

Northwood Residents' Association

Minutes of the AGM held on Thursday 11th April 2019 at Northwood Methodist Church

PRESENT: Nick Hurd MP, Cllr Carol Melvin, Cllr Richard Lewis, Sergeant Jim Last, PCSO Cara Remick, Group Captain Jason Sutton (guest speaker), 13 officers and members of the NRA executive committee, Councillors from Eastbury and Moor Park ward, and approximately 160 residents

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Paul Barker, Hoda Lacey and Cllr Scott Seaman-Digby.

INTRODUCTION. Tony Ellis, chairman, welcomed everyone to the 53rd AGM of the NRA, especially those who had not attended one before, and invited guests. He reported on the work of the executive committee through the last year. His speech included the following:

We are grateful to the Methodist Church for hosting us, in particular to Keith Tabor for masterminding the technical aspects.

I have now completed 10 years as your chairman and the role is still as challenging and stimulating as ever. I do, however, hope to pass on the baton in the not too distant future. Once again the future of Northwood is threatened by unseemly development by London Transport.

As I have mentioned in recent newsletters, the viability of Northwood is threatened with the closure of businesses, large and small. We have lost or are about to lose three of our banks, our hardware shop and a restaurant. Businesses in the High Street are constantly changing. The fact that TfL is such a dominant landlord does not help. The Government makes encouraging noises about thriving local high streets but takes no positive action. All we can do is spend as much money as possible locally and hope.

Traffic problems seem to be top of our complaints list. Speeding and inconsiderate driving and parking continue and I'm glad to be able to report that our local police team is now much more actively pursuing offenders. I reported last year that Peter Lansdown, member responsible for traffic and I met with the Council to discuss traffic problems in the Green Lane, Maxwell Road and Murray Road area. Consultants were appointed and produced a report but we've yet to see any improvement. Residents have raised several petitions about speeding but with no success. It would appear that the Cabinet member responsible for traffic is somewhat inflexible. However, we will keep on trying.

We tried two new events at Christmas - a carols evening outside Costa Coffee in conjunction with Holy Trinity Church and a best window display competition. We hope to improve on them next Christmas. Also, one of our new committee members, Emma Brown, will be exploring what further events can be held during the coming year.

Our new committee member for planning, Trevor Sherling, has been dropped in the deep end, and I am glad to report, learned to swim very quickly. The number of planning applications has increased considerably and Northwood is one large building site. We must be rapidly approaching a situation where our roads, water and sewage systems can no longer cope with the extra demand. Not to mention additional school places and demands on the National Health Service.

Chief Road Steward Paul Barker skilfully manages our Road Stewards and the distribution of newsletters. Road Stewards are the arteries of a residents' association. They collect subscriptions, deliver newsletters and maintain contact with residents. Without them the NRA would cease to exist. Thank you all for your invaluable contribution. You will see a map in the foyer showing where we have vacancies. If you can help, please let us know. He asks that those of you that haven't registered to receive emails from us please do so.

Treasurer David Blowers continues to keep us on the straight and narrow, Philip Green liaises with the police, Andrew Egan continues dealing with environmental matters, Peter Lansdown tries to keep our traffic moving, good luck with that Peter, and Amir Lakha keeps an eye on the health scene. Hoda Lacey continues to look after our businesses, Dipesh Patel has been recruited to improve our relationships with schools and Ros Plume, our secretary of many years standing, has joined the committee. Sue Mansfield now acts as Minutes secretary. Frances Meyer has resigned from the committee but is continuing as membership secretary.

Now we come to Miles Gillman who has been vice-chairman for 19 years. Miles is our Mr Fix IT. Noticeboards, posters, publicity, shifting trestles, Christmas lights. As well as deputising for me, the list of things he does is almost endless. You are a star Miles and we cannot thank you enough for the great contribution you make to Northwood.

I am grateful to all of the committee members for the hours that they give up to make Northwood a better place in which to live. Finally, Ros, every newsletter you produce is full of interest and expertly put together.

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Two years ago we donated £5,000 to the 1st Northwood Scout Group. There is a small display in the foyer showing the progress they have made on their new building. Richard Plume and his fellow scouts and helpers are to be congratulated on their magnificent efforts.

GUEST SPEAKER. The Chairman introduced Group Captain Jason Sutton, Commanding officer at Northwood HQ.

He spoke of the history of the area. It was a country estate, used by the Hell Fire Club, and in 1938 was sold to the Air Ministry for Coastal Command use. The first bunker was built in 1960, and rebuilt in the late 1970s and early 1980s. It was the main base during the cold war. It played a major part in directing the Falklands War, under Margaret Thatcher. In the early 2000s it was redeveloped under PFI, now with Skanska. It is one of the most modern and well run sites in the country. It is now the HQ site for:

1. HQ Joint Forces Command who organise joint facilities for the three services, such as medical services
2. NATO Maritime Force: Command and Control of all NATO operations, 80% of which are non-British
3. Command and Control of about 32 overseas operations including Afghanistan and Syria
4. Joint Forces HQ which can organise immediate operations in a matter of hours
5. Standing Joint Forces HQ provides a framework for operations such as a current Anglo-French enterprise
6. Naval Reserve Unit, HMS Wildfire, which provides training for naval deployment

So it is the major UK operational HQ for UK overseas operations. Many of the personnel live in Northwood and use Northwood schools. It is probably South Oxhey's biggest employer.

He also dispelled the myth of tunnels to Downing Street and a tube station at the base.

Valerie Mellor proposed a vote of thanks to Jason, citing his excellent service record, including an OBE, to which the audience responded with a round of applause.

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS. Treasurer David Blowers presented the accounts. The chairman thanked Chris Rogers, who has audited the NRA accounts for 37 years and has agreed to continue doing so. The Treasurer said that as many members pay more than the minimum subscription, the low minimum sub can be maintained. The proposal to continue with a minimum rate of £2 per household and the Business member rate of £10 and the adoption of the accounts was approved by a show of hands. There were no questions.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS. Vice President Valerie Mellor conducted the election of the chairman, who then conducted the elections of the other officers. There being no new nominations for the officers' positions, the following were elected for the year by a show of hands:

Chairman – Tony Ellis; Vice chairman – Miles Gillman; Treasurer – David Blowers; Auditor – Chris Rogers

ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. The chairman introduced each of the members standing for (re-)election. Those elected for the year by a show of hands are:

Paul Barker - membership and chief road steward

Emma Brown - community liaison

Andrew Egan - environment

Philip Green - police liaison

Hoda Lacey – business membership

Dr Amir Lakha – health matters

Peter Lansdown - Transport and Highways

Dipesh Patel – schools liaison

Ros Plume - secretary

Trevor Sherling - planning advisor

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT. The chairman said Alan Prue had a serious stroke nearly 2 years ago and his recovery has been painfully slow. He has, therefore reluctantly, resigned as president. Alan was our Chairman

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for 6 years and a committee member for many more, and he will be sorely missed. He and his wife Pat were sent our best wishes and thanks. Valerie Mellor was proposed as President, and it was thought unnecessary now to have a Vice President. This was agreed by a show of hands.

NICK HURD MP

Nick said he had met with TfL a few days ago. In Nick's personal view Station Approach and the station itself need an uplift, he likes the new restaurants and shops and affordable accommodation. But this development is entirely wrong for Northwood, and worse than the last proposals. Nick will oppose it.

The application will go to the desk of the Mayor for the London Plan. The community must organise. As many signatures as possible on the petition and oppose the planning application. The Secretary of State (Minister of Housing, Communities and Local Government) can call in an application and Nick has already spoken to the current holder of that office, Kit Malthouse.

Nick added his welcome to the police present, Sergeant Jim Last and PCSO Cara Remick. Nick said he gets as many e-mails about burglary as he does about Brexit. Particularly about violence with theft. There will be a public meeting on May 15 with the Police.

Turning to health matters, Nick said that the Hillingdon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) intend to contract Michael Sobell as both an inpatient and day care centre. For the Northwood and Pinner Hospital site the CCG and NPS aim to put in a planning application within a year to update the facilities and make it a hub for primary care commissioned by the CCG with some residential accommodation. For cancer services we should look out for further action about Mount Vernon coming under review. It is planned to increase the use of the Hillingdon hospital site

NORTHWOOD SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD

Sergeant Jim Last said he, in January 2019, had joined the team of PC Dave Bell, PC Dan Ashworth and PCSO John Usher. Crime statistics for Northwood showed a reduction in the last 12 months over the previous 12 months of: Burglary 5.9%, theft of motor vehicles 22.7%, theft against the person of 35% and drugs crime of 72.7%.

Our nearest police station open to the public is in Hayes. Our Safer Neighbourhoods Team (SNT) are running 'A street a week' to engage with local residents, either by meeting them or leaving information packs.

Drop in sessions at Costa and Waitrose are continuing, see the newsletter sent out for dates and times. And Jim asked everyone to sign up for Online Watch Link (OWL) to receive police notifications and requests for information.

<https://www.owl.co.uk/>

Operation Sidewinder is a burglary prevention initiative jointly with the Metropolitan Police and the Hertfordshire Constabulary. This provides more resources and plain clothes officers to try to reduce the problem.

Speeding violations are a ward priority and the team now have a calibrated speed gun.

Road safety is also a priority.

In summary Jim pointed out that Northwood is a safe place to live.

TFL's PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The Chairman introduced the subject by saying that local residents appeared totally opposed to this development. The 'consultation' has been a sham and an insult. He noted that in Stanmore it is planned to build, on a 450 place car park, housing for 1200 – 1500 people, leaving a parking deficit of well in excess of 500 places. The London Mayor appears to be planning to build on all TfL owned car parks having no regard to the fact that outer London suburbs have completely different profiles from inner London places.

Trevor Sherling described the process to be followed:

- As soon as the Council has received the application the NRA will e-mail all residents on the NRA e-mail list, saying how to object and what planning reasons would be considered. Mainly:

1. It is in a conservation area and totally inappropriate for that
2. New buildings should not be substantially larger than those existing
3. To reduce car parking from 240 to 60 places without any visitors' spaces will affect commuters and cause overspill to surrounding streets.
4. Surgeries and schools will not be able to cope with such a large influx of new people.

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- Objections should be via the council web site and be copied by e-mail to councillors and Nick Hurd.

Trevor also noted that the consultation said that the station car park is now under-utilised and that the Green Lane car park has spare spaces. He has recent photos which deny these claims.

The Chairman said he has asked Peter Elliott of TfL to hold a public meeting, but they have said they need to 'look at the facts' first.

The Chairman said Save our Northwood still exists on paper and has over £18,000 in the bank. However, several of the members have left or retired and whatever vehicle is used for the fight, it needs new members and someone with energy to lead a long campaign, so it needs new leadership, as the Chairman is unable to continue as the leader. The likely outcome of a campaign will be challenging the development through the High Court which will be expensive and need legal expertise.

Comments from the floor were invited.

Chris Ireland of Knoll Crescent said he had given comments and his e-mail address at the October presentation but was not told of the March events. The Chairman said Curtin and TfL have a poor system but have not acknowledged that fact. He has also been told that they have not yet started to analyse the comments received in March.

Richard Plume of Hallowell Road asked about the timetable including when a replacement London Mayor might be expected? Nick Hurd stated that TfL have said they may make revisions based on the March meeting feedback, hold more public consultation and are looking at a planning application in the autumn or winter of 2019, but it was unlikely to show major changes from what we have seen so far. The Mayor's current term of office expires in May 2020, when he may be up for re-election.

Jonathan Hutchins of Hallowell Road pointed out that the number of flats, 250, is much greater than initially proposed. As Station Approach is a cul-de-sac there would be major fire risk if a fire started at a peak time such as 8.30 am as fire engines could not get through the traffic. Similarly a problem if there were a train accident. The Chairman said that the fire authorities are consulted during the planning process and we must ensure this point is not lost.

Cllr Reena Ranger, Moor Park and Eastbury, Kewferry Road, pointed out that cars now drive from Bushey and park in Kewferry Road to take advantage of cheaper fares from Northwood. TfL pricing could sort this out.

Sally Corless, Carew Road was concerned about fragmentation of protest efforts with other groups including Northwood's Voice, who are active with a petition and Facebook page. The Chairman said we all need to talk and are doing so, but it is still early days and we must be careful to optimise our joint efforts.

Rosemary Mastin, Langton Grove, pointed out that the site is brownfield and asked what would the NRA accept. The Chairman said that the NRA accepts that something must be done and thought the 2015 plans were an acceptable compromise. However Northwood's Voice voted against them on the basis of the effect on the Conservation Area. He also said that new lifts at the station as the only improvement is not good enough.

Dennis Sare, The Glen, recommended caution in proceeding to ensure it is effective.

Philip Newfield, Carlton Place said that 20% of the responses from a survey of his residents said 'don't bother to protest, it will happen anyway'. At the right time we must get a lot of residents to join the protest. The Chairman confirmed his hope that the NRA and Northwood's Voice will work together.

Howard White, Rofant Road, said that the residents of the new flats will probably have to park in the surrounding streets. So parking restrictions will have to be added to the present 1-2pm to include an overnight slot as well. He also said the third runway will have a major effect on Northwood and the recent plan says 17 flights per hour over

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Northwood at low stacking levels. The Chairman pointed out that the consultation on that has now closed.

Jocelyn Howell of Hilliard Road commented on the disruption during development and the problems that would cause.

Michael Peters, Drysdale Close asked for communications with all Northwood residents. The NRA can e-mail on its e-mail list, and the Community Notice Boards and church notice boards can also be used.

Sally Corless, Carew Rd said a Facebook feature can be used to contact all within a mile, and suggested a mail drop of the whole of HA6. The Chairman said the last attempt to that has not been effective, but that we will use every effort to ensure that the whole of Northwood is told.

Jon Marx, Copsewood, of Northwood's Voice said he had met Deputy London Mayor, Heidi Alexander in January 2019 and warned her of local opposition to the plans. He pointed out that it takes a long time to get to such people and that Save Our Northwood leadership and management is badly needed. There are petitions out now in the Northwood and Moor Park shops.

Nick Hurd said it is very important to have one group speaking for Northwood to the London Assembly. The Chairman said a leader with full time availability at busy periods is required.

Rosemary Sare, The Glen, said Facebook is very useful, and we must leverage all tools that are easy and quick. She volunteered to work on this.

Jonathan Hutchins, Hallowell Road said this is not a party political matter, and the present plans would create a slum with no family / affordable facilities.

The Chairman concluded that we must find a way forward, and find a leader by the summer. Also needed will be the skills of a lawyer, surveyor, planning expert, and more money. Young people must be involved.

COUNCILLORS QUESTIONS TO Cllr RICHARD LEWIS (RL) and Cllr Carol MELVIN (CM)

1. A Knoll Crescent resident stated that flights over Northwood are increasing, and we need a current air space map. RL said it was known where planes go now and he was not aware of any changes but would enquire.
2. Chris Rogers, Gatehill Road stated that the condition of Green Lane with its potholes and floods is unacceptable. CM will feed this back. Thames Water have been using cameras to monitor the situation and there have been problems with tree roots.
3. Cooksley of Grove Farm Park asked if the Northwood HQ has a no-fly zone. GC Jason Sutton said they do not but they do have a no-drone zone.
4. Caroline Field, Highfield Road, pointed out that parking on both sides of the Rickmansworth Road between Maxwell and Murray Roads makes it very dangerous. Parking should only be allowed on one side. CM has already told the Council this, a survey is to be done.
5. Freda Kosmin, Sentis Court asked whether parking is permitted in places where the marked spaces are so faded they cannot easily be seen. CM agreed some were very faded but they must be reported and were still valid.
6. Dylan James of Hallowell Road said we should not be completely against any TfL development. It would be good for shops and something will undoubtedly be done.

There being no further questions, the chairman thanked everyone for coming. He closed the meeting at 22.00.