

# Minutes of MHNF Committee Meeting 29 July 2019

## Adam and Eve, The Ridgeway, Mill Hill NW7

Present: John Gillett (Chair) Bonnie Overlander, Peter Neal, Paul Edwards, Anesta Weekes, Cheryl Farrow, Susan Connolly, Alan Connolly, Limor Nouriel, Stuart Kershaw, Clive Blass, Marion Gillett.

We welcomed, Anesta Weekes, and Marion Gillett to their first meeting as new Committee Members.

Further, following the meeting Clive Overlander, Alan Connolly, Adam Morley (Trustee NW7hub), and Patricia Kershaw have now agreed to join the committee. We could still accommodate more.

Apologies received from: Sian John and Jonathan Cumming

**1. Re-Designation of Mill Hill Neighbourhood Forum.** This was a major item for discussion. On 24/7 The Planning Committee of Barnet Council had met and had voted to refuse the re-designation of the Mill Hill Neighbourhood Forum (MHNF or The Forum) (Renewal of such bodies has to take place on a five yearly basis and five years would have elapsed on 16 September 2019). A number of reasons were advanced by the Barnet Planning Committee in support of their decision to refuse. Full details are to be seen in the document online 'Planning Committee 24 July 2019'. In summary The Planners believed that the Forum had not satisfied the Council that it had met 'a statutory set of basic conditions including membership, constitution and an express purpose of promoting well-being in the neighbourhood area'. A principle failure, for example, was the fact, it said, that The Forum had not achieved a Committee membership of at least 21 persons either living or working in the area of Mill Hill. These points were then discussed by the Committee in order that a decision could be taken to:

- a) accept the decision of the Council and discontinue the Forum.
- b) make an Appeal against the Council's ruling.

The Chair and other members of the Forum Committee expressed extreme disappointment at the decision of the Council, since, whilst it was accepted that certain requirements had not been met, the Forum believed that it had indeed promoted well-being in Mill Hill and had met many of its objectives. It was also possible, in short order, to remedy the omissions listed by the Council. The Committee would look very carefully at the assertion by the Council that The Forum did not have 21 members or more on 24 July 2019, a Statutory requirement. The Committee also believed that the Council hearing on 24 July had been unfair since undue emphasis had been given to a number of objections from various parties who had misrepresented themselves. For example, one objection had been raised by an individual stating that he represented an important body in the area, Mill Hill Residents' Association (MHRA) when this was not, in fact, the case. This evidence should not have been allowed by the Planning Committee. The Residents' Association was known to be supportive of the activities of the Forum. It was agreed that The Forum would also produce evidence to show that its membership was well in excess of the 21 persons needed on the date specified.

### **2. The Neighbourhood Plan.**

It was accepted by the Committee that the Neighbourhood Plan had not been produced within the specified time limit, however a great deal of work had been completed and The Chair was willing to give an undertaking to rapidly complete the "Regulation 14 submission", assuming the Council's comments on the recently submitted "Final draft" are not too significant. It was accepted that production of the Plan was an urgent and highly important undertaking. Copies of the NDP as Version 4a would be released in the next few days to current Committee members, but it had to be treated as confidential. It was noted that there had been no response or guidance from the Council following submission in June of the Draft Neighbourhood Plan.

### **3. Confidence in the Chair.**

SK made a comment re Confidence in the Chair. Whilst this was not put to a formal vote the Committee wished to express thanks to the Chair for the considerable volume of work undertaken since the Forum was set up originally in 2014.

### **4. Amendments to the Constitution.**

The Committee has decided that the Constitution needs to be reviewed with a view to necessary amendments, including, inter alia, clauses which relate to release of minutes, financial accounts,

qualification of membership, attendance of members at meetings and removal of members who were deemed to be disruptive.

### **5. Support from Local Councillors and Safeguarding**

It was recognised that support from local councillors was highly desirable. This had not been forthcoming of late, due it was believed, to a Safeguarding issue. Committee members were now familiar with the fact that the Forum had received assistance with the production of the monthly Mill Hill magazine, and the Mill Hill Guide. This had come from a person to be known as 'Mike'. Some within the Mill Hill community had accused Mike of being on the sex offender register. The Forum (including the Chair) has not received reliable evidence as to whether Mike was, or was not, on the register. Uncertainty about Mike therefore remained. Nevertheless, The Forum recognises the concerns raised and supports the Chair's decision to dissociate the Forum totally from this person. The Chair confirmed to the Committee that he had ceased dealing with Mike at end May and had written on 18 July to all Committee Members and Council Officers, in order to make this quite clear. The Forum could not run the risk of guilt by association.

Re the Safeguarding issue, it was not clear whether Committee members would need to be DBS checked. This might be necessary if, in the future, the Forum had any contact, albeit, indirectly with children. This issue was to be looked into further, and a final view was to be put to The Committee and agreed.

### **6. Support From other Mill Hill Organisations.**

Efforts should be made to gain written approval from other local organisations, in addition to those who gave their support to the Re-Designation application.

### **7. Other Measures to Meet Council Requirements.**

- a) A new Deputy Chairman had been proposed and will take up position as soon as the Re-Designation issue has been settled
- b) Financial Accounts would be produced before the next AGM, again provided the Re-Designation issue has been settled.
- c) Minutes of all future meetings will be produced shortly after the meeting concerned, and will be placed online once Committee members have seen and approved, within a target of 6 weeks.

### **8. Other Matters.**

- a) **Pentavia.** The Committee stated fundamental disagreement with the decision by the Mayor of London to approve this application since it contravened many important Planning Guidelines. Further action will be considered jointly with Mill Hill Preservation Society, including possibly an appeal to the Secretary of State. On this issue, Dr M. Offord MP could be of assistance and he has already voiced his opinion against the Mayor's decision to allow the development.
- b) **Development of the National Institute of Medical Research site.** It was noted that the number of dwellings had increased within the original footprint. Also 52 additional parking spaces and the 35% Affordable ratio would be maintained as originally approved. It was not felt that it would be worthwhile for the committee to object to this minor amendment.
- c) **Motion for an EGM.** It was agreed that the Chair would write to Mr Klaff to inform him that in the light of the Planning Committee's decision to refuse The Forum's Re-Designation, any motion to call an EGM had to be put on hold until the position of the Forum was clarified

### **9 Any Other Business.**

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.45pm.

**Our next full meeting was set for Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> August at 7.30, at the Adam & Eve **NOW CONFIRMED****

**Stuart Kershaw. 7 August 2019**

