

NDF Public Meeting & AGM, 24 February 2020
7.30pm, West Hampstead Library

Nick Jackson, Keith Moffitt, David Brescia, Linda Sluys, Joanne Scott, Guy Shackle, Sanjoy Sen, Tracey Shackle, Ian Cohen, Nicki Cohen, Susan Kwok, Michael Yianneskis, Cllr Lorna Russell, Sue Spreckley, Christine de Porteire, Vivianne McDuell, Reneé Banoun, Philip Manktelow, Cllr Flick Rea, Roy Dantzig, Diane Dantzig, Marcel Maag, Nancy Mayo, Linda McDowell, Maria Elena Brady, Janet Grauberg, Stephen Frazer, Loulou Brown, Louise Dryden, Mark Hutton, Richard Burdett, Jeanne Norwood, Wayne Stalley, Robert Lastman, Ian Simcox-Heath, John Saynor, Andrew Allaz, Sue Measures, Gregg Kohansky, Michael Payne, Eugene Regis, Ti Goed, Michael Poulard, Eugene Regis.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Keith welcomed the residents, and gave particular thanks to the two Camden councillors who had attended: Flick and Lorna.

Apologies for absence were received from Amos Sivan, Clarence Jackman, Enyd Norman, Cllr Peter Taheri, Cllr Shiva Taweri, Anne Gold, Cllr Richard Olszewski.

2. Minutes of last meeting (1 April 2019)

Minutes of the previous public meeting (&AGM) were distributed to attendees, having previously been emailed to the NDF mailing list, and residents asked to read and confirm if they were happy. The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

Nick stated that the 'matters arising' from the minutes would be covered by the comprehensive agenda of the current meeting.

3. Chairs' Report

Keith thanked the committee members for their work over the past year, and all members for giving support. Thanks were given to Alan Watson, who was stepping down from the committee.

Keith gave his report:

- The NDF tried to hold at least two public meetings per year, but the one planned for November 2019 had been cancelled due to the General Election.
- The West Hampstead & Fortune Green NDF had been formally re-designated by Camden on 12th April 2019 as the area forum – for another 5 years.
- The local government boundary commission had been doing a review of ward boundaries in Camden, and had now published its recommendations. Relatively few changes had been proposed for the West Hampstead and Fortune Green wards: parts of Compayne Gardens, Broadhurst Gardens, West Hampstead Mews, and Cleve Road would go into South Hampstead; Linstead Street would go into Kilburn; shop fronts on Kilburn High Road (which the West Hampstead & Fortune Green NDF already excluded from its area) would be going into Kilburn. The NDF Committee was not proposing any corresponding changes to the NDF boundaries, as it believed all residents currently in our zone would still want to be involved.
- As usual, the NDF had run a stall at the annual Jester Festival in Fortune Green: a successful way to engage with residents, sign up new members, and find out people's opinions.
- The NDF had been involved in the West Hampstead Overground Station Consultation Group, had been invited to join the 156 West End Lane construction demolition group, and had met jointly with West Hampstead Amenity and Transport (WHAT) and Transport for London to talk about their proposals for West Hampstead tube station. Keith expressed gratitude for the constructive working relationship between the NDF and WHAT.

- Keith referred to queries received from students studying neighbourhood planning, to assist with their research.
- The NDF's views were increasingly being sought by developers in advance of applications being submitted: e.g. the Loftus Brothers with proposals for Blackburn Road, and developers for 307-309 Finchley Road. There had been a meeting with Land Securities about the possible development of the O2 Centre car park. Keith and Linda had met with Mark Handley of the Farmers' Market to talk about its wish to extend opening hours. The NDF had taken part in the consultation about street furniture on Kilburn High Road.

Nick gave his report:

- The NDF tries to monitor all planning applications that come in, and what happens to them. Nick had looked at 190 planning applications last year for this area – some small, some parts of bigger schemes. In last 12-14 months 122 were approved, 70 were still outstanding, 28 had been withdrawn, 8 had been refused.
- Nick had the impression that Camden Council's planning department were talking to developers earlier on, so that schemes could be tidied up into a form more likely to be accepted, before developers submitted the formal applications.
- The NDF had successfully objected to proposals to add more telephone booths to Finchley Road – the primary purpose of which would have been to host black glass screens for moving adverts. The applicant had been owned by an advertising company. All the refused applications had been put to appeal, but the examiner had rejected all the appeals. The NDF's objection had been on the basis that they would have blocked pavement access and local views.
- The Gondar Gardens retirement homes application, previously rejected, had gone to appeal earlier this year. The appeal process went on for two weeks. Objections were led by Gondar and Agamemnon Residents' Association; the NDF made a statement against the appeal; and the applicants' appeal was ultimately rejected. Another, smaller, scheme previously permitted for the site, was due to expire, and the NDF would be pushing Camden not to allow its renewal.
- The NDF had objected to an application to convert a shop on 287 Finchley Road into an estate agency, but the decision (rejected in 2018) had been appealed and approved in May 2019.
- The NDF had objected to an application by the developers to expand even further their already controversial large permitted development on 156 West End Lane.
- The NDF had objected to proposed plans for 74 Fortune Green Road, and consequently the proposal had been redesigned.
- Nick explained that the NDF did not consider it constructive to get involved in disputes between neighbours on minor applications – but that it readily gave advice to any residents who requested it on how the Neighbourhood Plan could be used as a basis for objections.

4. Current Issues

Guy gave a description, and said pictures would be circulated to those on the NDF mailing list, due to projector problems:

- The **London housing market** in 2019 had been very slow in Zone 2, although some development continued in Zone 1. A lot of schemes had been approved, but construction work was not progressing due to economic conditions. Guy believed more government support may be required to incentivise house purchases at the high price the market had reached, but nonetheless expected development to start increasing again in the next year.
- In addition to its own area of West Hampstead & Fortune Green, the NDF also kept an eye on proposals just outside its borders that might impact on it. The **B&Q site by Cricklewood**, Brent, about four streets beyond our boundary, would be visible to our area if it was built: a

'mega scheme' whose tallest tower would be 25 storeys. Guy was keen to galvanise feedback on this development.

- West Hampstead had been designated as a 'zone of intensification' by the Mayor of London since about 2008 but was no longer classed as such in the newest draft **London Plan**.
- Residents probably needed to be most aware of developers' intentions for the **O2 Centre car park** site. Camden had published site allocations on their website in February. Consultations were open until 27 March. Camden had taken on board what the NDF had suggested at its workshop: the advantages of treating the car park and (separately owned) car showrooms as one site, so that any redevelopment and its corresponding amenities would be holistic and well connected. There had been talk of more than 950 homes – potentially even well in excess of 1,000. Building a deck with a car park under it would be expensive. Accessibility to transport was an important consideration. Keith elaborated that the NDF had met with the developers and discussed the site in very broad terms; the developer had held a public consultation stall within the O2 Centre; but when the developer was invited to the NDF's meeting in November 2019 they replied that there was 'nothing much going on'. The NDF Committee agreed that Land Securities' consultation stall had been disappointing: the developers had refused even to answer residents' questions about the intended height of the proposed buildings. The NDF favours medium-rise mansion block developments, but Land Securities seemed to want something much larger and denser. Keith predicted that a proposal of this scale would take a long time to get to the planning submission stage.
- After receiving planning permission, the **156 West End Lane** project had gone quiet for about two years, waiting to be able to terminate the ground floor leases of Wickes and Travis Perkins. The building was now vacant, and owners A2 Dominion were submitting discharge of conditions applications. It was noted with disapproval that after having won permission for a 164-unit development in the face of massive opposition, the developers were now applying to increase the size even further, by an additional 16 units. The NDF asked for an indication from Camden's councillors as to when this enlargement proposal would go before the Planning Committee. Guy added that the proposal was against the GLA's density guidelines, and at 6-7 storeys would obscure the picturesque view of West Hampstead's hills. It was reported that the developers intended to demolish the site's existing structures from the back and work towards the front – the process would be complicated, due to the need to manage access over a public right of way, and remove rubble. If the demolition occurred in 2020, it would probably take two years to build. Ian revealed that A2 Dominion's accounts showed they were holding back on a lot of their site development plans: they had permission to build on 21 sites, but many of them seemed to be up to three years behind schedule.
- Guy described the **Clockwork Apartments at 13 Blackburn Road**, owned by Richard Loftus and his brother. The owners had previously undertaken a short-term permitted redevelopment to turn the former offices into flats for letting, but their long-term intentions were to develop it permanently. Camden Council had organised a managementdevelopment forum where plans were shown to expand the site to its maximum capacity, including the basement, although Guy suspected some concessions might have to be made during the planning process. Ian observed that the Builder Depot site across the street also had planning permission for a residential development.
- The **West Hampstead Overground Station** experience was better now, with lifts installed. The original Edwardian façade, originally planned to be demolished, remained for the moment, supposedly as a safety barrier against any lorry that in might veer off the road and destabilise the bridge. Camden Council wished to see the Edwardian façade demolished and replaced with a contemporary kiosk; Guy preferred to see it demolished have nothing built in its place, widening the pavement. Keith favoured a trief kerb, like Minster Road had; Shiva reported that a water main had been discovered which might render it impossible to build a

rief kerb; Flick believed TfL were “making excuses”. Guy hypothesized that TfL was primarily looking to save money, by keeping the old Edwardian ticket office instead of demolishing it to build a new one.

- The school on the **Liddell Road** development had been completed and was now open, although not at full capacity as it seemed Camden had over-estimated the number of required school places. Guy believed the site had now been sold by Camden to a developer, but was unsure whether the sale had completed yet. With 100 private units permitted, it was surprising to see that such a seemingly profitable development had not moved forward yet – although any developer would also be obliged to build 3,000 m² of business space before they could start the residential.
- The problem of **West Hampstead Underground Station** not having a lift, and being increasingly overcrowded, was on the radar of mayoral candidates in election time. The NDF’s longstanding position was that the most sensible solution would be to build a new station on the opposite side of West End Lane, so that it would be on the same side of the street as the Overground and Thameslink stations (which both had lifts).
- Nick described how the **Farmers’ Market** was well received on Saturdays, and had previously experimented with selling food on weekday evenings on a temporary basis. But its organisers now wanted permission to run it 7 days a week, 7am to 8pm. Many residents, and the NDF, considered this highly undesirable, for reasons such as the rush hour congestion it would cause around stations. The initial application – criticised for being extremely vague about what types of stalls would be allowed – had been withdrawn, but a new application was on the way. The recent consultation meeting for this new application was considered unsatisfactory: the market operators had wanted to add permanent structures to the currently open space next to the Thameslink Station. Residents appreciated the butchers and other small shops on West End Lane, and did not want to see them driven out by unfair competition from stallholders who did not have to pay the same business rates. Lorna described how councillors had advised the market to apply only for stall on the back end of the space, to limit the congestion on this three-way station interchange at peak times, but the applicants had ignored this request and applied to have stalls on both sides, 7 days a week, which she considered unpalatable. Flick likewise was concerned about the amount of litter that would be generated from selling street food in front of the station, comparing it to the situation in front of Kings Cross. Ian recalled how the space in front of the Thameslink station, when it was developed with its green wall and trees, had been envisaged as an ‘area for the community’: he considered that a weekly farmer’s market fitted this criterion, but a daily street food market did not. Lorna noted that the new application was also requesting an alcohol license. Keith stated that the reasons the NDF had given for its objections to the previous application, were relevant to the newest application as well. By a show of hands, a majority of residents in attendance indicated a preference for simply extending the hours of the existing Farmers’ Market on Saturday.

Roy Dantzig observed that West Hampstead and Finchley Road stations were almost at full capacity, and asked how much consideration would be given to increased pressure on transport infrastructure, in consultations for large sites. Guy confirmed that due consideration had to be given, and that large developments were obliged to pay a Community Infrastructure Levy, which was supposed to be spent in the local area on mitigating the pressure on infrastructure: in addition to transport, an increasing population would of course add pressure to doctors’ surgeries for example. All residents were encouraged to raise these points during Camden’s consultations.

Sue noted that the large Tavener C & Son builders’ yard site on Iverson Road might be redeveloped at short notice: it appeared on the London Plan, and its owners had presented a small exhibition two years ago about potentially redeveloping the site, although had gone quiet since. This would add

further pressure on public transport. Sue reminded attendees that West Hampstead was effectively in competition with the Kentish Town interchange, in applying for funding for step-free access for our tube station, therefore it was important for residents to remain vocal about our particular station's needs: the NDF would circulate details of the websites that residents could submit their feedback to.

Flick stated that, in the absence of a lift at West Hampstead station, when Kilburn station's lift temporarily closed from 2nd March to 11th, TfL would be advising local people who needed step-free access to the Underground network to take the 139 bus to Bond Street.

Keith said the NDF would continue to work together with WHAT on this issue to reach as many people as possible.

A resident who lived near to the Farmers' Market expressed his concern about the increase in noise and music if hours and days of operation were expanded. David advised residents to sign up to the Camden Planning website to submit their objections on the application, and to be notified of other applications that arose within a certain radius of their home.

Another resident asked if local applications included soft surfaces to absorb surface water or return it to the soil. Nick answered that the NDF plan advised against concreting over permeable surfaces, and said that planners were generally quite observant about drainage.

Nick would attend a meeting arranged by GARA to meet the developer of the garden behind 1 Hillfield Road. He also said he would like to draw up a short study of the growth small infills at the back of terraced houses.

Keith said the NDF had been approached by nearby residents from Burrard and Parsifal Road, opposed to a proposal from the ESCP Europe Business School to erect a 2-story porta-cabin on a 'temporary' basis for five years, on open space. Lorna said that councillors were opposed. Flick added that when the land was sold, it had been with a condition of no permanent buildings being added to the site. David recalled that similarly controversial 'temporary' classroom structures for South Hampstead School, discussed at a past NDF meeting, erected on the tennis courts off Lymington Road, had indeed been removed again as promised at the end of their term.

5. Priorities for 2020

Keith listed these as the aforementioned 156 West End Lane, O2 Centre car park, West Hampstead Underground (lift) and Overground (façade) stations, Liddell Road and Blackburn Road.

6. Financial Report & accounts

Nick presented the accounts for 2019-2020, 2018-2019 for comparison, and a budget for 2020-2021. He described expenses of hiring space in the West Hampstead Library for public meetings such as this one, participation at the Jester Festival, and occasional leaflets. The NDF had made a loss of £166 last year, and Nick pointed out that the NDF was reliant on donations, therefore those in attendance were encouraged to make a donation at this AGM, or online.

Nick explained how one 'payment to creditor' item in the accounts was reimbursement for something he had paid for on the NDF's behalf the previous year and hadn't claimed within the year. He added that the NDF was hoping to obtain a modest grant from Camden or Land Securities to cover the cost of hosting a public consultation workshop to discuss the O2 Centre car park development.

7. Elections

The following were approved by attendees:

- **Co-chairs: Nick Jackson and Keith Moffitt** (proposed by Linda Sluys, seconded by Ian Cohen)
- **Treasurer: Nick Jackson** (proposed by Keith Moffitt, seconded by Joanne Scott)
- **Secretary: David Brescia** (proposed by Joanne Scott, seconded by Guy Shackle)
- **Membership secretary: Linda Sluys** (proposed by Lorna Russell, seconded by Loulou Brown)
- **Communications Officer:** Keith explained that Juan José Jamarillo had stepped down from this position due to time commitments but was remaining on the committee. Gondar Gardens resident Vivianne McDuell, who had experience as a communications manager, had contacted Keith about becoming involved in the NDF, and would be invited to the next NDF Committee meeting to be considered for this role.
- **Other committee members: Ian Cohen, Joanne Scott, Margaret Murphy, Juan José Jamarillo, Guy Shackle.** (Proposed by Reneé Banoun, seconded by Sue Measures and Mike Poulard second.)

8. Any other business:

Mike Poulard presented a bottle of wine as a gift for the next NDF Committee meeting. Keith thanked residents for all their support of the NDF.

9. Date of next meeting:

Later in 2020 to be confirmed.