

# Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Watford Fields Residents' Association

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2016 at 7.30pm

Watford Fields Junior School Annex

## Welcome

Jags Shah opened the meeting with a welcome to all to our Birthday Celebration. Also welcomed Dave Messenger (WFC Supporters Liaison Officer). We won't have much business this evening but will focus on what we have achieved and what we would like to achieve.

## Minutes

The minutes from the Inaugural meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2015 agreed and proposed by Haresh Vaya and seconded by Roy.

## Chair's Report

Committee made up of 9 members who all work and give up their time voluntarily. General meetings are organised regularly, and one that stands out is the question time meeting where we had four speakers who answered questions. We also try to include some social meetings and we had our summer picnic on the fields. We had some old school games including a three legged race. We have also organised the Watford fields Spring Clean as part of the Clean for the Queen initiative where we have 20 volunteers and collected 21 bags of rubbish on that cold day. John found a dagger which was reported which was our most interesting find of the day. We are an independent Residents' Association but we do work closely with other agencies. This includes Network Rail who came and cleared the rubbish that had collected by the bridge in Lammas Road.

Chris Hamil included that we are not part of the council and asked those attending to spread the word that we are residents ourselves and want to work with residents to get a better service for the residents.

Jags then added that we are in contact with Bob Clark regarding the trees in the area.

We have worked with the council over the new link road (Tom Sayer Way) and worked with Stephen Giles-Medhurst who has conducted a traffic count on our behalf so that we can see if there is an impact on Watford Fields. We have also petitioned HCC to reinstate a pavement that was removed as part of the new road layout. HCC are still looking into it as it's a slow process but we will keep up the pressure with HCC to get the footpath reinstated.

We have also been in contact with WBC under the freedom on information Act to ask the council to provide information as to how the fields are protected against development. A document was provided which states that the land must be used for

recreation and sport. The fields are also designated as green space on the WBC local plan.

Moving forward to are still working on the reinstatement of the footpath, conservation area, new metline extension, gas board land regeneration, litter issues, changes to lighting through the fields and organise some more social events to get to know each other and promoted the area. I'm very proud to be a resident and to be Chair of the Association.

## Treasurer's Report

Haresh Vaya presented the report.

Income - £300 grant was obtained, further £75 grant to purchase a PA system, Membership £58 = £453

Expenses - £33.30 for the hire of the hall for one year, website £14.40, and some substance for this evening which leaves us with £354

Membership is low so please encourage neighbours to become members. We also have a suggestion box at the front of the meeting. This is for the year 16/17.

## Election of officers

Jags Shah thanked Lizzie for being a member who is sadly standing down as she is moving away.

The room was asked if anybody would like to stand for any of the position and nobody put their hand up.

The officers were read out as proposed and agreed.

## Speaker

Dave Messenger from Watford Football Club

As neighbours it's been an interesting. Every club has to have a supporter liaison officer. I am a Watford fan since I was 7 years old.

Watford is in the premier league. After a bad game we spend the first 15 minutes of the next working day getting the loss out of our system. We have to get it all out of our system so that we can get on with the job in hand. Managing the relationship between the club and our fans (over 30,000 registered members who come from all over the country). My role is the conduit for all those people being able to come to the club.

We have been building for the last year and a half which may well continue as the club grows. There is a lot of work within the club to make the club accessible for all by autumn 2017 so lots more access for disabled supporters and a sensory room for children on the autistic spectrum with allow them to come and watch a football match. All exciting stuff. The new link road will be good for us too.

Dave then had a question and answer session.

From the floor: As a resident how does somebody become a member of WFC.

DM: Very easy, it can all be done via the website. We have a policy of selling home tickets and give priority to those who attend regularly.

From the floor: Is it possible to turn up on the day and get a ticket

DM: Not impossible but for not all games depending on the specific game. You must have membership in place first.

From the floor: you used to have family days

DM: we haven't had one since last season but we need to make sure that the circumstances are right but we might be able to do something next year.

From the floor: Understand prioritisation is for members who have been attending regularly but is it possible to extend to local residents

DM: No impossible and as I am at the club then I am sure that there is something that can be done for members of WFRA. We may also be able to give you some donated tickets for a fundraising event.

From the floor: Excuse my ignorance but how do you get young players up through the system.

DM: We have an academy scheme with Harefield Academy and those identified will go to Harefield for their secondary education where they train daily. At 16 the best ones are taken into the Youth system at the club. Those who don't make it then they will be helped to find another club such as Wycombe Wanderers. It's those with dedication that tend to move forward even if their ability isn't the best. The academy scheme is a very big part of the club which we are very proud of.

DM: Elton John story. At 13 years old I was a ball boy and Elton would come to the stadium. There is an Elton John suite and on the walls Elton provided a lot of his own Watford memorabilia. He is a Football geek and he knows a tremendous amount about WFC. He would also host parties for the players at his house in the 1980's. He would sign his gold discs and hand them to the players. He is a very important part of WFC and they wouldn't be where they are today if it wasn't for him, as well as Graham Taylor he has 4 seats in perpetuity.

From the floor: Has he been to see the lyrics that have been written around the surround.

DM: The lyrics to "your song" which was done to create a sense of place which is important to a football club. He didn't know it had been done but he has seen it. It's important that the new owners have retained the history of the club. 53 months ago the club almost went out of business but the new owners have done an amazing job.

From the floor: What made the difference to put them into the premier league

DM: With my supporter hat on when the new owners took over they brought players in from across Europe which improved the quality of player. It's a real combination of investment in the team and determination to get the club to the premiership. The club is now able to attract the better player due to this success.

From the floor: Can I ask you about schools and discounted tickets

DM: Not something that we have looked at in the last year but it maybe something that we need to look at again so I will take that away with me. We have to keep the door open for young children to attend games.

From the floor: Would it not be better to change the Manager

DM: The owners being Italian don't wait and we have gone through 7 coaches in the last 5 seasons.

From the floor: Are they an Italian family and do they own any other clubs?

DM: They are and they own 2 other clubs one of which has just been sold to a Chinese investment company. The Chinese minister is extremely keen about football and is pushing the game in China.

From the floor: How important is the football club to the local economy.

DM: Very important. Vicarage Road area and the town centre is bustling when there is a game on. Having a premier league football club is a massive thing for a town to have.

Jags said that WFC is now an associate member of WFRA.

## Any other business

Traffic coming through the fields, can the school be notified of the speeding traffic via the association. We have 20 mile an hour signs but can it be enforced, maybe with a flashing speed sign at points through the fields. Rabi Martins has made a note and

asked is there a particular section. Response was Elfrida Road, Tucker Street and Neal Street. To be discussed at the next committee meeting.

The cycling problem – the signs that say no cycling are completely ignored. One person has already had an accident.

Response from Jags: This is a hard situation as many want to cycle but also pedestrians need to be safe. The signs are there but you can't stop everybody. Sarah Thomas (PCSO) is aware and does stop people. It has been considered to make a cycle lane provision but it's not easy. Glenys suggested that we have some slightly different signs as people don't understand the sign. Rabi Martins – the only problem with the signs is that they are governed by legislation. Chris Hamil – speaking as a cyclist is that it's good for you but when you cycle through Watford Field Road where there is all the parking it's very dangerous as a cyclists. There are pavements for people but no path for cyclists. Jags added that there is a HCC cycle plan. Rabbi Martins added that Tim Aldrige is responsible for the whole cycle strategy for Watford so maybe it would be an idea for him to come and meet with the committee. Chris Hamil added that there are bad cyclist as there as bad motorist who give the good ones a bad name.

## Close

Jags thanked all the committee members who all work hard.

Encourage members to look at the website, facebook and twitter.

Meeting closed at: 20.30pm

# Appendix 1

7<sup>th</sup> November 2017

Nomination of Officers

Office	Name	Proposed	Seconded
Chair Person	Jags Shah	Stella Gordon	Terry Clarke
<i>Signature</i>			
Vice Chair	Glenys Isaacs	Jags Shah	Chris Hamil
<i>Signature</i>			
Secretary	Karen Arnott	Chris Hamil	Glenys Isaacs
<i>Signature</i>			
Treasurer	Haresh Vaya	Terry Clarke	Stella Gordon
<i>Signature</i>			

Elected Members

		Proposed	Seconded
		Haresh Vaya	Glenys Isaacs
<i>Signature</i>			
Members			
Terry Clarke		<i>Signature</i>	
Chris Hamil		<i>Signature</i>	
Steve Evans		<i>Signature</i>	
Stella Gordon		<i>Signature</i>	
Lizzie Reid		<i>Signature</i>	