

West Byfleet Community Liaison Group

Monday 09 May, 18:00 – held by Zoom

Attendees:

Name	Initial	Organisation	Notes
Spencer Neal	SN	Keeble Brown	Director, Community Relations
William Jankowski	WJ	Keeble Brown	Media & Public Affairs Manager
Rob Bolwell	RB	Keeble Brown	Account Executive (Public Affairs)
Wade Pollard	WP	West Byfleet Neighbourhood Forum	Chair, West Byfleet Neighbourhood Forum
Stewart Dick	SD	Byfleet, West Byfleet & Pyrford Residents' Association	Chair, Residents' Association
Cllr Josh Brown	JB	Woking Borough Council	Byfleet and West Byfleet ward Councillor
Ian Mcatamney	IM	West Byfleet Neighbourhood Forum	Board Member, West Byfleet Neighbourhood Forum
Guy Flintoff	GF	Retirement Villages Group (RVG)	Planning Director
Cllr Gary Elson	GE	Woking Borough Council	Pyrford ward Councillor
Cllr Steve Dorset	CSD	Woking Borough Council	Pyrford ward Councillor
Christine Osbourne	CO	Christine Osbourne Dental Practice	
Terry Unitt	TU	Retirement Villages Group (RVG)	Senior Project Manager

Apologies:

Name	Initial	Organisation	Notes
John Keenan	JK	Mathieson Keenan (Chartered Surveyors)	Local Resident (Semi-retired Valuation Surveyor and developer)
Peter Collis	PC	Waitrose & Partners	Store Manager
James Ahearne	JA	Retirement Villages	Development Director
Sunil Khadka	SK	West Byfleet Business Association	Owner of New Haweli restaurant (Station Approach, close to site)
Graham Chrystie	GC	Local resident	Former Pyrford ward councillor
Dharma Sivarajasinham	DS	West Byfleet Business Association/West Byfleet Neighbourhood Forum	Managing partner of local business Excellenium
Keith Cresswell	KC	Byfleet, West Byfleet & Pyrford Residents' Association	West Byfleet village representative on the residents' association
James Lowe	JL	West Byfleet Business Association	Owens JL Butchers

Roland Nevett	RN	West Byfleet Business Association	Retired business owner
Cllr Amanda Boote	AB	Woking Council	Byfleet and West Byfleet ward councillor and county councillor for The Byfleets division
Seanne Hunter Hill	SH	Woking Borough Council	Neighbourhood Officer
Dr Sundeep Soin	SS	Madeira Medical	General Practitioner

Minutes:

Initial	Notes	Action(s)
SN	Introduces meeting and agenda: a) Site update b) Section 73 and related news c) Contract update d) Progress to other elements: Design, branding, and market engagement e) Working with the new administration f) AOB	
TU	Site update: Affinity Water confirmed they will be onsite to remove their assets from the boundary. This will solve the issue of running water onsite. Another obstruction out of the way to help de-risk the site.	
SN	Thanks to those who have been in touch to notify us of the running water issue – we have managed to respond to all. It is appreciated that you let us know when you see anything untoward.	
GF	Section 73 update: Consent has been issued today, which is great news. This covers the amendments you know about, changes to the balconies and other minor changes to the scheme. This is a good step forward.	
SN	Constructive feedback from the team at Woking Borough Council has been helpful and is appreciated.	
GF	The Highways Authority were consulted on the level changes proposed on Station Approach. They provided no comments or had any issues with this. Design is matching the planning now, good progress.	
SD	This is very good news. You made life for Woking Council very straightforward. Thanks to Ben and his planning team.	
TU	Update on the preferred contractor contract: We are all aware of the challenging environment we are facing in the outside world and its impact on the construction industry. Challenging market to engage with contractors on a fixed price negotiation. We have the benefit of an engaging main contractor. What we are focusing on:	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the positives of section 73 and where we can wrap this up into our coordinated design - Continue to monitor the market closely - Look for efficiencies in areas of our design, refine the numbers. <p>It is a challenging environment to navigate, and it doesn't allow us to provide a shovel in the ground date yet.</p>	
WP	Would it be possible to break the contract into parts and build in stages?	
TU	In some ways, this is a potential option. It means we will reconsider the way that we procure the project. Whether we cut it up into sections or do a hybrid approach to procurement is what we are looking at. We are being led by external advice, including government bodies, looking at the best way to deliver the project for us and the contractors. We want to take the time to ensure robust design and pricing so we can eliminate as much risk in the supply chain. The entire sector is experiencing this currently.	
SN	We have been speaking with Department for Transport last week. Experiencing similar issues with investment in Railway track.	
TU	A lot of advice is pointing to working a lot closer with contractors. We are focusing on the areas within our control.	
TU	It is about levelling the cost of materials vs the value of the properties when it is time to sell them.	
SN	We are in the world of VUCA – Volatility Uncertainty Complexity Ambiguity	
SD	Fixed price contract seems unlikely, and negotiations will require a degree of flexibility on both sides. How are these discussions progressing?	
TU	Knee jerk reaction has settled in some ways since news concerning Ukraine. Still a degree of volatility in the markets. You are right, fixed price contracts seem non-existent at this current time. We will get there; negotiations are challenging at the moment.	
IM	How long do you estimate the delay to be at this point?	
TU	We cannot estimate at this time. We must focus on keeping our finger on the pulse. We are looking for the quickest route to get to site. We have invested a lot of money already.	
IM	I sympathise as I know others in a similar position on a smaller scale.	
JB	The development has come up time and time again on the doorstep. We have been saying all progressing well. Now we are in a situation where we don't know, could be 6/12 months. What do we say to residents?	
GF	Absolutely fair point. There is some work to understand if there is an option that will get us there quicker. You are	

	right, we won't leave people guessing for too long as this leads to issues.	
SN	This is where we come in. We are not going to say we have all the answers unless we do. We are going to keep on talking, communicating all the works that are happening behind the scenes, such as the section 73 amendments, progress on marketing suite etc. These are ways of communicating our commitment. We are not walking away until a more positive moment.	
IM	Is there an option of walking away and cutting your losses?	
GF	It is not being talked about.	
SN	Walking away is not an option.	
WP	I see you (RV) have since purchased another development site in Tunbridge Wells	
GF	Slight difference with the project – we have purchased subject to planning. However, we are continuing to look for new projects, this is very much still a priority for us.	
TU	To add, the events we are faced with doesn't extinguish the requirement for our product for the market. This is a pivotal scheme. It is not 'if' we build, but 'when'.	
SN	We were talking with Lucy last week on options for the marketing suite. This will provide a useful piece of communication as well as market engagement. There are going to be elements of the construction programme that are going to be disruptive and it's going to be communicated that it will all be worth it. We're looking at how we're going to use the suite to give people a sense of the story that's building up towards the point where people can look forward to moving in.	
SN	A new administration: As a big project in West Byfleet, we recognise we'll need to work with the new administration. Any advice?	
GE	You will still have the real support of the councillors. This is important as the main contact will be with the planners. The CEO of the council has not changed and will still be very much supportive of the scheme. You can count on our support.	
SN	What's your take with what's happening with Woking Borough Council?	
CSD	Hard to say at the minute as so soon since the election. My feeling is that the new administration will want to continue very much as the current and want to continue on course. I think everyone sees the benefit the development will bring and will want to support this.	
SN	Sustainability, Net-Zero etc will continue to be a priority	
JB	These will still be high priority for the Lib-Dems. Who the Exec will be is yet to be seen. If Planning portfolio holder were to be Cllr Louise Morales, she knows West Byfleet well and is keen on planning policies. She is a big 'Greeny' too.	

SD	Thanks to section 73, you don't need to return to the planning committee now. You will continue to have full support for the WB neighbourhood forum and RA. New councillors in Byfleet and West Byfleet and Pyrford, they have pledged their full support.	
IM	Are the other councillors invited to this group?	
SN	What do we think on this? My intuition is yes, they should be invited.	
SD	The new councillors should be invited to the next liaison group meeting.	
CSD	Be conscious it takes some time for [new councillors'] email addresses to be set up.	
SN	I have Daryl Jordan's phone number.	
WP	Both are new to being councillors, I imagine there will be a lot of training in the first few months.	
IM	You mentioned the shop window, do we know when this is going to go live?	
SN	We will be speaking with Lucy from RVG to give us more of a sense as to what the next steps are. We are looking at how to redecorate and enhance the façade.	
WJ	Amy has been working on ideas to engage local groups as part of this.	
SN	Guessing there will be a new Mayor.	
CSD	It will be Conservative Cllr Saj Hussain who is a big fan of the Byfleet's. I'm sure I can say that with some confidence.	
	Next meeting: 13th June 2022	
SN	There will be updates coming out in the Newsletter and social media this week. Thanks all attendees	