



Westhoughton Community Network

Meeting: Wednesday, 22nd February 2023 (7:00pm)

at Winifred Kettle Day Centre

Minutes

1. Present

Groups represented (11)

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| 1. Cornerstone ADS | 7. Rotary Club of Westhoughton |
| 2. Friends of Daisy Hill Station | 8. Senior Solutions |
| 3. Friends of Eatock Lodge | 9. Westhoughton Garden and Allotment Society |
| 4. Friends of Westhoughton Station | 10. Westhoughton Local History Group |
| 5. HEART | 11. Wingates Band |
| 6. Lostock Cricket Club | ~ Urban Outreach Bolton |

Individuals in attendance (14)

Laura Bagley (UOB)	David Kaye (WLHG)	Michelle Todd (SNS)
David Chadwick (WTC)	Brian Leyden (FWS)	Kirsty Wilssdon (SNS)
Val Chadwick (WLHG)	Joy Mooney (WB)	John Dale
Colin Gradwell (CADS)	Andy Mooney (WB)	Chris Buckley (WCN) CHAIR
Steve Harrington (RCW)	Jack Speight (FDHS)	

Apologies (15)

Gill Bailey (Westhoughton High School); Janice Bayliss (Women of Westhoughton); Trevor Benn & Ann Benn (Friends of Eatock Lodge); Stephen Freeborn (Friends of Westhoughton Station); Garry Hampson & Dennis Lee (George Formby Society); Dave Hendry (Westhoughton Art Group); Phil Lamb (Bolton Council - Regeneration); Susan Missin (Harold Daniels Legacy Fund); Elsa Parker (Co-op Members); Carol Pharaoh (St. Bartholomew's Church); Jason Taylor (Bethel Crowd); Mark Taylor (Hope Church); Gill Williams (Daisy Hill in Bloom).



2. Welcome/Apologies

Chairing the meeting, Chris Buckley made the room aware of the unusually high number of apologies (15) ahead of the meeting, including the Secretary last minute, and the withdrawal of a guest speaker due to update us the Town Hall Refurbishment. Whilst attendees were down it was decided to continue with the meeting. The Chair thanked Senior Solutions, Michelle and Kirsty, for helping out with refreshments (Kirsty especially for coming along whilst on leave). John Dale was also thanked for volunteering to act as doorman.

As it had impacted on attendance, there was a short explanation on Ash Wednesday and a reminder of its significance marking the start of Lent and lead up to Easter. Half term a factor too.

Apologies recorded, and the groups in attendance were introduced.

3. Urban Outreach

Before welcoming Laura Bagley, [Urban Outreach](#) Food Team Leader, the Chair gave a quick overview of how local churches and community centres allied to Westhoughton Community Network were brought together back in 2013 to form a 'Grub Tub Network'. A rota put in place to get donated food to the Urban Outreach Storehouse Centre in Bolton for onward distribution; then WCN Chair, Harold Daniels, took the lead on this. Our support greatly appreciated by Urban Outreach; the system worked very well, that is until the disruptions and uncertainties of Lockdown measures (2020-).

Laura, now 7 years with Urban Outreach Bolton (UOB), took on the Food role last summer and is getting to grip with the changes of late. A well-established, high profile charity, UOB has a number of projects, best known for Food (Grub Tubs, School Lunches and Christmas Hampers), there are also teams working with Children and Families (children who run away from home; youth mental health) and Adult issues such as homelessness, prostitution and women offenders.

The arrival of the pandemic changed everything! How things were done and reach, for example, pre-pandemic UOB supported 250 households per week across the whole of Bolton, by April 2020 that number had reached 1,200. Surprisingly, in spite of the limitations imposed by Covid measures, more food was donated than ever; the team and even more volunteers working imaginatively to collect and turn donated food over quicker and more efficiently. Laura remarked on the amazing community spirit of looking out for each other during this period. UOB established a 'Food Hub' taking over the 17,000 ft² former Office Outlet Store at the Trinity Retail Park. Changes included using monetary donations to buy in additional supplies working with Aldi (orders could be £15-20k when required). Whilst wanting to get back to normal, the period seemed to be marked by reacting to crisis (wars, cost of living...); there was also a noticeable increase in local community groups doing food parcels, which with limited food available required some efforts and communication to avoid duplication.



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There are three ways to receive food from UOB: [1] Bolton Council – Emergency Local Welfare Provision referral – food parcels delivered or collected from Food Hub. [2] UOB [Storehouse](#) Foodbank – there to identify and meet need from people in a crisis moment (600 people across Bolton); trained UOB representatives including NHS Social Prescribers now able to issue food vouchers or refer people to Storehouse (with the additional focus UOB is seeing an increase in cases in Westhoughton – food is delivered because of distance to Bolton. [3] Storehouse Pantries, a partnership with Bolton at Home (service not restricted to BaH residents). There are four in operation across Bolton; one at Washacre School ceased last summer owing to duplication and greater need elsewhere (Halliwell). These more local operations are geared to providing longer term ‘wrap-around’ support in trying to address deeper issues such as lifestyle, debt or unemployment.

A new team member, Nathan Broadhurst, in order to get a better picture of the situation in Westhoughton, is tasked with getting on top of Grub Tub locations and collections into UOB system after the disruption of pandemic and Lockdowns.

Laura took some questions from the room:

On Pantries... though depending on who is running it it can vary, a fee is paid to access cheaper food and/or services and there is an element of choice in provision (set up like a shop).

Food parcels (ex Storehouse)... are a short-term measure, 4-8 weeks to help individuals through a difficult time.

Helping people to help themselves... such as cooking and buying-in better is one of the projects (‘Friends of Fun Food’); this is taken into the community to improve food education and confidence.

‘Fresh as a Daisy’ is a sister operation that helps with the provision of sanitary and hygiene items for women and girls. The campaign has led to supplies being available in schools and at community hubs.

BL Lunches... Grant and donation-funded School Holiday lunch pack for children in receipt of free school meals has been undertaken since 2014; Westhoughton base being the John Holt Centre on Washacre.

Funding... UOB receives fundraising donations from individuals and groups and was able to purchase the Trinity site outright. Some recent funding has come from the Household Support Fund (HSF) – a Government pot of money allocated through local councils to help with impact of pandemic measures.

4. Community Rail Trails / Westhoughton Station

Brian Leyden (**Friends of Westhoughton Station**) brought along a new fold-out leaflet with maps and local information, and introduced the new [South East Lancashire Community Rail Partnership](#) initiative creating a walk mixing scenery and historic points of interest between Bolton and Wigan, linking railway stations along the way. The 13-mile walk is split into manageable signposted sections of up to 2 hours duration. Locally it takes in Borsdane Wood, Hart Common and



Westhoughton Station, with the next section going up to Chew Moor and Lostock. Leaflets available from library / manned stations.

Brian gave an update on the work at Westhoughton Station as the Sunday morning (10am-12pm) volunteers work to ready the environs for spring and summer. Build-up of leaves on the steep embankments to be tackled to allow re-emergence of plants and the planting of new bulbs ready to go in. The group will hold its AGM on 8th March (7pm) at Wetherspoons.

Electrification work is ongoing on the Bolton-Wigan via Westhoughton line with overhead power line installation and work on bridges. Currently the bridge near Westhoughton Golf Club is being replaced (Golf Club closed until 1st April because of this). How the Westhoughton Church Street bridge is to be tackled is still unknown.

Future disruption coming affecting Hindley and Westhoughton stations as Ladies Lane Bridge is replaced and Hindley Station platforms extended. Between 13th March and 23rd July trains will continue to run on both the Atherton and Westhoughton routes between Wigan and Manchester, but they will not stop at Hindley. A bus service, running a [one-way circular route](#) of Hindley-Daisy Hill-Westhoughton-Hindley, will connect with trains to and from Wigan, Bolton and Manchester.

5. Wingates Brass Band 150th Anniversary Year

Andy Mooney gave an update from our local brass band and their *sesquicentennial* anniversary (150 years). An amazing milestone... with achievement, tragedy, many ups and downs, changes in personnel... but always one of being a top-class active brass band, very proud of its Westhoughton heritage. 2023 is to be marked celebrating its roots, past members, local connections and longevity. A Heritage Lottery Grant has been applied for with the intention of putting on celebratory concerts and undertaking a major project to record, digitise and preserve materials, recordings, music and artefacts from this long history. Andy mentioned his gratitude to Dave Kaye, former band president and author of the 2013 'From Bible Class to World Class' anthology, for his meticulous research around the band and for his ongoing support in this project.

[Wingates Band](#) is a registered charity, fortunate enough to have its own band room (they are proud to have an historical blue plaque marking this); the band itself is self-funding through concerts, music sales and its Supporters Club and grants it can obtain. It is an expensive business: a tuba (Andy's instrument) can cost £5,000 second hand and £10,000 new (brass bands typically have 25 players plus percussion plus the Musical Director). The band is hoping for a successful Heritage Lottery bid in order to put together a programme including local concerts, special events and a revival of the much-loved and very popular Folk and Brass events with The Houghton Weavers, and to proceed with the archiving project. The band is very grateful for the written support in this from David Kaye, Chris Buckley on behalf of WCN and the Town Council.

A bad leak affecting the Band Hall currently a problem, help sought from a local roofer.



6. Town Centre Regeneration Project

Phil Lamb, Principal Project Officer, Growth and Regeneration (Bolton Council) was due to attend WCN with news of the Town Hall refurbishment, but was advised not to attend this meeting due to the controversy initiated by the 'Focus Group'. The Chair gave an overview on the latest happenings and read an update from Phil incorporating an excerpt from the Executive Cabinet meeting [minutes](#) (13/2/23).

Following a considerable amount of work by the Regeneration Team and the Q422 marketing of space within the building, a report and recommendations were put before the Executive Committee (13/2/23) [[Key Notes / Summary](#)]. Whilst approved, meaning additional capital funding (£1.5m) could be allocated to complete the project and get the internal work started [completion/handover target September 2024], the decision was immediately called in by the Liberal Democrat Leader and is now subject to a Scrutiny Committee review. Because of this Steering Group meetings have also been suspended. We now have to wait and see what transpires; heading into an election period adds a political posturing dimension. The project is now delayed, which further exacerbates hopes for getting on with community space improvements in the Library/Carnegie building as indicated in the Masterplan and 'Future Use of Civic Buildings' proposals.

With £2.3m remaining from the District Centres Fund allocation and contractor Bethell appointed work to step up on Market Street/Town Centre public realm 'Streets for All' improvements and [remodelling](#), and is scheduled to be completed by late 2023. Landscaping (Council) and traffic signals a separate undertaking and phase. Contractors will seek to minimise disruption to businesses and ensure access to premises at all times; some out of hours work anticipated facilitating this.

7. Information Share

Senior Solutions (Michelle Todd) – things are going well; referrals have been increasing (150% up on pre-Covid) and they are managing the numbers. Volunteers always welcome, especially a couple of male volunteers.

The Tuesday Social Group with its range of activities and entertainment is very popular, so much so that capacity might have to be capped. They took part in the Council's 'Warm Space' initiative – a smaller group of people aged 55+ attending and enjoying the company has them considering starting a Breakfast Club.

Monthly Carers Group has funding only until June, so a little uncertainty. Using the kitchen at the Winifred Kettle there is a Lunch Club on a Thursday; Senior Solutions recently awarded a 5-star hygiene rating.

In other news, Bolton Cares have indicated that Day Care is to return to the Winifred Kettle on certain days with Senior Solutions able to keep doing their clubs, however this and the monetary value put on using the room may be a problem in the future. Suitable, sizeable alternatives few, and clients are well-served and happy coming here. For the Council it is a good cost-saving way of looking after older people who are not ready/do not need a Day Care option. The situation brings a little uncertainty pending a formal agreement that works for the clientele.



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There was brief discussion about summer ideas, and looking at filling the gap left by W.A.S.P.'s folding and the loss of those occasional OAP day-trips they did. Enquiries being made.

Rotary Club of Westhoughton (Steve Harrington) – Father Christmas Float collections, visiting local estates and a day at Sainsbury's raised £5,640, which will help local charities (April Presentation Evening). They are very grateful for public support and generosity. The run saw the first time use of a tracking app; new President Stuart Bailey (in his 30s) is bringing a more youthful vigour and tech-savvy to proceedings. A Rotary Santa video was viewed over 170,000 times!

Westhoughton Garden and Allotment Society (Jack Speight), now a year old as a group, there will be an AGM 16th March. Group has been having speakers on its third Thursday meetings at the John Holt Centre (7pm) talking gardening and wildlife; a recent one covered the Turton Tower Kitchen Garden project, a future one will look at hedges and supporting eco-systems. As well as litter-picking, they undertake planting to bring colour to local areas – funding will help them do more.

Cornerstone ADS (Colin Gradwell). The panto run concluded at the weekend – a great success, biggest audiences for years! The Friday sold out even with The Houghton Weavers performing up the road at St. Bart's. Pleasing to see new members joining the ADS, with 3 under-20s, which bodes well for the future. There is a Murder Mystery, 'Who Killed the Mad Scientist?' on 21st and 22nd April (7:15pm) with a Saturday matinee at 2:15pm aimed at group bookings. Tickets are £8 and include pie and peas supper. They will then take the show on the road: Over Hulton Conservative Club (26/4) and St. Augustine's Bolton (29/4). They are happy to entertain groups such as Senior Solutions. Further ahead, they are looking to do a two-play one-evening run in September. Colin mentioned the church being involved in the Warm Space initiative with doors open second Friday of month (morning) run by Pamela Pedder who does the 'God's Beauty Parlour' sessions.

Friends of Eatock Lodge – Chris Buckley gave an update on getting some maintenance funding off the Town Council to take on urgent tasks at the lodge (subcontracted to professionals with some help from volunteers); Bolton Council Parks Manager retired last summer and has still not been replaced, which has left something of a void in support. There was an update on the swan family with four 2022 cygnets in the process of being moved on by the parents, who will likely breed again. Being tagged we can track cygnets; one - 4DUD Dudley (2021) - has now been located at a lake in St. Helens and has even had visitors! People have become interested in their progress and wellbeing, proving the worth of Local Nature Reserves. A summer Funday is a possibility after a break of several years.

Westhoughton Local History Group (David Kaye). Thankfully, given the interruptions and uncertainties of recent years, the group kept going via Zoom and now seems to be firing on all cylinders with a schedule of historical talks, trips and project planning. Numbers are back to pre-Covid levels for the 3rd Thursday meetings at the Library (10:30am). The 'Howfen Herald' newsletter, reaching some 300 mailboxes, keeps people up-to-date... next speaker event has Ruth Duckworth



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talking about her 'Life in Cricket' and connections to a famous and recently venerated cricketer relative, George Duckworth (16/3); an excursion to Liverpool's [Western Approaches Museum](#) in the offing (23/3).

David remarked that, like many community organisations, having lost momentum during Covid, it has been hard to get going again, particularly with older organisers. A number of local historical societies have sadly folded, including a big one at Atherton.

The History Group is pleased to have been supporting *Westhoughton Assist Service* in their endeavours to help the needy, with 'grub tub' donations of food at meetings and £270 donated from raffles buying food delivered to The Hub for sharing.

Wearing another hat, David Kaye spoke of new WCN member group and future meeting host [Lostock Cricket Club](#), giving some background on the Chew Moor sports club and efforts build social and community connections around the new clubhouse. Chew Moor, a key sports area for Bolton boasts 4 active sporting entities (Lostock CC, Tempest United, CMB and Ladybridge). Moving there 6 years ago, the club has cricket and two fully-booked football pitches (rugby moved elsewhere following a merger with Bolton RU); there are 7 cricket teams, including 4 junior ones, and enquiries to get involved in sport are most welcome.

The clubhouse now has a full public licence meaning it can serve alcohol to non-members and host events and parties... they are hoping to increase use of the facilities with special events and talks at the weekend... Upcoming, David Kaye talks of his 'International Cricket Tour experiences following England' (4/3), the Acoustic Cats perform (1/4). During the cricket season LCC will be an ideal location to spend a summer's afternoon or evening watching local sport. Leaflets given out.

8. Any Other Business

The Chair mentioned a £1m [rebate](#) from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Waste and Resources Department given to Bolton Council to be shared with each ward, so a not-insignificant £100,000 will come to Westhoughton to be used within the community at the discretion of local councillors (Westhoughton Town Council precept budget ~£150,000). No further detail as yet, nor when the money will be made available. It was suggested, given the delay to Regeneration work on community provision at the Library/Carnegie Hall [[M40](#)], it might be worth lobbying for a short-term lift for Carnegie Hall to bring it into use to help with larger events – the Bethel Crowd still have nowhere to put on their bigger productions.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions to the meeting.

9. Next Meeting

Westhoughton Community Network will next meet at **Lostock Cricket Club** on **Wednesday, 10th May 2023**. Meeting finished at 8:50pm.

WesthoughtonCommunityNetwork.co.uk
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