

West Finchley Neighbourhood Forum Designation Application

West Finchley Neighbourhood Forum submits for consideration this application for designation as a Neighbourhood Forum.

This application is made to the London Borough of Barnet further to the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015.

- The name of the proposed Neighbourhood Forum is West Finchley Neighbourhood Forum.
- The Constitution for the proposed Forum is shown as Document 3 of this application.
- The proposed Forum application relates to the proposed Neighbourhood Area illustrated in the Appendix 1. An application for Neighbourhood Area designation accompanies this neighbourhood forum application in Document 1.
- The principal contact details for the proposed Forum is:

Salim Sabri
west.finchley.nf@gmail.com

- West Finchley Neighbourhood Forum will conduct itself in accordance with Section 61F (5) of the 1990 Act.

Objectives

In pursuance of the Government's Localism Act (2011) the objectives of the West Finchley Neighbourhood Forum will be:

- To prepare in partnership with the local planning authority a Neighbourhood Plan for the area.
- To encourage the goodwill and involvement of the wider community in the preparation, production and implementation of a Neighbourhood Plan.
- To promote or improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the West Finchley area.

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- To encourage development of a good mix of facilities and amenities, including those that bring people together and foster community spirit and encourage civic pride.
- To favour development that will protect and enhance existing green/open space and the local environment, promoting bio-diversity and nature conservation, and allow for the planting of new trees.
- To support development that will be of high-quality design and will need to reflect the existing styles of the Area, preserving the distinct character and appearance of the Area, as well as the views across it.

The West Finchley Neighbourhood Plan will be based on Barnet Borough's "Three Strands Approach" and incorporate Barnet's other planning guidelines as well as the relevant guidance of the London Plan to the protection, enhancement and consolidated growth of the West Finchley neighbourhood. The Neighbourhood Plan will seek to ensure that development preserves the local character and be sympathetic to the appearance, scale, mass, height and pattern of the surrounding area, whilst improving the amenity of the community.

Background

West Finchley Residents' Association, WFRA, has grown because neighbours wish to work together concerning planning, improving the local environment and to provide social activities. We work in collaboration with the local MP, the Ward Councillors, The Finchley Society and other civic groups.

Membership is open to all residents living in the area and currently stands at 260 households which is some 37% of all households in the area. The membership is representative of the different population groups and covers the whole area.

It has a socially and ethnically diverse population with a strong sense of community and neighbours already consult each other on local matters. The area's amenities include the open spaces along the Dollis Brook and off Finchley Way (the Brent Lodge Green Acre Nature Reserve), allotments, Finchley Tennis Club and Gordon Hall. A key transport link in the area is West Finchley Underground Station and it is important to engage and foster a relationship with Transport for London.

It is recognised that our Neighbourhood Forum must stand as its own body and it should be noted that WFRA is supportive of the proposed forum. There will be strong links between the residents' association and proposed forum but their work will be governed by their respective constitutions and committees. Members of the proposed forum are not in all cases members of the residents' association.

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There are approximately 700 households in the area of which a high proportion (some 20%) are rented. There is a great diversity in the area with many international families, resident for business, and others from a variety of ethnic and religious backgrounds who have been living in Finchley for more than a generation. Some families, of all backgrounds, have lived in the area for 20 or more years with some homes being occupied by the same family for over 50 years. For the most part, the international renters, many of whom are Japanese, value the local schools and stay in the area for five years or more. Thus, while there is a significant proportion of rented accommodation there is not a rapid turnover of renters. Along with the families who have been in occupation for 20 or more years, the area is seen as a stable community ideal for bringing up children.

The West Finchley area was built in the inter-war years. There is a cohesive design of three bedroomed semi-detached properties with gardens spaced apart by side entrances or driveways. Many of the families have extended the properties either by loft extensions or rear ground floor extensions or both. The Government's latest easing of permitted development rights has encouraged a number of households to add large rear extensions.

The West Finchley Residents' Association was formed in 2010 and has an active membership of over 260 households - 37% of households in the area. The Association has a committee that meets monthly and there are social events throughout the year. The Association constitution tasks the committee with developing a sense of community in the area as well as acting on issues that affect the community whether it be changes to Dollis Brook or issues of over-development, the threat of unlicensed basement building or the shortage of school places.

In this ethnically diverse area the WFRA has members who were born in Uganda, Eritrea, South Africa, India, China, Japan, Iran, Palestine, USA, Colombia, Germany, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Ireland, Malaysia, along with members born in other parts of the UK all of whom have made West Finchley their home alongside members who are born and bred in Finchley. Many faith communities are represented and Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Jain and Christian members join together in our community activities which are planned to avoid major religious festivals.

A Japanese-born resident has been a member of the WFRA committee for over four years and our activities are promoted in publicity and emails in Japanese. Included in our social events have been an Indian evening. 70% of the families that participated in a recent event for children were Japanese. The ethnic diversity of the community is represented in the 44 people who have volunteered to be part of the Neighbourhood Forum.

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The West Finchley Residents Association has organised regular (almost monthly) social events for members including picnics in the park, restaurant meals, visits to the Houses of Parliament (through our MP, Mike Freer), bring and share lunches in the Gordon Hall, an annual dinner in Finchley Golf Club, a presentation from the Metropolitan Police, Borough Commander and local council election hustings. Each of these has contributed to building a greater sense of community in the neighbourhood which is appreciated by residents as expressed in the survey (see below).

The West Finchley Resident's Association welcomes the Localism Act and the support that it gives to building up local communities through the development of Neighbourhood Plans.

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Neighbourhood Forum

Survey of all local residents – February 2015

In February 2015 all residents in the West Finchley Area, whether they were members of WFRA or not, were contacted by the West Finchley Residents' Association. Members of the Association visited every household and, where possible, explained the aims of the Association to work towards a Neighbourhood Plan.

Residents were asked to complete two surveys, one demographic, which was anonymous, and the other to seek opinions about the neighbourhood. In some 40% of households it was possible to speak face to face. In others, an explanation of the Neighbourhood Plan and the details of the survey were left and residents asked to complete the surveys either in hard copy or on line.

In all there were 191 responses to the demographic survey – 27% of households. As would be expected, the anonymous survey reflects the 2011 census statistics for the West Finchley Ward with some other details not sought in the census.

There were 124 detailed responses (18% of households), 90% of which were completed on line through *Smart Survey*. This process was used as a way of engaging residents, especially those not involved in the Residents' Association, in the process of developing a Neighbourhood Plan. As part of the questionnaire residents were asked if they would be interested in becoming part of the Neighbourhood Forum.

As a result 44 people came forward to be part of the Neighbourhood Forum and the list of those members of the Forum is in the Appendix.

The open questions contained in the survey were intended to be an engagement in the process and indicative of residents' views rather than an agenda for the Neighbourhood Plan.

The most popular attraction of the neighbourhood is its environment. 35.0% expressed their like for the "green" environment, the tree-lined roads, its quiet, the availability of the Brook and its playground, the open spaces and possibility of walks near at hand.

15% of the residents perceived the neighbourhood as having a good community spirit and friendly neighbours. Residents see that people care about the area and welcome the ethnic and cultural diversity, the "cosmopolitan" nature of the neighbourhood.

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As stated above, the survey was intended to engage residents in the Neighbourhood Plan process and to that end it was successful with over 191 responses, 27% of households, 124 of whom gave detailed responses concerning their likes, dislikes and aspirations for the area (18% of households - see separate document Survey Summary). The aim of the West Finchley Neighbourhood Forum will be to regularly engage with local residents providing updates of information as well as seeking views.

We have 44 residents, (well in excess of the statutory requirement of 21) including local business people, plus a local councillor who are willing to be part of the Neighbourhood Forum. We look forward to receiving approval of the designation of the area, the approval of the West Finchley Neighbourhood Forum and to taking the next steps towards developing the Neighbourhood Plan

In addition, recognising that there are key local stake-holders such as businesses who may not be residents of the area proposed for designation, the West Finchley Residents Association has visited and spoken to all the shopkeepers in the area, we have made contact with the Lawn Tennis Club, the allotment holders and the neighbouring Residents' Associations in Dollis and Woodside Park.

We have set up an interim committee with the approval of the Forum volunteers and are keen to take the next steps to create and develop the Neighbourhood Plan. The committee members are all resident in the area and interface with other community activists and organisations such as the Finchley Society, Councillors and officers of the London Borough of Barnet, Metropolitan Police and neighbouring residents' groups.

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The following are those who have offered to be part of the Forum:

Name	Address	
Maggie Airey	Brent Way	Retired teacher, Christs College
Romana Ashberry	Nethercourt Avenue	Local resident
TF Chan	Brent Way	Local resident
Kevin Devine	Hamilton Way	Accounts Manager London Metropolitan University
Nick Dimant	Finchley Way	Local resident
Alan Douglas	Nethercourt Ave	Retired Architect TFL
Adam Eisenberg	Brent Way	Local resident
Peter Fielding	Brent Way	Local resident
Nicola Goldsmith	Brent Way	Local resident
Sunethra Goonewardene	Nethercourt Ave	Local resident
Despina Hadjisavva	Fursby Avenue	Teaching Assistant, Moss Hall Nursery
Ruth Huggett	Fursby Ave	Local resident
Greg Thornett	Fursby Ave	Project Manager Network Rail
Vivienne Igel	Brent Way	Manager of a local NHS Mental Health Team
Alex Igel	Brent Way	Local resident
Penny Igoe	Brent Way	Retired TV Executive
Ariella Gomori Jackman	Courthouse Road	Local resident
Mamta Kapoor	Courthouse Road	Commercial Photographer
Mary Karaolis	Hamilton Way	Retired Teacher, Governor St Andrew the Apostle School
Daryl Kaye	Nethercourt Avenue	Local resident
Jenny Kettleton	Fursby Ave	Volunteer Co-Ordinator Chickenshed Theatre
Kieran Kettleton	Fursby Avenue	Fundraising Consultant
Jo Laderman	Courthouse Road	Local resident
Loveday (Campbell) Langton	Westbury Road	Local resident
Marilyn Lee	Courthouse Gdns	Teaching Assistant
Laurence Lewis	Brent Way	Director & Chief Executive
Taeko Mochizuki	Fursby Ave	Yoga Teacher
Pam Nitz	Hamilton Way	Local resident
Jacqueline Ravenhall	Courthouse Gardens	Local resident
Helen Roberts	Fursby Avenue	Local resident
Barbara Rudoe	Courthouse Rd	Local resident

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Name	Address	
Salim Sabri	Courthouse Gdns	Finance manager NHS
Arvind Shah	Fursby Ave	Retired retail executive, member Jain temple committee (Potters Bar)
Sheila Shannon	Brent Way	Retired Executive Assistant
Catherine Delano Smith	Nether Street	Retired university lecturer, active researcher and editor of an international scholarly journal
Andrew Ampers Taylor	Western Court	Retired marketing and sales manager and journalist
Adam Townley	Finchley Way	Local resident
Denis Vigay	Chesterfield Rd	Local resident
Lucy Walker	Brent Way	Local resident
Caroline Westgate	Nethercourt Ave	Local resident
Roswitha Williams	Fursby Ave	Retired homemaker, member Barnet German Twinning group
Cllr Ross Houston	West Finchley	Ward Councillor
Clare Aarons	West Finchley	Training Coordinator at a national charity
Linda Moore	West Finchley	Local resident

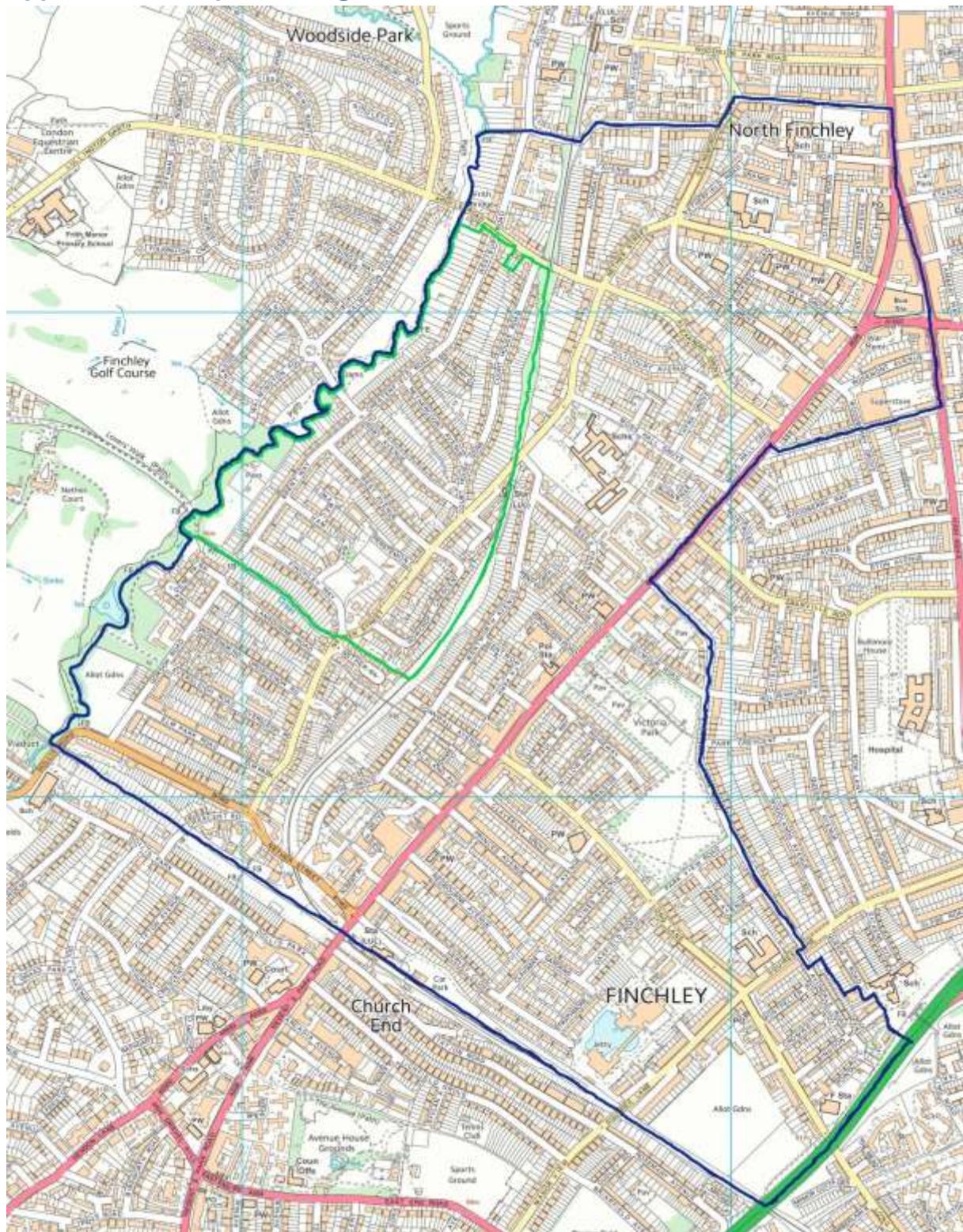
The Forum is capable of being a qualifying body for the purposes of section 61G of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The Forum is the sole body applying for a Neighbourhood Forum for this area.

Like the WFRA, it is a voluntary, not for profit organisation which exists for the benefit of the residents and businesses of the area.

Regular communications and social activities help improve engagement and steadily increase membership. Whole area leaflet drops, a website, Facebook and a rapid email alert process that distributes news promptly all help to increase community involvement.

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Appendix 1 – Proposed Neighbourhood Area



Ward boundary



Neighbourhood area
boundary