FitzWest Fitzrovia West Neighbourhood Forum

**Minutes - FitzWest NF- Executive Committee meeting**

**Date held**: 05 Dec 2019 **Time:** 1800-1920

**Venue**: Sainsbury Welcome Centre, 25 Howland Street W1

**In Attendance:**

Julia Haythorn (JH)- Chair

Yoram Blumann (YB) - Minutes

Ian Johnstone (IJ)

Sharon Banoff (SB)

Gwilym Harbottle {GH)

Barbara Corr (BC)

Dan Johnson – NWEC (DJ)

Nick Bailey (NB)

**Apologies:**

Chris Show (CS)

West End Ward Councilors: Pancho Lewis, Jonathan Glenz, Timothy Barnes

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**Item 1. Welcome, introductions and apologies**

**Item 2. Minutes of the last meeting 24 Nov 2019**

Approved subjected to a textual amendment

**Item 5: Application for forum renewal- status:**

YB reported that the public consultation is open till 13 Jan 2020. Following that, WCC is expected to approve our application for renewal.

**Item 3. Health Check- Neighbourhood Plan draft**

NB emailed a document prepared by Martin S Lee dated 23 Nov 19

titled ‘Initial draft health check review- report for Reg 14 Pre-Submission

Version FitzWest NP’.

NB reported that a health check had been carried out on the plan and Basic Conditions Statement and the Examiner's comments have been included in another draft uploaded to the website. WCC have been asked to carry out a screening to determine whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment is needed. This has to be subject to a consultation with statutory agencies.

By January we should know whether the SEA is required and, if so, this is normally carried out by AECOM. If not, all documentation is submitted to WCC who then deposit it for a further period of consultation before it is referred to an Examiner. He/she then notifies us of any further changes required and a date is fixed for the referendum.

JH agreed to revise the Consultation Statement and possibly ask Jackie Cramphorn to lay it out appropriately.

GH proposed to analyse the business profile of recorded membership.

**Item 6: Disseminating and marketing the Neighbourhood Plan to residents and businesses.**

NB and YB reported by email on the ‘NF forum of all NF’ meeting on 02 Dec, one of the topics discussed were the lessons learnt from the successful referendums resulting in adopting NPs for Knightsbridge and Mayfair Business NFs.

Councilor TB also commented by email circulated to the EC.

Voting process- summary:

Registered residents and businesses paying business tax in the FitzWest designated area are entitled to vote.

There are two voters’ lists- one for residents and one for businesses.

The voting process for residents is identical to the normal election process for local and general elections.

The voting process for businesses is different:

WCC will send a letter addressed to the part of the organization to which tax bills are sent [person, department - such as accounts -if known] informing them of the forthcoming referendum, asking them to nominate a person who will be voting – either in person or by postal voting – on behalf the business. If there is a nomination, a voting card [same as sent to residents] will be sent to the person nominated.

WCC would make the full resident voters list available to the NF as soon as the referendum letters are sent out.

WCC would make a list of business voters available too, however Mayfair reported some difficulties in getting the full list of businesses and the exact addressing label used by WCC in addressing the business letters.

Spending restrictions: the normal election spending restrictions apply; those come into force from the day the elections are announced.

There is an expense cap of £2,362 plus 6p per person on the voters list.

NB lead the discussion on the recommendations by the forum of forums on the referendum:

* Holding regular meetings and distributing leaflets/invitations - in named and addressed envelopes to ensure they reach actual voters;
* Get lists of registered voters and business contacts ASAP (Mayfair said WCC electoral services can provide this and were generally helpful- but see above);
* Building up email lists of residents and businesses and using Mailchimp software to monitor responses etc;
* Identifying street and block champions to distribute publicity and to get out the vote on the day. E.g. contacts in Holcroft Court and other big blocks will be essential. Ensure other members get at least 10 neighbours to the vote;
* Beware of the expenses cap of £2362 + 6p per person spent from date of announcement of referendum date. Accounts monitored by WCC. So, spend early eg on stationery etc!
* Use a variety of methods, repeat message regularly in different ways, to ensure all fully informed well before the referendum.

Action points:

Membership list:

JH and GH agreed to review and update our membership list re: address, emails etc.

GH would go through the list identifying residents and businesses.

Divide our area into blocks as recommended above- targeting residents:

To be discussed in detail at our next Jan 2020 meeting.

Information and public meetings:

Depending on progress of our NF draft, we pencilled in a public meeting and AGM for

30 April 2020.

Produce a flyer

There would be two versions- one for residents and one for businesses summarising what we aim to achieve for the area.

SB agreed to assist.

Approach former EC members – especially from the business community – asking for their assistance during the campaign. GH would draw the list from our records.

LDG might be helpful in approaching small businesses they know in our area.

Approaching Businesses in our area

NWEC very generously agreed to assist; DJ said he will see what can be done- in terms of information, mail shots, approaching businesses and so on.

Proxy Votes:

Experience shows that business voters tend to vote by post [80% for Mayfair].

DJ offered to explore the issue of Proxy Votes for business, hoping to increase business voters’ numbers.

Employing somebody to assist us in the process:

YB mentioned that we were awarded £5,000 from the West End ward budget towards adoption of the NF. We budgeted for paying someone to help up along the process.

In the discussion that followed, we agreed that we would be looking for someone to work for 1-2 days per week, prior to the referendum date, so it would not breach the spending guidelines for local authority referendums.

Planning the campaign:

It was agreed to hold a meeting with NWEC to plan the campaign- with emphasis on business voters- in late Jan? [DJ]

Public meeting- OSD:

It is expected that the OSD team would have the traffic plan ready in late Jan or later.

We already said that we would like to hold a public meeting on the traffic changes in our area; we could use the opportunity to mention the referendum.

**Item 4- consultation on WCC boundary- closing on 13th Jan 2020.**

The electoral commission proposed changes to the number and composition of the WCC wards to take effect in 2025. Number of councillors to be reduced by 6 to 54 representing 18 wards.

The proposals can be seen here:

[https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk//node/16234](https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/16234)

Currently the FitzWest area is split between the West End Ward and Marylebone High Street Ward.

According to the proposal, most of our area would now be covered by the West End ward.

There is no detailed description of the ward boundary effecting FitzWest. Looking at the map, it is looks like this:

The West End ward boundary would be: to the East- the WCC boundary with Camden, going northwards to the end of Cleveland Street, then Euston Road, then Great Portland Street.

This is different from our designated area: it does not include the former church now known as ‘One Marylebone’ opposite Great Portland Station, as well as the station and the western side of Great Portland Street- some of which are part of our designated area.

The above-mentioned excluded bits would form part of the Marylebone Ward [renamed from Marylebone High Street].

Action: no comment, except that we need clarity on the exact boundary between the proposed West End and Marylebone Wards.

**Item 7: Oxford Street District**

The OSD team is still working on their traffic model proposals for the area.

DJ reported that WCC appointed a project manager to run the project- titled: Oxford Street Director [Mr D Hill].

**Item 8: Riding House Street play area proposals:**

CS and YB are to meet local residents on 10th Dec.

CS reported on this and on some proposals for a Green Wall for the school – by email dated 2 Dec 19.

SB reported on a contact with Andrew WestCott from Addison Lee’s Greener Future project.

They have completed a project in WCC, and are now completing an application to do construct some more green walls – deadline Feb 2020.

Their criteria: air pollution in the school area. We do not have up to date figures on FitzWest.

They provide match funding and some other support for projects.

In the absence of CS, it was proposed that he contacts AW to see whether our proposals would fit with Addison Lees project criteria’s.

**Item 9- Any other business:**

9- 1. The Greening Project

GH reported that Tesco are meeting to discuss progress on grants awarded to various projects. They may ask for their funding back due to the delays we experienced.

GH and BC reported on the latest issue- the Police objected to placing pots, as they may be used as hiding places for knives, drugs and so on.

BC said that there were delays in processing the application by WCC officials [planning], and we agreed her recommendation that we approach the Marylebone High Street councillors for support.

It was suggested that we approach Chris Martin -the person responsible for our green environment report- he might help in finding a solution or an alternative.

DJ offered to have a look at the project- via NWEC.

9-2. Forum of Forum CIL application – explore an application for air pollution measurement funding.

YB reported that the forms explored a possibility of a joint application- funded by Westminster CIL money [i.e. not our portion] to pay for an air quality measurement across Westminster. This data covering our area is not available, although there is a proposal for a partial project covering the OSD area.

The EC agreed in principle to the idea; NB is attending a WCC meeting on CIL on 10th Dec, to which the NFs were invited, and he will explore the idea further.

**Item 8- future dates for meetings:**

**Next meeting: 28 Jan 2020 at the Sainsbury Welcome centre at 6pm**

**Chair: Sharon Banoff Note taker: Julia Haythorn**

**Other dates: 10 March , and the AGM: 30 April. IJ to book the hall for the meetings.**