

# FITZROVIA WEST NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

## EXECUTIVE MEETING 13 MAY 2020

### MINUTES

Present by Zoom: Nick Bailey, Sharon Banoff, Yoram Blumann, Gwilym Harbottle, Julia Haythorn, Iain Johnstone, Chris Shaw (Chair), Jace Tyrrell (NVEC).

#### 1. Jace presented **NVEC's May 2020 discussion document on West End Reopening.**

- a. There are a number of often competing considerations: potential loss of 10s of thousands of jobs; health and safety, sustainability; the need not to lose the benefits of the lockdown; reduction in public transport capacity; increase in use of private vehicles; need to encourage cycling and walking (including bike racks). The response needs to be agile and flexible. The reopening will inevitably be slow and gradual. For the specific proposals see: <https://www.newwestend.com>. It will be revised over the next week.
- b. The consensus that emerged from the subsequent discussion was as follows (to be sent to Jace once approved):
  - i. Much of the draft, including a gradual reopening, makes good sense.
  - ii. The impact of the reopening on the whole of the West End (not just Oxford St, Regent St and Bond St) needs to be fully taken into account. We mustn't forget the wide diversity of businesses in this area.
  - iii. Increased traffic and indiscriminate parking (commuters, office workers checking offices etc.) are already a concern. Air quality is already deteriorating again. We don't want our area to become a huge parking lot. The impact on our area would be exacerbated by staggering working hours and opening times and extending Sunday trading hours. One possibility would be to introduce filtering to reduce through traffic.
  - iv. It is important that the reopening doesn't lead to a return to pre-congestion charge traffic conditions. Accordingly, we would propose that the congestion charge, ULEZ charge and parking charge holiday should be ended shortly (except for accessibility vehicles, people with disabilities, NHS and other essential workers and emergency workers).
  - v. The priority message should be that people should walk and cycle to work and the shops.

- vi. There needs to be more cycle parking with proper security (a good possible location would be Cavendish Square but there are many others in our Area). This could initially be temporary but with an eye on it becoming permanent. Cycles should not need to be fixed to railings.
- vii. There should be parking priority for the disabled and workers. Consideration should be given to permitting parking in existing underground car parks where they are underused.
- viii. This is an opportunity to progress delivery consolidation and distribution hubs.

2. **Neighbourhood Plan.** Nick reported that WCC had asked for some changes to the Consultation Statement which he is doing this week. WCC will then put the draft plan out for formal consultation, with a 10 week response period. There can be no referendum until March 2021.

3. **Forum renewal.** Nick and Yoram confirmed that the Forum had been renewed for 5 years from 20 February 2020.

4. **AGM.** The provisional date of 8 July will be reviewed at the next meeting. All to send Chris (copying Jackie Cramphorn) 5 key issues for discussion at the AGM. Possible speaker to address the Oxford Street District plans. Gwilym to look at legalities of remote meetings.

5. **CIL.** Yoram reported that there was no news on this.

6. **Finances.** Yoram reported that we have £10k to promote the Plan. Tesco money (for greening) is £6775. There is £700 unspent from the Ward Budget. NWECC had promised more money. We will make an application to Locality for money relating to the referendum but this needs to be carefully timed because it will have to be spent in the same financial year (ending 31 March) as the grant is made.

## 7. **Greening and streetscape projects:**

- a. Riding House/Fitzroy Place. The public consultation remains with WCC.
- b. Market Place. Yoram reported that there was no news.

- c. All Souls Green wall. Addison Lee are no longer involved. We are awaiting the School's input on air quality.
  - d. Great Titchfield Street. Gwilym reported that the person administering the Ward Funding had said that WCC would not insure the project but had suggested we ask the local housing officer. He had asked Denise Julien to identify that person but had not heard back. He will continue to address with the Housing Dept. It was agreed to raise the general issue of insuring such projects with the Forum of Forums.
8. **Website.** The new website is up and running well. It was agreed that it is a vast improvement on the old version. Many thanks to Julia and Nick for all their hard work.
9. **Date of next meeting.** 2 June 2020 at 6pm.

**GH 14.05.19**