

FITZROVIA WEST NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING WEDNESDAY 2ND DECEMBER
2020 BY ZOOM

MINUTES

Present: Nick Bailey, Sharon Banoff, Yoram Blumann, Barbara Corr, Gwilym Harbottle, Julia Haythorn (Chair), Ian Johnstone (Notetaker), Mark Dillon, Jace Tyrrell, Edward Kellow

1. Apologies:

Pancho Lewis (Ward Councillor), Tim Barnes (Ward Councillor)

2. Minutes of the last meeting.

These were approved.

3. Constitutional admin and vote.

Gwilym had noted that the AGM may not have been quorate such that the elections may have been ineffective. If so, also the last meeting was not quorate either. Tonight's meeting was quorate as the whole Executive was in attendance, so the meeting co-opted onto the Executive the three members who were elected at the AGM (Gwilym Harbottle, Ian Johnstone and Mark Dillon) and also Edward Kellow. The meeting then ratified all the decisions made at last month's meeting.

4. Supporting Hospitality Businesses.

Gwilym reported that Westminster Council has now agreed to extend the existing arrangements for outdoor dining until 30th April 2021 and review thereafter. It was agreed that the Forum's support is until this date and then we will review the situation depending on the new information available.

5. Great Portland Street.

Gwilym reported that he had walked around the area with Mark Gazaleh and then circulated suggestions from – including a north/south pedestrian route and to prune existing and plant new trees.

Mark was keen to have something about this in the Neighbourhood Plan, but Nick Bailey explained it is too late as it has already been submitted. However, the plan includes greening policies and aspirations.

Mark is looking for support in principle from the FitzWest Forum and it was agreed we give that.

Nick suggested an approach to Westminster Council to see if any funding was available. **Action: Gwilym to report back to Mark Gazaleh.**

6. Tesco/Clipstone Street greening project

Following an objection to the 2018 planning application for these planters, the Designing Out Crime Officer (based in Ruislip) at the Met became involved in making sure the planters will not be a target for criminal activity. Barbara met the officer on site some time ago to discuss the scheme. In response to the officer's suggestions, the landscape designer reworked the plans two or three times to take account of the evolving criticisms, each of these amended plans were submitted and each time they have been rejected with new criteria to be met. The landscape designer regards the most recent criteria for planters (as suggested by the Designing Out Crime Officer) as unviable.

Barbara has suggested that as the money from Tesco is for planters in any area, and we could look to relocating the planting to Riding House Street. The idea is to try to tidy up the blocked off street, remove unused railings and include temporary planters to improve the look of the street which is currently an eye sore. **Action: Barbara and Gwilym will leaflet the school and the immediate neighbours on RHS. Pancho has offered to help with this. Gwilym to contact Tesco to ascertain if the funding area can be changed.**

7. CIL - Community Infrastructure Levy/LTN - Low Traffic Neighbourhood.

Nick reported that there was £140k in the neighbourhood CIL budget. The deadline for applications is 17 December and quarterly thereafter. He explained that expenditure applied for must be for infrastructure.

Ideas for CiL applications:

- a. Bike racks with power for charging electric bikes. It was agreed this was a good idea and it would need a feasibility study for the power source etc. **Action: Julia to contact Tim Barnes**
- b. Great Titchfield Street/Foley Street – supporting the businesses as they have moved out into the street, by contributing to the look of the street. Reference the 'green line' in Mayfair where they are creating a route that is green including shop fronts, planting etc. Suggested to fund a consultant to look at creating Design Guidelines with an emphasis on greening so there is a consistent look and feel. Note the Forum is only supporting the new licensing rules until the end of April 2021 and then will review.

Yoram pointed out that greening suggestions would have to be funded and local businesses might not want the additional cost. So consultation is very important.

Suggested to consult residents and businesses for areas they would suggest could be possible greening areas. **Action: Julia to share**

Urban Movement map with greening suggestions on website and ask for more suggestions from residents and businesses.

- c. A traffic survey to provide an evidence base for a Low Traffic Neighbourhood.
Nick and Yoram have been in touch with Westminster Council and will know more soon about how the area will be affected by Oxford Street Plan. There is a possibility that the Oxford Street team might share their figures or provide other support. There are also discussions going on between officers in WCC and Camden about a possible wider study of traffic flows in Fitzrovia. Nick suggested we should consider an application for funding in the New Year when we should know more, and traffic flows might be establishing a 'new normal'. **Action: Nick to report back.**

- d. The Air Quality survey should be across all areas and not just in FitzWest. And it was felt it should be funded by the collective CiL. **Action: Nick and Yoram to raise at Forum of Forum meeting next week**

8. Date of next meeting

Julia will circulate dates for next 6 months. **Action: Julia.**

9. AOB

- a. Planning and Licensing:
Thanks for Stephanie Connell for the new Planning and Licensing page. No volunteers yet for the subcommittee to look at applications. In the meantime, Nick and Yoram will continue to keep track of them and Julia will update the website.