

FITZROVIA WEST NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

EXECUTIVE MEETING BY ZOOM: 6PM ON 19 OCTOBER 2021

MINUTES

Present: Nick Bailey, Barbara Corr, Mark Dillon, Gwilym Harbottle, Julia Haythorn (Chair), Jace Tyrrell, Esmerelda Ypsilant

Apologies: Yoram Blumann, Ian Johnstone, Walid Sheikh

1. **Executive Members.** Esmerelda introduced herself. Gwilym explained that Mark had inadvertently been left off the list of Executive Members standing for re-election at the AGM. It was agreed to co-opt Esmerelda and Mark as Executive Members.
2. **Minutes of the last meeting.** Agreed.
3. **Referendum result.** Nick explained that the Neighbourhood Plan was now "made", that is adopted as part of the statutory planning framework for the Fitzwest Area. It is in force for 10 years but can be amended or reviewed (a full review would involve a referendum). We need to monitor the application of the Plan. The challenge is now to use effectively the 25% of the Community Infrastructure Levy ("CIL") budget which the Forum is entitled to apply for. Julia reported on behalf of Yoram that we have filed the referendum spending report in accordance with the regulations and are within the permitted amount.

4. **CIL.** There was a discussion about possible uses. The following suggestions were made:
 - a. Nick: These could include employing an administrator (jointly with Soho Neighbourhood Forum), perhaps for a year. Jace pointed out that Westminster Council had said that there are legal issues with funding expenditure on people or revenue expenditure.
 - b. Nick: A "green corridor" running North to South through the Area along the lines of the Mayfair green corridor. This would not necessarily involve the closing of streets but would involve more trees and other greening along the corridor. It was agreed to discuss this at the next meeting.
 - c. Nick: engaging planning consultants such as Chris Martin and Arups to put forward schemes.
 - d. Barbara: a transport survey of the Area to inform greening projects
 - e. Jace: engaging someone to advise us on the legal, ethical and process aspects of operating CIL.

5. Julia reported that there had been no responses to her request to local organisations to state their views on possible CIL projects and agreed to contact them again. Nick said he would be happy to visit them to explain details in person. Action: Julia.

6. Decision: it was agreed to consider engaging someone to advise us on the legal, ethical and process aspects of operating CIL and to engage planning consultants. Names to be put forward by email for further discussion at the next meeting.

7. **Greening.** Gwilym reported that we are working on a consultation to spend the Tesco monies on planters at various well-known rubbish dumping spots in the hope that this will deter dumping. The money needs to be spent this Spring at the latest.

8. **Market Place.** The improvement scheme is on hold pending the further Oxford Street District ("OSD") consultation. Westminster has said that the funds remain allocated to the scheme. Jace said that he expected an update on OSD by Christmas. In the meantime, New West End Company ("NVEC") were prepared to roll over their £15,000 contribution for another year. The Forum thanked NVEC for this. It was agreed to aim to persuade Westminster to conclude the Market Place scheme regardless of the fate of the OSD plans.

9. **Finances.** Julia reported for Yoram that we had £7,500 in the bank for general spending excluding ongoing website costs which have already been budgeted for.

10. **AOB.**
 - a. Nick mentioned that he had spoken to the Westminster Council conservation team about rationalising the 5 conservations areas which are partly or wholly within the Fitzwest Area.
 - b. It was noted that Westminster had started work on the reversal of traffic directions on Berners and Newman Streets. There had been very limited local consultation and no consultation of the Forum. It was agreed that Julia would write to Westminster for an explanation and about how the traffic would be monitored. Note – Nick has done this since the meeting.

- c. Gwilym to write to Holcroft Court Residents Association inviting them to nominate a representative to the Executive.
- d. Jace mentioned the NWECC Christmas Party on 18 November at Fenwicks.

11. **Next meeting.** 2 December. Sainsbury Wellcome Centre is now confirmed as the venue.

GH