

FitzWest- Fitzrovia West Neighbourhood Forum

Minutes - FitzWest NF- Executive Committee meeting

Date held: 25 July 23 **Time:** 1800-1920

Venue: Sainsbury Welcome Centre, 25 Howland Street W1

In Attendance:

Julia Haythorn (JH)- Chair, Yoram Blumann (YB) – Minutes taker

Ian Johnstone (IJ), Barbara Corr (BC), Nick Bailey (NB), Mark Gazaleh[MG]

Apologies:

Gwilym Harbottle ,Del Corsi, D Julien

Item 1. Minutes of the last meeting – the AGM – 18 May 23:

Approved

Item 2. Reports- Regent Street and Oxford Street meetings

Report on Regent Street consultations:

NB commented that he attended one of the “engagement” meetings.

Report on Oxford Street plan:

04 July 2023: meeting with the WCC- OS team and the traffic modeler: attended by

YB, BC and Wendy Shillam

YB reported that the meeting was held at our request concentrating on the detailed plan for Great Titchfield Street [GTS]

Tom Rimmer- the traffic modeler- explained that traffic flows along GTS would be changed:

traffic flow northwards between Eastcastle Street and new Cavendish Street would be made possible, by making the section between Eastcastle and Mortimer Streets northwards only. Pedestrian crossing would be redesigned at the junctions with Margaret and Mortimer Streets.

See the map here: taken from the public consultation website made public in late July 23:

<https://oxfordstreetprogramme.co.uk/assets/pdfs/marylebone/marylebone-fitzrovia-traffic-flow-map.pdf>

and

the general map showing the new traffic flows proposal for our area:

<https://oxfordstreetprogramme.co.uk/assets/pdfs/marylebone/marylebone-fitzrovia-permitted-traffic-movements.pdf>

At the meeting, YB said that the existing traffic flow grid/restrictions in Fitzrovia was introduced in the 80s in order to protect residents' amenities and prevent rat runs; GTS contains the heaviest residential concentration in Fitzrovia, and the proposal is likely to increase traffic – as predicted in previous model presentations. How would the proposed traffic scheme protect resident's amenity?

Tom said that he completed the traffic model study, based on figures as recent as the end of Dec 2022. It shows in many cases some significant traffic volume reductions; in the case of GTS those reductions outweigh the expected small rise anticipated in previous 2019 models.

BC and SW highlighted the importance of GTS as a living street intended primarily for walking and cycling.

Report on Oxford Street Advisory Board meeting 10th July 23:

OS team presented a progress report on the scheme:

Phase 1- traffic flow – is now being consulted – ends 31 August 23.

Phase 2- design stage for Oxford Street: this is scheduled between Sept 23-Mar24.

There was a presentation of the concept:

AS far as eastern section of OS is concerned, it does away with the two traffic lanes around GTS completely. There would be a rest area Amenity Space- at the GTS end of OS – which is already pedestrianised, with 5-6 grown trees providing some shade and some benches.

Some planters would also be used, and an “idealised” design of a street full of trees and planters and few pedestrianised was shown.

YB raised the following points at the meeting:

FitzWest would like to be involved in the process, especially on greenery, and, alongside other organisations would be willing to consider some matched funding towards making more public green space available, especially in tributary street.

In answer to a question, the team confirmed that S106 is still available towards providing more trees in Berner Street.

YB asked if it would be possible to secure some planters for All Souls School for their play area refurbishment project.

NB and others raised the issue of availability of public toilets: there was no positive response on that.

Item 3: CIL updates:

Planters:

GH reported by email that “ the planters have been ordered and will now be delivered and planted in October. Tesco have agreed to this. We have asked for a definitive delivery date but have not yet been given one. There is one outstanding issue on the contract. Westminster are insisting that we take out insurance to cover fraud and crimes on the part of our volunteers. Our existing insurance doesn't cover this and I am seeking a quote. I'll keep you updated”

FCC:

No change, summer fete to be held on 13/8/23.

School and Placemaking:

YB said that we were invoiced for work done between April to June 2023;

NB said that Placemaking were supporting the school in submitting a cost estimate to the school and WCC., details to be confirmed, as we were not informed.

Soho Playhouse:

They requested an additional £20k funding, in view of increased inflation, this was agreed.

Greenery:

Planters from OS/Regent Street to the school:

Following YB's request at the Advisory Board meeting [see above], we were contacted by WCC, and we referred them to the school for further info: how many planters could be used etc.

Market Place:

YB reported no further progress.

Item 4: Finances:

YB reported that we secured some WCC ward funding:

£720 for social media work, fliers and recruitment of new members

£1020 for professional help assisting the school with CIL application. £720 already spent.

£350 for website update work.

CIL Spending:

Despite promises, no up to date CIL funding figure was provided by WCC.

This is to be raised at the next Forum of Forums meeting with WCC in Sept.

Item 5: Oxford Street Consultation:

“Shape the future of Oxford Street and the surrounding area” is the title of the consultation

Starting on 17th July to 31 August 2023.

On the day of our meeting, public flyers were distributed in our area, as well as some public “posters”;

4 public meetings were booked in the salvation army hall, 275 oxford Street:

18+19/7 and 2+9 august 2023.

The consultation is available online here: <https://oxfordstreetprogramme.co.uk>

The committee discussed the issues raised above in item 2:

Those related to traffic in GTS, making Mortimer Street two way- creating a parallel traffic flow to Oxford Street from Portman Square to Goodge Street, bus and taxis stands, green issues, Market Place.

It was felt that it would be a good idea to attend one of the public meetings:

We preferred the 9th August meeting:

This would take place between 1400 and 2000, with presentations at 1600 and 1830.

It would give us an opportunity to raise some questions once we had an opportunity to consider the details of the proposals, particularly regarding traffic flows.

YB agreed to circulate some bullet points on OS: traffic flows, greening, market place, etc.

What is the view of NWECC on the proposals?

Item 6: AOB:

Electric Bike stand proposals- WCC

The committee felt that it was a good idea, hopefully it would reduce the all-too-common side of electric bikes being ‘dumped’ on pavements.

Consultation on Cycle Hangers- flawed process

YB explained that a recent consultation on this, carried by a contractor on behalf of WCC was, as far as amenity societies were concerned below standard:

Not all stakeholders were consulted, just residents, and that there not enough information was provided on the scheme, and that there was no WCC contact details if we wanted to question/query the proposals.

This was contrary to normal WCC consultation process; this was to be raised the following day at the WASF meeting with WCC leader and cabinet members.

Item 7: next meeting:

14 Sept 2023 at 1800, same venue

