

Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Forum

EXECUTIVE/CIL COMMITTEE MEETING

Sainsbury Wellcome Centre 8th November 2023 at 6pm

MINUTES

Present: Nick Bailey (Acting Chair), Yoram Blumann, Barbara Corr, Mark Gazaleh (minutes), Dee Corsi (NWEF), Zack Thompson (Fitzrovia Partnership), Denise Julien

Apologies: Gwilym Harbottle, Julia Haythorn (Chair), Ian Johnstone

1. Minutes of last meeting:

The minutes of the meeting 14th September 2023 were accepted.

2. Report on CIL planters:

The planters are all in place with two WhatsApp groups to coordinate activities. Neighbours and All Souls School have offered to take care of them with forum members. There were compliments on plant choice and Rebecca who helped source them has been reimbursed. Gwilym was thanked for sorting out the contract and insurance with WCC.

3. Report on other CIL bids:

- *Fitzrovia Community Centre*

The Centre has been funded £21K for repairs which may include new flooring and reception area.

- *Soho Poly Theatre*

The money has been spent and the work done. A visit by Nick to see the space is planned for next week. It will have a capacity for 50 people. There was a question whether FWF may be able to use it in the future.

- *All Souls School*

Ongoing application – no news. FWF awaits a full proposal from the school. There has been no news regarding the greening project or WCC planters for the playground from the school.

- *Market Place*

There has been no movement. The design team needs to meet with WCC by the first week of December. Yoram mentioned to them that existing trees should be kept.

- *Holcroft Court Medallion Project*

The project for the Thomas Holcroft building medallion is being evaluated by Westminster's CIL team. A response is expected within 3 months.

- *Holcroft Court Cleveland Street Greening Project*

Denise mentioned that this project to green a stretch of wide pavement with planters was in development at the junction of Carburton/Cleveland Streets. It would ideally include a scheme to use bike racks as bollards to keep cars and vans from driving on the pavement.

- *Street trees for Great Titchfield Street (GTS)*

Trees may only be possible if there is space for them in build outs on the road. It's a challenge as there is much competition from other uses and the bays are currently at 100% usage. The value of street's varied architecture was also mentioned – and the risk that this may be obscured by trees. There is a possibility that space may be found on GTS if some of its bays/uses are moved close-by to adjacent streets.

- *CCTV*

We had hoped to see on local scheme working in Mayfair – but the CCTV project there is stalled. The requirement was also raised at a number of forums but it was not taken forward. There also does not seem to be a CCTV component in the Oxford Street project (OSP).

4. GTS Traffic Proposal

NRP who were responsible for the OSP came up with three alternative schemes. One solution is to place removable bollards on GTS (at the intersection with Langham Street) as part of the enabling works for OSP. WCC have been told that this meets FWF concerns regarding heavy traffic going north on GTS. FWF needs to know when WCC will consult on the proposal. There was also a concern about pedestrian safety on the southern intersections of Great Portland Street should be addressed within the OSP project.

Agreed: to await full consultation on the Experimental Traffic Order before the Forum expresses an opinion.

5. Traffic Study

There is an effort for WCC and Camden to work together on a traffic study to reduce through-traffic in Fitzrovia. Cllr. Geoff Barraclough seems positive to share costs on a joint study with Camden. Yoram said he would contact Camden (Adam Harrison) and that this would be discussed at the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association Board meeting next week. CIL funding will be needed for Camden's side and a brief is required to cost the project. Barbara said she would prepare the brief to move this forward.

6. BIDS

Fitzrovia Partnership (FP)

The FP area extension vote was a success with approval votes of 91% majority and 95% vote by ratable value. A 100-day mobilisation plan is in place with 5 wardens being split to manage issues between Westminster and Camden (2 wardens each side and 1 shared). They will be visiting businesses to re-educate them about waste removal and to do safety checks on street. This is to start on 1 December 2023.

The BID itself is being treated as an enlargement and a singular organisation, with caveats being considered regarding Council concerns (budget, funding/grants, regulatory processes etc). Its will be branded as The Fitzrovia Partnership: Business Improvement Districts.

New West End Company (NWE)

NWE expects some disruption this weekend with demonstrations in the area. The adult gaming centre (AGC) proposal for 100 Oxford Street's is being appealed by the operator despite objections being received from many sides. Dee said she thought the space had been let to a Chinese company, *Miniso*:

<https://www.retailgazette.co.uk/blog/2023/10/miniso-oxford-street-flagship/>

Nick has submitted a statement on behalf of the Forum supporting retail rather than an AGC. He will report when he receives the Inspector's decision.

7. Financial Report

Yoram said everything is in order and that there was nothing further to report.

8. AOB

Loss of Launderette on Cleveland Street:

There is an objection to the proposal to change its use to café. Nick will submit a comment to Camden.

WCC Night-Time Economy:

WCC is preparing a strategy for the night-time economy. The policy was discussed at the last WASF meeting – it's the WCC's new look at the night-time economy and how to control it. There will be 80 inspectors. We will be in the West End team's area which will have a Team Leader (Neighbourhood co-ordinator), 1 senior inspector and 5 inspectors who will be on duty from 7 to 7. A 24-hour team will have a staff of two. The noise team will still operate but without the benefit of 'noise specialists'. It was suggested that we should meet with the new team and the Westminster's presentation on the subject should be shared on FWF's website.

We've been informed that Lee Lyons will represent the Fitzrovia Partnership at future meetings (lee.lyons@fitzroviapartnership.com)

9. Discussion on fixing dates for meetings:

Next meeting: Wednesday 24th January (Sainsbury Wellcome Centre, 6pm)

Many thanks to the Sainsbury Wellcome Centre for hosting this meeting.