

Fitzwest Neighbourhood Forum

Executive Meeting Minutes

Date: July 8, 2026

Chair: Julia Haythorn

Notes & Minutes: Julia Haythorn / Robert Gorczynski

Attendees

- Julia Haythorn (JH) (Chair)
- Fay Sandler (FS) (Resident)
- Yoram Blumann (YB) (Resident)
- Robert Gorczynski (RG) (Local Resident / Guest Member)
- Tim Barnes (TB) (Councillor)
- Paul Fisher (PF) (Councillor)
- Mark Gazaleh (MG) (Portland Village Association) *
- Barbara Corr (BC) (Resident) *

* Attended remotely via zoom.

1. Apologies: Ian Johnstone, Gwilym Harbottle, Nick Bailey, Marcos Gold (Fitzrovia Partnership), Denise Julien, Kate Boothman Meier (New West End Company) and Councillor Elizabeth Amos.
2. Minutes from last meeting available on [Fitzwest.org](https://fitzwest.org)
3. Discussion with Councillors

a) Remedies for Margaret Street/ Great Portland Street safety issues re. OSDC traffic plans.

i) Oxford Street / TMO Response

- Pedestrian crossing at Margaret St / Great Portland St: no traffic light, flagged as basic safety failure
- Same issue at Great Castle St / Great Portland St
- Blood donor centre van access blocked by new bus stand (where van previously parked)
- Loading bay access at Great Castle St (IKEA) needs managed solution, ~20 buses/hour
- TMO consultation deadline: 17th July; reference GLA2026-0466

- TFL published first TMO the day after elections with no prior notice to residents and argued January consultation means no further formal consultation required
- Although no plan exists yet for east of Oxford Circus; Mayor insists full pedestrianisation will proceed
- Missing from the current scheme: hostile vehicle mitigation, security plan, policing plan, legally required environmental studies
- Westminster Act compliance also unresolved; TFL initially unaware of it

ACTION - TB to extract the Great Castle St / Great Portland St crossing issue and feed into Westminster City Management schedule

- Will also incorporate YB papers into the TMO response
- YB to send TB the specific points tonight

ii) Meeting with OSDC Chief Executive

- Nabil Khan (CEO, Oxford Street Development Corporation) invited Fitzwest Forum to meet, email sent 19th June
- Plan: meet on location to walk him through the specific issues on the ground
- YB, MG, and others to coordinate a date

b) *BT Tower Hotel Development*

- MCR Hotels (US chain, Tyler Morse) converting BT Tower into hotel, ~200-300 rooms
- Westminster is not a statutory consultee; no part of the site falls on Westminster's side
- Key concerns raised:
 - Cleveland St cited as main construction access route; Tyler Morse incorrectly stated no residential there (University of Westminster is directly opposite)
 - No drop-off bay planned for taxis, Ubers, or coaches; guests expected to arrive by public transport or cycling
 - TFL acknowledged Oxford Circus has no disabled access; fix estimated at £500m
 - It is noted that the Section 106 greening should be linked to Tower Tavern (University of Westminster) greening on Cleveland Street which is directly opposite the tower.
- Westminster will make representations when the formal planning application is submitted

c) *Tower Tavern*

- University of Westminster seeking to convert Tower Tavern into community event/exhibition space
 - Change of use to sui generis community centre; academic accommodation above to remain
 - Pre-notification submitted; ~£66k NCIL ask flagged
 - Concern: community access not clearly guaranteed; booking system not explained

- Committee to clarify accessibility terms before supporting NCIL application

d) Hanson Street Project

- Section 106 from Hanson St project: Schedule 1 is blank; no detail on scope or budget for greening
 - Langham Estate has appointed new architects; renewed interest in Marketplace greening
 - NCIL earmark for Marketplace to be kept alive pending outcome
- Opportunity flagged to coordinate Tower Tavern, Hanson St, and BT Tower applications for coherent greening of Cleveland St area
 - Westminster moved a tree in front of the Tavern site successfully; further tree planting possible on Westminster's side of the boundary
 - University running student design competition for the green space

e) CCTV and Antisocial Behaviour

- Two CCTV cameras installed on Clipstone Mews following persistent ASB behind 101 Cleveland St
 - Concern: no follow-up to assess whether the problem has been resolved
- Safer Neighbourhood Team (West End ward) spends most time at Leicester Square, not Fitzrovia
- BIDs as a route to increased presence discussed; Fitzrovia Partnership security flagged for early-morning Saturday patrols near the Clubhouse
- CCTV reprioritisation possible when cameras come up for review

f) E-Bike Parking Enforcement

- Problem widespread: bikes on yellow lines, dropped kerbs, residents' bays, fire exits
 - Bolsover St example: 75 bikes overflowing a bay, organised by the operator as if sanctioned
 - Great Titchfield St pedestrian area: ~150-200 bikes where 30 should be
- Westminster began impounding bikes ~10 days ago (first action under new administration)
 - 20 bikes taken in first operation; two warehouse spaces secured across Westminster
 - Regular targeted operations now underway; fixed penalty notices issued to companies and individuals
 - Companies must pass FPNs to individual riders; recovery costs charged to operators
- App should direct riders to available bays before they arrive; Westminster pushing for this
- Unused basement cycle storage in buildings flagged as potential operator storage space
- Licensing (including e-bikes) remains with Westminster, not OSDC/TFL

- Oxford Street planters now TFL's responsibility; all dead due to no maintenance
- Mark to forward his 4th June email about e-bikes to Councillor Caroline Sargeant to Tim

NOTE further to communications, Councillor Caroline Sargeant for Enforcement has now visited Fitzrovia e-bike problem sites. Locals all need to use Report It more to help the inspectors.

4. NCIL Funding

- ~£500k in Fitzwest pot; no major planning applications for ~4 years, pot not topping up
 - Major applications down ~85% across Westminster; no "major major" applications currently live
 - Oxford Street MDC developments will generate no NCIL for Fitzwest
- All Souls School ask: originally ~£100k, now inflated to £350k
 - TB view: £100k was about right; school should find match funding for the remainder
 - Anglican diocese policy: no capital investment in schools currently
 - Schools generally poor at identifying other funding sources
- Process reform coming: pre-application meetings to include officer steer on neighbourhood priorities and match funding requirement
 - Applications should not leave Westminster without cabinet-level awareness first
- Other potential NCIL candidates: Fitzrovia Community Centre (large ask expected), Soho Poly Theatre, possibly Tower Tavern
- Marketplace NCIL earmark: kept alive pending Langham Estate's new design appointment

5. Ward Funding Application

- Ward funding application to be submitted promptly: ~£1,600 for website, AGM costs, insurance, and technical support
 - Separate ~£1,000 application for CIC planter costs
- AGM to be scheduled for September/October (last one was over a year ago)
- Future meeting dates to be circulated among the executive
- AI note-taking used again; Julia to tweak as needed

Action Points

- **YB to send TMO points to TB tonight**
Tim will incorporate into Westminster's TMO response and extract the Great Castle St / Great Portland St crossing for City Management.
- **MG to forward 4th June e-bike email to TB**
Email was sent to Councillor Caroline Sargeant; TB to follow up on it.

- **YB / MG to coordinate on-location meeting with Nabil Khan**
Yoram, Mark, and others to agree a date to walk the OSDC CEO through local issues on the ground.
- **Clarify Tower Tavern community access terms before supporting NCIL bid**
Booking system and genuine public access not yet confirmed; committee to seek answers from the university.
- **Submit ward funding applications promptly**
~£1,600 for admin/website/AGM/insurance; separate ~£1,000 for CIC planter costs.
 - **NOTE** – application made for £1900 and awarded successfully on 23.7.26
- **JH to circulate AGM and future meeting dates to executive**
AGM likely September/October; last one was over a year ago.