

Westbourne Neighbourhood Forum

Forum Committee

Plenary session 18 # 1

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 15 January 2018

Venue: St Mary Magdalene's Church, Rowington Close, W2

Present

Jack Gordon (JG), Resident, *Chair*
Lawrence Harrault (LH), Resident, *Secretary*
Geoff Biggs (GB), Voluntary and Community, *Chair*
Fr Henry Everett (HE), Resident
Jason Swerling (JS), Resident
Toby Gale (TG), Paddington Development Trust
Shamsa Hersi, Voluntary and Community
Keith Cookson (KC), City West Homes
David Boothroyd (DB), Ward Councillor
Adam Hug (AH), Ward Councillor
Nicole Charles (NC), Voluntary and Community
Sophie Nguyen (SN), Business community

Guests

Mariam Hassan, Community Champions
Lizzie Fletcher, Community Champions

Apologies

Patience Owen, Resident

1 Welcome, introductions, apologies for absence

Jack Gordon, as the new Chair elected in November 2017, opened the meeting at 18:40. He welcomed all present and wished them a happy new year.

He extended a warm welcome to the two PDT guests working for the Westbourne Community Champions and then invited all members to briefly introduce themselves.

There was apology from one Committee member, as recorded above.

2 Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held in November 2017 were approved as accurate, apart from a few spurious lines to be deleted at the end of section 6.

There was no matter arising not covered by subsequent items of the agenda.

3 Presentation of the Westbourne Community Champions project

Jack invited Mariam and Lizzie to present the Community Champions project for Westbourne. This has been developed as a PDT-Creative Futures partnership. At present, they are promoting Maternity Champions among parents, and are recruiting people for the drop-ins. A leaflet was distributed to Committee members.

Shamsa asked how the Committee was to support the project, especially for reaching vulnerable and isolated people. She suggested cooperating in some form of partnership.

Jason asked who the intended recipient of the Feel-Good Fridays were, and was told that everyone was welcome.

Lawrence reminded the Committee of a past project involving the NHS and focusing on isolated and vulnerable people, and wondered if that could provide a model for other organisations. Toby remarked that the Champions were distinctive, as they seek to address long-term, deep-seated issues.

4 Feedback from the International Food Day

Jack introduced this item by expressing his appreciation for a superbly organised event and congratulated all those involved.

Geoff explained that the event had been a sort of ‘knee-jerk’ reaction to the absence of elections.

Jack informed the Committee had sent a press release to a local newspaper, but it had not been published.

The idea was reiterated of having two events a year as mentioned in the Forum Constitution. The first one would be the Summer Festival and the second one, possibly in the autumn, could also be used in connection with consultation about the neighbourhood plan. As regards funding, we should aim at a financial package for both events.

Reporting from the Events Working Group, Geoff was happy to report that Liz (last Festival’s coordinator) was keen to coordinate again this year. The pencilled date for the Summer Festival is 1 July. There would be a first meeting of the Working Group at the end of February (most probably Thursday, 22 February), then a meeting on the last Thursday of each month. As such the Events Working Group functions as the primary Working Group at the moment.

There was a short debate about the necessity of creating other working groups. In Geoff's view, we should "feel our way forward" and take account of the limited resources that the Forum has. We would need a good rationale for other working groups to be created.

Regarding neighbourhood planning, Jack observed that how we approach this will say a great deal about the Forum's work. It was very much a matter of "nuts and bolts" at present.

The workload to be taken on should also account for the Procedural Panel. Shamsa explained briefly what the Panel had been doing and expressed her concerns that everyone should be well aware of the Forum's Code of Conduct, as we all need to behave professionally.

5 Forum finances

Geoff gave a brief summary of the actions taken so far. The Forum was to have a bank account with TSB, Westbourne Grove branch within a week, as the sort code and account number had already been set.

Shamsa expressed the Committee's thanks for Geoff's diligence in this matter, and remarked that it was a great relief that the Forum was now able to manage its own finances independently.

Lawrence and David gave a short explanation on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). There was already some funds kept in store by Westminster City Council, and part of them would have to be requested, provided that our intended use is for the benefit of the local community, not just for Forum operations. Lawrence felt that work on the Neighbourhood Plan met that criteria, although part of the money could be used in the very short term to build up the Forum's cash-flow.

6 Election of the Forum Treasurer

The Committee was reminded that the Constitution provides for a Treasurer to be elected by and among members of the Forum Committee.

While Lawrence had acted as Treasurer for the last few years, it was now time to proceed through the election. Lawrence proposed Geoff and this was seconded by Jason.

Geoff was unanimously elected as the Treasurer of the Forum.

7 Communication and outreach

From the chair, Jack observed that, whilst the recent international event was an outstanding example of the Forum's work in the community, Westminster Extra was not in a position to feature our press release. Adam explained that there had been some flux in their staffing, with some resulting difficulties in keeping on top of things.

Jack wondered whether the Forum's status, position and relevance made it unlikely to be featured. We would need to find out why.

We should give consideration to the possibility of having a dedicated person for external communication, building up sound and friendly relationship with the media. Jack asked if we could raised our profile and leave a mark,

Jason felt that the problem was to find someone who would be willing to take on this job.

Shamsa concurred that a lot of effort had been made by the Forum, and that there was a need for making this visible to the media.

Jack agreed, but stressed the need for our approach to be strategic and systematic.

Turning to the subject of the new website, it was recognised that financial support was required. Investment would now be possible, and should happen as the website is "one of the most important support pillars".

Toby suggested that the contact list should be handed over by PDT. We would need to write to each person on the list, to make sure that each one is willing to remain on the contact list, for Data Protection reasons. This was to be done before May.

Jason informed the Committee that he was waiting the hosting for the new website. As soon as this is sorted, the new website can be in operation.

8 Neighbourhood Planning Working Group

Toby and Lawrence reported from the meeting of the WG that took place in December. The two main topics had been the planning application for the former Windsor Castle pub and the future steps for the Neighbourhood Plan. Lawrence explained that we had now reached the phase of the first "full" draft (as opposed to the Preliminary Draft, now one-year old), thanks to the exploitation of the results of various consultations in 2015-17 and the responses to interviews.

9 Any other business, future meetings and conclusion

Toby had been contacted by Westminster Trees Trust about planting trees in the local area. Toby invited members to make suggestions in response to the plans the Trust may have. Toby was to follow this up.

First meeting of the Events Working Group: Thursday, 22 February, St Peter's meeting room

Meeting of the N-Planning Working Group: Tuesday, 20 February, Great Western Studios

Meeting of the Forum Committee: Monday, 19 March – venue to be announced.

JG thanked all present and closed the meeting at 20:05.