

Westbourne Neighbourhood Forum

Forum Committee

Plenary session 18 # 4

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 16 July 2018

Venue: PDT Meeting room, Great Western Studios, W2

Present

Jack Gordon (JG), Resident, *Chair*

Lawrence Harrault (LH), Resident, *Secretary*

Geoff Biggs (GB), Voluntary and Community, *Chair*

Jason Swerling (JS), Resident

Toby Gale (TG), Paddington Development Trust

Observer

Mariam Hassan (MH), Community Champions

Apologies

Fr Henry Everett, Resident

Patience Owen, Resident

Sophie Nguyen, Business community

Adam Hug, Ward Councillor

David Boothroyd (DB), Ward Councillor

Papya Qureshi (PQ), Ward Councillor

Keith Cookson, City West Homes

1 Welcome, introductions

Jack Gordon, as Chair of the Forum, opened the meeting at 18:38, and welcomed all present. He then thanked PDT for hosting this Committee meeting and Lawrence for preparing it.

Jack welcomed Mariam Hassan, Manager of Westbourne Community Champions, who had already attended a Committee meeting in January and had opened possibilities of further Forum outreach through the Champions. Toby proposed her cooptation as a Committee member (Voluntary and Community category). He added that she was a member of PDT staff, but would sit as representative of Community Champions. This was seconded by Jason and agreed by all present.

However, Lawrence observed that the Committee quorum was not met at this meeting. He would therefore send a circular email to all Committee members to confirm this decision.

2 Apologies for absence

There were seven apologies as recorded above.

3 Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held in May 2018 were approved as accurate.

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

4 Forum finances

Jack invited Geoff to present his update of the Forum finances since 1 April 2018.

Geoff reminded the meeting that £14,000 had been budgeted toward the Summer Festival. The total expenditure incurred would be closer to £13,000. He would produce the final Festival summary of accounts at the next Committee meeting.

The bank account balance at mid-July amounted to just over £1000. Geoff had to report to 'My Westminster' with evidence of expenditure for a total of £5000.

A £3500 contribution from the Ward budget had been approved by the Ward councillors. This will fund the autumn International Celebrations for £2500 and consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan for £1000.

In the budget, £1500 was allocated to communication. Out of this sum, £750 needed to be paid to the designer of the new Forum website, Leon Alexander. This could be done thanks to the leeway opened by the under-spend on the Summer Festival (see above).

Regarding the Community Infrastructure Levy, there was to be a Westminster Council meeting on 25 July to discuss the way forward. The money side of this had not been dealt with yet.

At this point, it was suggested to examine the financial side of Neighbourhood Planning in anticipation of item 7 of the agenda. This was unanimously accepted, and Lawrence left the meeting, to avoid any possible conflict of interest.

Toby tabled a draft roadmap and briefly introduced it. This was then discussed by all present. The key points to report from that discussion are as follows:

We should approach the upcoming work on the Neighbourhood Plan as a two stage process. The first stage is about digesting and distilling knowledge about our community, and relies on our internal capacity, and continuing community engagement. The second stage is likely to require specialist external expertise. It would be sensible to commission these two stages separately.

For the first stage it would be appropriate to request a proposal from Lawrence on the basis that:

- a) as well as a commitment to the neighbourhood he has local knowledge and experience that we would not find in an external consultant;
- b) given the expected modest cost of this work it would be disproportionate to run a competitive tendering process for this stage;
- c) this approach would enable us to proceed one step at a time.

Subject to a brief being finalised, funds being secured, and a proposal being received from Lawrence the process should be managed and overseen by a sub-group of the Neighbourhood Plan working group, reporting to the Forum Committee. It would review the work, monitor progress against agreed outputs, and sign it off if satisfactory. Subject to completion of the first stage of work, the question of how to proceed with the second stage would come back to the Committee for decision.

Obviously, if Lawrence is involved on this basis he would be asked to remain aside from any decisions about the process.

The above process received support from all present at the meeting.

5 Feedback on Summer Festival

The feedback was introduced by a summary read by Geoff.

- The Festival was a plastic-free event!
- Advertising by various means had reached over 6000 people.
- The attendance at the Festival was estimated around 1200 people.

Jason: it all went really well. Noted was the lively performance of classical music on the stage. It would have been even better if the canal has been free of green stuff.

Mariam: the Bouncy Castle was very busy. Parents engaged well with Community Champions, whose stall welcomed at least 200 visitors.

Lawrence: this Festival was probably the best in years.

Jack: this Festival was astonishing, so worthwhile, with plenty of useful and helpful stalls. The team led by Liz should be commended for an outstanding event showing the Forum's rooting in the local community.

Toby: It would have been even better if more publicity could have been given to the event. The exhibition in the Warwick Community Hall did not do too well. Next year should be more open on St Mary Mag's.

Geoff: it would have been even better if people were signed the way toward the canal side. We will need to devise better signing. There was no halal food stall obviously present.

Jack: the Festival had good Westbourne Forum branding.

Lawrence: the Forum stall was very well manned all through the duration. Attendance was excellent, with a gentle but continuous flow of visitors making encouraging comments.

6 Communication

Jack proposed to skip this item of the agenda, awaiting the opportunity for him to meet with Jason and Lawrence regarding the website, to be seen as the heart of the Forum's communication strategy, including for posting press releases. Jason would take the lead in many aspects of communication, especially the website.

7 Events WG

The WG was to resume its meetings on 27 September morning, probably at St Peter's Elgin Avenue.

- Purpose: the autumn International Celebrations
- Liz to be employed as coordinator
- Event hopefully to take place at Westbourne Park Baptist Church
- Date to be later than usual.

Further WG meetings pencilled for 25 October and 17 November.

It was planned to have a Neighbourhood Plan corner, to be designed by Lawrence.

8 Updates

8.1 SMM Project

Fundraising was ongoing, with £700K still to be raised. At present, there was enough money to finish construction, but not for furnishing. Construction is to finish in December, although the Church should be back into use from September, and take part to the Open House day on 22 September. A small grant was received from the Arts Council.

8.2 WPBC Project

The new building is likely to open in October. There will be a vast space with spacious reception area. The building will house the children's library.

The whole building has been designed for wide community use while also generating income.

8.3 Crossrail

Lawrence gave a brief update on the train services from Paddington, now operated by TfL Rail in prelude to the opening of the Elizabeth Line in December.

9 Conclusion

Jack thanked all members present and closed the meeting at 20:10.

Next meeting of the Committee: Monday, 17 September at a venue to be announced.