

Westbourne Neighbourhood Forum

Forum Committee

Plenary session 15 # 2

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 16 March 2015

Venue: Westbourne Park Baptist Church, W2

Present:

Toby Gale (TG), Paddington Development Trust, *Chair*
Lawrence Harrault (LH), Resident, *Secretary*

Geoff Biggs (GB), Voluntary and Community
Jason Swerling (JS), Resident
Jane Winney (JW), Resident
David Boothroyd (DB), Ward Councillor
Fatima Taha (FT), Young representative
Manahil Ahmed (MA), Voluntary and Community
Shamsa Hersi (SH), Voluntary and Community
Smita Bora (SB), Westminster Academy
Keith Cookson (KC), City West Homes
Shona Cullen (SC), Resident

PDT Staff in attendance:

Monika Pawlowska (MP), Community Officer

1 Welcome, introductions, apologies for absence

Toby Gale, as the Chair of the Forum for March and April 2015, opened the meeting at 18:40.

Apologies had been received from: Abby Jan Dharamsey, Naomi Muigua, Noumeira Bettache, Jackie Rosenberg, Cllr Adam Hug.

2 Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

LH had produced the minutes of the first Plenary Committee meeting held on 12 January 2015. These minutes were approved as accurate.

Matters arising:

- TG reminded the meeting that the Chair of the Forum would be taken in rotation by GB, TG and SH, and that this arrangement could be revised at any time this year if necessary.
- TG also reminded the meeting that NM has been elected as Vice-chair and LH as Secretary.

3 Relationship with PDT

3.1 Basis for the relationship

From the Chair, TG expressed PDT's willingness to be involved. His wish was for a supportive working relationship to prevail, subject to what the Forum wants.

GB: At this stage of the Forum's life, the Forum will greatly benefit from PDT's knowledge and insight of the area, and will also facilitate our cooperation with other wards, to enable us to learn lessons from them.

SB: PDT will help to avoid a 'silo approach'.

KC: PDT has provided practical support, but has also acted as a facilitator, a liaison agency. PDT could offer resources and officer expertise. PDT's role in the community has been proven by recent history, and we cannot think of a better organisation to support us.

LH: We will need to watch out for potential conflicts of interest, especially if PDT is entrusted with the management of Forum funds.

TG acknowledged the dual position of PDT, and thought this was the right moment to turn to the draft Memorandum of Understanding

3.2 Memorandum of Understanding

TG opened the discussion and wished the MoU to be signed off at the next Committee meeting.

LH, who had produced the draft, acknowledged that Article 3 was too short.

MP informed the meeting that the draft was to be discussed in detail within PDT. Clarity would be sought regarding the definition and funding of PDT's work in practice.

Action:

The draft MoU, as revised by PDT, to be circulated prior to the next Committee meeting.

4 Neighbourhood Planning

4.1 General discussion

TG gave a short reminder that the production of a Neighbourhood Plan was a new and important responsibility vested on the Forum. He viewed this as natural development of the activity of the Forum throughout its history so far. At this point, the Committee should get an idea of the work to be engaged with.

Two documents had been produced by LH and circulated by email:

- Draft Terms of Reference of the Neighbourhood Planning Working Group, already studied by the Standing Committee;
- Action Plan, explaining what Neighbourhood Planning involved.

LH gave a brief exposition of the contents of both documents. KC asked for clarification as to the actual purpose and status of the Neighbourhood Plan, and DB explained that it would have statutory value subject to the provisions of wider planning policies at City and Greater London levels. It would include a statement about the development of the area, building policy, use of resources and public realm. The Plan will be an official planning policy document, to be submitted to local referendum.

JS: There are lessons to be learned from past planning exercises.

TG: We have an awful lot of material available.

JW: Regarding the part of the Neighbourhood Area including the Brunel, how are we going to get people interested?

SH: We should do so that the community can digest the Plan and that people get motivated when it comes to the public vote. It will be essential to communicate well.

LH made a short presentation of the method, and identified three phases as follows:

- Determination of overall objectives and areas of planning, and criteria for assessment;
- Subdivision of the Area into three coherent zones with specific needs and concerns;
- Synthesis at Area level to ensure consistency and unity of focus.

Actions:

- ***Look at the information we have got with fresh eyes and avoid recreating all the work already done.***
- ***Examine how the Summer Festival can be used to consult local people on the Plan.***

4.2 Getting started

TG: The Neighbourhood Plan should be the fruit of a creative process throughout, with a view to production being over in about six months.

MP: At what stage would we consider engaging an expert?

TG: Early days to decide on this, but we first need to set up the Working Group.

JS: Would like to be a member of the Working Group.

SH: Would be able to connect with some people on the Brunel Estate.

FT: Would like to join the Working Group.

LH: Will (obviously) take part.

TG: Would like to be on the Group too.

KC: Would like to help by liaising with Housing bodies.

DB: The Ward Councillors agreed to ask DB to be on the Group.

It would be worth involving the North Paddington Society.

TG: Put on the agenda to identify the groups that need to be involved in the process.

TG: Would a Committee member be willing to chair the Working Group?

LH expressed his readiness to stand if no one else is prepared to take this on. This was then formally proposed by TG and seconded by JS. LH was unanimously elected.

Actions:

- **Neighbourhood Planning Working Group to meet on 30 March from 17:00.**
- **Membership from outside the Committee to be on the agenda of that first meeting.**
- **Terms of Reference of the Working Group to be amended to provide for meetings "at least every two months". Otherwise, Terms of Reference to stand as approved.**

4.3 Funding through Locality

MP gave a summary of the financial side of Neighbourhood Planning.

In the Tax year 2014-15, Locality made up to £7000 available to groups in the process of forming a Neighbourhood Forum or to already designated Forums.

Westbourne claimed and obtained £1600, which was used as follows:

- £700 to PDT to pay for their ongoing support (including MP's time and work);
- The rest to cover the costs incurred by the November elections.

In the Tax year 2015-16, we should be able to claim up to £8000, minus the sum already obtained. To this could be added an extra £6000 for Forum without a Parish Council and/or located in the deprived area.

MP asked all present whether she could prepare an application for this year. Any funds received should be used within six months. This was unanimously agreed.

MA stressed the importance of Community events and the need to see how we can fund them.

5 Events Working Group

As Chair of the Events WG, GB suggested an amendment to the Terms of Reference regarding the frequency of meetings. This was accepted.

The Festival is to take place on Sunday 7 June from 13:00 to 17:00, on the Canal Side again.

Monika is administering the preparations for the moment, and staff is to be recruited nearer the time. Funding is being sought.

FT asked if meeting times could be altered to enable her to attend (preferably at evenings).

SH echoed this and insisted on the need for young people to participate.

GB: Westminster Academy should be approached once again.

TG: There should be some incentive for young people such as awards or certificates.

Actions:

- ***The Events Working Group to meet on 2 April, probably from 14:00.***
- ***The WG to study the idea of awards and/or certificates for young volunteers.***

6 Communication and outreach

JS reminded all present that the Forum Bulletin had gone out. For the next issue, the following items would be desirable:

- Neighbourhood Planning
- The Summer Festival
- News from Westminster Academy
- News from local Supplementary Schools

Actions:

- ***Design and produce posters for the Festival.***
- ***Deadline for articles for the Bulletin: end of April.***

7 St Mary Magdalene's Project

TG gave the meeting an update on the progress of the SMM Project.

- A set of plans is being produced, including Learning activities, Conservation and Business Plan.
- Work is under way to design the new building as well as restoration of the Church.

An application is to be sent to both Westminster City Council and to the Church of England Planning Authority. Deadline: mid May.

Funding for the next phase will depend on the planning permission being granted. In the meantime, all involved are gathering further ideas, which are then input into a reflection group.

8 Other updates

8.1 Prince of Wales Junction (Harrow Road)

DB: The Prince of Wales public house closed in the autumn of 2014. The owners of the premises received an expression of interest from Bet Fred.

The Council has an Article 4 Direction for this sort of case. The place could also be designated as Asset of Community Value.

There was a petition circulating, but Bet Fred has already applied for a licence to operate.

JS: We need something that keeps the Junction lively.

TG: Should we seek listing? The Committee expressed its support, and the matter should be referred to the new Neighbourhood Planning WG.

SB: This should be kept politically neutral.

8.2 Westbourne Green Regeneration

TG and BG had a meeting with Ben Denton at City Hall to discuss the public vote that took place in June 2014. At the formal request from the chair, the discussion that ensued was agreed to be kept strictly confidential.

8.3 Thames Water

Regular monthly meetings keep happening. LH sits on them as the Forum representative. Things are moving according to the revised schedule, and everything should be completed by June. There are doubts as to the landscaping of Westbourne Green being finished by then, though.

Work on the "Pit" at the corner of Bourne Terrace had just begun.

8.4 Safer Neighbourhood Panel

The last quarterly meeting took place in February, and the next one is due in May. LH is still the chair of this Panel, but did not have anything of interest to report.

9 Other business

FT informed members that she was celebrating her 18th Birthday on the very day of the meeting! She was duly congratulated and cheered by all.

Crossrail: there should be a new ramp to the footbridge over the railway in the summer.

Website: JS invited suggestions.

10 Date of next meeting and conclusion

The next meeting of the Forum Committee is to take place on a Monday evening in May. The favoured date was 11 May. Exact time and venue will be confirmed nearer the time.

TG thanked all present and closed the meeting at 20:30.