

# **BRIXTON**

## Neighbourhood Forum

**January 28<sup>th</sup> 2016 at the Vida Walsh Centre, Saltoun Road at 7pm**

**Present:** Stuart Horwood (SH), Rob Goacher (RG), Jason Gibilaro (JG), Alan Piper (AP), Nic Weedon (NW), Devon Thomas (DT), Maria Thacker (MT), Bill Linskey (BL), Dinah Roake (DR), David Pinder (DP), Minister Lorraine Jones (LJ), Annick Alet (AA), Gerry Evans (GE), Jurema Jandira (JJ), Manuel Santo (MS), Alicia Alexander (AA), Vivienne Lewis (VL), Errol Jones (EJ), Marilyn Rogers (MR), Joanna Spilman (JS), Nicola Whyte (NW).

**Apologies:** Jane Duncan, Caroline Clark, Jean Kerrigan, Laura Morland, Petrona Wickham, Matthew Clarke, Anthea Masey, Michael Smith.

**Welcome** from the chair Devon Thomas. This is the first meeting of 2016, after an eventful and productive year for the Borough.

Services and standard of living have been under threat as we search for creative solutions, generating own resources following collective approach.

**Introducing** Alan Piper (secretary), Nic Weedon (treasurer), Jason Gibilaro (co-optee), Maria Thacker (administrator).

Historically the Brixton Neighbourhood Forum was formed in 2011. Its purpose was to raise interest in localism, the town centre and to challenge ideas of development in favour of those who live and work in Brixton. At the time there were planning ideas around commercial properties to be altered to residential dwellings. The BNF challenged these ideas in defence of trading and highlighted the gap between market trading and gaining commercial premises. 80% of Brixton's shop tenants began as local small businesses.

Pop Brixton is the most recent project to address startups for small businesses and notably includes a community payback element for all tenants.

Brixton BID (Business Improvement District) is an idea that stemmed from Canada and the USA and has been running locally for the last year. Michael Smith is the current manager of this organization that is based in Pop Brixton. The role to pool business resources for the upkeep of the area and to support local happenings such as Brixton Splash and to ensure that nice projects that support community cohesion exist.

BNF is supported by Lambeth Council's Gerry Evans, who covers all local neighbourhood forum meetings in the Borough.

## **2. Reports on Local Issues.**

**a. Brixton Market Changes: Stuart Horwood** (SH) CEO of Brixton Market Traders Association. The street market of Electric Avenue will be in upheaval until June 2016. The project is funded by Lambeth Regeneration and the Mayor of London High Street Fund. SH has been working with Lambeth Regeneration fund to raise £750,000.00, Lambeth Council added £200,000.00 and along with the Mayors High Street Fund the sum is £1.2 million. This money will resurface Electric Avenue and create new market entrance features. The water and the electricity supply will be improved for traders who will also have larger pitches. Further information available on Future Brixton website.

The ten-year Street Market Strategy will consider future management, layout and Popes Rd toilets refurbishment (which is contracted to Veola until 2021). It is hoped that this strategy will ensure the longevity of the street market, building on its 150 year history.

There is also a project to renovate and restore the old barrows with support from the Heritage London Trust and match funded by Lambeth Council.

Fruit and Vegetable stalls are participating in a health project for families. The Rose Project distributes food coupons to low income families via health clinics. The participating stalls advertise Rose Vouchers and families can exchange these vouchers for fresh fruit and vegetables.

Stall rents will be kept at natural levels, increasing with the times but not escalating to unaffordable levels.

Commodity restrictions are hoped for to prevent repetitive stalls, although a European Union directive will soon enter the public realm that will rule that anyone can sell anything.

Saturday Market continues to struggle especially at this time of year, it usually picks up in April. The Sunday Market is not functioning since the Farmers market pulled out last year. A new contract has been drawn up for Sundays and will go to public tender in April 2016. The old Farmers Market had such strict rules, the new arrangement has a more flexible and relaxed approach. The West Norwood and Herne Hill markets have not impacted generally on Brixton Market but did negatively affect the Sunday Market.

Congestion concerns have been taken into consideration for pedestrians by limiting outside use of shops to 1.2 metres and setting stalls at 90 degrees to the curb. The revolting filthiness of the market was raised and members suggested that it could be regularly jet washed. SH asked members to campaign for this by asking all shops and traders to contribute to the cost, it is hoped that BID will also contribute.

BL noted that the dumping of rubbish at the end of the day will no longer be possible under the new plan as there will be an electric hand-pull operation all day to prevent build up of waste. There will no longer be room for trucks. It was

requested that residents to monitor and complain if necessary. **BNF to support monitoring of this.**

A traffic order has been imposed on the Street Market Electric Avenue from 8am 'til 6pm. A Pedestrian Enforcement policy that has no bearing on the requirements of the Traders. The Traffic ban used to be from 10am – 4pm. SH explained that the new vehicle restriction enforcement turns a ten hour working day into a twelve hour working day. He suggested that Traders vehicles should be allowed to enter the market until 9am and allowed to reenter at the end of the day by 5pm. **BNF to pick up and undertake investigation.**

It was highlighted that soon a new hotel will be opening in this area and what would be the plans for taxi pick-ups? Traders need somewhere to park.

**b. Loughborough and Angel Town: Minister Lorraine Jones** has been ministering in Brixton for the last thirty years. Following the fatal stabbing of her son Dwayne, Minister Jones has set up the Dwayne Simpson Foundation to engage with young people and families for healthy lives. The foundation currently runs primarily as a boxing/fitness club.

The Dwayne Simpson Foundation is funded by the Evening Standard and Metropolitan Police (Lambeth). The Borough Commander, Richard Wood is a keen supporter of Dwayneamics and police officers engage with the Youth Boxing Award, a 12 week certified course for 30 young people at a time. The course is so popular that Minister Lorraine Jones has had to extend the course to create a female only, a fathers and sons, and mixed groups.

The Police have given the use of 282 Belinda Road to the Dwayne Simpson Foundation. A purpose refurbishment of a railway arch fully equipped. Officers are able to give references to offenders engaging with the project.

Partnerships have emerged in particular with City Bank who created openings for two young people. Also a law firm has created an internship for one young person. Norwood School sending direct referrals to the foundation. The London Community Foundation, the Lottery contributed financially and Lambeth Council have followed suite.

The Foundation works hard to break the post-code battle by accepting children from all areas of the Borough.

**c. Health and Wellbeing: David Pinder**, SLAM, 336 Brixton Road. HEALTH WATCH is a social care forum for health and social care champions. It is an organization affiliated to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and can inspect organizations from the consumer perspective to ensure positive delivery.

A research project has been undertaken by talking to people in the Vassall Ward Community on the subject of Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing. The research was to highlight people's ability to function in society, how easy was it

for people to find advice and support and were they able to easily access resource centres.

It was highlighted that where there are gaps of accessibility, information and long waiting lists, people in need often accelerate to 136/137 powers of arrest and can be detained by the police for 72 hours. This research aims to work on prevention.

DP continued to explain that Afro-Caribbean men are seventeen times more likely to suffer from lack of accessibility to resources leading to the over hospitalization of Afro-Caribbean in-patients. The research has revealed that Afro-Caribbean people do not engage with General Practitioners and are more likely to engage with ministers or pastors.

Of the nineteen institutions found in Vassall Ward only six of them had information regarding mental health.

DP introduced his mantra for Well Being: **Be active, Engage, Interest, Notice, Give**

He informed the forum of Oasis group meetings and the Lambeth Early Onset intervention.

**d. Tulse Hill Forum.** Jurema Jandira of High Trees Community Development Trust and Alicia Alexander of the forum introduced themselves. JJ explained that she had been employed on a trial basis by the High Trees Community Development Trust to outreach to St Martins Estate to create projects. Her employment had been extended and she had been working on the Neighbourhood Forum Plan asking what people would want or change. JJ and AA are very much looking forward to working on the plan.

DT explained that this was a similar history to BNF work and this is why BNF steps back with regard to neighbourhood planning but hopes to be of strategic support to other forums.

Gerry Evans of Lambeth council's forum network stood up to explain that ALL areas are planning. Tulse Hill, Herne Hill, Loughborough Junction, Vassall and Coldharbour, SE5 Forum, Norwood Forum, Clapham Park Forum, Stockwell Partnership, KOV Forum, Streatham Action. GE explained that the Tulse Hill Giratory would be a co-operative zone, that the forum network was about engagement through boundaries. GE also mentioned David Borderman needs volunteers for the wider Lambeth Forum Network.

Bill Linskey raised the issue of boundaries and highlighted legislation. He asked that the BNF should formally register its boundary as registered forums cannot overlap boundaries. BNF does not currently have a designated boundary. **It was proposed, seconded and agreed that BNF should officially register by way of boundary designation.**

Gerry Evans explained that Vassall and Coldharbour are funded and said that there had to be hard boundaries for neighbourhood plans. She asked BNF to consider that the Localism Act was a conservative construct that Lambeth's Labour council was not willing to embrace.

(Localism Act designated neighbourhood forum.)

Bill Linskey explained that you do not need a neighbourhood plan to have hard boundaries. Without hard boundaries, a forum is unable to exercise its statutory rights, for instance "its right to a say in the seal spend".

BL called for hard boundary for statutory rights, a properly constituted boundary and reminded the forum that BNF constitution is already set.

**e. Brixton Green and Somerleyton Rd: Dinah Roake** reported that 304 flats got through planning with no objections. 65 will be for the over 55's, there will be a chef school, oval house, community centre, outdoor gym, a shop and a nursery included in the development.

Lambeth are still trying to compulsory purchase a piece of Somerleyton Rd.

Brixton Green remains a co-production, locally controlled and managed. Lambeth have agreed to give a long lease to a newly formed Community body to be set up over the next three months as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. All will be rented in order to pay back the lease. A robust business plan with 40% social rent, 60% market rent. The mural will be saved and refurbished. Construction will start in Autumn.

Part of the planning conditions are; that none can be sold for life. If the organization becomes a charity this may protect this right. Social housing could be bought but higher rental properties could not. This is based on the Housing Co-Op model and aims to be of Community Interest.

Currently Lambeth has a nest egg from sales of property that it needs to spend.

**3. Gerry Evans** explained that the forum network is comprised of 12 groups and is a very broad church. Clapham is the only area that has not joined.

The network as a whole received for eight years a capacity building fund, to alleviate the voluntary cost. BNF has seven people on its patch that sit on other forums. There is half the current funding for the future and there is no knowledge of the future. Forums should no longer rely on the Council Network for funding. Gerry is willing to act as a human signpost, there are small funds left.

Alan Piper explained that it would be a few months before it is known if there is a budget for the twelve months. Although referring to the agenda noted needs of BNF as follows: Community Chest Fund £1650, Promoting the forum: insurance £250, publicity £500, Development and running costs meetings £600, part time admin £2730

GE warned of a surge of new groups.

DT explained that BNF is upgrading technically with support of 2qubits. Manuel Santos of 2qubits explained that his company supports local groups to digitally upgrade.

AP reported that there was nothing to report with regard to Electric Avenue and the buildings above the shops to be restored to add to the look and feel of the place, as Townscape Heritage had postponed the last two meetings.

BL reported that there had been local complaints about the deterioration of Windrush Square and that the police had been made aware. The pop-up bollards at the end of Rushcroft Rd have not been working allowing vehicles to drive across the square. These bollards have now been replaced with a steel swing barrier. The bins are to be replaced, and hopefully the bulbs. The curbstone by the bicycle pump has been fixed.

Splash: not enough stewards and too much waste. It is a condition of the license agreement that the organizers are responsible for the clean up, this year they did not have the budget for this. A competent body needs to take on the Splash and consider carefully health and safety

RG made mention of his campaign Take the P out of Brixton. The temporary police unit has been taken away because it has been urinated on so much. This campaign will be forced to take direct action towards the aim of building a solar paneled boat shaped public toilet with a shop incorporated on its corner to contribute to running costs. They also hope to acquire an arch for added public toilets for Brixton.