

From: Brixton Neighbourhood Forum mthacker@brixtonneighbourhoodforum.org
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Brixton Neighbourhood Forum Minutes Feb 2017

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Minutes of Meeting on 22 February 2017

Held at Brixton Community Base, Talma Road, SW2, opening 6-35 pm.

Present:

Stuart Horwood, BMTF (in chair), Doug Perry, LBL/ Environment,

Alan Piper (Forum Secretary), Tom Bridgman, LBL/ Regen.,

Chris Patton, FoWG, Jennifer Angus, LBL,

Jane Duncan Ribeiro, BCB, Sarah Coyte, LBL/ LFN,

Caroline Funnell, BCB, Nick Weedon (Forum Treasurer)

Alan Slingsby, Brixton Blog, Sebastian Wood, Urban Growth,

Linda Quinn, Brixton Blog, Binki Taylor, Brixton £

Jason Gibilaro, inclusion Arts, Lucy Cava, Brixton £

Ord Henry, Market House, Rebecca Trevalyan, Impact Hub,

Bill Linskey, Brixton Society, Victoria Sherwin, VACF,

Rob Goacher, Take the P out of Brixton, Insp.Dan Rutland, Met.Police,

Caroline T, resident PC Lance Edmundson, ..

Maria Thacker (Forum Admin.)

Apologies for absence from: Devon Thomas (Chair), Gerry Evans (LFN), Marilyn Rogers (FofTL), Jean Kerrigan (FoWG), Jedidah Onchere (LCF) and also several

ward councillors due to a full Council meeting this evening.

1. Town Centre Development 1.1 Streetcare:

Doug Perry reported back on some of the issues raised at the last meeting.

New signage for toilets has been installed in 9 locations so far. Jet-washing has been stepped up after consulting Rob Goacher and the BID, with the worst spots being cleaned 7 days a week in the early morning.

A 20p charge is being introduced at the Popes Road toilets to help meet running costs. (The traditional “spend a penny” charge from a century ago would be about £1.15 at current prices.)

Pissoirs are to be provided late at night in Electric Avenue and Stockwell Avenue, but residents highlighted the rear of Morleys (Tunstall Road/ Bernays Grove) as a nuisance spot.

At present no signs expressly ban street urination, and a cultural change is needed. Police powers are limited and serious crime issues are their priority, though the Council has some enforcement officers who can deal with isolated cases.

It was suggested that social media could be used - Doug to discuss with the Council’s communications team.

Anti-social behaviour largely comes from visitors, and toilets need to be in easy reach of the High Street area and accessible at night.

Doug advised that the Council has a “superloo” in storage but it has a large footprint and needs to be sited so as not to attract objections from neighbours. Bill suggested below the high-level railway bridge on the east side of Brixton Road, where there is generous pavement space and no residents close by.

A decision is still awaited on bids for use of the Windrush Square underground toilets – the Brixton BID was one of the contenders.

1.2 Regeneration:

Tom Bridgman provided a summary of ongoing projects in Brixton:

Brixton Economic Action Plan: Brixton has limited office space compared with some other town centres, and although Council staff would be concentrated in Brixton, their numbers were reducing. One element of the plan was to encourage other local employment to help support shopping and other uses in the town centre during the week.

Tom would provide a longer presentation on this at the next meeting.

Victoria Sherwin highlighted the need for a Community Economic Plan in the Vassall area also.

Brixton Central Master-Plan: This includes the Pop Brixton and former Tesco sites and the railway station. New development should provide c.7000 sq.m. of business space and c.300 new dwellings, with more active uses along Brixton Station Road and revised access to the station. Plans are still provisional and building is about 3-4 years away.

International House: This is included in the Master-Plan but Council staff are due to move out in the middle of next year, so the building could be used as interim workspace for up to 5 years, depending on the development timetable.

Town Centre Parking: car parking capacity was assessed recently, and a separate consultation event is being set up on this issue, at the suggestion of the BID, to follow on from the Atlantic Road consultation.

Network Rail Arches: NW-Rail expect finally to start work in the next month. There has been a big loss of trade for remaining businesses along Brixton Station Road, and a meeting between them and NW-Rail is being organised. A reduction in their business rates is also being explored.

Gateway Features: Repainting is being organised for the low-level railway bridge over Brixton Road – there may be a design competition in connection with the Brixton Design Trail.

Electric Avenue Renovation: Recent improvements need to be followed up by enforcement of display criteria for market stalls and shops, vehicle access times etc. The new waste compactor site adjoining the Station Road car park

should be operating from 1st March.

Work is starting on renovation of 2 more shops as part of the THI programme.

Atlantic Road: Consultants are digesting results from the 2 recent workshop events on redesigning the road. There will be a follow-up consultation in about 6 weeks time, with draft proposals.

Community Local Investment Plans: Each CLIP covers typically 3 Council wards, and identifies priority projects to be financed from the Community Infrastructure Levy (charged on planning applications) and other capital funds. A series of local consultation events have been moving slowly around the borough and the Brixton event is coming up. **Tom would ask Trisha Boland to explain this to our next meeting.**

Brixton Windmill: A new education centre to stand alongside the mill should be ready around the end of the year. A bid is also being made to the Heritage Lottery Fund to employ an education/ development worker.

Brockwell Hall: An HLF bid is being prepared to make more use of the Hall and its service yard in the centre of Brockwell Park.

Loughborough Farm: Current plans will add 1500 sq.m. of work space, while the food-growing project continues. A priority is to offer facilities for smaller catering businesses. A planning application has just been made, aiming for construction by end of March next year. Tom was also due to discuss this project with LJAG this evening, so apologised for the brevity of his presentation.

He encouraged Forum members to join the Council's Future Brixton e-mail list, for regular progress up-dates.

1. Impact of the Night-time Economy:

Rob had been in touch with the Mayor's Night Czar, Amy Lane, who hoped to visit Brixton soon. A pilot scheme for toilets was a possibility.

Apart from the toilets issue (see above) busking was also an issue, particularly around the Tube Station entrance, from a combination of noise and obstruction. Acoustic music was tolerable but amplified sound was

intrusive over a wide area.

The police had responded to some extent, but did not want to appear heavy-handed, and they had found the Council reluctant to act.

Rob proposed that the Council adopting the Busking Code would clarify the situation and provide a way forward – see www.buskinlondon.com

So far the Council has refused to adopt this, though it was not clear if this was being obstructed by key Councillors or by Jamie Akinola, the officer with oversight of street trading.

Jamie Akinola to be invited to next Forum meeting.

Tom undertook to raise the issue at the next meeting of the Brixton Operations Working Group, which he chairs. The police would prefer designated busking pitches with set times, that can be enforced consistently. Street trading by-laws would then apply to other uses.

2. Crime and Policing Update:

The appointment of the new Met. Police Commissioner had been announced today, but in any case we could expect to see further reorganisation in response to budget pressures, e.g. likelihood of Lambeth and Southwark being combined under a single commander. Brixton currently has 38 PCs in its “central cluster”, 14 PCs as ward officers (2 per ward) and 7 PCSOs. There is a relatively small core of persistent offenders: 10 individuals have been banned from the 4 Town Centre wards; 17 drug dealers were jailed at the end of 2016, and another 27 dealers are being targeted. Acre Lane and St. Matthew’s Churchyard have received particular attention, but members also highlighted Brixton Station Road as at risk due to closed shops and reduced lighting.

1. Information Exchange:

4.1 Urban Growth Project – the Brixton Orchard:

Sebastian described how Urban Growth is working with the BID to create a model orchard at the corner of Brixton Hill and St. Matthew’s Road. There will be 34 fruit trees, up to 3m high, plus some fruit bushes or hedges against the fences at the back of the site. The aim is to demonstrate the varieties of fruit

that are growable locally.

Members asked about long-term sustainability, since Lambeth tends to leave trees in parks to fend for themselves, without regular pruning. Fruit trees would need a different pruning regime anyway. The project will maintain the trees in the interim but hoped other groups may take an interest also.

The police advised some lighting and a relatively open layout on security grounds, though care is needed to avoid lamps shining into nearby flats.

4.2 The People's Fridge:

Rebecca introduced the People's Fridge, which originated from discussions at the Impact Hub about minimising food waste. It allows traders or individuals to place surplus food items in the fridge for others to collect. It has been crowd-funded, with contributions from 140 local people, and a refrigerated display cabinet is now sited within Pop Brixton. Only licensed food traders can put cooked food into the fridge, and then only for a maximum of 24 hours. The promoters would prefer to site it on the street frontage so more people could use it, though public access would still be at limited hours.

4.3 David Bowie Memorial:

Binki Taylor described the proposed memorial, for which plans were launched the day before. A lightning bolt feature would stand at the east end of Tunstall Road, close to the existing mural on the side of Morleys, and directly in sight from the Tube Station entrance. Total funding of £990,000 is being sought via crowd-funding over the next 4 weeks. A planning application will follow if enough support is attracted. Further information will be on display in the Brixton £ shop in Atlantic Road or see www.davidbowie.community/press

Bill felt the design was out of scale and the concept was wrong. Another suggestion from the meeting was that a music education scheme or bursary for local young people would provide more enduring benefit to the community.

4.4 Training for Community Organisations:

Alan reminded members about the CMI training course which is being offered to individuals involved with any of the community or voluntary organisations in the borough. Details were recently circulated by e-mail and application forms were available at the meeting, but the deadline for applications is 2nd March.

Note also that more local events are now being posted on the Forum's website, www.brixtonneighbourhoodforum.org

4.5 Pop Brixton – Community Give-back Scheme:

Lucy described the scheme co-ordinated by Brixton £ where tenants of Pop Brixton or the Impact Hub donate some of their time or talents to supporting local projects. Groups were asked to consider what help they needed within the next 3 months and contact her at lucy@brixtonpound.org

4.6 Brixton Elderly Project:

Caroline reported that Sixteenfeet Productions were starting a series of creative writing workshops on Thursdays from 16 March, to help elders record their memories: carofunnell@sixteenfeet.co.uk

4.7 Brixton Windmill:

Friends of Windmill Gardens have recently published their list of dates when the Windmill will be open for tours, plus other special events in the gardens. See www.brixtonwindmill.org

4.8 Afro-Caribbean Food & Drink Conference & Festival:

Devon had supplied leaflets about two linked events, a conference at Lambeth College on Friday 18 August, and a weekend festival on 19 & 20 August, expected to be in Brockwell Park: see www.juscaribbean.com

1. Next Meeting:

The next General Meeting of the Forum is on 26 April (details to be confirmed).

Notes prepared by: Alan Piper, 26.2.17, APiperBrix@aol.com

