

# BRIXTON

## Neighbourhood Forum

### Minutes of Forum General Meeting, 30<sup>th</sup> January 2020

Held at the Vida Walsh Centre, 2b Saltoun Road, SW2.

<p><b>Present:</b> Ken Floyde (Chair),          Nick Weedon (Treasurer),          Alan Piper (Secretary),          Maria Thacker (Administrator),          Jennifer Angus (Lambeth Regen.)          Tristan Dewhurst ( .. ),          Kate Hogarth ( .. )          Joel De Mowbray (Lambeth Transport)</p>	<p>Matthew Clarke (BRUG),          Jean Kerrigan (FoWG),          Yaicub Esrael,          Alan Slingsby (Brixton Bugle)          Clare Neeley (Lambeth Cyclists)          Travis Winstanley (FoLP)</p>
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#### **1. Welcome and apologies.**

Apologies for absence received from Cllr. Donatus Anyanwu, Siobhan Rooney (Myatt's Fields South TA) and Bill Linskey (Brixton Society).

#### **2. Brixton Central Supplementary Planning Document.**

**Jenifer Angus** (JA) introduced herself as the new **Area Regeneration Manager** for Lambeth Council, covering Brixton. She also introduced **Tristan Dewhurst**, **Kate Hogarth** (Good Growth Team) and **Joel de Mowbray** (Liveable Neighbourhood Team).

She is taking forward the Council's strategic vision for the next several years, based on feedback from consultations in 2009, 2014, 2017. The **Supplementary Planning Document** (SPD) pulls together ideas from all the previous consultations.

Sites that would be included in the plan include International House, PoP Brixton, Sports Direct, the railway arches up to Gresham Road/ Coldharbour Lane and the railway station, which is intended to have step-free access.

Liveable Neighbourhoods and Good Growth funds should enable the Council to provide more homes, job creation, easier movement for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.

JA stated that the main consultation stage would be in May, so she hoped to return in April with a fuller presentation.

MC confirmed that members had contributed in detail to the earlier Masterplan. He also noted that Creative Enterprise and GLA money had been used by the Council to refurbish International House as 3Space. He suggested that the Council should maintain this project for the longer term for the well-being of the community.

JA replied that 3Space was currently due to last until 2023.

MC suggested that Station Road as a whole should be included within the new Supplementary Planning Document. He asked how high the proposed new Hondo building on Popes Road would be allowed to rise and was it in the Plan? He added that when members took part in the earlier consultation they thought they were contributing. He

also asked if the new SPD was more sympathetic to developers? The Council should move things forward by taking over the derelict office building behind the Popes Road toilets.

JA replied that she is working with Network Rail and will have an update on the prospect of access to the London Overground at **Brixton East** train station by May 2020. The revised plan includes affordable work-space but she was keen to hear what people would like spaces used for.

AP questioned the time-scale of the plan, and if it was keeping up with changes. Hondo would be exhibiting their own plans the following day. Demands and pressures had changed since the original discussions in 2009, when building hotels in Brixton seemed unlikely, but we had already seen a few such proposals in the past couple of years. We are more concerned that work-spaces are still available in Brixton, because many had been lost to housing development. The Forum and some of its member groups are beginning to use space in International House. Impact Hub is about to move from PoP Brixton to the former Photofusion site at 17a Electric Lane.

MC reminded all that the Brixton Rec. is integrally linked to International House and that disability access is poor since the footbridge access from the former multi story carpark was demolished.

NW enquired as to how the consultation would be presented – would participants be faced with prescriptive questions? i.e. “choose one option from the above”.

JA assured members that ‘there would be a flexible framework for contributors’.

The Forum favoured use of exhibition and market stalls to inform the public. AP asked JA to let us know when exhibitions and consultations are happening so that we can assist in ‘spreading the news’.

### **3. Brixton Recreation Centre: STEM workplace/training project**

**Kate Hogarth** (KH) from the Council explained that the Mayor of London had granted £4million from his Good Growth funds for improving the Public Realm which will include Brixton Station Road, Beehive Place and the concourse between Brixton Rec and International House.

An unspecified portion of this fund has already been used to refurbish International House.

New workspace will be fitted out in disused space underneath the Brixton Rec., for science, technology, engineering, community training and schools education etc.

The Council will also work with the proprietors of retail units under the Brixton Rec. to improve signage, lighting and stop leaks.

The Council aims to appoint a design team shortly, but is also seeking an operator to manage the new STEM workspace.

Proposals will be formally launched in May, but again officers hoped to return to the Forum in April for an update.

KH clarified that the available space within the Rec. complex is a split-level large retail space that was never let. The Council has since used it for storing surplus office furniture. It will not be just a working space – provision for education/exhibitions will be included in the service agreement.

MC added that Brixton Rec. users want to be involved and are keen to reintroduce the cafe and to improve the reception and concourse. He also noted that he was not receiving emails from the Station Road Forum and MT agreed to forward the thread. He pointed out

that the Brixton BID represented local businesses, but this is not the same as consulting with the wider Brixton Community.

#### **4. Brixton Liveable Neighbourhoods – next steps**

Joel De Mowbray (JDM) explained that during November and December 2019 he had made some instructive films of Railton Rd, Ferndale Rd. and Loughborough Rd. on the theme of Air Quality and Safer Streets.

Round 1 will recruit 5 active community people to help the team continue the consultation work. As from Friday 7<sup>th</sup> February, there would be a focus month using the website CommonPlace to show each of the above 3 neighbourhoods. There will be questions at the bottom of the page, then responses and comments would be translated into qualitative statistics.

Round 2 will start in May 2020, using the films to support community engagement in the remaining sectors (Brixton Hill/ Blenheim Gardens/ St. Matthew's Estate, Loughborough Park/ Evelyn Grace and Brixton Town Centre) which will happen on the streets and at local schools and community buildings.

There will also be a Community Design Competition.

JK reminded all that Brixton Hill and Brixton Road form a common thread through the area, with high air pollution and low car ownership nearby. Planning small areas may close 'rat runs' but this increases traffic on the main thoroughfares. It's important not to raise expectations. Plans should consider the area as a whole, not as small unrelated parts.

MC warned that the consultations should not mislead the community with pre-set ideas and buzzwords that may not be the ideas of the community.

CN highlighted the Mayor's support for Cyclist Routes (Google "motor traffic evaporation"). Research showed that few Brixton Market customers drive to Brixton.

#### **5. Brixton Night-time Economy – update**

JA explained that there were workshop consultations during May and June 2019. Consultants had been appointed, Night Time Economy Solutions.

AP stated that we had expected a report back in September 2019. Problems can be traced back to the mid-1990's when venues like the O2 and The Fridge were opening and entertainment uses were encouraged. Licensing has been relaxed in recent years. Now we are at crisis point because we have the Night-Time Tube coinciding with many new residents within the Town Centre. Licensing and planning functions are not linked. The Council's noise team has only been reinstated recently.

JA promised a fuller update for the next meeting in April.

#### **6. Update on Forum Budget and programme to end of June**

AP reported that our budget had been approved by the Lambeth Forum Network and funding released. We can now plan our Showcase event for May/June 2020. We have taken a hot-desk space at 3Space in International House so that we have a registered address and may improve networking and co-working. We continue to circulate our monthly e-bulletins - members have stated that these are very useful in terms of coming events, funds available and training opportunities.

## 7. London Renters Union

Tenants on Myatts Field South Estate are considering membership in order to obtain support from a larger body. Discussion deferred because Siobhan Mooney was unable to attend this meeting.

## 8. Any Other Business/ News/ Notices from members

**Nour Cash and Carry** have been served a notice to vacate by Hondo Enterprises. There is a petition in the shop that you can sign. MC to contact Cllr. Donatus Anyanwu and Helen Hayes MP for support.

AP reminded members that a key part of the listing of the indoor markets was for their cultural and ethnic diversity.

As part of charitable fund-raising for the Windmill, JK urged members to collect blue tokens at Tesco's checkout and put them in the ballot box for **Friends of Windmill Gardens** in the store. There is also a gardening session in Windmill Gardens on 1<sup>st</sup> February.

**Brixton Pound Cafe** has re-opened, now using the Platform Cafe at Wyck Gardens, Loughborough Junction on Mondays and Tuesdays.

**Brockwell Park** Community Partners are seeking practical help with hedge maintenance on 5,6 and 15 February. Further sessions are likely (enquiries to [susy@susyhogarth.com](mailto:susy@susyhogarth.com) )

On behalf of the **Loughborough Park** working party, TW requested advice, support and additional stakeholders. JK suggested that they should organise as a "Friends of" group and join the Lambeth Parks Forum, to network with and learn from similar groups. MC noted that Loughborough Park is run by three separate parts of the Council who do not communicate with each other. Apparently the Council is spending £15,000 a year on security to keep the old adventure playground building closed.

*This meeting closed at 9pm.  
draft minutes MT 06/02/20, edited AP 26/2/20.*