

Soho Neighbourhood Forum Steering Group Minutes



Meeting no. 007
Date 23 March 2016
Time 5.30pm
Location SoHost, 8 Berwick Street , W1F 0PH

Present

Matthew Bennett **(MB)** – Chair, Anna Boyle **(AB)**, Mike Fauconnier-Bank **(MF-B)**, Lucy Haine **(LuH)**, Leslie Hardcastle **(LeH)**, John James **(JJ)**, Joan Moynihan **(JM)**, Andrew Murray **(AM)**, Jamie Poulton **(JP)**, Sandra Schembri **(SS)**, Robin Smith **(RS)**, Jace Tyrell **(JT)** and Ken White **(KW)**.

1.	<p>Welcome and apologies</p> <p>MB welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Michael Case, Rob Kirk, Clare Lynch, David Morrow and Jessica Stewart.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of the last meeting</p> <p>Meeting notes from the last meeting held on 24 February 2016 were agreed.</p>	
3.	<p>Matters arising</p> <p>Website: AM had not managed to get further with the website. LH and MB stressed how vital it was to have a public interface in order to develop the Forum. If AM could not deliver this we would have to find an alternative. The website needs to make WG notes available. AM had not been chasing up groups for their records, and would need to do so.</p> <p>Calendar: AM reported that JS had the calendar of events that LH had produced, and he hoped it would be on the website soon.</p>	
4.	<p>Progress report from working groups</p> <p>There was positive feedback from meetings that had been held, but some concerns raised about maintaining levels of interest. It was felt we should wait for more evidence as to whether people were dropping out of the groups. The need for each group to know what the other groups were doing was highlighted. More planning knowledge was also needed.</p> <p>KW raised the question of a suggested joint meeting between Getting Around and Environment, to clarify areas of overlap. It appeared that there had been some confusion about what had been proposed, but it was agreed that the FSG representatives on each group would meet to take this forward.</p>	

5.	<p>Discussion of way forward</p> <p>MB used the list of issues produced by the Living in Soho group to illustrate the different sorts of issues we were dealing with.</p> <p>AM said that we needed to be clearer about what we wanted to achieve alongside the AGM, as ‘Vision Day’ and ‘Community Day’ had not yet pinned this down. He suggested that working towards the AGM each group should identify a ‘top 3’ for (i) planning issues (ii) non-planning issues and (iii) possibilities for CIL investment.</p> <p>MB pointed out that we did need to engage in more opinion gathering from the wider Soho public, for example through a questionnaire and a stall on the market.</p> <p>JJ said that we had enthusiasm in the groups, but needed a clearer idea of what to do, and also better understanding of how overlapping issues would be handled. AB suggested it would be good to add new people to WGs if we can.</p> <p>JT said that we needed the focus of the AGM to agree our priority policy areas, from which we could move forward to develop specific policies. MB proposed we used our April/May FSG meetings to prepare for the AGM, along the lines that AM had suggested.</p> <p>SS asked if there was a route map for the process. MF-B outlined the process, but there was not a detailed route map for each stage. For example, some Neighbourhood Forums use working groups or an equivalent, while others do not.</p> <p>AM clarified that we seemed to be aiming now for an AGM in early July (as with our Inaugural Meeting) at which we planned to identify the key policy areas that we would work on. This was agreed.</p> <p>There was brief discussion of potential venues, and of the possibility of getting some input from Westminster to give working group members more understanding of planning issues. AB suggested that this was not what we envisaged for community activity connected with the AGM, which was accepted. We would need to be clear what we expected to gain from MB reminded FSG members of information from Westminster that was already available.</p> <p>SS said that it was important to acknowledge all the issues that had been raised with the Forum, even when they could not be included in specific policy.</p> <p>JP and RS proposed that the WGs should be tasked with identifying their top 3 planning issues, sifting out those issues that were non-planning issues or that would not find a reasonable consensus. This was agreed.</p>	
6.	<p>Bank account and finance</p> <p>MF-B reported that the Forum bank account was finally open and a cheque book had been received. In the new funding year there would be various support packages for the Forum to use if appropriate.</p>	

	JT reported that NWEC were willing to donate £1,000 to support the administration of the Forum.	
7.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Regenerating interest from Forum members: MB suggested we should contact all who had expressed an interest in the Training Day. However, most are on a group mailing list, and it was agreed that these lists should be refreshed at the AGM. SS pointed out that we needed to give people a clear indication of what they could add to the process by getting involved.</p> <p>Berwick Street Market: AB raised the issue of the Westminster Council's plans to privatise the market and asked whether the Steering Group should take any action about this. A range of views were expressed. It was agreed that before the Forum got involved in individual issues such as this the Steering Group needed to establish a protocol. Meanwhile, other groups and individuals would be taking up their particular concerns with ward councillors. SS suggested that information about the plans for the market could be circulated through various other networks, such as the House of St Barnabas, the Soho Society and Soho Radio.</p> <p>New West End Company: JT reported that the NWEC is planning an event to bring the four West End Neighbourhood Forums together. NWEC is also planning to survey 2,000 West End residents about what it has to offer them. JT would welcome suggestions regarding useful questions that could be included in the survey.</p>	
8.	The next meeting will be held on 27 April 2016 at 5.30pm at the House of St Barnabas. <i>[Unfortunately, the House of St Barnabas is unavailable. New venue will be notified.]</i>	