

Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Forum

EXECUTIVE/CIL COMMITTEE MEETING

University of Westminster, Wells Street, 16th May 2024 at 6pm

MINUTES

Present: Nick Bailey (Secretary), Yoram Blumann (Treasurer), Barbara Corr, Mark Gazaleh, Gwilym Harbottle (acting chair).

In Attendance: Jules Athanayake (UoW), Matt Morrison (UoW)

Apologies: Dee Corsi, Julia Haythorn, Ian Johnstone, Denise Julien, Lee Lyons

1. Minutes of last meeting:

All were welcomed and the minutes of the last meeting were approved.

2. Soho Poly Theatre:

Matt Morrison made a short presentation on the evolving programme of the theatre. Recent events have included: Poetry reading, a badge café, polyphonic Mondays, Bengali plays, a UK audio drama festival and the Beatowels album launch. 75-80 events were planned for September '23 through to this June. The theatre is hoping to take over a classroom opening onto Riding House Street to be used for reception, refreshments etc.

Members said that the detailed programme was not always filtering through but warmly welcomed the forthcoming dedicated website and regular newsletter.

ACTION

Yoram will contact Jules, Matt and Jordan to discuss engaging the local Bengali population via the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association.

UoW staff should send us regular information and also inform the Fitzrovia News (news@fitzrovia.com).

3. Planning the AGM on 26 June

It was agreed that crime and community safety are current issues in the area and this might make a suitable topic for discussion at the AGM.

Mark reported that he had met the Met Ward Safety panel to discuss the installation of CCTV on Oxford Street. Another system has been acquired by WCC designed to pick up anti-social behaviour rather than serious crime. Mark said it would be good if

these systems, with others operated by organisations in the area, could be integrated and supervised by the Met police.

ACTION

Agreed that:

Mark will invite Cllr Lilley and the executive councillor for community safety.

Gwilym will invite Cllr Fisher

Nick will invite Jordan Scammell or Matt Morrison to make a brief presentation about the Soho Poly theatre (as a success story and with links to the local community) at the beginning of the AGM.

Barbara to ask Tony at Kalkwik if he can design and print an A5 flyer based on a previous design.

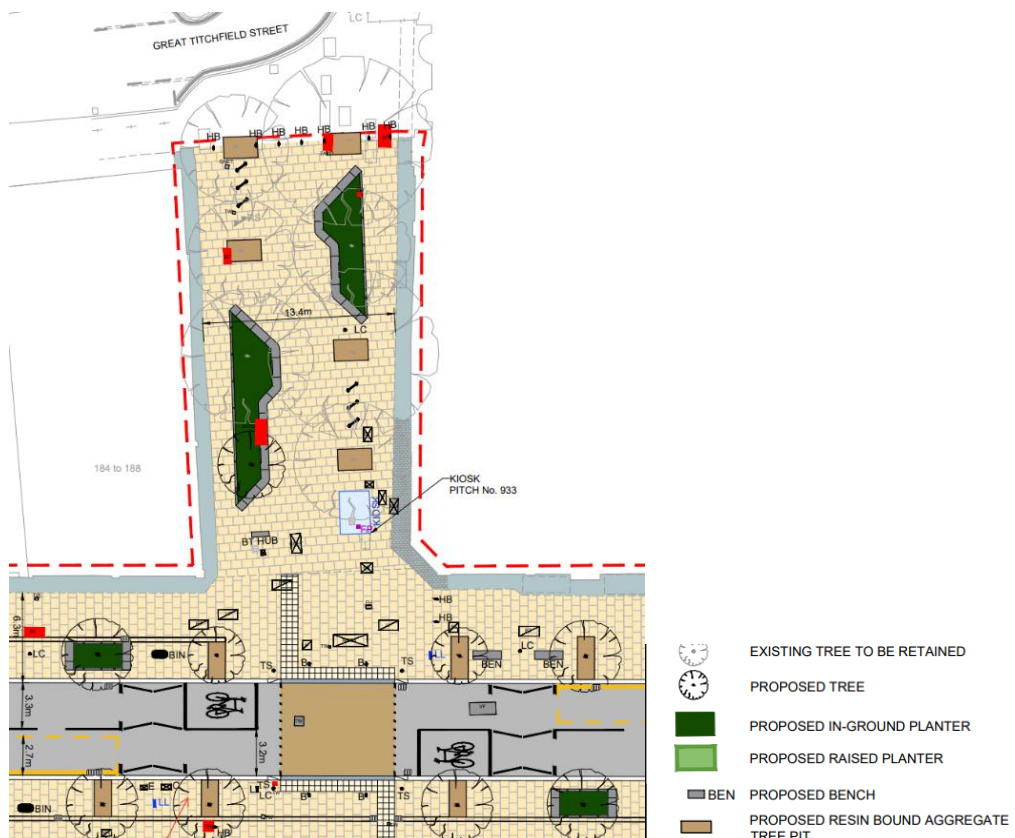
Ian to contact the Wellcome to see if the room is available for 26 June.

A more detailed programme for the AGM will be needed to include elections and a financial report.

Agreed to meet on 4 June @ 6 to finalise arrangements.

4. Informal Consultation on South End of Great Titchfield Street

Yoram reported that we had been sent some draft plans (as below) for improving the paved space at the south end of GTS before it is subject to formal consultation.



ACTION

Yoram agreed to reply to Maria Davies, thanking her for consulting us, making the following points:

I've just noticed that the 2 new features in GTS are dark green i.e. 'proposed in-ground planters'. I would much prefer that these were raised to deter people and dogs walking on them and with a surround which people could sit on;

There appears to be only 1 new tree in GTS although there are several proposed in Oxford Street. We would like to know what species of tree this will be;

The area should be repaved with the same materials as a proposed for Oxford Street so that it reads as one feature;

To ask how the space will be managed and whether paving slabs can easily be replaced if lifted in future for maintenance by utilities;

To request improved lighting, perhaps lower down and not based on standard WCC light standards. Also remove the lighting which has box structures (for plants?) attached;

Query the red boxes on the plan; waste bins?

Is there any new signage/wayfinding included?

All street furniture and paving to conform with that selected for Oxford Street.

5. Other Street Improvements

Mark reported that he'd had discussions about tree planting at the south end of Berners Street. Some funding was available from Arcadia from 2013 but a survey is needed to see if tree planting is possible.

Mark and Yoram are also meeting the University of Westminster site manager to see if any improvements can be made to the pocket park on the corner of NCS and Cleveland St.

6. Any other Business

Yoram reported that the Government is changing the way tables and chairs on the pavement is managed and will in future be licensed and not need planning permission. In future WCC will have 14 days to make a decision. But how will we be informed and consulted?

Nick reported that the University of Westminster is creating a 'student hub' at its NCS building, which will include the demolition of Latimer House in Hanson Street. Some members attended the consultation meeting on this but were generally supportive of the changes. Some wanted to see the Tower Inn fronting onto Cleveland St brought back into use.

WCC is setting up a planning advice service to which community groups can seek advice. This will take effect later in the year.

Barbara proposed we invite Ali Yazdi to join the executive at the AGM. Agreed subject to him accepting.

Members were encouraged to write to Camden Council supporting the Fitzrovia Trust's application to make the Whitfield Street nursery and play space an Asset of Community Value. It is used by both Camden and Westminster residents. [*This was approved on 20 May*].

Date of Next Meeting: 4 June @6 at Wellcome Foundation – AGM on 26 June.

Nick Bailey