

Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum: Spring General Meeting Minutes – 19th July 2018 FINAL

Date and time of meeting:	19 th July 2018, 6:30pm – 8:15pm
Location:	Royal Oak pub, Harlesden
Attending:	<p>Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum Committee: Leao Neto – HNF Chair; Atara Fridler – Co-vice Chair (AF); Paul Anders – Treasurer (PA); Megan Lewis – Secretary & Coordinator (ML); Colin George (CG)</p> <p>Guests: Anna - OPDC; Grace Nelson – Harlesden Town Centre Manager; David Zarra - Crisis; Leroy Simpson – Community Liaison Officer and Festival Lights project;</p> <p>Other attendees: 32 attendees</p>
Apologies:	Nick Jones (committee: Co-vice chair), Ricky Gardener (committee)

Item	Minutes	Actions
1	<p>Welcome & Introductions (AF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LN welcomes all attendees • LN encourages all attendees to introduce themselves • LN gives updates that actions from the AGM have been completed, attendees agree and adopt the meeting minutes 	
2	<p>HNF updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Colin George gives an update on the planning activity that HNF have been involved with. Provides background to the Neighbourhood Plan, announces the Brent consultation beginning end of July and explains the formal process which is to follow that. Explains that it is quite an achievement as only around 8 other NPs in London. - Q1 – attendee asks if another walkabout of sites in the plan would happen again for the referendum. CG responds that it's a good idea and we'll do what we can to engage when the time comes. - Q2 – How do we communicate with Brent planners? CG explains we have a good relationship with them and seek professional advice where needed. Attendees explains that often Brent agree to things 'on site' but rarely follow through with commitments. LN responds that the Neighbourhood Plan clearly sets out our position on many planning concerns in the area and the Council should be using it anyway. ML also clarifies that the Plan, when 'made' is a statutory document that the council have an obligation to follow. Attendee suggests we should apply pressure on Brent in other ways (in addition to formal processes). - CG explains how we interact with Brent planners - HNF get sent notifications of all planning applications and have a system to filter them according to issues relating to neighbourhood Planning, then drafts responses accordingly – i.e. Park Parade change of use and advertising hoardings. CG goes on to explain how HNF influences the planning authorities – namely via the GUA and getting independent expert advice in how to respond to some proposals. - CG encourages all to respond to the 2 Scrubs Lane proposals and the Furness Road junction which is only open to direct neighbours and for 6 weeks over summer - Q3 – attendee expresses concern over loft conversions - Q4 – Attendee asks how we can get the consultation area and timing extended – Councillor Matt Kelcher responds to say may be possible to do so and is looking in to it. 	<p>HNF to look into arrange another sites walkabout for the Plan referendum TBC</p>

3	<p>Housing issues in Harlesden & PRS champions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ML introduces the section and David Zarra (DZ) progression coach from local homeless charity Crisis Brent. - DZ gives brief summary of issues in the housing sector locally which are affecting peoples lives – including over-crowding, hidden homelessness, people with no recourse to public funds, universal credit etc. <p>PRS sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ML introduces the Brent Private Rented Sector Community Champions scheme – ML as champion for HNF, DZ champion for Crisis and Leroy Simpson also on the scheme. Runs through the objectives behind the scheme, the basic things to know about the PRS sector- licencing, spotting signs of irresponsible landlords and tenants and what to do. ML encourages attendees to sign up as a champion and to relay the key information to people they are concerned about (tenants and landlords). - Q1 – How do we get the council to actually enforce? Brent are expanding the licencing so assume are committed to enforcement (ML) - Q2 – How do we find out what to do if we are concerned? Go online straight away, but make sure you have permission from the person you are concerned about, or encourage them to take action themselves (ML) - Q3 – What are the council going to do about changing fire regulations which need updated with the licencing? That would be a question for the council as champions only cover basic rights, responsibilities and signposting. - Attendee states that and Brent must find a way of ensuring landlords actually have funds to maintain properties, such as replacing a boiler if needed. Does losing PRS landlords cause homelessness? - Attendee states that the council must refuse to be bullied by developers in relation to affordable homes. <p>Homelessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DZ relays facts about homelessness in Harlesden – 1 in 10 council house applicants are successful, 50% of homelessness applications in Brent come from the Harlesden ward. DZ also explains the role of Crisis Brent and what they do to support homeless people – the progression process and partnership working. - Q1 What should we do if we know someone at risk? Contact Crisis Brent, can walk into the Duty service or call, or visit Advice4Renter or the Council. Attendee states that the problem lies with lack of resources for councils. DZ responds to say Crisis were instrumental in getting the Homeless Reduction Act passed which gives stronger obligations of councils to help homeless people. Attendee mentions the SHPS program run by Crisis and Brent, who have partnerships with private landlords for homeless tenants. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ML rounds up by encouraging people to find out more and pick up leaflets. 	
4	<p>Brent Town Centre Manager update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GN gives an overview of her role, which includes looking at retail vacancies, public real aesthetics, shop fronts, studying ASB and issue of perceived and actual crime affecting peoples experience of the Town Centre. She also helps to manage the Harlesden Business Association, and works with Brent’s officer for waste and environment. Announces her 1 year vision which is to begin marketing for the area and celebrating it’s positive aspects. In the longer term the focus is growing business resilience and responsibility through support, including improving food hygiene, and working to boost the local economy through investment. - LN responds to say it would be good to see how this aligns with Brent’s town centre charter – GN agrees. - Questions – LN invites several questions and statements from the floor - Q1: There is an issue with Somali cafes being exclusive to Somali men and excluding women. Also other communities putting breaks on progress – how can we work with them? - Q2: How will you involve the youth and children in your work – we need to make decisions for the next generation? - Q3: There needs to be more youth clubs and offer for kids as they’re getting caught up in stabbings 	GN to respond to certain queries after the meeting - emailed

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Q4: IT's ok to encourage entertainment in the area, it is needed, but with the idea of Harlesden becoming a 'mini west end' comes the need to understand the neighbourhoods they're coming into – gives example of the Picture palace which has been empty for over a year as it didn't work in the area - Q5: – <i>could not record</i>) - Q6: Queried about what was being done about the intimidating young men who congregate outside Cake Box on Craven Park Road. He mentioned that when he spoke to the Manager of Cake Box, she mentioned that one customer was scared to complete her transaction at the till as she was scared of one of the young men who had entered into the shop. (perceived crime). - Q7: There is a need, before encouraging investors and retail in the area to fix the existing problems – in some streets there is rubbish knee high and this needs tacking first. - Q8: Attendee (A Somali representative of several community integration initiatives) responds to Somali question – it is frustrating for her the issues mentioned about the cafes, but also, she is part of several initiatives run by the Somali community and there is a need to spread the word about them - they want to be active and inclusive. Also it's difficult to get involved when many community meetings are held in pubs or churches - could we look at other spaces? - Q9: There is also a severe lack of CCTV cameras in the area which has led to crimes between young people. Other attendee agrees that Brent's projects must shout loud and clear that they are doing the best for the future of the youth in the area – an essential consideration. - GN responds to say she will look into and respond to some specific points separately after getting hold of the right information. Also states that it is not possible to solve things over night, and it takes time to establish solutions. The Town Centre strategies are designed to be positive and encourages the group not to let negative things take over the many positives in the area. 	
5.	<p>HNF strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LN introduces Paul Anders treasurer of the committee to summarise HNF's working forward plan / strategy. - PA gives a summary of the recent committee planning day and review of successes and areas for improvement. - PA runs through the 4 strategy areas – Community and Economic Development, Community Voice, Planning and Environment and Community Led Housing. He explains the committee agreed the need to hold ourselves to account further and will ensure the strategy areas are clear at each future meeting and we give updates in line with the areas. - PA mentions a skilled volunteer who has come forward to help move on a specific area of the community led housing work. PA explains how valuable it is to have volunteer take on tasks. - PA explains the full forward plan will be put together by the two co-Vice-chairs and circulated in the coming weeks. 	HNF to make the strategy public once compiled - complete
6.	<p>Community Liaison Officer update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leroy Simpson discusses the issue of the unused phone boxes on the high street and the issues they cause – including fly posting and blocking visibility, as well as anti social behaviour. The community have already pushed for two to be removed and there is a petition for a further two to be removed. LS encourages attendees to take part in the petition. - Attendees suggest two other boxes which are problematic – on St Albans Road and Acton Lane. LS states the St Alban's road one will not be removed as it receives many calls through to it. - Attendees make suggestions to reduce ASB in the phone boxes by including more CCTV and changing the shape of the booths to make them more exposed. 	

7	AOB: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Anna from the OPDC explains the Community Review Group which they are setting up – and how to get involved – including encouraging new people to join as there will be training in how to read plans and respond, so no background experience is needed.- ML announces a volunteer role going at the Harlesden Hub for reception and IT support – encourages attendees to apply. ML also thanks the volunteers who do invaluable small tasks for the Forum. - LN closes the meeting	HNF to circulate details again - Emailed
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