

Church Street Business Forum

5th March, 6pm – 7.30pm

35-37 Church Street

Members Attendance:

- Babar Ahmed (Market trader)
- Emmanuel Tremolan (Les Trois Garcons)
- Kamal Abdulla (Taza Kebab)
- Nimal Raj (Westbury Foods)
- Lawrence (Joel & Sons)
- Leon Young (Young & Son)

WCC Officers:

1. Lukas Holden [LH] – Communication & Engagement Manager
2. Alice Kennedy [AK] – Senior Development Manager
3. Devrim Zarif [DZ] – Regeneration Manager
4. Millie Morrissey [MM] – Communications & Engagement Coordinator
5. Trisha Husbands [TH] - Communications & Engagement Coordinator

1. Introductions

LH introduced the WCC team, and attendees gave an introduction of themselves at the beginning of the meeting to allow the team to understand their priorities and get a better picture of their businesses.

2. Site A Update

AK updated the group on the programme date for Site A. AK reiterated that Mount Anvil have been appointed as the Joint Venture Partner for Site A, and aside from the programme they have a vested interest in communities and will be working closely with Westminster to engage with the community, including both residents and businesses.

The question was raised regarding the flow of construction traffic during demolition. AK explained Broadley Street is being used as a working assumption for construction vehicles to use. LY queried if the traffic could come from Edgeware Road purely for construction vehicles. AK explained all details are to be worked out with the contractor, and all possibilities will be looked at. LY added there is a strong consensus from the antiques quarter that construction traffic should remain at the lower end of Church Street (nearest to Edgeware Road). This is so as the traffic does not pass by their shops and disrupt business, and affect customers parking, as this may lead to a critical issue for art & antiques businesses.

LY asked what the plan is for Site A market relocating, and if they will be offered trading space in the antiques area of Church Street. DZ explained that during the demolition of Site A it is expected that the Site A market will remain contained within the Penfold Street to Edgeware Road area. DZ added there is a fair amount of flexibility from Monday to Friday, if short- or long-term relocation is required due to heavy works or machinery, traders can be moved to Site B pitches. DZ assured attendees that the contractor has been asked to avoid undertaking works on Saturdays unless

absolutely necessary as this is the busiest market day. All effort will be made to relocate Saturday Site A traders who are affected if short- or long-term relocation is required but that a shortage of available Saturday pitches will make this difficult. DZ reiterated there should be no need for Saturday works, and should they have to happen businesses and traders will be made aware well in advance.

DZ clarified there is no intention to relocate Site A weekday market traders to the other end of the market i.e. towards Lisson Grove. The current Site A storage provision will be relocated to the current Site B car park, Market facilities will be built in the basement of the new Site A scheme. There will not be lifts for traders, however it will be accessible due to the ramp.

The general consensus is that the appearance of the market needs to be improved in order to appeal to more visitors and increase footfall and business. This was raised extensively during the pre-planning consultation period for the Sites ABC planning application from engagement with businesses and traders.

NR asked what will be in place in terms of pest control for the next round of demolition. DZ explained the topic of pest control has been raised by both residents and businesses and that it will remain at the forefront of conversations with the contractor moving forward. Pest control can also be on the agenda for future meetings.

3. ASB & Crime

It was mentioned that there is a persistent issue with gangs of teenagers congregating along Church Street. The police are being called almost every day. There are issues with the gangs using the shop for their dealings. Business owners emphasised the need for CCTV to be installed on street level so there is no longer a reliance on the shop keepers handing over CCTV footage and putting themselves in danger.

The team spoke about the Safer Neighbourhoods Forum and encourage businesses and traders to attend, as there are lots of residents involved already. The team stressed how important it is to hear the issues being faced by both residents and businesses. There is also an intention to roll out CCTV from Westminster City Council in hotspot areas.

Action: CCTV proposals need to be looked at in detail. The team can then report back latest updates at the Business Forum. The forum can help in understanding the need of the community, and what the most effective way forward is to ensure everyone feels supported and satisfied with a level of safety. The next date for the Safer Neighbourhood Forum will be shared with the Business Forum.

4. Communication & Engagement

LH updated on the frequency of the forum meetings going forward. LH explained there will be a bespoke newsletter for businesses and market traders distributed every 3 months following January 2024 leaflet that was distributed to businesses. The leaflet was also translated to Arabic and there will be continued engagement with markets and businesses to build future attendance to the forum. The future leaflets will also include details of the next meeting, topics that will be discussed, key events and project news. As there are new appointments being made of a demolition contractor and for the Joint Venture there will also be upcoming opportunities to engage with them and find out more about their role and future work.

5. Any Other Business

Nothing raised.

6. Date of Next Meeting

13th June 2024