

SOMERSTOWN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING PROJECT

PLANNING MEETING

Monday 13th February 2012

5pm – 6:30pm

Somerstown Community Centre

Present:

Susan Adams	British Library
Debs Baker	Met Police: Anti-Social Behaviour
Dervilla Carroll	Goldington Street Estate Tenants and Residents Association
Revd John Caster	St Mary's Church
Bill Connor	Met Police: Safer Neighbourhood Engagement
Dave Cooper	Met Police: Safer Neighbourhood Team
Clare Davies	Origin Housing
Sarah Elie	Somers Town Community Association (Chair)
Helia Evans	Ossulston Tenants and Residents Association
James Farmer	Woof (Air Quality)
Tim Foster	Somers Town Coffee House
Dave Hoefling	Chair of Tenants Association
Jennifer Hugh	38-60a Levita House Tenants Association
Barbara Hughes	Somers Town Community Association/local resident
Jamie King	Somers Town Community Association/local resident
Cathy Lettan	Oakshott Court Tenants and Residents Association
Mohammed Miah	Superior Negotiators
Shofi Mohammed	Somers Town Community Association/local resident
Shelagh O'Connor	New Horizon Youth Centre
Vijay Patel	NISA/local resident
Vijya Patel	Somers Town Community Organiser
Cllr Roger Robinson	Somers Town & St Pancras Ward Councillor
Sarah Simonon	Camden Studios
John Wood	Walker House
Jack Wratten	Open Pathways

Also in attendance:

Alex Charles	Voluntary Action Camden (Minutes)
Jim Murray	Bloomsbury Village Neighbourhood Planning Project
Michael Parkes	Voluntary Action Camden/Planning Aid London
Donna Turnbull	Voluntary Action Camden

Produced by

Alex Charles, Voluntary Action Camden

29.02.2012

Apologies received from:

Shahnewaz Ahmed (*Somers Town Bengali Cultural Association*), **John-Jackson Almond** (*Shaw Theatre*), **Natalie Bennett** (*Walker House*), **Suzanne Bull** (*Attitude is Everything*), **Peter Brayshaw** (*Ward Councillor*), **Mellisa Callaghan** (*Public Health Outreach Team*), **Finnula Campbell** (*Somers Town Community Organiser*), **Manpreet Dillon** (*local business contact*), **Gillian Hall** (*local resident*), **Jim Jepps** (*local resident*), **Samata Khatoon** (*Ward Councillor*), **Afe komolfae** (*Somers Town Community Association*), **Jennie Lewis** (*local resident*), **Katie Matthews** (*Francis Crick Institute*), **Akin Olukiran** (*DISC*), **Sally Warren** (*Plot 10*) and **James Widdowson** (*Oakshott Court Tenants and Residents Association*).

1. Welcome and Introduction

Sarah Elie agreed to Chair the meeting. Attendees were welcomed by the Chair and asked to introduce themselves to the group.

2. Minutes of previous meeting 10th January 2012

Agreed.

3. Updates from members

Cllr Robinson: spoke with Gillian Hall (*apologies*); Vijay Patel *NISA* (in attendance); Tim Foster *Somers Town Coffee House* (in attendance); Clare Davies *Origin Housing* (in attendance); Father John Caster *St Mary's Church* (in attendance); Mohammed Miah *Superior Negotiators* (in attendance); Fran Herron and Manpreet Dillon.

Not possible to contact Sue Croftwood.

Jennifer Hugh: has put posters up around local area and spoke with local residents.

Dave Hoefling: put on tenants association agenda and spoke with local residents.

Sarah Elie: spoke with Susan Adams *British Library* (in attendance), Sally Warren *Plot 10* who is keen to be involved; Sue Sommers *Age UK* (has limited capacity due to reduction in work hours but has agreed to review any papers to ensure older people's views are represented) and Akin Olukiran *DISC* (apologies). Meeting with Katie Matthews *Crick Institute* next week regarding schools. Awaiting responses from NOVOTEL and the Shaw Theatre.

Ashley Adkins (update by Sarah Elie): spoke with *Attitude is Everything* and *LGBT* who are both keen to be involved but couldn't attend today.

Cllr Khatoon (update by Sarah Elie): spoke with Shahnewaz Ahmed and Abdul Hannan Tarofdar *local mosque* who are keen to be involved but couldn't attend today.

Peter Ward (update by Sarah Elie): contacted SNT- Bill Connor, Debs Baker and Dave Cooper from Met Police SNT (in attendance).

Donna Turnbull: spoke with Robert Taylor *Camden Fed Private Tenants* who is keen to be involved and Jeff Hopwood *Camden Council* who, in identifying the differences between Single Regeneration Budget and Neighbourhood Planning forums, has provided useful input to take forward.

Helia Evans: spoke with local residents and sent emails to those on her database.

Jamie King: working with local young residents but they weren't in attendance due to half-term.

4. Presentation by Jim Murray from Bloomsbury Village Neighbourhood Planning Project (BVNP)

Background

- Research into the then Localism Bill [now Localism Act] in July 2011 after attending an event on localism, run by the Camden Community Empowerment Network.
- Local dissatisfaction with Bloomsbury demonstrated through a loss of image/direction, high crime rates and rising social inequality motivates local people to engage with the neighbourhood planning process.

First steps

- Followed official neighbourhood planning guidance from government and advice from CamdenCEN / VAC.
- Developed community-led forum, inclusive of ALL stakeholders including small local business and InMidTown BID
- Building working relationships with local council, landowners and other key contacts
- Set-up contacts database and skills-bank of all stakeholders
- Sought sponsorship for website dedicated to the project and Sticky World room
- Held first planning for real type exercise on 5 December 2011
- Land owners / developers have already made contact with BVNP in light of the redevelopment of local post-office site.

Essentials

- Enthusiastic, motivated, imaginative approach- **seize the opportunity!!!**
- Community-led, transparent, "open, local and sticky" process

- Supported by ICT with main reliance on solid community development work to build relationships and momentum through face-to-face contact with stakeholders- keep all doors open!
- Understanding of local planning context and national planning policy
- Identify neighbourhood assets- who owns what and where
- Managing change from top-down consultation to **community-led dialogue**.

Challenges

- Lack of resources and expertise
- Planners and developers sceptical of local communities' motivations and abilities. (Success of BVNP to date demonstrates that such concerns are largely unfounded).
- To meet community aspirations- keep it realistic and achievable.
- Will local council provide staff, finance and support when they are experiencing cuts affecting their own priorities?

Resources

- CamdenCEN / VAC: advice and guidance, facilitation.
- Sticky-World: online virtual interactive map of Bloomsbury Village <http://stickyworld.com/featured-room/bloomsbury-neighbourhood-plan-2/>
- Free mapping software "Community Walk" <http://www.communitywalk.com/>
- Camden Council support for community websites??? Speak with Martin Black, Camden Council.

5. Discussion and way forward

Donna Turnbull:

- Presented a large scale map of the Somers Town boundary area
- Priorities gathered from local people at past events, outreach work and ward councillors have been categorized and roughly plotted on the map
- Most priorities correlate and reflect one another but these are general at this stage and need to be added to through further engagement with local stakeholders and unpicked to identify specifics.
- Begin to see a visual overview of the main priorities e.g. employment (identified as a major priority) links into both existing and potential areas of development opportunity.

Michael Parkes:

- The planning for real type event held in Bloomsbury in December 2011 helped to identify 'real' problem areas and opportunities.
- Local people were very much engaged and although a similar type event is some-way down the line for Somers Town, it is a realistic prospect to aim towards

- Lots of opportunity exists around the area including local mentoring, supply and purchase, planning gain etc.

Sarah Elie then opened the discussion up to the floor

Dave Cooper: Speaking on *community safety* Dave identified main problems affecting Somers Town, namely drink, drug-taking and loitering around stairwells; gangs from outside the area using Oakshott Court area, and other problems of anti-social behaviour. Speaking on *HS2* he states mainly residents in the Regents Park ward will be affected but if proposals go ahead, could open up the way for a passenger corridor between St Pancras and Euston stations which falls within the Somers Town boundary. On *employment* he suggested the creation of a local job-centre or something of a similar ilk.

Cathy Lettan: speaking on *anti-social behaviour* Cathy felt that the area around Oakshott Court has become a 'rat-run' for wayward kids and cameras will not solve the problem.

Helia Evans: speaking on *anti-social behaviour* she believes the issues could be sorted by regenerating estates so they are only accessible to residents e.g. fitting gates.

Shelagh O'Connor: speaking on *anti-social behaviour, engagement and employment* stated that open spaces can create opportunities for young people too; training and employment opportunities do exist but are not always taken up by / known about by local people. She is interested in ways of improving local engagement.

Dave Hoefling: speaking on *anti-social behaviour* felt that problems shift from one place to another the minute you provide a 'solution' in an isolated patch. Estate security needs improving, as does anti-social behaviour, but this must be across the whole area, not just one estate. Need to solve the problems facing Somers Town as a whole, together. Speaking on *employment* he feels sceptical of local opportunity, based on empty promises of the past.

Tim Foster: speaking on *employment* identified that local businesses would be willing to employ local people but need the community to identify those unemployed and their skill-sets to feed into the process. Tim suggested the formation of a group around employment issues.

Clare Davies: on *employment* spoke of the WorkSmart apprenticeship which offered 5 places. Lots of applications were received demonstrating local interest.

Roger Robinson: stressed the importance in terms of *planning* of the need to know how the Local Development Framework works in Somers Town and on *engagement* the need for everyone to work together.

Vijay Patel: speaking on *IT* felt that business may be happy to sponsor a community website but would want to know associated costs.

Sarah Elie wrapped up this part of the meeting by identifying common areas that came out of the discussion. The suggestion was to form sub-working groups around these key areas and those in attendance agreed upon the following:

Working sub-groups (in no particular order of priority)

1. **Community safety**
2. **Business, employment and training**
3. **Planning, development, housing and environment**
4. **Governance**
5. **Engagement, IT and outreach**

6. Community Consultation

Community Engagement (Sarah Elie)

- There is a lot of work to do to ensure viewpoints brought to future meetings are representative of the whole community
- Need to verify identified priorities through engagement across Somers Town
- Anyone can contribute
- We will endeavour to undertake consultation in a community led capacity but should this not be possible or feasible this will come back to the forum for review and a way forward identified
- Sarah is meeting with UCH to discuss potential opportunity for students to get involved in the process, through something like Camden Shares
- **Michael Parkes** commented on the importance of establishing a credible and representative forum which can be taken seriously by potential private and public sector partners
- **Clare Davies:** offered to place an advert in the Origin newsletter.
- It was noted by **Vijay Patel** that there are 72 different languages spoken in Somers Town.

Air Quality across Somers Town (James Farmer from Woof London)

- Woof London, an external marketing firm, has been seconded by Camden Council to deliver a questionnaire about ways to improve air quality in Somers Town.
- **James Farmer** stated that the people's views are key to gain a better understanding and would welcome peoples help to distribute it.
- Every response will be entered into a prize-drawer to win £50.

- It was suggested for **James** to contact council caretakers and supervisors.

7. Actions before next meeting

- **Type up minutes and circulate to all stakeholders (Alex)**
- **Send out work-group headings and ask people to sign-up to the group they are interested in (Sarah, Donna).**
- **Please send responses to Sarah Elie sarah@somerstown.org.uk, Alex Charles cenadministrator@vac.org.uk or Donna Turnbull dturnbull@vac.org.uk by no later than Thursday 23 February (everyone)**
- **Anybody who wishes to help James Farmer distribute air quality questionnaire to get in touch with James directly at james@wooflondon.com**

8. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 5 March

5pm – 6:30pm at Somers Town Community Centre.