

EARLS COURT BUSINESS FORUM

Earl's Court Business Forum Steering Group Meeting minutes

Tuesday 23rd November 2021, 16:00-17:30
K+K George Hotel, 1-15 Templeton Place

In attendance

Philip Chambers – K+K George Hotel (Acting Chair)
Andreas Gunberg – The Troubadour
Caroline Todd – Earl's Court Film Festival
Emily South – TLC Estate Agents
Jamie Hodge - Earl's Court Development Company
Jamie Wilks – Marks & Spencer
Matilda Russell – Finborough Theatre
Nicole Bernhardt – TLC Estate Agents
Rebekah Paczek – Earl's Court Development Company
Richard Hardeling – The Troubadour
Spencer Parsons – Boka Hotel
Toby Churchus – TLC Estate Agents
Cllr Katherine Faulks - RBKC
Cllr Linda Wade - RBKC
Cllr Malcolm Spalding - RBKC
Graham Hart – RBKC
Susie Barlow – The means/Earl's Court Business Forum

Apologies

Craig Bennett – Indigo Hotel (Chair)
Eric Bestebreuer – Bolton Pub
Anthony Hicks - Metro Bank

Welcome, introductions and agenda

SB gave apologies on behalf of Craig, explaining that he will be standing down from chairing due to a career change. Philip Chambers has been approached and kindly agreed to Chair for the time being. SB thanked Philip and team for hosting, introductions made around the table and new attendees welcomed.

Building capacity and sustainability of the business forum

- **Steering group representation and chair/vice chair:** it was noted that although there are new attendees, the group is lacking in representation from some business groups. For example office based businesses and business owners from the Filipino community. These

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gaps need to be addressed, especially if the forum wishes to build its capacity towards a future BID.

- **Connections with Earl's Court Development Company**

- i.* A discussion was had about potential meanwhile uses at EC2 and Warwick Road. For example a film and food festival or festive installation. It was explained that planning permissions are needed hence not enough lead time for December 2021 at Warwick Road – but the success of summer activations should set a precedent for further activities in 2022.
- ii.* There is potential for Underbelly to return in 2022, if this is the case, there is more scope in the timeline for businesses to be involved in early planning conversations.

- **A Business Improvement District for Earl's Court?**

A brief review of the purpose for the work taking place to establish the Business Forum, and discussion around what should happen next to further develop the group's capacity. Cllrs Faulks and Spalding gave current context of Business Improvement Districts in the borough, with two already in place and Kensington High Street going to a ballot in February 2022.

- Jamie Hodge spoke about the *Stratford Original* BID experience – businesses were sceptical initially. The BID is now well established and has achieved many good outcomes. Similar experience reported by Jamie Wilks (M&S) who managed the Brixton store previously.
 - Cllr Spalding – there has been an expression of appetite for a BID - Surveys done by Comres previously
 - Several attendees expressed the need to test the appetite among businesses for a BID – suggestion that the group do a feasibility survey. SB expressed concern that engagement from many businesses in the forum has been low – small business owners haven't had the time to engage or attend meetings etc.
- **Engaging wider Earl's Court business community**
 - Face to face visits
 - Networking event to launch the brand
 - Themed working groups – A discussion took place about the importance of engaging with Earl's Court Road land owners in addition to the businesses. Cllr Wade has raised this previously and done some preliminary reaching out to landlords. TLC have resources at their disposal which might assist

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- **Action:** *The means* to coordinate an initial meeting with landlords, also to keep track of voids in the area

- **Quick-fire projects update**

- Developing the Earl's Court brand
 - i. Shortlisted concepts for public vote
 - ii. Lampost banners, socials and website
 - iii. January launch event
- Earl's Court Foodie Fortnight – January 2022 (now postponed to February 12-20th)
- K&C Mutual Aid 'Transition Lunches' program – positive feedback about the sessions. There was confusion expressed by some small businesses that they didn't receive COVID grants info.

- **AOB**

Highways meeting – Nandos planning permission. Taco bell, needs planning and licensing input.

Something a BID would work on?

Shop fronts – curating the high street

Discussion around engaging Freeholders – do the council have a database? Can help address the issue of voids. SB updated that there is a plan to engage landlords

Philipino community – how do we make it inclusive? Attempting to encourage involvement in the Food Week promotion.

Deliveries as a themed working group. Takeaways etc. Deliveroo, Uber Eats etc. - Something a BID could resource?