HAM AND PETERSHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

COMMITTEE MEETING

**TUESDAY 21ST JULY 2020**

Online, 7.30PM

**Present**

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| Simon Coupland (Chair) | David Williams |
| David Lamb | Jean Loveland |
| Penny Frost | Geoff Bond |
| Justine Langford | Brian Waters |
| Andree Frieze | Tina Waas |
| Brian Willman | Lisa Fairmaner |
| Gareth Richards |  |
| Siriol Davies (Co-ordinator) | Simon Cavanagh, RHP (guest) |

**MINUTES**

1. **Apologies** were accepted from Stan Shaw.

The Chair welcomed Simon Cavanagh, Regeneration Manager at RHP since January, with a background in building affordable homes for Housing Associations or councils.

1. **Minutes of last meeting 17th March**

The minutes were accepted.

Matters Arising -

**Richmond Park transport strategy** - a six-month trial without cars is scheduled. There were differing views on whether this should simply run as a continuation of the lockdown policy or should be deferred until next year as the current situation is not comparable. GB had contacted the Royal Parks and had no response. The Forum had requested that the Royal Parks make their plans in consultation with the local councils, but has had no communications from them apart from seeing their public pronouncements. The park roads are private and therefore not subject to the usual requirements such as impact assessments of any change.

It was agreed that the North Kingston Forum should be invited to hold a joint meeting, to conduct a public debate and feed back local views to the Royal Parks. AF will contact them.

1. **Local Area Fund**

This fund, sourced through the CIL and Civic Pride Fund, has £10k to give to each ward. Ham and Petersham is the first ward to benefit. Some applications for small projects (e.g. from the Youth Service and for a poo-bag machine) have been received. Councillors can make the decisions, but are seeking views on how to go forward. It was suggested that more significant projects might be considered such as a skate park or improving St Richard’s square. The fund has been advertised through the Council twitter account and the recent Community Conversation. It could be publicised through the Ham and Petersham magazine. Councillors will agree a deadline and process for applications.

1. **Liveable Neighbourhood Bid**

The Bid made to Tfl for money to connect Richmond and Kingston by improving pedestrian and cycle paths, has failed. However, LBRuT has received £100k from the DfT/Tfl from the Emergency Active Travel Fund, which is intended to enable social distancing, create new cycle lanes and reduce car use (given the evidence that pollution exacerbates the impact of Coronavirus). The question asked was whether some of the aims of the LN bid could be achieved through this new funding.

**Travel to school -** Under 18s will be losing free travel rights. This is a concern, since at Grey Court, 47-65% of pupils use public transport to get to school. The mean distance travelled is 2.5k, potentially a good distance for cycling. School Streets have been proposed; these close the street to through traffic (not residents) at school opening and closing times. The LN bid had proposed Ham St as a cycle route, but given the relatively high number of accidents there, the suggestion had been to put bollards near the library to stop through traffic. Another option would be a filter on the corner of Ham Common, by St Thomas’s church to prevent vehicular entry there. However, this might simply divert the problem to Back Lane. The example of continuous pavements over side roads in Waltham Forest, which encourage drivers to give way to pedestrians and bikes, was mentioned. Any changes made in the short-term would not be preceded by consultation, but would all be on a trial basis. Some, created particularly for the coronavirus situation, might be short-term in intent. Long-term permanent solutions might be preferable to cheap short-term ones.

The bid for the next tranche of money must be made by Friday. The Forum gave their support to this. AF will speak to the Head of Grey Court about the school streets proposal, before confirming with the council. AF has been co-opted to the Grey Court Education Fund Board.

1. **New permitted development rights**

New regulations have recently been published on developments which are permitted without planning permission. These include extensions of up to two extra storeys on flats built after 1948, rules on upward extensions of dwellings of any date, replacement of commercial or residential premises with residential (dating from pre-1989 and vacant for 6 months). Details will be circulated by LF.

Research indicates that only 22% of changes made through permitted development met space standards; planning permission ensures higher standards. The changes need to be analyzed to understand the scale and the concomitant risk of poor quality accommodation being built. The reduced requirement for planning permission will lead to a fall in income for the local authority and a consequent reduction in their capacity to promote good design.

6. **Pedestrian/cycle bridge across river**

The council has recently made a bid for funding a bridge between Ham and Twickenham in one of two locations. However, the funding was designed for projects that can be quickly launched, which is not the case here, as only a feasibility study has been conducted. The bid has elicited concern and negative feedback on social media.

The Neighbourhood Plan called for an assessment of the viability of a bridge. A Forum Travel workshop in 2016 had recorded 90% support by attendees for a bridge. It was agreed that, to clarify the Forum’s position and the history of the idea, an article should be put in the H & P magazine. Justine Langford will talk to the editor about text for the next issue.

7. **ATAG Report**

At the ATAG they discussed the allocation of the first tranche of COVID-19 funding that has been awarded by the central government. None of the projects were in Ham or Petersham, although projects taking place in the borough will be positive for residents out and about in the surrounding area. (Hence the bid mentioned in item 4 above).

8. **Telecoms Tower**

The importance of good connections in this era of home working was emphasized. It is difficult to find suitable locations without knowing the criteria required. AF will try to ascertain further information.

9. **Electric charging points**

There are only 3 charging points in the area and this is not enough to meet demand. They need to be central and visible. They are installed by Source London, who have no current plans to add more. However there is funding available for using lamp-posts. The question has been raised at councillors’ surgeries. AF will share the response from the council.

Electric cars are part of the future, but not the answer to improving the environment because of the materials used. Alternatives to car ownership are car-sharing schemes such as zipcar, hiyacar or getaround.

10. **Finance/Treasurer**

Since John Goddard stepped down, Brain Willman has been Acting Treasurer. The Chair is now a bank signatory. A new treasurer is sought and volunteers are welcome; the number of transactions is small.

Brian Waters was thanked for his generous donation to fund the H & P magazine entries for the Forum for four issues. This means that the money from Petersham United Charities for the same purpose can be held over for use next year.

11.**Marking return to normality**

Discussion was deferred, but it was noted that Ham Parade Market will re-open on 1st August (with suitable spacing) and Ham Fair is due to be held on 12th September.

12. **AOB**

**Ham Close** - Simon Cavanagh is in the process of meeting local groups to update people on the current process. In terms of selecting a developer, invitations have been issued and the parameters of the new scheme outlined. Developers with relevant experience have 12 weeks to put forward a proposal; there will be a six-week review of submissions, followed by a public virtual exhibition of the short-listed schemes in mid-November. Feedback will inform the final decision and planning applications will be put in next year. The developer will choose the architect, in close consultation with RHP.

13. **Date of next meeting**: 15th September

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.