

Hackney Wick Fish Island | Cultural Interest Group

Minutes of the meeting on Friday 11th December 2015

Held at: **HUB 67**, 67 Rothbury Road, Hackney Wick E9

‘Working to establish a permanent, sustainable, creative economy in Hackney Wick and Fish Island

In attendance:

Karenjit Clare (University of Loughborough)
Nick Sharman (LB Hackney)
Tony Westbrook (LLDC)
Andrew Atkins (East Wick & Sweetwater)
Victoria Stonebridge (LLDC)
Mel Allison (East Wick & Sweetwater)
Joe Edgington-Pollard (LLDC)
Adriana Marques (LLDC)
Jenny Judova (Tom’s Etching Studio)
Simon Cole (Hackney Tours)
Marta Rossi (Goldsmiths, University of London)
Cecil Sagoe (University College London)
Jacob Fairless Nicholson - **Secretary** (Artist)
Hannah Andrews - **Chair** (Fish Island Labs/Trampery)
Rebecca Feiner (Artist)
Chris Kennedy (LB Hackney)
Richard Brown (Unit-APD/Affordable Wick)
Rachel Blake (LB Tower Hamlets)
Laura May Lewis (Chat’s Palace/Artist)
Fabricio Mendes (Social Entrepreneur)
Kristie Lucassen (Peabody/Neptune Wharf)
Ozlem Edizel (Middlesex University)
Graeme Evans (Middlesex University)
William Chamberlain (Creative Wick)
Francis Aguiard (London School of Economics)
Sally Andrews (Hub 67)
Lucy Oliver Harrison (The Yard Theatre)

Agenda:

1) Graeme Evans, Hydrocitizenship update

- Graeme Evans from Middlesex University has been working in Hackney Wick for the past 15 months on the 'Hydrocitizenship' project and was present at Hackney WickED Open Studios in June 2015. The project explores water and the environment, and specifically how canals and rivers support ecosystems and communities. The project has involved collecting material/research/data from residents around the Lower Lea Valley, as far up as Walthamstow marshes, Stoke Newington reservoirs, and the new Lea River that flows down to Bow. As part of the project, students from Middlesex University have also looked at how imaginary spaces might be used in the future by communities here.

Some findings:

- The Mapping study had 42 participants, one striking result was that the towpath around HWFI was mentioned as both 'liked' and 'disliked', from security issues to nature/environmental benefits (safety and security issues were not endemic to HWFI, and pop up elsewhere along the Lea Valley).
- Green spaces were also mentioned a lot, and so were the Olympic venues that seemed to jar with the identity of the people in the area. On the other hand some participants valued the Olympic venues culturally.

- Graeme said there are some issues here that need to be reconciled – the broader issues are pretty consistent across the different sites, and they need to be addressed along the breadth of the waterways. Communities and environments need to be connected along the whole of the Lea Valley not just in isolated stretches by different bodies. All outputs from the project can be accessed at www.leavalley.org

- Graeme is planning a future project at The Three Mills in Spring 2016 to deliver energy via a turbine mill. He is keen to access schools, local residents and citizen-guided initiatives.

- In response to this proposal, William Chamberlain mentioned work by Vilmar Pellison, who started a safer towpath scheme amongst the boating community. Vilmar eventually convinced LLDC/LB Tower Hamlets to fit towpath lighting along the stretch of canal between Hackney Wick and Fish Island and that is an excellent example of citizen activism. The project was initiated in the CIG and the whole process took around three years before lighting was successfully introduced.

- Other suggestions from members included Graeme contacting Scottish Canals and Waterways – and to conduct research into towpath management – who is responsible for the land in specific areas and places?

- It was revealed there is an ongoing LSE project also involved in towpath management. Those involved cited a lot of conflict between Hackney and Tower Hamlets in terms of providing lights and managing them and questions remaining around the width of the towpath.

2) Neptune Wharf update, Kristie Lucassen

- The first phase of the Peabody project is divided into two sites. Demolition started mid-October and should finish immediately. Various different architects have been involved in the design of the scheme. There will be 45,000 m/sq. of commercial space on the ground floor of the site – more info to follow soon.

- April 2016 will see contracts with contractors signed and nothing much will happen on the site until then. The first phase should be complete by Jan 2018, with the second and third phases to follow in 2020 and 2021.

- Rebecca Feiner asked about affordability and suggested that it be laid down. Kristie said that planning permission was granted for 4% affordable - Peabody don't usually do as little as 4% and will probably aim for 35%.

- There was a question asked about how such a low figure can be possible. It was revealed LLDC had probably given approval of a 4% affordable housing because there was a primary school included on the site in the planning application.

- Councillor Rachel Blake said that 4% is an example of where citizens must hold elected bodies to account for levels and processes and mechanisms in planning. All figures are based on levels 'at that time', and although review mechanisms are in place it is useful to ask for them. It's also really important to keep a discussion up around how the area is changing, and how land prices are rising.

- Richard Brown said that we should just be able to build more affordable homes.

- Adriana Marquez asked if an update on workspace could be given. Kristie said she is working with a social enterprise and that there will be affordable workspace. Adriana said that the affordable workspace rate will be applied to the Masterplan area around Hackney Wick station only and cannot be rolled out across HWFI (including the Peabody site). Adriana appreciates the definition of affordability is difficult to pin down, but said that the LLDC are intent on negotiating with developers and planning authorities. For developments in planning authority land, it is hoped workspace will be re-provided.

- William Chamberlain then asked if Peabody will be influenced by the proposed £8-10 per square foot rate for affordable workspace. Kristie said it will definitely be affordable, but couldn't say if the deal will be made public. Adriana suggested that for workspace rates, the £8-10 per sq. foot is going straight to the operator, and that a rate including services etc. will more realistically be around £13 per sq. ft.

- The office building at Neptune Wharf is being retained for security to remain on the site for several months, for meeting facilities, toilets, etc. William Chamberlain asked about interim uses but nothing was mentioned. Will also said that the empty floorplate is now a huge concrete slab, and that it could be painted.

3) Stratford Waterfront, Victoria Stonebridge

- Consultation has begun on the site that will be home to The V&A, London College of Fashion, Sadler's Wells and The Smithsonian Institute. LLDC are at the very first stages and Victoria is here to tell us that more consultation activities will be rolled out currently.

- Rebecca Feiner asked how Stratford Waterfront fits into Olympicopolis. Victoria said that yes it does fit into that greater scheme, but that a bigger public launch will follow in the following years.

- There was also a question about it being called 'Stratford Waterfront'. Victoria said that it is known as that at the moment.

4) Update on East Wick and Sweetwater, Andrew Atkins

- Came to see CIG in September. Have moved on from consultation stage, and are now at Reserved Matters stage. LLDC, Places for People, Balfour Beatty and various architects are involved.

- Overview of site is that they will deliver 1500 units, East Wick is at Masterplan Application stage (and will deliver 900 units), Sweetwater will deliver less (at 600 units). Commercial space will be provided too, as well as two new schools, nurseries, play spaces, and a doctor's surgery as well.

- The Masterplan Application was put forward in September 2015, and Phase 1 construction is hoped to begin in Summer of 2016.

- Phase 1 is the first of 4 phases and will provide the 'Neighbourhood heart' of the scheme, extending the planned neighbourhood centre of Hackney Wick across the canal. It includes 295 units heavily weighted towards family use. Three architects are engaged in Phase 1. Site will include a lot of public realm, so pedestrian links, sitting areas, meeting and playing spaces, community gardens and squares, and possibly events spaces too. It is hoped business uses will break out across the space and that 'active' windows will be prevalent to create an exciting space.

- The CIG were provided with a detailed slideshow including illustrations and CGIs of the site and how it might look from above. Plans of individual blocks were also given. The properties are to contain under-street level parking and are formed of a mix of mews, terraced housing and flats. It was asserted that if Phase 1 were done correctly, it would build wanted momentum for the scheme.

- Sustainability was a key issue for the developers, so materials, energy and water management have been considered. Examples include using 100% sustainable timber. Aspirations were also outlined around cycling, biodiversity and sustainable lifestyles.

- There was a final request for people to get involved in the consultation events. All materials are online and feedback can be submitted by email or post.

- Questions from the CIG followed on affordable housing. 30% will be affordable, although LLDC have asked for the provision of a greater percentage for Phase 1, so at the moment that level is at 37% affordable.

- Will it be Car free? This is very difficult because people's wants and needs are varied. The street environment has been worked on rigorously, so controlled hours parking, blue badge holders only etc. rules will apply. It was acknowledged a zero-car scheme puts pressure on

land elsewhere. Nick Sharman said there is a trend towards car-free in inner London developments elsewhere and that it would be good to see that here in this new inner London development.

- The onsite school will be finished by September 2016. HWFI is in the catchment area. The school will have its own website and a lot of time and consideration has been put into the plan.

- Will Chamberlain asked about food waste and clean biogas production. No obligation to provide schemes such as this.

- Nick Sharman asked about getting 'friendly' employment uses, both to sustain mix of what exists already and to make the place appealing, what do you have in place to achieve this? A medium term hold will take place, this will include 5-10 year leases. Places for People is involved as the long-term manager of the scheme. Curation will be key. Landlord powers will be utilised. LLDC also has a degree of control. Nick worries that the leases are low and in five years other tenants will move in who will be able to outprice existing tenants. Nick cited Shoreditch as a bad example of what could happen and is worried about long-term control. Nick is worried that this market-level workspace is a temporary commitment. Nick said we must think about long-term management of the area. Scholarships and business starter funding are included in that.

- In response to that, Victoria Stonebridge said that Echo ++ (the business arm of Echo) is going really well, one Hackney business, 'Drapers' has built up quite a head of steam from it, and is doing really well. Hannah from Fish Island Labs also gave positive feedback on the venture. Simon from Hackney Walking Tours also gave feedback and said he now has access to a massive network across East London. Simon said there's lots of spin-offs from this. Although Will Chamberlain said that the scheme is only open to those that have spare capacity to offer, and that there are stipulations that must be met. The group was reminded that 'Echos' can be earned through simple tasks such as ironing for elderly groups.

- Nick Sharman brought the discussion back to the development and how sound it is. The developers want to gauge a sense of what works and doesn't work. Mistakes in East Village that need to be remedied were given as an example of what the scheme hopes to aspire to. Nick asked how we can usefully input to the development and the planning of it and said he was not surprised the consultation was not well attended because everything already seemed to be present.

- Melanie said that consultation was useful to get feedback and opinion on how things look, and would love to hear more on if it sounds like we're doing the right thing, and if there is anything that we've missed etc.

- Closing the discussion, William Chamberlain offered feedback on East Village and Richard Brown asked who the PRS provider might be. It was revealed nothing was set in stone.

5) Tom's Etching Studio, Jenny Judova

- Tom's Etching Studio has moved to Hackney Wick's Mother Studios from Peckham. The studio is open-access and people who want to can come and use the facilities. There is also

an exhibition space open to artists for use for exhibitions. There is an exhibition tonight with a live-printing session and raffle.

<http://www.tomsetchingstudio.co.uk/>

6) Update on anti-social behavior and the late-night economy, Lucy from the Yard Theatre

- There is a meeting on Tuesday 15th December at 6pm at the Yard Theatre, this is a combination of Pub Watch members and key local residents. It is a completely open meeting. Please contact lucy@theyardtheatre.co.uk for more details. Community stewarding is on the agenda.

- Jenny from Tom's Etching Studio, a new member of the HWFI community asked what the problems have been.

7) Update on parking controls

- Parking controls in Fish Island will come into force on the 14th December with enforcement from mid-January 2016. Tower Hamlets should be contacted for ticketing and permits.

8) Loughborough University CLEVER research project for 18-25yr olds - £20 Love to Shop vouchers - Dr. Grace Smalley

Loughborough University in London have been in touch about 'The Clever Project', and are offering a £20 Love Shopping voucher in return for an interview on the topic of broken mobile phones. The interviews will be held at the Loughborough University campus at Here East. More details to be circulated via the network.

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Lastly, Lucy from the Yard Theatre offered to chair the next meeting on Friday 8th January 2016 at the Yard Theatre.