

**VICTORIA NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM
STEERING GROUP MEETING - MINUTES
18 February 2025 17:00-18:20
London Heritage Quarter, 54 Wilton Road SW1V 1DE**

Attendees

Steering Group Resident members	Observers
Graeme Cottam (<i>dial in</i>)	Pamela Honour, resident
Fiona Geddes (<i>dial in</i>)	Randa Hanna, MAPP Architects
Glenn Murphy, Vice Chair	Chris Darling, Darling Associates
Carlo Comminos	Fr Jonathan Kester (<i>dial in</i>)
Steering Group Business members	
Nigel Hughes, Chair	
Jane Parsons, Secretary	
Charlie Baxter (<i>dial in</i>)	

Guests (non VNF members)

1. Jon Herbert, Troy Planning + Design, guest speaker (*dial in*)
2. Claire Mander and Alice Walters, theCOLAB / The Artist's Garden

Apologies

Vishakha Parekh, SG Resident member
 Leslie Macleod-Miller, SG Resident member
 Siggý Oskarsson, SG Business member
 Janet de Klerk, LandSec
 Terence Rodrigues, Resident

Actions in bold

- 1 Welcome, introductions, approval of previous Steering Group meeting minutes / matters arising not addressed on the agenda**

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and noted apologies. The meeting was declared quorate.¹

The minutes of the last Steering Group meeting (27.11.24) were approved without alteration. Matters arising not addressed on the agenda:

- Following the last meeting the VNF Safeguarding Policy was updated and v2 of the Policy has been uploaded to the VNF website.
- The Chair noted that at the AGM in November both Siggý Oskarsson and Carlo Comminos had been officially appointed to the Steering Group.

¹ To be quorate (for ratification of any significant decisions) a minimum of three residents and three business members is required. If a meeting is not quorate any significant decisions require approval from additional Steering Group members by email.

- Jon Herbert from Troy confirmed that the actions related to the Neighbourhood Plan agreed at the last Steering Group meeting had been completed, including the Executive Summary which had been prepared and circulated, and Troy, the VNF and London Heritage Quarter had met with TfL and WCC for initial discussions around the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan project. Jon mentioned the need to respond to Westminster's sustainable transport strategy, to use it as an opportunity to further discussion the production of a SUMP for the area.

2 Guest speaker: Claire Mander, theCOLAB / The Artist's Garden

Claire Mander presented an overview of the Artist's Garden, a sculpture garden above Temple tube station dedicated to women artists, and its unique position in raising issues of gender parity and inclusion. Claire outlined the challenges faced by the Garden, including lack of accessibility, no power, and no waste facilities. Claire outlined the request for NCIL funding for the project, which was estimated to be around £400,000 over three years, with a smaller contribution requested from each neighborhood forum. This would support the proposed future of the Artist's Garden from 2025-30, making it an accessible and inclusive public space.

Graeme Cottam raised concerns about the license duration and the potential for combining lift installation with step-free access at Temple tube station.

Claire acknowledged the challenges and suggested forming a stakeholder group with TfL and Westminster to discuss cost-saving measures.

Fiona Geddes suggested the idea of a refreshment station to encourage longer stays at the garden, which Claire Mander agreed was being considered but explained the need for power to implement refreshment facilities and the ongoing efforts to explore revenue generation options.

Nigel Hughes and other members discussed the feasibility of the funding request. The Artist's Garden was not in an existing Neighbourhood Forum area hence their presentation to several Forums. Claire confirmed the intention to submit the NCIL application in the next round, aiming for April.

The presentation from Claire Mander, The Artist's Garden is [here](#).

3 Victoria Neighbourhood Plan (VNP)

Jon Herbert provides an update on the Neighborhood Plan submission, noting the comprehensive submission pack including the plan, Executive Summary, and supporting documents. The plan had been updated following the Reg 14 consultation feedback and included a basic condition statement, SEA screening, and HRA screening. A long consultation statement was included, spanning eight volumes, demonstrating extensive consultation efforts since 2016.

Jon had provided the Steering Group with a draft letter to be signed off which would accompany the formal submission of the Plan to Westminster City Council. The Steering Group was asking to formally resolve to approve the Neighbourhood Plan for submission purposes so that the date of this meeting could be noted on the cover letter. Next steps were:

- WCC would lead the examination stage which normally takes around six months but given the status of the Partial Review of the City Plan, could take longer.

- WCC would run another round of consultation, for a period of six weeks. There was no set date for when this would take place. In parallel to this they would appoint an Examiner, and VNF was able to provide input to this appointment process. After consultation it was normal for the Examiner to issue a series of clarification questions, the VNF would have a few weeks in which to respond. After that, the Examiner would issue a Fact Check version of their report, before then issuing their final report. This will likely include a set of recommendations which the Forum will then need to make before it can proceed to referendum.
- There will be two referenda in Victoria, organized by WCC: one for residents and one for non-domestic ratepayers. If the referenda result in a yes vote, then WCC would take the Plan through their Committee cycle to confirm that it can be made as part of the City Plan.

ACTION: The Steering Group approved the signing of the cover letter to accompany the submission of the Plan to WCC and approved the formal submission of the Plan to WCC.

4 VNF Steering Group

The Chair noted that Terence Rodrigues had been unable to attend this meeting but may join the Steering Group at the next meeting, as a resident member. Janet de Klerk, LandSec, was also unable to attend this meeting but may join as a business member, replacing previous business member Peter Mail (LandSec).

Chris Darling (Darling Associates) and Randa Hanna (MAPP Architects) attended this meeting as observers, with a view to possibly joining the Steering Group or sub-groups in future. Pam Honour, local resident, also joined the meeting as an observer with a view to potentially joining the Steering Group in future.

5 VNF redesignation in 2025

The Chair explained that the VNF was required to go through the process of redesignation in 2025, as this was a 5-yearly requirement and following the meeting it was confirmed that the starting date for the next five-year period would be 30 November as the VNF was last redesignated on 30.11.20.

Westminster City Council had introduced additional requirements for designation, asking applicants to “elaborate on how the demographic structure of the Forum reflects on the following aspects of the Neighbourhood Area: age, gender, household composition, identity, tenure of household, economic activity status and level of education”, as well as illustrating spatial diversity. To address this challenge the Chair invited a few members of the Steering Group to volunteer to form a sub-group to lead the redesignation process. The Chair had also asked WCC for a meeting to ensure the Council’s requirements were clear, for the benefit of both parties.

ACTION: Volunteers to contact the Chair.

6 NCIL projects

- a) The Forum had been notified by WCC of NCIL Autumn round decisions for information only, as they were “still subject to final sign-off and the required call-in period.” The applicants had been notified. The list included:
 - The Queen Anne’s Gate Residents’ Association: Upgrade to Narrow End of Old Queen Street (£92,916 - Victoria NCIL area)

- Victoria Business Improvement District: King's Scholars' Passage Greening Project (£30,000 - Victoria NCIL area)
- b) WCC's NCIL application for CCTV was no longer going ahead as WCC had found the budget to fund it. It was noted that several Forums had discussed their dissatisfaction with how the NCIL process was managed by the Council. Mayfair Neighbourhood Forum was moving to make some firmer representations regarding the NCIL process. The VNF Steering Group supported engaging with other Forums on this matter, in a concerted effort to try and unlock the system.
- c) On Westminster Cathedral Piazza, Carlo was waiting on Adam Summerfield's (WCC) approval to spend the £30k allocated to the VNF for Victoria Street Greening. London Heritage Quarter (LHQ) had agreed to match fund this amount, so the project had £60k total to spend, pending Adam's approval. Two consultants would be working on the project, engaged by LHQ and the VNF respectively: Spacehub and We Are Placemaking.
- d) The initial installation of greening along King's Scholars' Passage was taking place this week although LHQ was awaiting receipt of the £30k allocated NCIL funds. **Jane would obtain the NCIL application from LHQ colleagues, to share with interested Steering Group members.**

Planning consultations

It was thought that the Planning Application for 171 Victoria Street was on hold as there was a by-election next week, and the Application would probably go to Committee after the by-election. Members agreed that proposed improvements to Cathedral Piazza would be of great benefit to the owners of 171 and the current situation with anti-social behaviour a hindrance, so it would be useful for the London Heritage Quarter Team, with the VNF, to engage with Motcomb once more before a potential Planning Committee to try and encourage further tweaks to the proposals. It was also suggested that representations should be made either at Committee or via Ward Councillors that Planning Committee members should visit the site before determining the application. Glenn Murphy suggested it might be useful to start thinking about the proposed projects in the Neighbourhood Plan and drafting NCIL applications for some of them, which would help us to conceptually 'ringfence' funds from the Victoria NCIL area, to start creating outline budgets for Neighbourhood Plan projects, and to help mitigate delays to projects arising from the lengthy NCIL application/approval process. Carlo and Charlie agreed this could be very useful and the NCIL sub-committee could start looking at this.

On the Artist's Garden, members agreed that although it was outside of Victoria it was used by residents of the area. There was no definite agreement on whether the VNF would support an application for Victoria NCIL funds, but Claire had subsequently suggested £100,000 (which was higher than potential numbers discussed at the meeting). Members were asked to let the Chair know whether, in principle, they would support a contribution to the Artist's Garden and if so, at what level.

ACTIONS:

- **NCIL application for King's Scholars' Passage to be circulated**
- **LHQ to be asked to contact Motcomb re: 171 Victoria / Cathedral Piazza**
- **NH to assist Carlo in contacting Adam Summerfield at WCC**
- **Members to advise whether they would support a VNF NCIL contribution to the Artist's Garden**

7 LHQ Women's Night Safety Audit

The Chair explained that the draft report shared with the meeting papers was the summary of a project undertaken by Publica for London Heritage Quarter which contained a series of recommendations, some of which could potentially be taken forward by the VNF. Members were asked to review the recommendations and consider whether any might be appropriate for the VNF to incorporate into its future programme.

***ACTION:* Members to feedback to the Chair**

8 AOB / end of meeting

Date of upcoming meetings:

To be diarised for 2025.