Hackney Wick & Fish Island Cultural Interest Group

Minutes of the meeting on Friday 14th December 2012

Held at: **Formans Smokehouse Gallery, Fish Island, London E3**

***“Helping to establish a permanent, sustainable, creative community in Hackney Wick.'***

**In attendance:**

Chair: William Chamberlain

Minutes : Rebecca Feiner - Artist (Mother Studio)

Dr Nancy Stevenson - University of Westminster

C.J Mitchell - Live Art Development Agency

Collin Priest - Studio Columba

Paddy Looney - Cadplan Ltd

Duncan O Brien - Treehouse Kitchen

Issac Marrard - The Wick Newspaper

James Morgan - The Hackney Pearl

Lolly Marlborough - The London Lions

Vince Macaulay - The London Lions

Susie Miller - Sparked at Viewtube

Helen Ball - Sparked at Viewtube

Lydia Brightling Reed - Sparked at View tube

Neil Howden - Stour Space

Rebecca Whyte - Stour Space

Juliet Can - Stour Space

BEAN J - Performance Space

Tom Seaton - Counter cafe/ CRATE

John Atherton - The Wick Art Store

Elisha - Hackney Wick Festival

Marek Wasuiewski – Bouyed up limited

Collin Atkinson Resident- organic Wick

Richard Brown - affordablewick.com

Liza Fior - MUF

**Authorities:**

Esther Everett- LLDC

Simone Williams - LB Tower Hamlets

Claire Gevaux - LLDC/ Legacy List

**Introductions and updates:**

**1.** CIG was updated with the results of recent LLDC funding applications of which eight members of CIG had been successful including the following;

Darren Ellis – The Wick Newspaper, Richard Brown – Affordable Wick, Foxtrot - CIG website, Cre8 Life Style Centre - Garden, Yard Theatre, Andy Willis – Front Side Gardens, Andreas Lang x2.

All successful applications met yesterday to discuss future. CIG is excited by the potential for links that can continue to grow.

**2. Hackney Wick Website.** Chair explained it is important for all members of CIG to feed into the **Hackney Wick.org** website- details of which will aim to be circulated round the whole group before Christmas, with an aim to draw down funding in January 2013.

**3.** **Stour Space**: The joint directors of Stour Space Neal & Becx Whyte explained to the meeting about the potential impact of the sale of the Victoria Wharf site, which went on the market six months ago.

Although the creative businesses and arts in Hackney Wick have been much praised all the freeholds are privately owned causing doubts over future security of tenure and raising many legal issues that have to be addressed if Stour Space and others are to secure a future in the area.

Neal outlined the role the Localism Act 2011 will play under ‘rights and powers of communities’ section which makes provision for a ‘community’ to put in a bid to buy Stour Space and Victoria Wharf. N & B requested support from Tower Hamlets council to support the community in this process of which Stour Space has established itself as part of. Tower Hamlets Asset Management Team confirmed at CIG meeting that they do encourage and want the community to take a lead in this process. As a first step in the process Neal has registered himself with Tower Hamlets as the main interest for Stour Space and Victoria Wharf.

Neal stated that the site is currently protected for 18 months. Becx explained there is an option of a 25 year mortgage which is being explored for the entire site which could then be held by a Community Trust that would have to be formed in a way that it could administer and hold property as a community asset. CIG agreed this could be an opportunity for LLDC and other authorities working closely together to ‘give back to the community’.

Current cost of the site and purchase money need to be raised stand at £4million. There are many legal issues to navigate and William C is currently offering some legal guidance pro bono in the interim to N& B.

It was that social media be fully utilised to galvanize to support for the project including a Victoria Wharf FB page/ forum. If freehold falls into private hands then it is estimated up to 150 businesses and 200 personal homes could be at risk if sold off to a private developer. It was suggested that CIG should try attract a developer with social conscience / or ‘poacher turned game keeper’, for advice and extra clout to achieve this goal.

**4. Performance Space**: have been served an abatement notice from the Tower Hamlets council due to one noise complaint. They are currently at risk of a £20,000 fine which they cannot afford. They do not have the resources to sound proof. They are discussing their future with ACE & Jerwood Space, and Stour Space have been supportive. Tower Hamlets arts dept are not being supportive. They report that Hackney council are currently being more helpful and have put them on a waiting list for vacant council properties. Anne Sutcliff who was present from Tower Hamlets suggested they contact the Asset Management Team and ask about properties on Roman Road.  The Yard Theatre has also been served an abatement notice.

Liza from MUF suggested using social media to get supporter to comment on planning applications and other issues with Tower Hamlets, Hackney & LDDC to clearly establish a campaigning voice. Liza reported that she had met (Amanda?) Barker from NYC (responsible for social developments in New York) who immediately recognised the potential of the area, how it is a point of change and the need to establish mixed usage.

**5. Neptune Wharf**: Marek asked about Neptune Wharf which currently has no recreational element.

**6.** **London Lions Basket Ball Team**: Vince and Lolly explained that the team would be moving to the copper box, that they are working in partnership with GLA, a registered charity and the only professional team. At the end of January 2013 they will have a TV recorded session and invite CIG members. They reported it will be the best venue in the UK. Vince described the new venue will be ‘basket ball central’ with copper box providing a capacity of 6,000 and an interested population of 300, 000 Lithuanians and other ethnicities to draw upon in London.

Vince & Lolly stressed their openness to engaging with the community and the local arts scene from photography to video, to street art, fashion, dance and performance. The London Lions will play 20 to 22 home games every year plus opportunities for performances etc in half term breaks. The team are currently operating out of Crystal Palace. William pointed about the potential positive impact of regularly having 6,000 visitors on to the local area every Friday night.

**7. Dalston Cola: (Tree House Kitchen)**a new manufacturing venture and local bottling plant is moving to the area. Set up by two chefs including Steve Wilson who instigated The peoples Kitchen and is Manager of the Russet in Hackney Downs . Dalston Cola is made to a secret recipe and aims to be a healthy alternative soft drink. Both chefs share the same philosophy and interest in food sustainability and community. Tree House Kitchen will have an opening and invite CIG members. They are keen to employ local people in the area. GLL have drinks contracts and are receptive to to local products. It was suggested that many local bars and cafes may be interested in stocking Dalston Cola including view tube cafe and other outlet that will develop in the Olympic Park.

**8. Mooring Network**: Marek explained concept of creating a genuine floating canal economy & wants to encourage waterside venues and businesses to participate and not just see it as an ‘add on’. Marek has set up a forum, an e-form and paper version to help make it happen. WC suggested  a waterside suggest group, which could include those biz with waterside frontage such as Stour Space, Crate Brweery/ White Building, Counter Cafe etc.

**9. Parking:** CIG discussed the inconvenience of local parking restrictions and it’s impact both residentially and on business. Tower Hamlets current commercial parking costs are £800 pa & £30 pa for residents. Canal boat owners could not park as they do have a permanent address but are part of local economy and community, Stour Space said it houses 30 small businesses that cannot afford Tower Hamlets charges. A representative of Tower Hamlets at the meeting said they would make sure that CIG was notified of any future consultations on this matter.

**10. View Tube Cafe/ Gallery**: Helen and Suzy are curators and project managers of the space. They explained the remit of getting people to engage  with the Olympic Park/ legacy.  They will be working with local schools from January 2013 and interested in ‘public facing’ initiatives linked to permanent works in the park and family workshops and other lateral thinking ideas to increase local people to use the space. They are looking to link with local venues and sites. They have a commissioning budget for local artists. They have a project space to exhibit for local artists. The new cafe will be a family run business. The Greenway is open, do visit, there will be an extension and a second viewing platform in 2013.

**11.** **Canal Park & MUF architects**: Eliza introduced the canal park and concept behind it. John Newton has been working on this (£10 million budget?) produced a masterplan, there’s a budget £1million to make pieces beyond  the tow path coming from the north using a ‘patch esque’ approach to imaginatively develop open space and spaces in between for youth, play, ecology. Ideas include an open air lido, zone identified for very simple single structure roof lit studios (skylights) to work with how people use open space, public space and how it is defined, idea of a canal park.

Liza explained that MUF are in negotiations with British waterways to install light activated walks by movement along the tow paths and fully integrate disabled access. It is hoped that built projects will be of a standard to inspire and become showcases for local businesses.

Liza congratulated WC for setting up the CIG group that brings all the different parties and information together.

**12**. **ICMovement at Cre8**. William has set up a special youth sports group delivering elite urban sport coaching in Tricking/Tumbling/Acrobatics/Parkour/Capoeira called I.C Movement at the old Public Baths (Cre8) and encouraged everyone to let any 12 plus age group to go along to the taster days on Dec 6th, 13th, 20th.

**13.** **Local Loyalty Cards**: Tom of Counter Cafe agreed to hold a launch for the scheme for those who live and work in the area. CIG agreed it was a great idea. Tom explained for it to be a success other businesses and service had to actively engage and come on board. The meeting suggested looking at the Transition Towns model, working in Totnes, Brixton and Hackney for how they operate and looking at local Time banks. WC suggested the scheme could be supported and publicised through the forthcoming website (due to be launched in March 2013).

**AOB**

**TFL: have again left local businesses, venues and cafes off their map.** CIG will be updated with the adjusted maps and look at the edition of ‘The Wick’ newspaper that documented many of the local businesses.

**Self build/ affordable space**: Richard will be wheeling out his self build studio/ office space into Queens Yard in 2013.

**Float Lab:** concept of developing science/ engineering floating laboratory to encourage imaginative youth involvement in the subject. The canal forms a corridor through many of the cities most deprived areas, Tower Hamlets, hackney, Harringay. CIG meeting agreed it was a great idea, all it needs now is a boat, equipment and funding. Meeting suggested making links and the Summer School headed by Professor Brian Cox for further ideas, contacts etc.

**Formans Smokehouse Gallery**: William announced that he would be stepping down from his role as director of Formans Gallery in 2013.

**Olympic Park tours** : Please contact Esther Everett if you want to join one of the tours.

**The next CIG meeting is on Friday 8th February 2013 at 9.30am at The White Building, Queen’s Yard, Hackney Wick.**