**Friends of Marcus Garvey Library: Meeting Minutes – Saturday 8th September 2018**

**Present**: Juney de Aguilar, Jasmin Taylor, Stefan Krupsky, Isidoros Diakides, Zena Brabazon, Vanessa Ndukwe, Maëva Vilela, Sue Penny, Nelcia Findlay, Winsome Vassall, Mary Yacoob, Margaret Fowler, Jacinth Thomas, Martin Ball, Beth Thomas, Hurso Adam, Nuridin Ahmed, Luci Davin

**Minutes**: Juney de Aguilar

**Minutes of the Last Meeting**: Agreed

**Agenda**

1. **The Children’s Garden**

The proposed layout of the plans and a sketch presented by Haringey’s Regeneration Capital Manager, Stefan Krupsky was discussed. The Chair brought the meeting up to date on the current situation with respect to the Children’s Garden. Stefan talked us through the plans and the overview of the scope of the works. When he mentioned the revolving door would be used, the meeting referred him to the minutes of the previous meeting. In those minutes, Councillor Brabazon had confirmed that the door would not be opened due to the child safeguarding concerns. He was also given further background information on other related issues.

The Chair suggested that Stefan should have a meeting with Zena Brabazon to receive clarification on the situation.

Stefan confirmed he had met with the corporate landlords to talk through the interior and escape aspects from library into the library garden. It was planned that an opening would be made from the library room directly into the garden. He also said that the Bernie Grant’s Arts Centre have agreed to give a small part of their land over to the Children’s Garden.

When the Chair asked what will be happening to the land beyond the cypress tree, Stefan explained that it is to become a cycle park. There was great upset at the meeting once it was understood that this area, that is part of the Children’s Garden would now be lost and become part of the public realm.

It was also explained to Stefan that the Friends have been working with the management to reconfigure the ground floor of the library so that the young people’s area/library could be reinstated and this was inevitably going to affect the plans he was presenting.

It was reiterated to the officer, that as residents, we want to keep the land we originally had before the revolving door had been put in and a large part of the Children’s Garden had been concreted over. It was also explained that from a health and safety perspective, the revolving door in itself is inappropriate as children using the library will be will be tempted to play with the door and could injure themselves doing so.

Stefan explained that he would be getting a decision on the funding of the Council’s proposed works soon and therefore the intention is to start the work in summer 2019. It was asked will there be a formal consultation for the garden and Stefan confirmed it is not needed for this kind of project.

The allocated budget for the whole project was £1.2m but he could not confirm whether this was still the agreed amount.

Stefan explained that a steering group does exist who give their input into the project itself and that the Regeneration Team do have regular meetings with the interested parties such as Fusion. He also said they are not too far down the path that changes cannot be made to the Council’s plans.

It was agreed that the Chair would send Stefan the more detailed responses from Councillor Brabazon and we will also send today’s minutes to him. Jasmin will also send over Yeliz’s suggestions for the children’s seating.

Isidoros also extended his apologies on behalf of the Councillors as some information had not been shared in a timely manner due to the change-over of administration.

Finally, in the discussion, it was pointed out that the Regeneration Team appears to be acting in isolation of the rest of the Council and is divorced from what the residents want.

Zena Brabazon, who was unavoidably late, joined the meeting after the officer’s presentation. She was brought up to speed on what had been discussed and said she felt that it was now important to bring together the key councillors, the Regeneration Team and all the interested parties to discuss all our concerns so that we can get to the bottom of what is going on.

1. **Agreed Priorities for the Marcus Garvey Library**

The progress we have made as a Friends group was discussed.

When the library closed we held a consultation event at the town hall and worked out what the library users wanted from Marcus Garvey Library. We had a range of meetings where we went through all the concerns with the Head of Libraries and discussed and recorded her responses. Major concerns were the lack of library staff with CILIP accredited qualifications and the gap in services for children over eight years old and teenage library users. We now need to consider what we next want to prioritise as a group.

It was agreed that our long term aim is to get customer services out of the library and Martin said we should see the reconfiguring of the downstairs area as a short-term fix. It was agreed that we must now work to consider how we can work with the new regime on when and how to move customer services from the library building.

There was discussion on the nature of the disruption caused because of the location of customer services within our library. It was agreed that we should get the figures on how many times the police have been called to the library. It was also suggested we should raise the health and safety concerns of having the customer services centre in the library and in such close proximity to the Children Library.

It was also suggested when the new Apex House is completed, that customer services should be returned to the ground floor of the building. The Old Fire Station was also suggested as an alternative space for customer services, but during the discussion it was argued that this might be too small. Isidoros confirmed he will let us know as soon as he hears more about what is happening with the old fire station. It is understood that a new restaurant will be opening there in the near future.

The decision of what will happen with the customer services and its removal falls between two or three cabinet members. It was pointed out that our list of priorities has already been sent to Councillor Brabazon, and going forward we need to work out in meetings how we can get traction on and push though our concerns. We also need to ensure that the new councillors don’t get too comfortable and not carry through their manifesto promises!

1. **Feedback from Opening of the Bernie Grant Exhibition**

This was a great success. The event made it into *Tottenham Community Press* was attended by around 150 people, and recognition was given to all in the room who stuck with the project through thick and thin. Amongst others, it was attended by Jeremy Corbyn, David Lammy, Zena Brabazon, Sharon Grant and students from CONEL. It was agreed that the student’s interview with Jeremy Corbyn was the highlight of the evening.

However, Margaret said she was disappointed by the event and felt it should be more about the library.

1. **Black History Month Events**

These are now being organised. There was some discussion about what appears to be a lack of promotion of events in the Marcus Garvey library, even though there is plenty of promotion for St Ann’s library. Events in St Ann’s Library have been advertised on BBC Radio London.

Isidoros gave us the information that The Town Hall Approach Road is going to be re-named Windrush Gardens.

**Any Other Business**

**Freedom of Information Questions**

1. The Chair asked for volunteers to send in Freedom of Information questions so that we could extract more information from the Council about our library service. Vanessa, Martin, Nelcia and Jacinth volunteered to attend a meeting to discuss this.
2. **The Library as a Centre of Excellence for Black Studies**

Isidoros explained that when the library was initially opened it was meant to develop into a centre of excellence for Black Studies, and it was disappointing that this important concept seems to have been abandoned. The Chair agreed and said it was important that we continued to work to make this happen.

1. **Hackney Pirates**

Zena has come across a group called Hackney Pirates, who are an organisation very keen to come and work in Haringey on our library projects.

**8. Date of Next Meeting**

**Saturday November 24th**, 2-4 p.m. in the main meeting room.