**St James St Big Local**

Draft for approval at next meeting

**Notes of Steering Group Meeting**

**14th April 2014 At Harmony Hall**

1. **Present**

Fiona, Tara, Mo, Tommy, Wendy, Betul … Jamie for 5 mins … Neesha Badhan from 8.0pm

**Apologies** Alan (on holiday) Trevor (in hospital… all wished him well)

1. **Notes of previous meeting** **10th March** Carried Forward
2. **List of Actions** Carried Forward  
   **ACTION (completed)**: Trevor to write down financial procedure (fewer than ten steps!) so we have it all down, circulated by this Friday (14 March). Include in there what expectations group has for reporting from Crest.  
   Payments at moment needed for Fab, upcoming for Fiona and possibly Jason. Signatories as Tommy, Annemarie and Fiona? Put to vote and group agreed.  
   **ACTION**: Fabien to forward his bank details to Alan to get payment prepped for release.   
   **ACTION**: Fabien to indicate when leaflets likely to drop; all of us check to make sure we have received  
   **ACTION**: after leaflets have been dropped, filter people toward working group activities (WHO, HOW?)   
   **ACTION** (completed): all do final social media push for worker post with 1 week to go.   
   **ACTION**: Trevor needs to write paper identifying HR mechanics (crest), who would pay salary (crest) and the line management /supporting of person (tommy and Fabien for now) in order to release funds.  
   **ACTION**: Trevor to pull together induction letter to worker   
   **ACTION**: follow up w Claire and jacintha about getting name of freeholders for the properties along high street (WHO?). Intention is that it will enable us to negotiate with landlords about pop up shop  
   **ACTION**: Betul to email list of the empty properties she has scoped out, in order to get names of landlords   
   **ACTION**: Fiona to chase up rail contact. Linda has health authority contact? sgt lee, bob champion as safer neighbourhoods team.  Try to invite all to next meeting (tho with purpose about what to talk about - us pull items from wish list to show concrete)   
   **ACTION**: promote info of pop-in business meet on Fridays at Italian restaurant via social media (***updated note: restaurant now closing?***)   
   **ACTION**: invite Abdul  Komar to future meeting to inform us of what people need to do to set up stall, get licence, and we have wish list of who has been in touch, what sort of stalls we would like to see (who to coordinate this?)
3. **Structure**

* Wendy said she would like to see a much more democratic, transparent, accountable structure. She felt that lots of people did masses of work, but this did not seem to lead anywhere. Minutes were repetitive. People came to meetings but then left. We have had a lot of tension and disagreements. Now Linda has left also. The working groups seem to exist more in name than reality apart from the Geeks. At least if we had a more conventional membership and committee structure it would be clear who was responsible for what. Tommy started to speak but Neesha arrived at this point.

**Introductions**

Neesha was welcomed and introductions were made. Neesha explained that she worked for CREST and had a background in creative arts events management including some years working for local authorities. (*Neesha was then asked to wait outside while Tommy spoke to the group as he did not want to start the worker’s first meeting with too much negativity.)*  
**Structure continued**

* Tommy said he had decided to leave the group. He felt there was a lack of structure, decisions were taken by some and others left in the dark, agreements were reached but not carried through. As an example Tommy said it had been agreed that he and Anne-Marie would negotiate with the new worker, but now it seems that Fabien has been made line manager. Another example was the way the date of this meeting had been changed. Tommy had expected the police, health workers and planners to be present at this meeting. Tommy said he had sent an email explaining his concerns and his decision to leave, but this did not seem to have been received by anyone. Tommy has arranged to have a meeting with the Chair of the Big Local next week to explain his concerns. The meeting expressed regret that Tommy was feeling this way and assured him that his contributions were valued.   
  *(Neesha was invited back into the room)*
* Fiona said that it was the Big Local structure that caused so much red-tape and confusion. Everyone feels frustrated. However everyone should familiarise themselves with the relevant documents so as to understand the BL idea that we should be “a melting pot” in the early stages. Fiona has explained the basics on the St James St website and given links to all the main documents. Wendy suggested an induction / welcome document. Wendy to draft something referring to the materials Fiona has produced and send it to Anne-Marie and Tara for checking. **WD**  Fiona said that the Partnership when formed would be more structured and it is a key part of the “Getting Started Phase” to develop The Partnership and its governance, so Local Trust don’t expect a fully formed organisation at this stage. There have to be 8 or more residents voting on any issue and that those residents must comprise 51% of those present at the meeting.

1. **Next Steps**

* Fiona said that now we have the Getting Started monies and worker we should be able to start to make a difference. Fiona produced a spreadsheet showing the original timetable which has now slipped 4 months. We now need to produce an Area Profile and carry out Community Visioning which should lead to the 10 year Area Action Plan.
* Mo proposed that we have a big meeting where there are walls with the ideas /wishes we have received so far grouped together in themes; eg green issues, transport, shops, parks etc. Mo said that the Mill had successfully used this type of Asset Based Community Development process where ideas come bottom-up from the community. Wendy said a similar idea was Open Table which might work well. Individuals with some knowledge of a theme sit at a table with information, ideas etc about that theme. Members of the community circulate around the hall, visit different tables, join in for a bit, and hopefully by the end of the day find themselves seated at the table that most interests them. In this way we could re-vitalise our working groups, or perhaps set up new ones that reflect what the community want. It is very important to ensure that we invite existing community groups and interest groups as the Steering Group is not very representative of the area at present.
* Another idea was to participate in the Big Lunch. Betul suggested she could involve all the restaurant owners in the St James St Big Local area. Fiona thought it would be good to have something in the market and that a social / lunch type activity that was already being publicised as a nation-wide event would attract more people. Tara suggested that we could piggy-back on the Friends of St James St park Big Lunch. They are already quite organised and although they are outside the boundaries they are very near and lots of St J BL community will be going. We should ask if we can have a gazebo there. **NB**
* It was suggested that we could organise a ABCD / Open table event a couple of weeks after the Big Lunch and use the 1st June to publicise it. Neesha agreed to investigate possible meeting spaces; must be accessible to people with disabilities, preferrably not a religious venue or a pub, and preferrably in the Big Local area. Neesha will draw up some options and circulate them. **NB**
* Tommy said he is now on CREST management committee. There is a lunch planned for CREST volunteers and we could have a joint event. People felt this might not be fair to the CREST volunteers, but we could certainly share information there.

1. **Communications**

* Internal communications:- Tara said that currently it was easy to miss emails, gmail tends to hide some conversations, and there seem to be problems with people not receiving things. She suggested that people have better email discipline, that new topics should always be given a new title and that people should copy themselves into emails to make sure they have been sent properly. It was suggested that a googlegroup be set up so that no-one gets missed off. **WD**
* Leaflets. These are still sitting in Fabien’s garage. Tommy said he had offered to distribute them to no avail and had also suggested doing a joint distribution with the Mill who have just delivered 4,000 leaflets. Neesha agreed to try to sort out system of delivering these. **NB** Jamie had volunteered to help with delivery before having to leave.
* Fiona said there were 300 people on the mailchimp list; about half open the emails which is quite a high percentage compared to other email newsletters. Neesha suggested regular newsletters with interviews with local people so that the community is constantly hearing the message about SJBL.

**Next Meeting**

19th May 2014 7.30pm at Harmony Hall. Wendy asked if she should invite Gordon Glenday but the group agreed that it was possibly too early to ask external parties to steering group meetings due to shortage of meeting time and that the next few meetings would be best used to plan the summer/autumn events in detail.

**Following meetings**

30th June, 11th August, 22nd September, 3rd November and 8th December.