

London Living Streets Group

MINUTES of MEETING 20 November 2017

Filename: 20171120 MINUTES

Note: all corrections submitted by LLS participants now incorporated, 27.11.2017

VENUE: Alan Baxter Architects, 75 Cowcross St., London EC1M 6EL.

PRESENT (23): Rik Andrew; Michael Bach; Michael Diamond; Karl Farrell; Roger Freitas; Emma Griffin; Alastair Hanton; David Harrison; Peter Hartley; Dave Irwin; Symon Knightswood; Jeremy Leach; Charles Martin; Richard May; Robert Molteno; Susie Morrow; Andrew Orford; Ros Redhead; Colin Saunders; Patty Singleton; Herman Tribelnig; Rachel Tripp; Christopher Waller.

APOLOGIES (6): Chris Barker; Terence Bendixson; Mike Grahn; Neil Hardiman; Tom Platt; Hugh Small.

ACTIONS and INDIVIDUALS PROMISING TO TAKE ACTION IN RED

1. Safe and the City Mobile App: Presentation by Jillian Kowalchuk.

Jillian did a Masters in Public Health at the London School of Tropical Hygiene and Medicine, worked at University College London (UCL) and is now full-time at this new project.

The starting point of this project is that sexual harassment, particularly of women, is a hugely under-reported reality. On-line guides like *City Mappers* and *Google Maps* indicate the shortest route from A to B, but with no indication of the relative safety of particular streets. Safe & The City is a revolutionary GPS navigation app that better utilises publicly accessible data, while crowd-sourcing users' experiences to build a safer community one step at a time.

Safe & The City will use various data sets (including Home Office crime data) that are geo-coded and mapped to assist users in deciding the safest way of getting from A to B, guided by GPS technology. This data will then be augmented by user-experiences to further inform current users. The routes are based on a UCL risk street-level algorithm to suggest routes where users may feel safer walking. Guiding users will help create walking networks, remove barriers to women walking at night and utilise real-time data to identify, mobilise and create a safer community one step at a time.

Volunteers will be crucial to augmenting the public data sets that already exist with up-to-date 'real time' data. Jillian explained what volunteers will be asked to do (reporting incidents and perceptions on particular streets) while walking.

Several businesses interested in the idea. The project is developing relations with the London Mayor's office, the Walking & Cycling Commissioner, the Met, UCL and various other organizations. They are recruiting 100 'Brand Ambassadors' and volunteers.

A 'soft' launch will take place in December 2017; with the full launch on International Women's Day, 8 March 2018.

Website: <https://www.safeandthecity.com> One can subscribe and be kept up to date with how the project is progressing.

Contact Details: Jillian Kowalchuk can be contacted at hello@safeandthecity.com

A vigorous Q & A followed Jillian's presentation, including:

- **How London Living Streets could help:** Our knowledge of particular streets and our network of people who might become volunteers.
- **No Go areas:** the worry expressed quite widely that the app might lead to the creation of 'no go' areas which women (in particular) are advised to avoid; the onus and action should instead be on public authorities to take measures to improve safety on certain streets (better lighting, enhanced police presence etc). Jillian explained empowerment was key to Safe & The City and 'no go' areas weren't an immediate concern as only sections of streets would be avoided based on where police have predicted crime.
- **Will the App give users a sense of relative risk in a particular locality?** For example,, absolute figures might show Oxford Street, with its huge crowds, has a high incidence of sexual harassment whereas Regents Canal might have a low incidence. *But as a percentage of people in that location*, the risk on Oxford Street may be lower than on the tow path along Regents Canal. Jillian replied: Safe & The City is utilising the police data that weighs into the absolute and relative risks for a street location. Future iterations of the algorithm with additional data would take into account these differences of foot traffic.
- **Parks – will routes through them be included?** Currently Google Maps ignores paths across parks. The Safe and the City app may have the same limitation. Safe & The City would consider adding footpaths data if London Living Streets could share. However we will not be guiding people into parks at night as will likely not be suitable for our target audience using the algorithm and crowd-sourced data to avoid risk.

Susie Morrow's substantive points relevant to this project: She and all other members are encouraged to share their expertise and insights throughout Safe & The City development. Members can sign up by registering at: www.safeandthecity.com or email hello@safeandthecity.com

Jillian was thanked and asked to keep in touch with London Living Streets and keep us posted as to developments.

2. Minutes of Previous LLS Ordinary Business Meeting, 14 June 2017 – Matters Arising

- a. **Our gratitude to Susie Morrow and Alastair Hanton re the London LS detailed response to the draft Mayoral Transport Strategy Consultation:** Jeremy drew our attention to the huge amount of work Susie Morrow had done in drafting our lengthy response, and Alastair Hanton in producing a summary of the key points we were making. Both were profusely thanked.

3. Future London Living Streets meetings – conduct of:

- a. **Regular Business Meetings:** AGREED: Usually bi-monthly.
- b. **Half-hour Presentations at Regular Business Meetings:** AGREED a good idea. **ACTION by each of us:** Please send suggestions of speakers and/or organizations

for these slots to Jeremy Leach or Robert Molteno. The Agenda already listed: *Stop Killing Londoners* (via Peter Hartley); *Hackney's Walking Strategy* (Brenda Puech).

- c. **Walk Abouts:** These will be in addition to Regular Business Meetings. **ACTION by each of us: Please send suggestions to Jeremy Leach or Robert Molteno.** The Agenda listed 3 possibilities -- *Mini-Holland/Villagization in Waltham Forest (forerunner of Liveable Neighbourhoods)* (Paul Gasson) and/or *Enfield (Clare Rogers)*; *Walk Elephant* (at Elephant and Castle); *The City of London's streets* (Bruce McVean). Rosalind Redhead also volunteered to organise a walk-about at the *Waltham Forest new wetlands*. **If you want to take part, please contact Rosalind at vreadhead@yahoo.co.uk**
- d. **Occasional big Outreach Meetings in the evening:** Dave Irwin and Roger de Freitas urged us to be ambitious, and reach out on key issues to members of the public and/or key office holders like Borough Councillors. Related organizations should be asked to help publicise these meetings. This meeting's Agenda already listed one possible such meeting -- **Healthy Streets – A Briefing by Lucy Saunders on Key TfL Documents & Procedures to be followed by Boroughs in future:** Key documents are becoming available – *Healthy Streets Check*; *Guide to Indicators of Healthy Streets*; and *Small Change/Big Impact – Guide to Tactical Urbanism*. Relevant to boroughs' LIP proposals, Liveable Neighbourhoods bids etc. **AGREED this should be the subject the Officers should organize for our next big LLS Meeting in the New Year.**

Further Suggestions for these Outreach meetings: (i) **Exploring links between LS expectations re streets and new buildings** (often unfriendly to people on foot) – Peter Murray of New London Architecture might organize (Alastair Hanton); (ii) **The role of the public realm and streets in improving the setting of historic buildings** (a senior Historic England figure, and other high profile commentators – Simon Jenkins? – could be invited (David Harrison); (iii) **Crossrail 2** – Michelle Dix who leads on this project (Dave Irwin); (iv) **1 or 2 local LS groups talking about their campaigning experiences**, and lessons to be learned.

- e. **Christmas Celebration of London Living Streets -- 6.30pm – 8.30pm, Wednesday, 13 December 2017, The Hope Pub, 94 Cowcross St., Smithfields, EC1M 6BH** (in the **Juniper Room** upstairs). Robert reported 30 people are already coming – 19 of us; 2 Living Streets office staff; two London Assembly Members (including Chair of its Transportation Cte); a couple of Officers (TfL and the City); and some eminent activist architects etc.. **Everyone welcome. But would be helpful if you are intending to come but have not yet let Robert know, if you could do so.**

4. Frequently Asked Questions – action by London Living Streets

Charles Martin and Cllr Rachel Tripp (Newham) raised the issue of reaching out to the large numbers of people who are less supportive of the Living Streets pro-pedestrian perspective. And the need to have a readily accessible stock of answers rebutting the objections to public realm transformations, encouraging mode shift away from reliance on the private car Such FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) could be posted on a London Living Streets website. **Action: no one volunteered to lead on this at the meeting. If anyone interested in getting this done, please contact Jeremy Leach.**

Symon Knightswood also raised issue of what had happened to finalising a Living Streets briefing on minimum requirements for crossings, and junctions. **Action: Symon Knightswood to find out situation from Tom Platt and Brenda Puech.**

5. Campaigns:

- a. **Central London Walking Network proposal:** David Harrison reported. He and Jeremy have met Will Norman, Walking & Cycling Commissioner, about it; he likes idea in principle. Next meeting now due. Rik Andrew reminded meeting that A Central London Walking and Cycling Grid was proposed in 2009 with the 7 boroughs in Central London involved. Action left to the boroughs. Idea re-started 2013. Still nothing came of it. **Action: David Harrison and Jeremy Leach will pursue.**
- b. **Appropriation of public realm by private sector developers' Projects:** Rosalind Redhead raised issue. Urged London Living Streets to take a stand on it. Patty Singleton, as a London guide, has had direct experience of the drastically reduced bundle of rights members of the public have in these areas that were, or are regarded, as public realm. Herman Tribelnig said it was possible to prevent this; he explained how the Kings Cross Development Forum over many years intervened at the Master Plan and more detailed developers' planning application stages to make sure the public realm at Kings X really is proper public space. **No Action discussed by LLS or decided on.**
- c. **3 May 2018 London Borough Elections:** Susie Morrow reported. Joint campaigning with London Cycling Campaign (Simon Munk et al) being planned. The central 'Ask' being proposed is that each political party in each borough be asked to commit to supporting their borough putting in a high quality bid under the Liveable Neighbourhoods Programme. Our 'Ask' will specify specific 'high ambition' components of such bids (from a walking and cycling viewpoint), so that the bids really meet the Healthy Streets and mode shift ambitions of the Mayoral Transport Strategy. **Action: At start of the next London LS meeting, Living Streets and London Cycling Campaign to present details of campaign 'Ask' and actions.**
- d. **London Boulevard idea:** This East-West route being developed by LCC and Living Streets office as a possible joint cycling/pedestrian proposal. **Action: London Boulevard idea to be presented by Simon Munk and Tom Platt at a London LS regular meeting after the Borough Elections.**

6. Report-backs (see also earlier Minutes of 14 June 2017)

- a. **Chair (Jeremy Leach):** In addition to drafting various TfL Consultation responses, has had meeting with (i) LCC over May 2018 Borough elections; (ii) Ramblers Inner London Cte, CPRE (Commission for the Preservation of Rural England) etc.
- b. **Vice-Chair (Peter Hartley):** Reported on:
 - i. **Hanover Square:** Good news. There will be a new Crossrail entrance/exit there. Western side of Square will remain closed to traffic.

- ii. **Strand East:** King's College has bought up land in vicinity. Proposal is to close it to traffic, including taxis but still allowing buses. He thinks buses should all be re-routed around the Aldwych (ie to north of Strand East). Westminster Council responsible for the consultation. Date not yet fixed.
- iii. **Grosvenor Square:** With US Embassy vacating, a hotel will replace it; it has persuaded Westminster to reopen the western side of Square. Qatari Embassy, the developers and the Council won't speak to him. If necessary, he plans to launch a one-man protest outside Embassy.
- iv. **Parliament Square:** David Harrison took over this report-back because of his knowledge of situation. Some parliamentarians want to close the Square to (most) traffic. Schemes are being worked up. London LS is in touch.
- c. **Crossings Research:** Alastair Hanton gave further update (see earlier Minutes). He and Mike Grahn currently seeking further meeting with Will Norman, Walking & Cycling Commissioner, to progress. Apparently local (borough?) traffic engineers can over-ride programmed pedestrian waiting times and make signals responsive to pedestrians pushing the button. Rik Andrew thought this was already the case with signalised crossings near schools. Symon Knightswood reported that in Lewisham recent TfL-installed crossings lacked auditory signals, despite being located in a shopping centre.
- d. **Outer London Borough perspectives (Rachel Tripp):** She highlighted big disjunction between much of public opinion and Living Streets activists' perspectives. A cribsheet of Facts and FAQs urgently needed (see Item 4 above). Suggested a Workshop to develop these.

7. Consultations:

- a. **Oxford Street West:** Peter Hartley has booklet setting out details of proposals. Far better than feared. Cost: £80m (to be met by TfL). Schedule: completion by end 2018 to coincide with opening of Elizabeth (Crossrail) Line. **Action: (i) Jeremy Leach/Peter Hartley/Tom Platt will draft LLS response & circulate to all of us; (ii) Everyone urged to respond to consultation (closes 17 December).**

No cycle route proposed along Oxford Street. Instead some route parallel to Oxford Street will be proposed at a future date. Danger: Cyclists will unanimously oppose the proposals. Rosalind Redhead suggested exploring whether cycles could use Oxford Street at certain hours, e.g. before shops open.

Shuttle bus for disabled running occasionally along Oxford Street also proposed.

- b. **Oxford Street East:** No action yet. Mayor says Central Government will have to finance.
- c. **Bank Junction Experimental Safety Scheme -- review by the City:** The City excluded from the Bank Junction all motor traffic except for buses from 7 am to 7pm, Mondays to Fridays, starting on 22 May 2017, and running for 18 months

under an experimental traffic order. It is now conducting a consultation survey on people's experiences since that date. **Closing Date: 24 November 2017. Action: Jeremy Leach asked each of us to complete this Consultation Survey – you can access it at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/bankonsafetyconsultation>**

- d. **Marshalsea Road/Borough High Street:** Jeremy Leach reported that this junction is not on TfL's list of key junctions being handled by Better Junctions Review Group. TfL has produced a proposal which appears non-compliant with Draft MTS policies. London Living Streets response has been drafted and will be circulated for comments to the group. **Action: Jeremy Leach will distribute via Yahoo Group; all of us to look at it and respond please to Consultation.**

8. Interface with TfL Working Groups:

- a. **Better Junctions Review Group:** No meeting since May 2017.
- b. **Vision Zero Group:** TfL is drafting Vision Zero Plan. TfL is drafting Vision Zero Plan which is due to be published in early 2018.
- c. **Direct Vision Consultation:** Susie Morrow reported: Proposals came out in mid 2017. **Consultation closes 24 January 2018.** Really important because lorries responsible for such high %ages of Pedestrian and Cyclist collisions. **Action: Susie Morrow will send us briefing suggesting how each of us might respond.**
- d. **Bus Stop Bypass Group:** no meeting held for ages.
- e. **Forum to manage/promote London walking routes:** Colin Saunders – welcomed and thanked by Jeremy Leach -- reported: Explained he is Vice-Chair of the Ramblers Greater London Forum. Also author of several guidebooks including the Capital Ring and London Loop walking routes. Ramblers (led by Clare Wadd of the Ramblers Inner London Cte) have met with Will Norman to discuss setting up a Walking and Cycling Routes Forum. They also presented to him a wish list covering the 7 big strategic routes, as well as lesser routes. He reminded us that years ago a London Walking Forum (LWF), funded by the Government Office for London and Countryside Commission, had existed; it awarded kite marks; and boroughs were supposed to signpost walking routes and promote them to the public. With demise of the LWF in about 2002, many of these routes were abandoned by the boroughs in the 1980s, the boroughs abandoned these commitments, with a few honourable exceptions like Barnet and Enfield, each of which have maintained one trail.

9. AGM:

- a. **Reports:** Jeremy apologised for absence of; but Minutes of London LS meetings during 2017 are a substitute.
- b. **Election of Officers:** Chair: -- Peter Hartley proposed, and Michael Bach seconded, Jeremy Leach; no other candidates put forward. Vice-Chair: -- Symon Knightswood proposed, and Rosalind Redhead seconded, Peter Hartley; no other candidates put forward. Secretary: - Dave Irwin proposed, and Susie Morrow seconded, Robert Molteno; no other candidates put forward. All 3 candidates elected nem con.

Meeting ended: 8.24pm.

10. Date of next London Living Streets meeting: Tuesday, 16 January 2018, 6pm to 8pm, in the Boardroom at Alan Baxter's.

Action: Peter Hartley to book the Boardroom.