

Soho First CDT Report

Community Economic Development Plan for Soho and Jewellery Quarter Ward

We have continued work on the Community Economic Development Plan for Soho and the Jewellery Quarter, a draft of which was launched for consultation in June 2019 at Soho House Museum. We were planning a follow up event this June to take place at Nishkam Centre when the lock-down started and therefore had to postpone the event. It is our intention to try again early next year when hopefully we can get enough people together in the same space safely. However, if restrictions are still in place on gatherings, we will organise a virtual event.

We have been redrafting the plan document to incorporate the outcomes of the work done by two groups of community researchers from the USE-IT! Project based at University of Birmingham. One group – Alison Thompson and Debbie Kerslake - looked at opportunities for local procurement by businesses and organisations in the Soho Ward. Over one thousand businesses and organisations were mapped, and a sample were followed up in detail. The second piece of research involved looking at the scope for creating a maker space/enterprise hub in the area including the demand for such a space and the facilities required.

Neighbourhood Network Scheme

Soho First is one of the four partners along with Birmingham Settlement (Lead partner), Nechells POD and Karis Neighbour Scheme involved in delivering the Ladywood District NNS. Each of the four Wards has a project support worker. Carlene McKenzie is the project support worker for Soho and Jewellery Quarter and is also the overall project coordinator for Ladywood NNS. Soho First is represented on the regular Partnership Board meetings and the Wider Steering Group meetings.

Soho First Website

A new website has been created for Soho First - www.sohofirst.org.uk - which is easier to manage and update. This includes links to both the Soho First Facebook page and Ladywood NNS Facebook page.

Changes in Trustees

Since the last AGM a number of trustees have stepped down including Adella Pritchard, who has moved on as Community Minister at Bishop Latimer Church and is now in Swansea, Kam Kanth who has moved to Worcester, and Thomas Cantwell, to devote more time to North Edgbaston Ward where he is based. Thomas continues to contribute to the Facebook page and was instrumental in setting up the Peace Garden at the Prison Visitors Centre which was opened last year by Shabana Mahmood MP and Councillors Sharon Thompson and Chaman Lal.

We are aiming to have an AGM shortly via Zoom and will be looking to recruit some new trustees if possible.

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