

SUMMERTOWN & ST MARGARET'S NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM NEW CHAIR REQUIRED

After completing an interim year, the current chair will stand down at the AGM in Autumn 2019.

Neighbourhood Forum background

The Forum was set up in 2013 to respond to a Council consultation about Diamond Place. Sometime after this, the committee decided to create a Neighbourhood Plan (under the Localism Act, 2011). A considerable amount of consultation was carried out to identify what the community wanted in its plan and to respond to various drafts. Early in 2019 a referendum approved the plan and it was “made” by the Council in May 2019. The importance of the plan is that it has to be taken account of by planners whenever planning applications are made, strengthening the influence of residents when commenting on and challenging planning decisions.

The current vision

The current vision is that the Forum should become a strong voice and champion for Summertown and St Margaret's wards. It has a number of jobs to do including updating the plan periodically, defending the plan against poor planning applications, representing the community when the development in Diamond Place begins, looking after the local environment and spending Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money wisely.

The governance of the Forum now

The Forum operates under a constitution produced a few years ago. Local councillors are invited and attend, ex-officio, from time to time; the main body of the steering committee is elected at each AGM and includes a secretary and a treasurer as well as a number of long-standing local members.

The challenges for the future

1. Engaging the community
2. Identifying projects on which CIL funding can be spent in the community
3. Representing the community in development of Diamond Place

The role of the Chair

The Chair must be able to respond to the new challenges and opportunities facing the Forum. In particular he or she will:

- Chair steering committee meetings and Forum meetings
- Represent the Forum in the media or in public
- Lead a review of the constitution and operation of the Forum
- Engage people within the community to increase participation and extend diversity
- Manage employees (none currently) and contractors (1)
- Coordinate fundraising as needed

Desired qualities

- Experience of chairing committees
- Strong links to the forum area
- A passion for working in the community supported by energy and enthusiasm
- A good understanding of volunteering
- A natural communicator with individuals and organisations
- Experience of working with a diverse range of people

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Service

This is a voluntary role with no remuneration. We would like the incoming chair to be able to serve for three years, renewable if mutually desired and agreed. The time commitment is expected to be in the region of three to four days per month.

Selection

Those interested should make contact with the current chair (below). We expect to meet applicants and conduct a brief interview. If you are interested, please provide us with a biography or cv and a note setting out why you are interested in working with us.

Making contact

Applications should be sent to Shamus Donald at shamus.donald@ntlworld.com by 5 October 2019.