



## **SWBA: Note of 27 July 2017 Meeting (Venue: White Light)**

### **1. Introductions and apologies**

**Present:** John Simpson (White Light), John D'Aprano (DS Systems), Nick Stefka (Box Office Supplies), Nick Golson (Deen City Farm), Ian Meredith (Endecotts), Raymond Kinsella (Merton Chamber of Commerce), Sara Williams (Merton Council), Kathryn St John-Mosse and Gillian Hermanstein (RPC), Ash Daud (Flexicom Solutions), Lee Anderson-English (GreenLight Electrical), Adam Laurie (Wow Your Crowd), Charlie Shakespeare (Colour House Theatre) and Claire Morris (SWBA Estate Co-ordinator).

Apologies from: Richard Armitage, Peter Elliott (BOC), Ian Docksey (Trinitarian Bible Society), Peter Wallder (Merton Abbey Mills) and Niamh Darlington (Mainyard Studios).

John Simpson was thanked for hosting the meeting and for providing lunch.

### **2. Matters arising from last meeting**

It was noted that the Merton Abbey Mills (MAM) scheme was still being developed together with a redesign of the website and that current timing was for a launch in the autumn.

It appeared that there had so far been a good uptake of the new trade discount scheme for SWBA companies and their staff operated by Lawsons although the invoicing arrangements for this needed to be clarified with Lawsons.

The arrangements for prior notification of roadworks and other works in public areas on the estate were being clarified with Merton Council. It was agreed that a system of advance warning of such works which could then be disseminated to businesses on the estate would be very helpful and should be pursued with Merton Council. (Note: the latest advice received is that due to the amount of works that the Council processes each year they are not able to notify everybody of these but so far as possible notification is made of major and disruptive works via the Council website. Utility companies are also requested to inform those affected of any interruption to their property or service. However, there is no legislation in place to enforce this action).

### **3. SWBA Ltd BID**

#### **Report on outcome of BID Ballot (May 2017)**

**John Simpson** reported that 66 out of a total of 186 eligible votes were cast in the ballot, representing a turnout of 35.5%, of which 54 were in favour of BID status and 12 were against. This equated to 82% by number and 78% by Rateable Value of those who voted voting in favour. It was agreed that in taking work forward during the BID term it would be important to persuade those businesses which were not in favour of the BID that there were tangible benefits for them. Formal thanks were expressed for the efforts of the BID Steering Group team in achieving a successful outcome.

### **Proposed structure of new BID Company**

John Simpson explained that SWBA Ltd was a not for profit company which had been set up to address the requirements of BID status. He and John D'Aprano were currently Directors of the Company and all BID levy paying businesses were now members with no liability. Businesses on the SWBA estate which were not liable to pay the BID levy could also join as voluntary members. The intention was now to appoint additional Directors to share responsibility and to lead work on the BID projects. The aim was to have 6-8 Directors, together with an Estate Coordinator and an Estate Ranger in support, both of whom would work on a part-time basis.

Advice from Merton Council was that there were no formal requirements for recruiting Estate Coordinators and it was therefore agreed by those present that Claire Morris should continue in this role.

### **Appointment of Board Directors**

Four candidates had indicated that they wished to be appointed to the Board and it was noted that a further two might also wish to be considered for appointment in due course.

Details of the four candidates had been circulated to SWBA businesses with the meeting agenda and no objections had been raised to their appointment. It was therefore unanimously agreed by all present that the following should become Directors of the SWBA Ltd:

Lee Anderson-English (GreenLight Electrical Ltd) - proposed by Raymond Kinsella and seconded by Nick Stefka

Ash Daud (Flexicom Solutions Ltd) - proposed by Nick Golson and seconded by Raymond Kinsella

Nick Golson (Deen City Farm) - proposed by Adam Laurie and seconded by John D'Aprano

Nick Stefka (Box Office Supplies Ltd) - proposed by John Simpson and seconded by John D'Aprano.

### **Arrangements for collection of BID Levy payments**

It was noted that Merton Council's Business Rates Department, which would be responsible for collecting payments from eligible businesses, was likely to be issuing bills for this purpose during the week commencing 21 August.

### **Arrangements for future Board meetings and SWBA members' open meetings**

**John Simpson** proposed that in each case meetings should be held six times per year every two months. Those present were in agreement that Directors' meetings should also be open to SWBA members to attend as observers if they wished to do so. It was therefore agreed that the initial Directors' meeting would be held on 7 September followed by an open meeting on 5 October and that this pattern should be followed every two months for the initial year of the BID term.

## **Other points of note**

Merton Chamber of Commerce had produced a membership pack for BID levy payers setting out details of the services which would be available to them as new members of the Chamber. This would be issued in the near future.

**Claire Morris** added that the SWBA BID was now a formal member of the Mayor of London's Industrial BIDs Group. She had recently attended a meeting and had found this to be a very useful forum which recognised the particular circumstances and issues faced by the 8 industrial BIDs in London. Membership of this group would allow the SWBA's interests to be raised and taken into account by politicians and policy makers in the GLA and elsewhere. In this context, consideration was being given to formulating relevant proposals for the Good Growth Fund initiative which had recently been launched and which offered match funding for innovative ideas developed by BIDs and other groups.

## **4. Estate issues**

There were the usual concerns about litter accumulating in various parts of the estate, notably around the Tramlink exit, which had been reported to the Council and would continue to be monitored and followed up as appropriate.

There had also been an instance of travellers recently setting up residence for a short while on the Merton Industrial Estate. They had now moved on having left a considerable amount of rubbish behind and it was likely that they would be looking for other locations in future. Businesses were advised to be alert to this and to seek advice about taking action if this occurred on privately owned land since removal could prove problematic.

## **5. Safer Neighbourhood Report**

The Abbey Ward Safer Neighbourhood Team were not present but it appeared that there had been no recent incidents to report.

**Claire Morris** said that the Met Police Business Crime Reduction unit regularly provided updates about counter-terrorism and other issues which she would circulate as appropriate. **John Simpson** noted that there was a strong case for considering adopting measures such as ANPR as part of the BID in this context.

## **6. Financial Update**

**John Simpson** reported that there had been several payments made since the last meeting in May, primarily in relation to an additional three months' work undertaken by Merton Chamber on the BID since this had taken longer than anticipated, but that the SWBA account remained in credit. The SWBA's accounts had now been submitted to Companies House and an application had also been made to HMRC for a VAT rebate amounting to £4K for the last year.

## **7. Any Other Business**

**Sara Williams** explained that Merton Council was currently working on a proposal in response to a new initiative from the Mayor of London for a London Borough of Culture award under which all London Boroughs could bid for funding to stage a programme of cultural events and initiatives. Further information would be available shortly. It was agreed that this was a very positive initiative, particularly in view of the number of creative businesses located on the SWBA estate.

**Ash Daud** said that he had recently attended a very useful South London Partnership (SLP) skills event which promoted the South London Skills Strategy. This aimed to work with businesses to deal with the challenge of growing skills gaps, difficulties with recruitment and problems with staff retention together with concerns over Brexit and the prospect of labour restrictions. **Sara Williams** added that although this was a one-off event there was an ongoing dialogue with businesses and employers as part of this Strategy.

**Raymond Kinsella** said that Wow Your Crowd, FlashlightTV, GRASSify and Stronger Fitness and Martial Arts had all been named as Finalists in various categories of the Merton Best Business Awards 2017, which was a great achievement. The Awards ceremony was open to any business to attend and would be held on 27 September at Epsom Racecourse.

**Charlie Shakespeare** explained that the Colour House Theatre at Merton Abbey Mills was expanding with shows taking place at a new venue in the Merton Arts Space located in Wimbledon Library which seated 250. The Theatre was currently offering unique sponsorship deals which it was hoped would be of interest to SWBA businesses. Details were available on request and would also be circulated with the minutes of the meeting.

**Claire Morris** outlined details of an event that the Department for International Trade (DIT) was running in Twickenham on 31 August about trading with the USA. This was aimed at small and medium sized businesses which were exporting for the first time or looking to expand into new markets. As part of this, there was an opportunity to apply to go on a subsidised Trade Mission to Virginia in October 2017. Further details including information about how to register for this event would be circulated with the minutes.

## **8. Date/Venue of next meetings:**

**SWBA Directors' meeting 12.30pm, 7 September 2017**

**SWBA Members' meeting 12.30pm, 5 October 2017**

**(Venues: TBA)**