

**PIAZZA FOUNTAIN STEERING GROUP MEETING: THURSDAY 19th OCTOBER, 2023 6.00pm-7.30pm  
at STAYCITY APARTHOTEL, DRURY LANE, Liverpool**

Present were the Chair of Engage Liverpool Gerry Proctor, and Pam Wilsher from Merseyside Civic Society (MCS), alongside the two local councillors Nick Small and Christine Banks, as well as representatives from the Friends of the Piazza Fountain: Sheila Lane and Tony Folan.

Firstly it was required to register in the account of the meeting a statement from Liverpool City Council that Councillor Small “was attending the meeting in his capacity as one of the councillors for City Centre North and not as Cabinet Member for Growth and Economy, and that he has no authority to make any commitments on the Council’s behalf, especially but not limited to on any development control or conservation issues and that he will feed back on the outcomes from the meeting to relevant council officers”.

The meeting started with updates from Engage and MCS about the latest conversations with the leaseholder and with the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). An Expression of Interest was submitted by MCS to HLF and the feedback was very helpful. It is expected that we will need to find in the region of £350-400k to fully refurbish the Fountain. But first we need to clarify the question of the relationship between the monument and its ownership. This was made clear in the fact that the bid was not submitted by the owners but by concerned citizens.

As a result a conversation was held with the leaseholder Elliot Group’s (EG) Elliot Lawless and MCS and Engage. That was extremely positive and a willingness was expressed to support the efforts to refurbish the Fountain. Follow-up conversations with the Council are still on-going and this meeting was helpful in identifying the options to be considered by everyone.

- **Option One:** A partnership agreement between LCC and EG which has the challenge of due-diligence needing to be done by all partners to the agreement.
- **Option Two:** That LCC might attempt to renegotiate the lease with EG and take the Fountain back into public ownership which has the challenge of future maintenance costs being prohibitive given the current economic climate.
- **Option Three:** Explore a Community Asset Transfer to an independent group which has the challenge of the difficulty of establishing such a group and the virtual impossibility of commercialising the fountain.

Further discussions are now on-going to see if these issues can be resolved. It was also mentioned about asking **United Utilities** to enter into a partnership with the Steering Group to get their support for the water fountain refurbishment and to request some funding to support the process. Should we be able to progress the ownership question to the satisfaction of the HLF we will need to evidence a Community Engagement Programme, an Education Programme and an Events Programme – all of which require more volunteers and citizen commitment than we currently have. Included in the bid is a proposal to train local White Badge Guides once there is a pathway to full refurbishment.