

**Alex Blackwood- Asking for forgiveness and not permission: Empowering people to break the rules**

With all that is going on in the world and the ease of access to news and statistics you would be forgiven for thinking people are inherently bad and untrustworthy. However, research is beginning to show this isn't true. If people are generally good, then maybe we could do away with some of the less important rules. Consultations concentrate on the rules that are needed and therefore elements of place-shaping that aren't very flexible. But if we gave people a bit more freedom to shape their places through removing the unnecessary rules perhaps we could start engaging people in the possible in addition to traditional consultation.

**Stacey Clark- Safeguarding London Club Culture**

Nightclubs and grassroots music venues in London are 'protected' in policy terms, but the reality is that these cultural institutions face significant operational challenges, and even closure. The Mayor's cultural infrastructure plan and many Council Local Plans seek to safeguard nightclubs and grassroots music venues, but the policy is not strong enough, or given enough weight. London's nightclubs, where numerous globally significant musical genres were born and which offer a safe space for otherwise marginalised social groups, are unable to survive. There are countless examples of this. London, and the rest of the UK, needs to take example from Germany, where clubs are now legally recognised as cultural institutions. Attitudes towards club culture need to change.

**Zohra Chiheb- Mantra for Inclusive Commissioning**

The Colston Four, heroes or vandals? I listened with creeping familiarity to the unfortunate Bristol Council officer tasked with defending the decision to prosecute on the radio. He mumbled vaguely about criminal damage, whilst trying desperately to avoid appearing to condone the slave trade. Local authorities can often be in an awkward position, balancing local opinions while addressing diverse communities' needs, and this is especially important in our built environment. As custodians of the public realm, it's important we take a leadership role in promoting diversity when commissioning, to ensure all voices are heard. How can we do this? Here's a mantra for inclusive commissioning.

**Jake Everard- Developing a lasting culture for everyone**

With London constantly developing to increase population density and make best use of space, the rich culture and heritage of certain areas is falling by the wayside, and even where it is being retained, the increased population within each development is skewing the ratio of residents fully immersed in an area's culture. My proposal is for all new developments to introduce a Culture Hub where the existing culture of an area can be immortalised, and any new residents to the area can learn about its heritage and become one with the culture.

### **Simon Foulkes- Meanwhile, I will open doors on your high street**

The wholesale erosion of the heritage of our local high streets is being driven by perpetual vacant retail spaces and residential conversions. I propose to develop on the existing concept of 'meanwhile use' specifically for existing local high streets, such as the 'Open Doors' pilot scheme. Landlords must offer vacant commercial spaces at a significantly reduced rent to local independent retailers, or indeed free, for a minimum term, with an option agreement to extend on a long term lease at 'affordable rents'. Initially, incentivised by reduced business rates etc, affordable rents could then be subsidised by levies on profits of local businesses e.g. local business improvement district (BID).

### **Laura Georgescu- From Global Heritage to Local Culture**

Over the past ten years, government funding for local authorities has fallen by 16%. The unequal distribution of cuts to cultural spending could be further exacerbated by Covid-19, particularly in the most deprived communities. With the prospect of Levelling Up plans leaving London behind, a more creative approach to help London thrive is needed. My proposal is to re-examine how the funding mechanisms can be leveraged to protect heritage and culture. Through a re-design of how funding is planned, I propose to distribute part of the revenue attracted by iconic heritage shopping areas, such as Mayfair, to culturally uplift and showcase the unique heritage in more deprived places.

### **Max Gregory- Why London needs the DEA**

There has been a widely publicised increase in dog ownership during the pandemic, but in a densely populated urban environment like London, there is no requirement for dedicated Dog Exercise Areas (DEAs) within the amenity space of our current regeneration developments. There are mental, physical and societal benefits of owning a dog, and DEAs in London regeneration projects would help establish a community of local dog owners and dog enthusiasts. Making DEAs a planning requirement and part of resident-led design will ensure developers deliver a new type of public realm to benefit a growing demographic of dog owners as well as the wider community.

### **George Harrington- Grassroots Music Venue Adaptation Fund**

Grassroots music venues (GMV) are the lifeblood of London's cultural scene and provide enormous economic and social value to the city. Despite their intrinsic value, affordability pressures and Covid-related restrictions mean that grassroots venues are closing down at an alarming rate. In response, a GMV adaptation fund would provide a dedicated financial grant to support GMVs to adapt their offer to create new models of revenue. This could include anything from providing space for food vendors in daytime hours to leasing space for co-working opportunities. The aim is to provide a capital injection to support GMVs to becoming financially sustainable in the longer term and optimise their impact on the local economy and places they operate within.

### **Nyemu Holness- REPRESENT LONDON: Inclusive community engagement and procurement**

In built environment community engagement and procurement exercises there is a lack of representation of BAME communities, particularly black men, young people, disabled people, and LGBTQI+ groups. In a city that takes pride in its diversity and traditions rooted in ideas of freedom, equality and democracy, this is alarming. The lack of diversity in debates, engagement, consultation and tender supply chains that shape and determine decision-making policies and the future of London's built environment needs to be tackled proactively to change this narrative. I propose an innovative engagement strategy that 'Represents' the voices of all Londoners through the collaborative delivery of physical and digital engagement activities, workshops and networking.

### **Grace Nelson- Future Harlesden: Celebrating cultural heritage within the town centre**

Future Harlesden will be an innovative programme of interventions to revitalise Harlesden town centre. The programme seeks to address three key challenges: deprivation; poor community cohesion; young people feeling unsupported and undervalued. It will communicate and connect Harlesden's reputation for music, dance, film and carnival to a wider London audience, boosting skills and employment opportunities for local people. My proposal aims to build upon Harlesden's existing rich cultural tapestry and provide new spaces and facilities to coordinate, curate and cultivate creativity of all kinds, with a particular focus on young people.

### **Penny Pang- Mapping local culture and heritage**

The best way to know London is to learn it from the locals, to understand what connects them to places. These connections are often of local significance, be they collective memory, local skills and traditions, or longstanding neighbourhood eateries. Within our communities are vast repositories of data, pinpointing our capital's local cultures and heritage. My proposal is to make use of the current web mapping technology, such as Google Maps, to create a platform to gather this place-based cultural and heritage data and make them findable and sharable amongst communities.

### **James Ringwood- Maintaining social housing stock: Taking pride in our historical buildings**

We should be proud of our history of providing genuinely affordable, secure housing for citizens on lower incomes. We should also be proud of, and celebrate, the diverse nature of the social housing stock itself – but do we? Do we celebrate the Victorian terraces, modernist architecture and converted historical buildings which provide social housing? Is there a stigma associated with social housing with the focus being on so called 'sink estates'? Do we undervalue and therefore underinvest in the rich assets owned by councils and registered providers? My proposal is that we re-think the value of these assets to generate the income that will allow for proper investment so that current and future residents can treasure these assets.

### **Tiffany Ryan- Embedded: Securing London's cultural infrastructure**

With the government's ambitious plans to develop more housing across the UK, London is under pressure to deliver its share with a limited land supply. The regeneration of industrial land has resulted in the loss of some important heritage and cultural contributors. 'Embedded' is a London-wide action group tasked with supporting small businesses and displaced local makers and talent through the provision of representation, funding, and support to ensure that creatives can maintain space in their local communities.

### **Jonny Simmonds- London's Cultural Metaverse**

One of Covid's legacies has been the rise of digital tools to engage, socialise and communicate. We spend so much of our time virtually, and it's no coincidence that 2021 also became the year of the 'Metaverse'. We need to look to the future and cultural institutions, places so naturally reliant on in-person visitors, must adapt. Sadiq Khan launched his Cultural Infrastructure Map in 2019, but imagine a new version. One which includes digital, 3D-buildings, places you click and visit from home. A version where kids can attend a guided tour of three different museums in an hour. London's Cultural Metaverse.

**Amandeep Singh Kalra- Can't touch this: Protecting London's markets**

Markets were the centre of towns, where people sold goods, crafted objects, shared stories, and hustled hard. They have been fostering community identity for millennia. Today the livelihoods of markets are regularly threatened by demolition or stealth gentrification. New generic markets are popping up, peddling artisan doughnuts, craft beer and sourdough pizza to the middle classes, while eroding the unique culture of local areas into a beige existence and displacing sole traders. But it's not too late. What if we had a statutory body that could protect our culture like it protects our buildings and landscapes? What if we had policies that could work hand in hand with community-led initiatives to preserve London's markets?

**Ashleigh Watkins- Making everyday participation in culture the ordinary**

London needs a cultural revolution! We live in a time where assumptions made around culture – as a commodity for consumption and a luxury for those with time - present significant participation barriers for the majority. Disappointingly, the GLA's Cultural Strategy remains lost in this mislaid outlook, resigning the majority of Londoners to being cultural tourists in our City – if and when they can afford to! This pitch starts from the premise that participation in culture is an everyday necessity. Challenging these ailing foundations by utilising the outlook of socialist writer Raymond Williams - who proclaimed culture "IS A WAY OF LIFE" - to establish three principles to nurture broader participation in culture. It then proposes a collection of ideas for the public sector to consider to build participation and - as the Mayor already coined it – grow a "Culture for all".