

## **THE MARYLEBONE FORUM AGM 2022**

Monday 14 March 2022

Via Microsoft Teams

The meeting attracted an attendance of approximately 33 people. All attendees were admitted to the meeting as existing or new members of the Forum.

### **MINUTES**

#### **1. Welcome and Introduction**

Yael Saunders (YS) welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed that all were happy for the meeting to be recorded for the purpose of drafting the minutes.

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#### **2. Apologies received:**

- Cllr Tim Barnes
  - Roy Bennett
  - Hanna Corney
  - Will Dyson
  - Sheila Green
  - Sally Ann Jacobson
  - Mitra Mesbah
  - Cllr Eoghain Murphy
  - Cllr Paul Swaddle
  - Steven Thomas
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#### **3. Approval of 2020 AGM Minutes**

Members voted in favour of approving the Forum's AGM 2020 minutes.

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#### **4. Chair's Report**

YS introduced herself as Chair of The Marylebone Forum and ran through a brief background and update on the Forum and its activities since the last AGM.

The Forum has been working on developing a Neighbourhood Plan for Marylebone. There have been five neighbourhood plans adopted in the Westminster area over the last couple of years, including neighbouring forums Fitzrovia West and Soho. A list of potential policies for the area has been pulled together by the Plan sub-committee following consultation over recent years and these are now being developed further with plans to work with professional consultants to turn these ideas into workable planning policies. The Neighbourhood Plan sub-committee is led by Andrea Merrington,

Planning and Engagement Director at the Howard de Walden Estate – see next agenda item for progress so far and the next steps.

The Forum's other role is CIL – Community Infrastructure Levy – a funding pot created from a charge placed by local authorities on new building developments. 85% of the fund is spent by Westminster City Council on strategic projects for the borough, with the remaining 15% of funds allocated to Neighbourhood Forums to spend in their local area on projects that meet their priorities. The Marylebone Forum has endorsed applications for the fund since 2019. Since the last AGM, these applications have included funding towards the refurbishment of science labs at the St Marylebone CE School and further support for the Changing Lives project at St Marylebone parish church (see agenda item 6). Both of these projects have made significant difference to local people. However, more needs to be done to spread the word more widely about the availability and accessibility of funding for community projects. Please get in touch with ideas of how to raise awareness or with details of projects where this money could be put to good use.

Thank you to Kate Rayner for the admin support provided over the last two years – this is her last meeting and the search is underway for a replacement resource. Anyone with potential contacts for the role please do get in touch. Thanks to business members that have recently contributed funding towards the Forum – Marble Arch BID, Howard de Walden, NWECC, The Portman Estate, British Land and the Marylebone Association. Thank you to Ward councillors for their support and for the recent financial contribution towards the new website from the Marylebone High Street Ward budget – the new website is due to go live shortly. And thanks also to all Forum committee members for their continued commitment.

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## **5. Update on the Marylebone Neighbourhood Plan - Andrea Merrington (AM), Forum committee member and Planning and Engagement Director at Howard de Walden Estate**

AM presented an update on progress with the Neighbourhood Plan for Marylebone. The adopted Plan would become a statutory document that would be used by WCC to help determine planning applications in the area and set out priorities that are shared by the community for investment in areas such as public realm and the overall neighbourhood. The Plan has to sit alongside and in compliance with the Mayor's London Plan and the WCC City Plan. Benefits of having an adopted plan in place include being able to shape the development and growth within the area as well as generate increased CIL funding being allocated to the neighbourhood portion.

Policies included in the Plan must be relevant to the whole area – which is large in scale and diverse in character. Draft policy ideas are being developed and adjusted as ongoing engagement with the community takes place. To date, these include:

- Sustainable Future of Marylebone – supporting biodiversity and greening, wellbeing and the protection of open space (new and existing), and sustainable transport such as improved walking and cycling facilities
- Sustainable Growth and Enhancing Experience – identifying specific areas of growth such as Marble Arch and Portland Place, further developing policies for Edgware Road following the Insight Study, and the encouragement of small retail and small business.
- Celebrating Marylebone's Heritage – looking to preserve and accentuate the area's unique design and conservation, setting out a clear policy on basements and the retrofit of historic buildings.

The overall theme of the plan that runs through all of the draft policy ideas is sustainability and supporting WCC on their journey to net zero.

Neighbourhood engagement to date has taken place at Howard de Walden Estate's Marylebone Christmas Lights event in November and the Marylebone Winter Garden in Portman Square in December at which members of the community were asked for their feedback. There have also been detailed discussions with two of the area's amenity societies – the Marylebone Association and St Marylebone Society – as well as with Ward Councillors in early January.

An application for Neighbourhood CIL funding was submitted to support the development of the Plan, including funds for specialist planning consultants to advise and assist with the more strategic and technical aspects, the creation of workable policies and stress testing these against existing planning policy. This application was approved at the end of February.

The next step is drawing up the planning brief to be agreed by the Forum committee and then sent to WCC for circulation internally and approval, giving the green light for inviting potential consultants to quote for the project.

Cllr Karen Scarborough (KS) commented that now the Harley Street Medical Area BID is up and running, duplication of efforts and activities need to be avoided. Some of the aims are the same as that of the Plan so there is room to work together. AM agreed and commented that this is also the case for the other BIDs in the area, represented on the Forum – Baker Street Quarter, Marble Arch London and NWECC – to ensure that all efforts are combined.

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## **6. Update on CIL: recent applications**

### **St Marylebone CE School – Deborah Loades (DL)**

Kat Pugh, Headteacher of The St Marylebone CE School, began by thanking the Forum for all of their support with CIL applications that have made such a difference to the school. DL displayed 'before and after' images of the school's science labs that have recently been refurbished following a successful CIL application for £100k that made up a significant proportion of the £330k total project cost. The old science labs were outdated, cramped and unfit for modern teaching practices and these have been renovated to more modern, accessible and appropriate standards. It is hoped that this will aid the school in its aims to encourage more girls into STEM subjects at a higher level and beyond.

An additional CIL application was submitted for £60k to contribute towards the creation of a roof garden and terrace, transforming a grey concrete roof space to an attractive and inspiring garden where students can learn about nature and food production. The garden supports biodiversity with planters filled with meadow flowers, herbs and fruit trees.

### **St Marylebone Parish Church – Canon Stephen Evans (SE)**

SE updated the meeting on the Changing Lives project that began nine years ago to both renovate the church building and inspire community outreach projects. The project was initially to be funded through both neighbourhood and strategic CIL funding pots but, following a change in WCC's allocation, this became reliant on neighbourhood CIL instead. An application for £100k of CIL funding for the replacement and restoration of the roof was successful and works since completed. This was essential for the stability of the building following deterioration and damage caused during WWII. Welsh slate tiles were replaced alongside repairs to stonework.

In addition to this, an application for CIL funding towards the renovation of the church's ornate ceiling was submitted and approved. This was an unexpected addition to the project after the ceiling was deemed unsafe. Extensive scaffolding, creating a second floor, was required. Ceiling renovations have since been completed.

The most recent application was to go towards improving accessibility, including a new lift, refurbishment to the steps replacing the Portland stone, a new entrance way for the Marylebone Health Centre in the lower ground area of the church, new volunteer space and kitchen, and new chairs for the congregation. Improving accessibility has meant that space is now available for regular meetings, community groups and workshops to take place, including music sessions for those living with dementia, and primary school visits.

The entire Changing Lives project is predicted to cost £12m, with the majority coming from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. £950k is still required by the autumn of this year.

YS thanked the presenters for their updates.

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## **7. Treasurer's Report, including annual accounts (year to August 2020)**

Treasurer, Ian Macpherson (IM), presented the accounts for the year to August 2020.

There was no income and limited expenditure in the year, which ended with £622. IM added that since these accounts were produced, more income and contributions have been generated that have increased the balance significantly.

Members voted to approve the annual accounts

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## **8. Election of Forum Committee members**

YS introduced each of the Forum committee members:

Residents:

1. Guy Austin
2. Michael Bolt
3. Alan Bristow
4. Sarah Buttleman
5. Sheila D'Souza
6. Ann Marie Johnson
7. Ian Macpherson
8. Yael Saunders
9. Steven Thomas

Non-Resident:

1. Penny Alexander (Baker Street Quarter)
2. Kay Buxton (Marble Arch BID)
3. Hanna Corney (British Land)
4. Will Dyson (NVEC)
5. Canon Stephen Evans (St Marylebone Parish Church)

6. Mark Gazaleh (small business owner)
7. Simon Loomes (Portman Estate)
8. Andrea Merrington (Howard de Walden Estate)

There is currently a vacancy for a non-resident representative.

YS invited attendees to vote for their approval of the committee. MB queried whether committee members should be allowed to vote. It was decided that as members of the Forum they are.

Forum members voted in favour of the above committee.

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## **9. Election of Forum Officers**

YS handed over to Sarah Buttleman (SB) to propose the election of Forum Committee Officers.

Chair - Yael Saunders: proposed by SE, seconded by AM  
Forum members voted in favour of YS continuing as Chair

Secretary – Simon Loomes: proposed by SE, seconded by AM  
Forum members voted in favour of SL continuing as Secretary

Treasurer - Ian Macpherson: proposed by SL, seconded by AM  
Forum members voted in favour of IM continuing as Treasurer

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## **10. Questions**

Juliet Hunter (JH) asked about the planned developments on Manchester Square. There are concerns that the pedestrianisation of the northern side of the Square will push traffic into the side streets. Was there any consultation on these plans and who was involved?

Simon Loomes (SL) confirmed that there was consultation which received 80% approval. Construction is due to begin on 7 April. Cllr Karen Scarborough (KS) added that the plans have been developed over a number of years with consultations taking place at various stages in the process alongside extensive studies into traffic and pedestrian movements both before and after Covid. More publicly accessible green space is desperately needed in Marylebone. This project is being funded by The Portman Estate, Baker Street Quarter as well as WCC. KS assured JH that the views of residents are listened to and taken on board.

Ann Marie Johnson (AJ) highlighted that, as a Manchester Square Trustee, she had expressed reservations about the plans that had not been addressed. Penny Alexander (PA) confirmed that a response had been sent to the Manchester Square Trust clerk and committee – she will find this and send to AJ.

PA added that plans for managing the space once completed are being developed, with a focus on deterring anti-social behaviour. A management plan is being drawn up with WCC with commitment from The Portman Estate, Baker Street Quarter and the Wallace Collection. This includes linking CCTV coverage and Street Team patrols with additional resource at night time, extra waste collections and cleansing with the aim of improving the status quo.

MB expressed frustration that the Marylebone Association were not consulted earlier in the process. Their committee is not in favour of the plans with concerns about traffic, especially the displacement

of vehicles that are already affected by the Baker Street Two Way scheme. Most of the positive consultation responses received were from businesses. KS responded that all Manchester Square residents were consulted thoroughly on plans early in the process and the overall response is supportive.

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#### **11. AOB**

YS thanked all for coming and brought the meeting to a close.

**Meeting ended**