

## **DRAFT MINUTES**

### **The Marylebone Forum committee meeting**

Thursday 21 January 2021

Via Microsoft Teams

### **Attendees**

1. Penny Alexander (PA)
2. Guy Austin (GA)
3. Alan Bristow (AB)
4. Sarah Buttleman (SB)
5. Kay Buxton (KB)
6. Hanna Corney (HC)
7. Sheila D'Souza (SD)
8. Canon Stephen Evans (SE)
9. Mark Gazaleh (MG)
10. Rosa Han (RH)
11. Ann-Marie Johnson (AM)
12. Christian Lock-Necrews (CL)
13. Simon Loomes (SL)
14. Ian Macpherson (IM)
15. Andrea Merrington (AM)
16. Yael Saunders (Chair) (YS)
17. Steve Wong (SW)

### **Apologies**

1. Michael Bolt
2. Amanda Feeny
3. Ann-Marie Johnson

## **MINUTES**

### **1. Welcome and apologies**

YS welcomed everyone to the meeting and announced apologies. YS gave a special welcome to new committee members and asked that they give a brief introduction about themselves.

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### **2. Minutes of Committee (8 October), and AGM (14 December)**

Apart from the misspelling of Gerald Eve (not 'Eves'), there were no further comments on the minutes of the last committee meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020. These minutes were approved.

Approval of the minutes from the AGM on 14 December 2020 will take place at the next AGM. YS asked if there were any comments or amendments in the meantime. SE noted the misspelling of Rachael Church's name (not 'Racheal').

## **ACTIONS**

- **YS/KR to correct misspelt names**
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### **3. Virtual Assistant Kate Rayner and the website**

YS updated the group on the appointment of Kate Rayner who is providing administrative and communications support over the forthcoming months. The website has been identified as a priority with updates to make it more user-friendly and increase engagement.

KB requested that a plan be circulated to the committee detailing the updates that are needed. The plan could outline five key priorities for the site, for example transparency. AM added to this, suggesting it be made clearer why these changes are needed and what is trying to be achieved. YS responded that the principal aims are to improve engagement and to encourage more CIL funding applications – highlighting what the funding is for, who can apply and case studies of previous applications. The Forum's activities and policies relating to the development of the neighbourhood plan also need to be made clearer.

It was suggested that a subgroup meet to discuss developing the plan for website improvements. SB and PA are happy to meet with YS to discuss further.

## **ACTIONS**

- **PA, SB and YS to meet to discuss a plan to update the website.**
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### **4. CIL Sub Committee and next steps**

YS suggested that CIL sub-committee meetings resume with a more proactive purpose. In the past the group has been responsive to applications that have been submitted, a role that needs to continue but in addition to more actively search for projects and organisations that may be interested in, and could benefit from, applying for CIL funding. YS suggested that the group draw up a list of aspirations to help identify potential recipients, revisiting the lists of high/low/ long term/short term objectives that were previously drafted. SL is fully supportive of the subgroup restarting and having a more proactive approach. It is likely that many community groups and projects will require funding post-covid and it would be good to identify these. With new developments in the area on the horizon, the CIL funding pot will continue to be replenished so encouraging applications should be a priority.

SD suggested writing to schools who may have projects that require support. SB added that grass roots, smaller community organisations will be in most need of financial help, for example Cosway Street and Homestart who would welcome support. YS suggested that organisations located on the boundary of the Forum area could benefit from making a joint application with neighbouring Forums. SE suggested that the CIL subgroup establish parameters for making this kind of joint application as the process isn't currently clear. AM agreed that the most important issue that needs addressing is engagement as this has never been tackled successfully.

CLN asked how the CIL funding process is promoted. And how are the final decisions, project updates and successes communicated? Has social media been considered? This would be an easy and free way of communicating and building relationships with the public, other local groups and organisations. YS replied that there isn't currently adequate functionality on the site to communicate news on CIL funding and encourage more engagement. SE added that there had previously been attempts to engage the community in person at local fairs and in the street but this had little effect. There hasn't been the resources to establish and manage social media. KB commented that those on the committee representing local organisations and Business Improvement Districts often share news on their own social media channels.

AB suggested that the Forum work more closely with Marylebone Association as they are working on similar engagement and the efforts are therefore being duplicated. There isn't currently any research being undertaken on what the local community feel about the future of Marylebone in general, but their views on specific developments through consultations have taken place. Maybe a more general consultation process would be useful.

SL highlighted the value that the Council places on the Forum, recognising it as an organisation that it needs to consider when making decisions that affect the area and the community. It is important that this recognised status is maintained particularly as it enables the Forum to have a stronger voice when lobbying.

SE highlighted to the group that WCC has launched a new CIL portal for projects to apply for funding directly which appears to be a move away from how CIL was previously administered. KB checked the website and could see the issue – it appears to bypass Neighbourhood Forums. SD suggested this may be because WCC are responsible for distributing 85% of the funding pot. It was agreed that greater clarity is needed from WCC on how the various funding pots are being administered.

#### **ACTION**

- **The CIL sub-group to reconvene to discuss a more proactive approach to funding applications. YS/KR to arrange a date.**
- **YS to ask WCC's CIL person, Amit Mistry for more information on the new CIL funding portal.**

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#### **5. City Plan update, Neighbourhood Plan, next steps**

YS reminded the group that the City Plan is due to be formally adopted by WCC in the spring, assuming that modifications are passed by the inspector. At this point, there will be a clearer understanding of how the proposed neighbourhood plan can fit in with wider Westminster policies. The Forum has its seven draft priorities identified but these may be impacted by the final City Plan.

SE expressed frustration about the delay to the development of the neighbourhood plan, awaiting the outcome of Council plans and having to return to the beginning of the process again. This repetition may be why the residents are less engaged. Progress is slow and the Forum remains without mandate.

AB commented that the government's recent white paper, making changes to planning policy, implies that the role of neighbourhood plans is going to be very different and what the Forum is trying to achieve may become irrelevant. SL responded that there are already many layers to planning policy in Westminster and that the white paper is national and aimed at bringing other

areas of the country up to the same level of protection and conservation that Marylebone and Westminster already have in place. It is in relation to CIL funding that having a plan setting out clear priorities will have the most benefit. Being able to target funding at projects that address the needs of the community will have a greater impact than trying to find gaps in multi-layered planning policy. Having an approved neighbourhood plan in place also opens the door to 25% of the CIL funding pot, an increase on the 15% available now.

IM asked about progress made with the consultants, discussed at the last meeting. The Forum needs to understand where there are inconsistencies with the seven priorities and identify gaps in the City Plan that will provide a focus for the neighbourhood plan. With the City Plan being adopted in spring and the Mayor's London Plan approaching its final stages, there will be a window of opportunity over the summer during which a neighbourhood plan can be developed. SL confirmed that Gerald Eve is working to identify the impact of the City Plan on the group's seven draft policies.

SB suggested that a CIL application should be submitted by the Forum as soon as possible to fund a consultant to develop a neighbourhood plan once the City Plan has been adopted. Submitting an application now would ensure enough time is allowed for the application process and that the funds would be ready when required. The work being carried out by Gerald Eve could pass over to the consultant to draw up a neighbourhood plan once the City Plan has been adopted.

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## **6. Invitations to consultations**

The Forum has received the following invitations:

- Planning Reform (Deirdra Armsby) 5pm, 21 January – KB is already attending. AM happy to attend on behalf of the Forum.
- Oxford Street (Cllr Caplan) 5.30pm, 25 January – SW can feedback key points to the Forum
- Marble Arch (Kanda) tbc, w/c 1 February – SB to attend

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## **7. AOB**

SE asked (earlier in the meeting) about the recording of virtual meetings and related protocols. Attendees should give permission to be recorded. YS agreed that this will happen from now on.

IM asked what progress had been made on the application for redesignation. YS confirmed that this had been submitted by SB and was expected to be confirmed by the Council imminently.

MG – asked for confirmation on making an application for CIL funding. As a committee member, is this seen as a conflict of interest? YS confirmed that this is fine. Applications have been made previously by committee members.

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End of the meeting. YS thanks all for attending