

THE MARYLEBONE FORUM AGM 2020

Monday 14 December 2020

Via Zoom

The meeting attracted an attendance approximately 37 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, postponed from May due to the Covid pandemic and taking place for the first time on Zoom.

2. Apologies received:

- Penny Alexander (Baker St Quarter)
- Hanna Corney (British Land)
- Canon Stephen Evans
- Christian Lock-Necrews (Knight Frank)
- Steve Wong (NVEC)
- Cllr Tim Barnes
- Judith Slack

3. Approval of 2019 AGM Minutes

Members voted in favour of approving the Forum's AGM 2019 minutes

4. Chair's report, including redesignation application

YS introduced herself as Chair of The Marylebone Forum and ran through, for those new to the Forum, a background to neighbourhood planning and the aims and objectives of this group. The Forum's designated neighbourhood forum status was granted in 2015 which expired after five years so an application for redesignation has just been submitted. The Forum's responsibilities include creating planning policies for the local area and supporting the allocation of neighbourhood CIL funding.

In the summer of 2019, a review of the Forum's policies took place and, in light of the development of WCC's City Plan, it was decided that some of these were no longer viable and were cut from 12 to seven. Andrea Merrington (AM) will give an update of this in the next agenda item.

The Forum has so far supported three projects in their applications for CIL funding – more will be heard about these in point 6 of the agenda. If any members know of any other local projects that could benefit from CIL funding, please do get in touch.

The Forum is made up of both residents and non-residents (such as local businesses) so provides an opportunity to speak with one strong voice on issues affecting the local area and that matter to the community as a whole. To be a successful neighbourhood forum, it is firstly important to be a neighbourhood and reflecting on what has happened in the past year with pandemic and lockdown demonstrates this. Volunteers from across the Marylebone area were quick to respond to help those that were isolated and vulnerable. The Marylebone Association and other groups effectively organised activity on the ground, and local businesses offered help and support to North Paddington Food Bank as demand rocketed. This sums up what a great neighbourhood Marylebone is and how lucky people are to be part of it.

YS thanked all committee members for all of their hard work over the last 18 months, to Tim Carnegie for setting up this meeting on Zoom, to Kate Rayner for admin support, and to the Howard de Walden and the Portman Estates and Streathers for providing meeting facilities over the past year.

5. Update on Neighbourhood Plan, WCC's City Plan and Government White Paper – Andrea Merrington, committee member and planning director, Howard de Walden Estate

AM began by highlighting that the following update was being delivered from the perspective of her role representing The Marylebone Forum, putting to the side her professional role at Howard de Walden Estate.

WCC's City Plan – the plan sets out an ambitious strategy for the next 20 years based around three key themes – homes & communities, a healthier & greener city and opportunities for growth. The plan recently underwent the Examination In Public, finishing in October 2020, after which, the Inspector has made modifications. These included the deletion of the proposed policy triggering affordable housing from commercial developments, an amendment to the wording with regard to protecting office space and retail usage in line with national changes to class use, and modification to protecting private housing and food and drink premises where appropriate. There have also been amendments to cycling facilities and parking, to bring it in line with the wider London Plan, as well as changes to environmental policies to improve air quality consideration and carbon neutral requirements in large scale developments, and a focus on the circular economy in relation to recycling. Roof extensions have now been permitted where they do not negatively impact on heritage sites. These modifications are currently under consultation until 18 January 2021. It is expected that the revised City Plan will be adopted by the Council in either March or May 2021.

Neighbourhood Plan – the Forum has continued to work hard to develop a neighbourhood plan but this has been overthrown by recent events and is now awaiting the adoption of the City Plan to assess how the Neighbourhood Plan will fit alongside this. There are seven policies in the draft that will need revision - Open space and tree-planting, Basements, Car parking, Small business use, Small retail space, Edgware Road and Environmental policies. Contribution to these policies from Forum members is welcome. People can get in touch via email at contact@maryleboneforum.org

Government's Planning White Paper – this proposed significant change to the planning process with particular impact on neighbourhood plans. The Forum has submitted a response to the proposal.

Cllr Karen Scarborough asked if AM could outline the hierarchy of where the City Plan sits. AM confirmed that the Westminster City Plan sits above a draft Marylebone Neighbourhood Plan and the proposed neighbourhood plan must comply with City Plan Policies, must be positive and must not replicate any adopted City Plan policies.

6. Update on CIL: 3 successful applications

St Marylebone Parish Church – Rachael Church (RC) and Ginny Walton (GW)

RC began by sending regards from Revd Canon Dr Stephen Evans who was unable to attend the meeting. RC thanked the Forum for the support for the church's two CIL fund applications for their Changing Lives initiative. Works to renovate the structure of the church building are underway, with Sir Robert McAlpine recently appointed to begin construction. This is expected to continue into May 2022. The church will remain open during this time and services will continue. GW updated on activities that have brought together the community by engaging residents, local schools and volunteers to participate in programmes including the 'Who Makes Marylebone' heritage filming project and an art initiative creating paintings of famous residents to decorate the construction hoardings.

Edgware Rd Insights Study – Sam Fox, Pragma

Kay Buxton (KB) of Marble Arch London BID introduced the Edgware Road Insights Study. The project, working with Pragma and Gerald Eve, aims to establish an evidence base for future planning policy and infrastructure interventions with the long-term vision of creating a thriving destination that knits together the diverse community and businesses. Pragma's Associate Director, Sam Fox (SF), ran through what the study has entailed so far including analysis of existing provision, audiences, user-satisfaction, future opportunities and planning policy, using a variety of data sources, as well as an assessment of existing business units, their quality, ownership and leases. The draft report is being sent to Marble Arch London BID shortly with a finalised study released later in the year.

Simon Loomes (SL) asked what Crossrail offers the future of Edgware Road. SF replied that Crossrail will undoubtedly draw more people into London generally and will change the stations into which people that work locally will arrive. The area is already an attractive location for businesses, with its proximity to transport hubs and being on the edge of the congestion charge zone. The impact of Crossrail will be explored in more detail.

SL asked if Class E is an opportunity or threat for Edgware Road's commercial future. KB confirmed that this is a worry, not just for Edgware Road but in all areas. There will be a need for licensing to rein in the issues that will arise off the back of the introduction of Class E. There will be recommendations in the report on opportunities around design codes and pattern books that may be used.

Michael Bolt (MB) asked about the impact of WCC's five year licensing report on the future plans. It proposes losing stress area status. Does KB see this as a good or bad thing? KB replied that the area remains a Special Consideration Zone and the shisha rules have been significantly tightened up recently. This could have become problematic under Class E so these moves are welcomed. New developments, such as those by The Portman Estate and the Church Commission, will have been helped by the move to a Special Consideration Zone, rather than a Cumulative Impact Area (or stress area).

St Marylebone CE School – Deborah Loades (DL)

DL began by thanking the Forum, from both herself, her team and especially the children, for its support with their recent CIL funding application to install a filtration system to improve air quality within the school's premises. It was well-documented that air pollution was high given the school's proximity to Marylebone Road, most recently in the School Clean Air Audit report, commissioned by WCC. The filtration units help tackle the issue within the classrooms at the main site.

DL added that a further application is being considered to fund a dedicated catering facility at the school to enable them to provide healthy meals to students on site.

YS thanked the presenters for attending.

7. Treasurer's Report, including annual accounts (year to August 2019)

Treasurer, Ian Macpherson (IM), presented the accounts for the year to August 2019.

The year ended with just over £1,800 in the account, an improvement on previous year. This was as a result of a grant of £2,500 from the New West End Company in December 2018. There was very little expenditure in 2018-19. This followed £500 being added back having been double counted in the previous year.

The balance sheet was displayed to the group.

Kevin Coyne (KC) enquired about extra sources of income on the horizon. YS replied that both Howard de Walden and Portman Estates have offered money for administration support going forward which currently accounts for most expenditure.

Members voted to approve the annual accounts

8. Election of Forum Committee members

YS presented the following members to form the Forum committee:

Non-Resident:

1. Penny Alexander (Baker Street Quarter)
2. Kay Buxton (Marble Arch London)
3. Hanna Corney (British Land)
4. Canon Stephen Evans (St Marylebone Parish Church)
5. Mark Gazaleh (small business owner)
6. Christian Lock-Necrews (Knight Frank)
7. Simon Loomes (Portman Estate)
8. Andrea Merrington (Howard de Walden Estate)
9. Steve Wong (New West End Company)

Residents:

1. Guy Austin
2. Michael Bolt
3. Alan Bristow

4. Sarah Buttleman
5. Sheila D'Souza
6. Amanda Feeny
7. Ann Marie Johnson
8. Ian Macpherson
9. Yael Saunders

Forum members voted in favour of the above committee.

KC added his thanks to the original committee members for their work over the last ten years.

9. Election of Forum Officers

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

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

Secretary – Simon Loomes: proposed by SB, seconded by AM
Forum members voted in favour of SL becoming Secretary

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

10. Questions (submitted in advance of the meeting)

YS reported that lots of questions had been received in relation to the recent reduction of service provision at Seymour Leisure Centre and introduced Tushna Ghadially (TG), Chair of the Families sub-committee of the Marylebone Association and founder of Marylebone Mums, representing over 2,600 families in the Marylebone area. TG expressed concerns on the closure and limitations of many services at the leisure centre as well as the ongoing delay to the new library. These services are vital to the health, education and wellbeing of residents and families. The soft play has closed permanently and the climbing wall's future is looking uncertain, while access to the swimming pool and swimming lessons are also now extremely limited.

Cllr Pancho Lewis (West End ward) responded that he is putting together recommendations to fellow councillors, highlighting the importance of the continuation of leisure facilities during the Covid pandemic. He offered to include Seymour Leisure Centre in these recommendations, despite it being outside of his ward.

Cllr Karen Scarborough (Marylebone High St) responded that she understands the frustration of the residents. Plans have needed to be adjusted as requirements changed and the speed at which these could be implemented has been delayed due to Covid. Assures residents that progress is being made to improve provision of both the leisure centre and the library and that she is fighting from the same place and continues to lobby Cllr Paul Swaddle, Cabinet Member for Community Services and Digital.

YS commented that, given the Forum area covers five electoral wards, the more councillors that fight for improved provision, the better.

Cllr Eoghain Murphy (Bryanston & Dorset Squares) responded that commitment to the development of the new library remains intact.

Cllr Barbara Arzymanow (Bryanston & Dorset Squares) added her support.

YS commented that it is reassuring to hear that there is continued commitment and support for leisure and library provision.

11. AOB

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

Meeting ended