



MARYLEBONEFORUM

MINUTES

MARYLEBONE FORUM COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday 27 January 8.30 – 9.30

Microsoft Teams

Attendees

1. Guy Austin (GA)
2. Michael Bolt (MB)
3. Alan Bristow (AB)
4. Sarah Buttleman (SB)
5. Kay Buxton (KB)
6. Hanna Corney (HC)
7. Sheila D'Souza (SD)
8. Will Dyson (WD)
9. Canon Stephen Evans (SE)
10. Amanda Feeny (AF)
11. Mark Gazaleh (MG)
12. Rosa Han (RH)
13. Ann-Marie Johnson (AJ)
14. Christian Lock-Necrews (CLN)
15. Ian Macpherson (IM)
16. Andrea Merrington (AM)
17. Yael Saunders (YS)

Minute taker

1. Kate Rayner (KR)

Apologies

1. Penny Alexander
2. Simon Loomes

1. Welcome, apologies and minutes

YS welcomed all to the meeting and announced apologies.

The committee approved the minutes of the last meeting on 14 December 2021.

KB requested that meeting recordings are deleted after minutes have been approved by the committee.

ACTION:

- **KR to delete recordings of previous meetings.**

2. Plan and CIL application (AM & KB)

KB updated the group on the CIL application for funding towards the development of the Neighbourhood Plan which was submitted to WCC on 6 January. KB and AM met with amenity societies before Christmas and in early January, updating them on progress to date and encouraging their support for the application.

Meeting with ward councillors was held on 4 January, they were positive and very supportive - confirmation of this support was later sent to Amit Mistry (CIL Officer at Westminster City Council). The councillors suggested quarterly meetings to stay up to date and chart progress. They also suggested increasing the funding application from £25k to £45k, adding £20k to allow for more effective engagement. While this could not be used for statutory consultation and campaigning, it can be used on materials for engagement with the local community.

KB advised that the original £25k had been based on the application made by Maida Hill Forum for its Plan and advice from Amit. The problem with using other Forums as a guide is that, while CIL applications are easy to view, information about additional funding they receive from Ward budgets is harder to find. This therefore makes it difficult to estimate what is needed. Cllr Scarborough has offered £2k of Ward budget towards the process and to plug the gap with the website development.

AM added that the councillors noted that the Forum has one of the largest boundary areas and therefore this extra funding would be necessary if engagement in the Plan's development is to be effective. Cllr Rigby was very helpful in suggesting contacts at other amenity societies in the northern section of the area who need to be consulted with. This included Friends of Regents Park & Primrose Hill and St John's Wood Society as well as suggesting making contact with London Business School.

WCC's CIL cabinet meeting is on 7 February, which will decide whether to support this CIL application. Any payments will be conditional on the Council seeing the brief for the planning consultant and agreeing it, as well as receiving official quotes for the work. MB confirmed that Tony Burton is interested in quoting for the planning consultancy but would like a meeting to go through what is needed. AM asked MB to send his email address so that a meeting can be arranged. AM added that the Forum committee and Plan sub-committee will need to approve the brief and decide which planning consultant they wish to proceed with, which will then need to be approved by the Council so there is still a long process to go through. KB agreed – the brief will need to be circulated to the Council's team for comments.

AB asked about the dedicated council person that was mentioned at the previous meeting. KB confirmed that this would be a nominated officer and not a ward councillor, but as yet it has not been confirmed who. AB expressed disappointment on this and would like to see more engagement from councillors in Forum meetings but is pleased that quarterly meetings with them would be happening at which a focussed discussion can take place.

AM updated on the Plan writing. Without further engagement or a plan for how this engagement will take place, it is difficult to put any further detail into the draft Plan. This engagement is essential to ensure that the Plan's content is reflective of what the community wants to see and, until that happens, there is little purpose in continuing with the drafting. AM suggests that, once approval has been granted for the CIL application, a fixed and focussed timetable of engagement will need to be drawn up, including meetings with various stakeholders. AM has recently been working to incorporate points raised through previous engagement, at the request of the Marylebone Association. This includes the policy relating to developments of basements. However, AM wants to double check with the last version of policies as the version she is working from has no mention of design and conservation and this had been included as a point to reincorporate. YS confirmed there had been no changes since the February 2020 version and agreed to re-circulate. MB asked to also be included to ensure it is the same version that he has.

The next Plan sub-committee will take place after 7 February, once the CIL application has been approved.

SE asked about the engagement activity that took place in Portman Square Garden before Christmas. What happened, was it useful and what feedback was gathered on the Plan? AM confirmed that all responses gathered at the event, as well as at the Howard de Walden Christmas lights event, have been logged. Around 30 names and contact details were gathered of those that were interested in staying up to date and these have been sent to KR to add to the member database. The purpose of the engagement was not to discuss details of the Plan but to introduce people to the Forum and inform them of the Plan's development. AB added that Portman Square session reminded him how challenging engagement with the community can be and suggested that a series of focus groups might be helpful to get into the detail of policies for the Plan.

KB added thanks to MB who has scanned and sent an extensive set of engagement documents that were completed through previous engagement activities. AB asked if he could see these documents and MB replied that he would send the scanned copies. MB strongly advised that future engagement should follow on from that done previously as it formed the basis of the emerging Plan and would avoid reinventing the wheel.

YS suggested that the Neighbourhood Plan sub-committee draft a programme of engagement activities and a framework to go forward to discuss at a future committee meeting.

KB suggested providing a debrief from the Forum of Forums meeting. AM added that hearing a regular update from these meetings would be useful, particularly with Plan making. KB updated the group on the recent meeting, with the following points:

- Cllr Matthew Green, Cabinet Member for Business, Licensing and Planning, attended and discussed Council relationships and engagement with Forums. Once a Forum has an adopted Neighbourhood Plan in place, it automatically becomes a statutory consultee. However, Forums who are in the Plan development process might not be kept up to date on changes such as the recent revocation of the SPDs, or on topics relating to highways and planning - this information is crucial to the Plan development process. In addition to this, consultation

with Forums isn't often used in schemes developed by planning or highways departments. Cllr Green agreed and suggested further discussion needs to take place with various Council departments to amend these processes.

- There was a presentation from the new Director of Communities on how WCC are planning to develop and implement some consultation and engagement protocols and principles going forward, however, no time frame for this has been set.
- In discussion with other Forums, the topic of street furniture was addressed including the limited selection available within WCC's guidelines. St John's Wood are looking to install new furniture made from more sustainable materials but this had been dismissed by the WCC's highways department.
- It was confirmed that WCC will not be publishing a CIL pipeline. The Forums did suggest to the Council that it would be useful to know when CIL funding pots are likely to be topped up.

ACTION:

- **MB to send AM Tony Burton's email address.**
- **MB to send AB scanned copies of previous engagement forms.**
- **Neighbourhood Plan sub-committee to draft schedule for engagement.**
- **YS to circulate last version of draft policies.**

3. Funding Update (IM)

YS thanked Marble Arch BID and NVEC for their payments – totalling £2k. The current bank balance therefore stands at £2,622 (£5 less following bank charges). Payment from British Land is on the way as is a cheque from the Marylebone Association – totalling a further £2k.

IM updated the group on a grant funding opportunity. Current outstanding financial commitments are £2,520 for the website designer. There are two opportunities for funding – one is the CIL application mentioned previously. The other is through Locality funding – an exploration of which shows that the Forum is entitled to a further £6,629 of funding, however, this would need to be applied for by 31 January (via a 22 page application form) and funds spent before the end of March. £17,572 has already been received from this source.

Given the time limits of applying for and receiving the funds before the end of the financial year, the only item it could be spent on is the website. KB highlighted that Marble Arch BID and other members have already made contributions assigned towards this project, and these funds cannot be spent elsewhere. AM agreed that this was also the case for Howard de Walden. KB added that there is also the £2k Ward funding offered by Cllr Scarborough to fund the gap in the website and it would be a mistake to turn this down.

AM asked that the invoice process be improved. There was information missing from the recent invoices that led to issues with the accounts department. If the Forum is to apply for more grant funding in future, the process will need to be smoothed out.

IM responded that draft invoices were sent out in advance, with the offer to amend if required. YS commented that the Forum is not a trading body and these invoices were the first to be sent. MB added that there have been invoices sent in the past but the change in personnel may have resulted in the loss of that experience.

KB added that as part of the CIL process, any additional funding being applied for should be declared – applying for Locality funding now would not appear on the form and could jeopardise the application. YS responded that the Locality funding had only been discovered by IM last week.

During the discussion it became clear that the correct process for CIL applications had not been followed: the level of funding in the Forum's CIL application (£45k) was above the level approved by the committee in December (£24k).

The committee recognised this error and agreed the CIL Subcommittee should be convened urgently (before Westminster Council CIL meeting on 7 February) to review the application.

The committee recognised the importance of adhering to its own protocols, especially where the Forum is the applicant for Neighbourhood CIL funding, and would not repeat this mistake.

The committee concluded that the application for Locality grant application should not go ahead as the timeframe for the money to be spent is too short. MB added that it is likely the Locality funding will be available again in future.

The committee agreed to KB proceeding with the application for £2k Ward funding. WD agreed to check with NWECC whether the contribution payment made was tied to the website. RH added that The Portman Estate's payment was not tied to the website – the invoice wording was for a general contribution to the Forum.

ACTION:

- **CIL Sub-committee to meet asap**
 - **KB to proceed with an application for £2k Ward funding from Cllr Scarborough to pay for the website.**
 - **WD to check whether the payment from NWECC was tied to the website or a general contribution.**
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Website progress

YS circulated the designs of the new website prior to the meeting. The committee confirmed that they are happy to proceed with the designs created so far.

AB asked about the navigation – this has to be right to engage visitors to the site. YS replied that it is difficult to see how the navigation works on the PDF versions but it works well on the site itself and there is a clear pathway for visitors.

KB asked about a going live date as this will be helpful for the Ward budget application. YS suggested the week before the AGM – 7th March. The committee agreed.

YS suggested the group that worked on the website text last year get together to make any amendments to the content and images. KR agreed to arrange a meeting

MB asked if the new site would have archive content such as the designated status and articles of association. YS confirmed that this would be the case.

ACTIONS:

- **KR to arrange a meeting with the website group to go through the content.**
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5. AGM date

YS has checked with councillors and suggests proceeding with the proposed 14 March date for the AGM. YS will email committee members to ask if they wish to stand again and will do the same for the officers. YS will liaise with IM to pull together the accounts and prepare the papers. These will be sent by 14th February.

SE asked where the meeting will take place. YS proposed that it take place online. Other committee members thought that in person would be better – it would act as a good engagement activity for the Forum and the Neighbourhood Plan. Engaging via a screen adds a barrier to getting involved.

YS and IM cannot meet in person on that date. KB suggested a hybrid option. SE confirmed that the parish church can offer a hybrid option.

[IM left the meeting.]

The decision was put to a vote. The majority (12) voted for an in-person AGM.

ACTION:

- **YS to work with IM to put together papers for the AGM, venue/format to be confirmed**

6. Seymour Leisure Centre

SB stated that there was a technical issue with the previous consultation event held by WCC and is being re-run next week – Wednesday 2 Feb. YS suggested the revised plans are receiving a positive response.

AM asked what the role of the Forum is in the development plans. It is a very important community facility project. What is our role as the Forum - do we respond to the consultation collectively? Does our support for it need to be incorporated into the Plan? YS responded that detailed plans are being developed by WCC and architects. As plans develop, we can consider the potential for a Neighbourhood CIL application for example to cover a funding gap for a community benefit that may be excluded, such as Soft Play.

MB commented that by the time the Plan is adopted, the leisure centre will be completed so there is little point in including it. SD replied that, as the only core community hub in the area, it should feature in the Plan, including how it should be shaped and maintained in future. AJ agreed. SD added that we shouldn't include a commitment to contributing Neighbourhood CIL funding at this stage but wait to see what the Council are proposing and what might need topping up.

KB commented that this highlights the issue of how Council departments interface with Forums. There is a richness to the work that MB did on community assets that has been overlooked. This project was an obvious opportunity for the Council to speak and interact with Forums. YS agreed that, despite efforts to engage on the project, both the Forum and the Marylebone Association were not consulted directly, despite previous engagement pre-pandemic.

7. AOB and date of next meeting

KB asked about the Deputy Chair role that SD had highlighted was in the previous minutes. KB thinks it would be a good balance to have a business representative as the Deputy. YS commented that in

the past this balance has been created by having a business representative in the role of Secretary. AM added that, more important than the balance, a Deputy role would keep progress, consistency and decision making going forwards that is vital for the development of the Plan, as set out in the timeline included in the CIL application.

MB commented that the articles of association would not recognise the position as official but that does not stop the Committee from creating a role going forwards. YS added that officers are elected at the AGM. Once the committee has been re-elected, YS will circulate an invite for members to volunteer for the role.

SE informed the committee that there is a weekly tour of the construction site at the parish church on a Friday afternoon at 2pm. Forum committee members are invited to attend if they wish and should email SE if interested.

YS suggested end of February for the next committee meeting. KR to send a meeting date.

ACTION:

- **YS to email committee members regarding standing again at the next AGM**
 - **KR to circulate a date for the next meeting.**
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