

THE MARYLEBONE FORUM AGM 2023

Tuesday 18th April 2023, 18:30hrs

The meeting attracted an attendance of 44 people. Attendees were registered on admission.

MINUTES

1. Welcome and Introduction

The chair of the forum Yael Saunders (YS) welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave apologies received from 16 persons not attending.

2. Approval of 2022 AGM Minutes

Members voted in favour of approving the Forum's AGM 2022 minutes which had been circulated before the meeting.

3. Chair's Report

YS ran through a brief background and update on the forum and its activities since the last AGM.

Marylebone Forum is one of 17 forums within the City of Westminster. The forum is the largest both geographically and by population. It was formed in 2015 and renewed in 2021. The forum is a business forum with a steering committee comprising 50% residents and 50% non-residents.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge levied through the planning system by the council for infrastructure improvements. Broadly 85% is spent centrally by the council and, where there is a designated neighbourhood forum, 15% allocated within a forum area. Where a forum has an adopted neighbourhood plan, the 15% allocation rises to 25%. The Marylebone Forum is working on developing a neighbourhood plan which will require input from a wide group of people and an extensive evidence based.

YS thanked councillors for their support for the forum throughout the past year and to the Rector of St Marylebone Church for hosting the AGM. YS thanked business members for contributions towards running costs and hosting meetings, all committee members for their input over the past year and ward councillors for funding assistance with the forum website particularly and AQ monitors. Attendees of the AGM were invited to become more involved with the forum if they wished do so.

4. Update on Neighbourhood Plan - Andrea Merrington (AM), Howard de Walden Estate and Kay Buxton (KB), Marble Arch London BID

AM presented an update on progress with the neighbourhood plan. The plan was a chance to influence policy within the structure of overriding policies elsewhere. An adopted plan would

become a statutory document that would be used to help determine planning applications in the area and also set out priorities for investment in infrastructure areas such as public realm.

The neighbourhood plan would be drawn up under the 2011 Localism act and four areas are under consideration:

- Sustainable Marylebone
- Growth and the future of Marylebone
- Enhancing experience
- Celebrating Marylebone's heritage

A neighbourhood plan has been an ambition of the forum from the outset however evolving overarching planning policies since 2015 (the national NPPF, the London Plan and the Westminster City Plan) have come forward. Development of the neighbourhood plan has progressed over the period but also paused at certain times in recognition of these evolving policies and also COVID-19. The committee is now actively progressing development of the plan. This activity is now taking account of changes in policy with the new administration at Westminster and also changes to the CIL rules.

5. Seymour Leisure Centre and library plans - Claire Nangle (CN) Westminster City Council

CN is Head of Capital Programmes at Westminster City Council. CN provided an update on the project at the Seymour Leisure Centre and plans for the relocation of the library. CN agreed to provide presentation slides to be distributed to those present. The project will include a permanent home for the library including a children's section, a cafe, a family zone and also flexible community space. The building may also include a relocated registrars' office however this is to be confirmed.

There had been extensive engagement including a website and significant feedback from communities on the project. A planning application had been submitted on 27th March 2023. The project is anticipated to take two years and will complete early in 2026.

The City Council was currently working with an appointed contractor on detailed designs and costs for the refurbishment. Monies have been allocated for the anticipated cost of the project however CIL funding is also under consideration. The new administration is fully committed to the project.

The City Council is working on plans for the facilities management of the completed project and also its operational management, an aspect where further consultation is planned to take place. The project would include much improved access to the building.

In response to questions from the floor, CN note that the whole building will open together, not piecemeal. Weddings would continue at the Mayfair Library, Marylebone Town Hall and Harrow Road. Questions were raised over availability of space for older and more isolated people. CN confirmed this was a key aspect for the project brief and that adult social care may operate from the building. All spaces will be designed to accommodate services for older people. It was noted that residents local to the existing library were concerned about their travel to the new library. CN noted that whilst this was regrettable, the new location placed the library within easier reach for other residents. CN also noted that Westminster has a greater supply of libraries than most councils and also runs a mobile library service.

On a separate issue CN, confirmed that contractors were due to commence work on new gates in Shouldham Street shortly.

In relation to queries over the Moxon Street site, CN noted that the City Council had made a long-standing commitment since 2015 to the leisure centre site for the new library. It was considered that the co-location of the library with other council services was the optimum solution and evidence elsewhere, for example Pimlico, showed increased user numbers as a result.

6. Update on CIL - Sarah Buttleman (SB), Resident Committee Member

SB referenced information provided earlier in the meeting with respect to CIL. SB noted that the council was now more proactive in spending CIL receipts. The forum is consulted on CIL proposals from both the neighbourhood and the council. To date approximately £900,000 had been spent on CIL projects within the forum area including recent applications from St Marylebone church and the Bridge school. Opportunities are being explored for Paddington Street Gardens, the Moxon Street community space and on Edgware Road.

The council is encouraging applications for CIL expenditure and it was noted that projects close to, but outside of the forum's boundary could also be considered.

St Marylebone Parish Church - Rev. Stephen Evans (SE)

SE provided a presentation on the history of the church, the background to its development and the recent series of major restoration projects undertaken including to the roof, the ceiling, new access arrangements and new WC facilities.

7. Update on Air Quality Monitoring - Sheila D'Souza (SDS), Resident Committee Member

SDS provided an update on the status of air quality in the forum area and recent initiatives to improve the available information. SDS noted the high levels of NO₂ and PM_{2.5} pollution in 2019, particularly adjacent to major roads. SDS reported that six new sensors had been located by the City Council within the area adjacent to schools. SDS credited the work by councillors of the Marylebone and Regent's Park wards, particularly Cllr Arzymanow, in establishing this secondary monitoring network.

SDS showed a number of slides which illustrated the significant historic impact of the ULEZ zone and its subsequent extension on pollution levels in the area.

Additional funding provided from ward budgets would ensure that the data collected by the secondary monitoring stations could be properly analysed and made available via a dashboard for wider access.

8. Treasurer's Report inc. annual accounts (year to 31 August 2021) - Ian Macpherson (IM), Treasurer

IM presented the accounts for the year to August 2021. The only expenditure for the year was for the accountant's fees. It was noted that the AGM in 2024 would consider the accounts for financial years 21/22 and 22/23 together to bring matters up to date.

Members voted to approve the annual accounts.

9. Election of Forum Committee members

YS introduced each of the Forum committee members present. Two further non-resident members are currently required.

Residents:

1. Michael Bolt
2. Alan Bristow
3. Sarah Buttleman
4. Linda Davies
5. Sheila D'Souza
6. Ann Marie Johnson
7. Ian Macpherson
8. Julie Redmond
9. Yael Saunders
10. Steve Thomas

Non-residents

1. Penny Alexander (Baker Street Quarter BID)
2. Kay Buxton (Marble Arch London BID)
3. Dee Corsi (New West End Company BID)
4. Rev. Stephen Evans (St Marylebone Parish Church)
5. Simon Loomes (The Portman Estate)
6. Andrea Merrington (Howard de Walden Estate)
7. Nicki Palmer (Harley Street BID)
8. Will Scott (British Land)

Forum members voted in favour of the appointment of the above committee members.

10. Election of Forum Officers

Chair - Yael Saunders, proposed by Paul Neville, seconded by Ann Marie Johnson
Forum members voted in favour of YS continuing as Chair

Secretary – Simon Loomes, proposed by Kay Buxton, seconded by Ann Marie Johnson
Forum members voted in favour of SL continuing as Secretary

Treasurer - Ian Macpherson, proposed by Steve Thomas, seconded by Sheila Green
Forum members voted in favour of IM continuing as Treasurer

11. Questions

YS raised a question raised in absentia by a member as to whether it would take 10 years for the neighbourhood plan to be completed. This point had been addressed earlier in the meeting and AM restated that this would not be the case.

A question was raised regarding the community use at Moxon Street. It was noted that the developer had applied for changes to the planning permission. It was recognised that both the market operators and the community wished for the market to remain as a street market. Interest in the use of the community space had been expressed by local schools. Cllr Barraclough noted that the market could ideally be provided on-street which would leave the space in the development to be resolved. It was noted that CIL funding could be utilised for the fit out of this community space. It could not be confirmed whether the community space could be returned for use by the development.

12. AOB

There was no other business. YS thanked all for coming and brought the meeting to a close.