

Church Street and Marylebone Area Forum

Chairman: Cllr Harvey Marshall

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Dear Marylebone Area Forum Member

Thank you to all who were able to attend the recent Church Street and Marylebone Area Forum and help us to make decisions that affect your area. Your views are important to us, so I'd like to take this opportunity to let you know what we are planning to do in response to your feedback.

At our last meeting on Monday 28th February, workshops were held to give you the opportunity to comment on spending reductions, crime reduction, air quality control, works at St Christopher's Place and the libraries and archives service. If you would like more detail on the workshop or ward budget spending visit www.westminster.gov.uk/neighbourhoods or contact our Area Forums Team.

Council Spending Reductions

Councillor Melvyn Caplan, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, discussed the budget the council has prepared in response to the Local Government Finance Settlement, which will significantly reduce the funding local authorities will receive over the next few years. Westminster's response to the spending reductions is to share services with other local authorities, reduce spending on the back office and get better value for money by doing more work with contractors and voluntary organisations. Some services will be made more commercial and eventually 'self-funding', while many street services will be scaled back.

Councillor Caplan also clarified the council's plans for Council House, which require £30m to be spent on refurbishment work. The council is holding discussions with a number of groups who may be interested in leasing the building and paying for the work to be carried out. Although these groups do include hotels and academic institutions, services available at Council House, such as the Register Office and facilities to hold council and public meetings, will be retained. The library will either be kept on site or moved to new premises on Moxon Street.

Coordinated Crime Reduction

Max Baker and Pippa Goodfellow, officers in the Neighbourhood Crime Reduction Service (NCRS), introduced the coordinated crime reduction approach. They discussed some of the successes of joint working between the NCRS, the Police and the Westminster Wardens, focusing on youth disorder in Church Street and rough sleeping in Marylebone. The Bryanston and Dorset Square councillors have spent some of their ward budget on a six week pilot of additional Westminster Warden patrols on Edgware Road. The warden will report back on any issues and we will establish whether there is a need for an extended presence here in the longer term.

You reported a hunger strike protest organized by the 'Kurdish Freedom' movement on Old Marylebone Road and asked how the council was responding. A section of the highway was cordoned off with crowd control barriers outside Winchester House. Regular inspections by both Westminster Wardens and Police were conducted to ensure no breaches were being committed. The protestors were not found to be committing any offences, but their actions were regularly monitored. The peaceful demonstration has now ended with no offences recorded.

Reducing Air Pollution

Jennie Preen, from the City Planning Delivery Unit, gave a brief overview of the levels and sources of air pollution in the City and outlined the key things the council is doing to reduce air pollution. You had several concerns including: enforcement of the London-wide Low Emission Zone; emissions from buses and heavy good vehicles; emissions from coaches - especially when stationary; construction and demolition dust. We are developing and updating priorities for the council's air quality work and will listen to and consider these and any other concerns you would like to raise.

Libraries and Archives

Patricia Fallon and Judith Bottomley of Westminster Archives highlighted the many ways in which you can engage with Westminster's historic collections: through exciting online projects, community websites and themed events. There was a particular focus on the Westminster Memories sites: a growing network of community history sites that allow you to share your memories of the local area. They also introduced you to the new Westminster Local History Network, which offers groups opportunities to explore their local history through study days and guided tours. Those of you wishing to have a more 'hands-on' approach to local history were invited to apply for volunteering roles. The Archives Centre currently has seventeen regular volunteers, but always welcomes applications from residents. Several of you signed up for volunteering at the meeting and someone offered to donate a collection of archival material on Manchester Square.

Works at St Christopher's Place

Mark Hammill, Programme Manager, told you about the improvements that are planned for St Christopher's Place and the surrounding streets. These will include tree planting, improvements to street lighting on James Street and around the fountain and installing benches and artwork on Bird Street. Some of the paving on St Christopher's Place and Gees Court will be replaced. You agreed with Mark that the three or four colour paving set would be the best choice for this.

£50,000 for your Ward – Ward Budget Updates

Marylebone High Street, Bryanston and Dorset Square, and Church Street

Councillors are currently seeking ideas about how to spend this year's ward budgets. You made some suggestions at the area forum and further suggestions can be made through the contact details at the bottom of this page. If you would like to find out about how ward budgets were spent last year, please go to www.westminster.gov.uk/wardbudgets. To find out which electoral ward you are in, please visit www.westminster.gov.uk/wardfinder or contact the team.

Your next Church Street and Marylebone Area Forum

I look forward to welcoming you to the next Area Forum on Monday 16th May, from 6.30-8.30pm at Council House, 97-113 Marylebone Road, NW1 5PT. If you would like to raise a topic at the next forum, or for further information, please contact the Area Forums Team using the contact details on the front page of this letter.



Cllr Harvey Marshall BSc (Est Man) FRICS (Rtd) D.Litt (Hon) Chairman of the Church Street and Marylebone Area Forum

Contact your ward councillors by calling 020 7641 2322 or email:
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