

THE MARYLEBONE FORUM COMMITTEE MEETING

The Portman Room, The Portman Estate, One Great Cumberland Place, W1H 7AL

Wednesday 7th May 2025, 09:30hrs

ATTENDEES

1. Penny Alexander
2. Michael Bolt
3. Sarah Buttleman
4. Kay Buxton
5. Linda Davies
6. Stephen Evans
7. Rosa Han (Observer)
8. Ann Marie Johnson
9. Simon Loomes (Chair)
10. Andrea Merrington
11. Kate Rayner (Minutes)
12. Julie Redmond
13. Steve Thomas

APOLOGIES

1. Alan Bristow
2. Ian Macpherson
3. Nicki Palmer
4. Nathan Parsad-Wyatt
5. Yael Saunders

MINUTES

1. Welcome

Simon Loomes (SL) welcome all to the meeting and announced apologies. SL announced that Alan Bristow has decided to withdraw from the committee for personal reasons and thanked him for his time and contribution over the years.

2. New administrative arrangements

SL introduced Kate Rayner (KR). Kate is returning to the Forum to provide administrative support with tasks including minuting meetings, monitoring the Forum's email addresses and circulating information as it is received, as well as updates to the Forum's website. KR's services would be funded by The Portman Estate for an initial year, subject to point below in item 5.

3. AGM Review

Members discussed the recent AGM that took place in March.

Julie Redmond (JR) wished to thank Yael, as outgoing Chair, for her report. Steven Thomas (ST) had not realised that there was a requirement for attendees to register as members of the Forum in order to attend and suggested that it would be better as an open event. It was discussed that going forward, with the dissolving of the Forum company, this formality would no longer be required and that the meeting would be open to all. It was noted that in future, it would be good to see attendance from local councillors however it was recognised that this year there was a clash with other events. It was also suggested that, while inviting questions in advance of the meeting would be beneficial, a balance is needed for open discussion on the evening itself.

The committee set the date for next year's AGM: Wednesday 10th June 2026 at St Marylebone Church.

4. Constitution

SL gave an update to the constitution. Revisions that were made by the committee to the existing constitution to reflect changes in the organisation's governance and company status remain in draft while the Forum awaits the standard model constitution that is expected from Westminster City Council imminently. Kay Buxton (KB) is awaiting the draft as part of her role at the Forum of Forums and will forward this on to SL once received.

5. Financial Status

SL updated members on the current financial status of the Forum and the move to dissolve the registered company, proposed at the recent AGM.

Invoices have recently been received by the web developer leaving between £400- £450 remaining in the Forum's bank account. SL proposed that these funds should go towards paying KR's initial fees and once empty, the bank account should be closed.

Sarah Buttleman (SB) asked what happens if money is ever received by the Forum once the account is closed. SL responded that The Portman Estate or others could create a holding account if necessary and if the Board agreed. Penny Alexander (PA) noted that this needs to be incorporated into the constitution. PA also queried what happens if the Forum applies for CIL funding - would an account be required? RH responded that in the past funds had been transferred to the Forum via the accounts of committee member organisations so it is not a requirement.

SB proposed this motion with SE as second. The motion was approved.

ACTIONS:

- **KR to invoice the Forum for the remaining funds in the bank account when due, and any remainder to be invoiced to The Portman Estate**
- **SL to close the bank account once funds have been spent.**

6. Company Status and Banking Facilities

Following the discussion above, SL asked if an EGM is required to amend the Forum's company status. It was decided that this should be checked in WCC's new model constitution once received. It

was not considered that an EGM was required to close the bank account which would regardless be unworkable if the company status were removed.

Directors and Officers Insurance is being sought by SL who will report further.

7. CIL Status and Applications

The committee discussed the CIL application process and how this should be managed going forward. KB highlighted that the amount in the CIL pot is currently unknown as WCC's webpage has not been updated since the previous round of applications were submitted.

The committee discussed the Forum's role as a consultee in the application process – a role that was changed under the new Council administration. There are concerns that there is little monitoring of the requirement to consult with the Forum; applicants not needing to submit evidence of consultation and making it easy to bypass this step. SB suggested that in future, the committee should proactively submit feedback directly to the Council on applications once they have been discussed to ensure that this is received prior to a decision by cabinet members.

The committee discussed the need to reinstate the CIL sub-group to go through applications that are proposed. It was suggested that the group's Terms of Reference be reviewed by the committee to ensure that the list of application criteria is up to date. SE added that the timeframes for applications need to be understood. KR will add these along with the CIL funding pot to the regular updates circulated to the group.

JR asked if it would be beneficial to meet with Cllr Barraclough to express concerns with the process and to establish a clear understanding of the Forum's role as well as the criteria that the cabinet members use to make the final decisions. There is currently a lot of confusion and uncertainty. KB suggested that, given this impacts all local Forum's, this should be taken up by the Forum of Forums group. The next meeting is on 10 June.

SL asked if members would be supportive of lobbying council cabinet members to return to the previous role that Forum's played in the application process. From a developer perspective, it is important that money goes to local projects that are tangible and add value to the community. The group agreed and some members suggested that the new process feels less democratic. It was decided to discuss action at a future committee meeting.

ACTIONS:

- **SL to circulate the CIL sub-group Terms of Reference**
- **KR to add the CIL pot total and application timeframes to the regular update to members.**

8. Moxon Street CIC Update

Michael Bolt (MB) provided an update on the Marylebone Association's proposal to create a Community Interest Company (CIC) to manage the community space at Moxon Street. The proposal has been submitted to the Council in partnership with the St Marylebone School, however, the Council has since invited wider expressions of interest. There are concerns that this latter activity could lead to a commercial business taking on the space and moving it away from being a vital community resource. There is uncertainty as to the preferred option of the Council.

The Forum committee agreed to support the application by the Marylebone Association to create a CIC and manage the space.

ACTIONS:

- **MB to draft letter of support and circulate to the group**

9. Oxford Street / MDC Update

SL updated the group on The Portman Estate's position on the Mayor's proposal to create a Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) to oversee the regeneration, including part pedestrianisation, of Oxford Street. The Portman Estate is broadly supportive of the plans, as it has been with previous proposals, subject to further MDC details to be announced. It believes however that the current boundary, focussing principally on the north of the western end of Oxford Street, needs to be expanded to incorporate the whole rather than only part of the surrounding streets, for the purposes of coordinated public realm design and investment.

Following consultation, the Mayor's ambition is to have the MDC launched in January 2026 with works commencing as early as March 2026, all TBC.

MB presented the view of the Marylebone Association, that is against the proposals, with concerns that the side streets in Marylebone will bear the brunt of the displaced traffic and buses, as well as increased noise and inconvenience caused by the nighttime economy. Views were also expressed by others in discussion.

It was decided that, as there is no clear common ground or united position for the Forum on the proposals, that there is currently no response for the Forum to submit to the consultation.

10. Marble Arch Update

SL thanked the Forum for its support for The Portman Estate's proposals to regenerate the area around Marble Arch. Upgrades to Marble Arch are crucial in light of the Oxford Street redevelopment plans, to avoid the western end of the street deteriorating if other sections are to be pedestrianised. The Portman Estate aims to offer to part fund the project (subject to consultation outcomes) and is talking to others regarding investment.

11. Members' Updates

- KB noted that the Marble Arch BID renewal process has begun and requested that members complete the online survey that will help them to refine their services and projects.
- AM noted that Howard de Walden Estate's plans to develop Portland Place are continuing and will present an update at a future meeting. AM is also meeting with the Council regarding proposed new cycle lane. PA noted that there has also been a proposal for another east/west cycle route.
- RH is expecting the Portman Square bench to be in place soon and also updated that George Street works have been delayed until September – awaiting confirmation from the Council.

- MB asked if members of the committee would join residents in opposing the proposed new cycle lane on George Street. PA and SL both confirmed this. SL to draft a letter. MB also noted that a second consultation on pedicabs is due and there are concerns that the legislation will not go far enough. PA confirmed that all central London BIDs agree with these concerns on the grounds of noise and safety. It was agreed a letter would be sent on the subject.
- ST raised the subject of the rolling Chair-ship of the Forum and encouraged volunteers to come forward to take on the role. SL agreed and stated that it did not feel appropriate for a representative of the landowning estate to take on the role on a permanent basis, although others would support.
- SB and PA raised the issue of policing and security. It was decided that this should form an agenda item at the next meeting with a view to making representations.
- Linked to this JR wished to record thanks to the street teams at both Harley Street BID and Baker Street Quarter. With the reduction in policing, the teams are working hard to tackle the issue of shoplifting and antisocial behaviour in the local area.
- JR added concerns about the rise in rough-sleeping and begging on Marylebone High Street. PA responded that the BID teams work closely with outreach services to help those that are homeless and vulnerable. This differs to the issue of wider organised begging which tends to be linked to high level crime gangs and people trafficking, which increases each year in the capital in spring and summer. The teams work closely with the police to monitor.

Date of next meeting:

Thursday 3 July, 14.00

The Portman Room, The Portman Estate, One Great Cumberland Place, W1H 7AL