



Marylebone Association

Newsletter March 2023

Dear {Contact_First_Name},

Seymour Pool Victory



The new Labour Administration inherited a rather old hot potato - that of the long running saga of the refurbishment of the Seymour Leisure Centre. By attempting to cram everything into one building the proposals had managed to upset a number of different groups: gym users, library users, and, not least, the swimmers. After reviewing all this and many months of additional consultations WCC have written to confirm the outcome of these soundings:

“After much consideration and further analysis of the plans, we have instructed the team to keep the existing main pool to the same dimensions. The pool will be re-lined and refurbished and will have deck level access to ensure that as many people as possible can use it. This will impact upon the previously proposed spectator seating and some changes will be required to the changing room space. However, the changing rooms will be completely refurbished and will remain a separate male/female facility with the retention of a family changing area.”

Therefore, a gain for the swimmers, not quite as much as if the original much larger pool could have been brought back in use, but far better than what had been proposed last year. The swimmers of course had a strong voice and made sure they got a hearing.

That is the good news, however the opportunity to review whether the library could go into the new Marylebone Square building was not taken. It will remain at the Seymour Centre. Obviously library users do not form the same sort of cohesive and persuasive lobby group as the swimmers.

This means that a once in a generation opportunity to put something worthwhile for the whole community in the centre of Marylebone has been passed by. We are already losing our last few banks from the High Street and there is still no sign of that promised new Post Office. The whole area is in danger of becoming a destination for affluent shoppers and tourists and little else. Without some amenities to offer the local population the High Street could lose its relevance to locals.

However, all is not entirely lost. A compromise has been mooted whereby the children's library could be located in the Marylebone Square development, in the now possibly redundant market hall, and this is being looked at. This would free up some valuable space at the leisure centre and put at least part of the library into the centre of Marylebone, right by the schools in the immediate area.

Unfortunately, even this compromise can go nowhere at present. Until the Farmers Market receives approval for continued trading on Aybrook Street, or elsewhere, any future use for the market hall is difficult to determine - see article below.

Future of the Farmers Market



The problem goes back to 2014 when residents, who had pushed hard for the new library to be located in the new Moxon Street car park development, were told that it was impracticable. It was not commercially viable to put aside the amount of space required in the proposed development. They were, incidentally, also told that it wouldn't be ready within an acceptable time scale. Yet nine years on the Marylebone Square project is almost complete - and the proposed new

home for the library has not even started.

Instead of a library a compromise planning condition allowing for a market hall was inserted. The problem with that was that it was never given enough space to be a truly viable self contained trading area. The market made it clear then it was not large enough, and they have made it clear ever since. But someone was not listening.

As a result the Farmers Market continue to express a clear preference to remain on their present temporary position on Aybrook Street. This, they feel, offers them the best long term future and is preferred by market traders as it will maintain the status quo. They are confident that they can make Aybrook Street work permanently and they feel this option will cause the least disruption locally "as it has been tested and proven to work".

The market traders further fear that the new hall would compact their operation, reducing the overall appeal of the market and potentially damaging sales and that consequently many stalls would stop attending due to the extra constraints. They also say that servicing the hall is likely to cause congestion in the neighbouring streets including Cramer and Aybrook Street.

However, there is a certain resistance to the market being on Aybrook Street from Westminster Council. WCC are concerned about the long term consequences if the market were to stay there once Marylebone Square is up and running with its underground car park entrance and exit on Aybrook Street. The existence of the car park would pose safety issues whilst a busy market is trading and problems for access to the residents of the new development.

However, it should be said that the developers themselves do not appear to have any problems with the Farmers Market continuing presence there on Sundays. If they feel they can sell the flats with this issue then how much of a problem really is there to the market remaining on Aybrook Street?

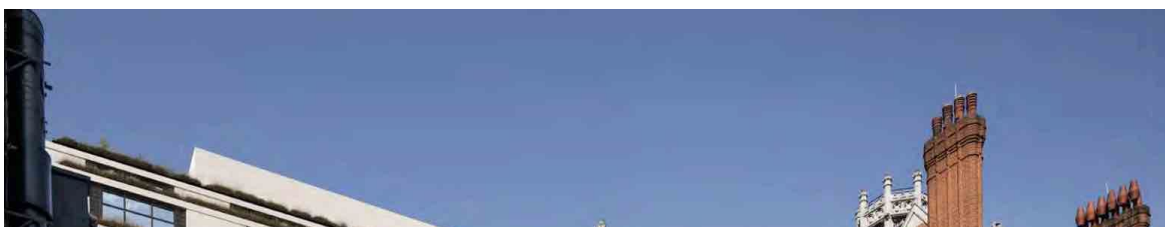
The council's present current position is that the Market will need to convince them that it can trade safely from Aybrook Street and their present proposal, including a degree of traffic marshalling is not deemed sufficient.

The council want to see further information from the Farmers Market to support their case, otherwise they say it will need to decide whether it wishes to reduce in size or revert to the existing consents and utilise the market hall.

The Farmers Market are meeting with the council to show them a revised proposal. They understand the need for more detail and this will include increased marshalling numbers, traffic surveys and evidence from similar sites across the borough and other boroughs. We understand that they are also open to moving some stalls onto Vincent or Moxon Street.

Meanwhile this has wider implications, for until the market application is resolved, decisions on changes to the community space at Marylebone Square cannot proceed. Unless that happens soon, maybe the best potential option for use of this space - as discussed in the article above, will no longer be on the table.

38-70 Baker Street





"An improved view"

Another proposal for a huge development on Baker Street has been submitted for planning consent, this time an entire street block wide.

The site is bounded by Baker Street, Blandford Street, Broadstone Place and Dorset Street. Although it is not located within a conservation area, it is directly adjacent to the Portman Conservation Area to the east.

The proposed development would replace five individual 20th century buildings and would be taller than the surrounding five storey building height by two storeys plus roof plant.

The development raises concerns on many levels, such as the loss of an Art Deco building in the block, home to the wartime Special Operations Executive, the arguments on sustainability, and much else- see our planning team's observations [here](#).

Another disturbing aspect of this application is the heritage report - the Heritage and Visual Impact Assessment, dated November 2022. One assumes it will be carrying some weight with the planning committee when they come to make a decision on this, yet it comes to the conclusion that no harm will be caused by this oversized monolith to Marylebone's surrounding conservation area.

The report, running to 132 pages and written by specialist consultants has the appearance of being an independent objective assessment but is dedicated in its entirety to showing that their clients development will have no significant impact. Any possible arguments to the contrary, where they are examined at all, are dismissed. It is one thing for the developer to claim this, but when third parties are employed to produce their opinion it would be desirable to see a certain level of objectivity.

This goes to show the danger in getting developers, particularly very large developers, to commission their own heritage and townscape assessments (not that there is any option under the present system). Just how independent can they be when they are being paid to reach the conclusion the developer requires? And in that case, what is the point of them?

The report spends many pages in order to reach the conclusion that: "The minor change to the townscape setting of the conservation area would have no effect on the ability to appreciate its heritage significance. The ability to appreciate the heritage significance of the conservation area would be sustained and not harmed in NPPF terms".

This is difficult to reconcile with the images provided in the report itself which shows a giant structure towering over the adjacent conservation area.

With regard to the Fire House building, which is directly in the line of sight, the report goes on to say: "The Proposed Development would change the scale and appearance of the close setting to the west of the listed building and would be visible in relation to the listed building in views across the converted drill yard from the southern end of Chiltern Street."

It certainly would, as can be seen in the picture above. But although grudgingly conceding the new building would be "visible" it then actually goes on to claim that it would improve the view..."The high quality, subdued character of the elevation of the Proposed Development to Broadstone Place would improve the townscape quality of the backdrop to the former fire station without distracting from the highly decorated architecture of the listed building in the foreground. While there would be a noticeable visual impact on the close westerly setting of the listed building there would be no resulting impact and therefore no effect on the significance of the listed building or the ability of an observer to appreciate that significance. The ability to appreciate the heritage significance of the listed building would be sustained and not harmed in NPPF terms".

Finally, the report is equally nonchalant about the impact of the oversized structure on the rest of the conservation area: "The Proposed Development would have impacts on the townscape settings of listed buildings within the built heritage study area but there would be no resulting impacts and therefore no effects on the significance of the listed buildings or the ability of an observer to appreciate that significance. The ability to appreciate the heritage significance of the listed buildings would be sustained and not harmed in NPPF terms."

So, conveniently, it is concluded that this building would have no impact on the surrounding area. This is not a view shared by the 40 plus bodies and individuals so far objecting to the development listed on the Westminster planning website.

Having dismissed the possibility that there could be any heritage harm at all from the development, the report is therefore equally able to dismiss the need to show the public benefits arising from the scheme- although we are assured there are some - "because no heritage harm has been assessed we have not summarised or assessed the benefits in this report".

To which one can only say- Really?

Proposals for Portland Place





Last month the Howard de Walden Estate revealed its new plans for Portland Place, which they have been working on for a while now.

The proposals are based around keeping and making permanent the 2 existing cycle lanes - which apparently is the option presently contemplated by WCC, although so far there has been no consultation on this. We opposed the installation of the present temporary cycle lanes at the time on the basis they were introduced without any consultation with residents. The lanes were not part of the designated TfL cycle network. We assume that this time around residents will be given a say on this.

The proposals listed contemplate a permanent narrowing of the street down to 2 lanes for vehicles north and south bound, and a reduction of parking spaces by about one third on the existing provision. This would enable further greening schemes to take place and improvements to various junctions.

The proposals can be seen [here](#).

We would be interested to hear member's views on the scheme.

Cleveland Street Cycleway

Another permanent cycle lane is under review in Cleveland Street, there is at the moment a consultation on its appearance. This is, however, part of the previously designated cycle network. Westminster City Council and Camden Council want to make it "safer and more pleasant to cycle and walk in (and between) both boroughs." This is part of TfL joint strategies to promote journeys by public transport, foot and cycle, to improve air quality and for London to become a carbon neutral city.

Westminster City Council originally consulted on the route in 2016 as 'Quietway 88'. Since then, proposals have changed substantially to meet up to date cycling standards. The proposed route runs along the borough boundary between Camden and Westminster, so in partnership with Camden Council, Westminster Council would like to hear your views on the updated proposals at the initial design stage to refine and improve them further.

Please note this consultation isn't seeking views on the justification for the route.

A New Grade III Listing?

Seventy-five years ago, after Hitler finished demolishing large parts of London, the post war developers took over where he left off. Such was the ensuing wanton destruction that urgent action was taken to 'list' and protect buildings deemed to be of particular architectural significance. When put before Parliament in 1947, the housing minister said "When this Bill becomes law, we shall have created an instrument of which we can be justly proud"

Since the Act's introduction, about half a million buildings have become listed at either Grade II, Grade II* or Grade I status across the country and many very valuable and beautiful buildings have been saved as a result. Restrictions vary by grading but all grades mean that the building may not be demolished without

special permission from the local planning authority.

However, despite well-supported campaigns like RetroFirst and Part Z, there are no equivalent laws in the UK that protect the other 25 million UK buildings from needless demolition. Apparently around 50,000 buildings in the UK are being knocked down each year to make way for new structures, and many of them seem to be in Westminster. The majority of these buildings are perfectly serviceable, but it is often easier and cheaper to demolish and rebuild. In addition the existing tax regime often encourages this.

As a result, as well as the destruction of our built heritage there is more embodied carbon being unnecessarily produced. The suggestion to stop this tidal wave of needless demolition is a very simple one - a new Grade III listing.

This idea was first put forward by structural engineer and writer Will Arnold last November. A Grade III listing status would be applied to all unlisted buildings in the UK. Arnold wrote, "The status would apply automatically to every building and it would come with just one rule: the property may only be demolished if it is structurally unsafe, or is given special dispensation by the local planning authority."

"To avoid overburdening SMEs, its initial introduction may only apply to major properties (for example those with a net internal area of more than 1,000m²) and would still allow us to alter layouts, strengthen foundations, add new floors and upgrade façades... But the restriction on demolition would at last enable us to make rapid inroads towards slashing construction's huge carbon footprint."

Historic England, which is responsible for listing historic buildings, agreed that reusing buildings rather than knocking them down could be a "powerful way to reduce our carbon footprint."

The Marks and Spencer building on Oxford Street is just one such example, the building is not structurally unsound, but the owners are seeking to knock it down and rebuild it simply for ease and affordability.

With the introduction of a new Grade III, development across the UK would change overnight. Re-using what exists already would become the norm. It would end the debate around whether to lower taxes on refurbishments and vastly improve the lives of all those who live next to or near buildings that presently face demolition. Most importantly, it would be a great step toward protection of our remaining built heritage.

The Case for Demolition





This new climate of conserving what we have is not sitting well with some professional developers, never mind a new Grade III regime. A view from this side of the fence on the retrofit vs redevelopment debate last month came from Graham Clemett (CEO of Workspace Group). Writing for React News, Clemett noted three issues with the proposal to introduce Grade III listing status.

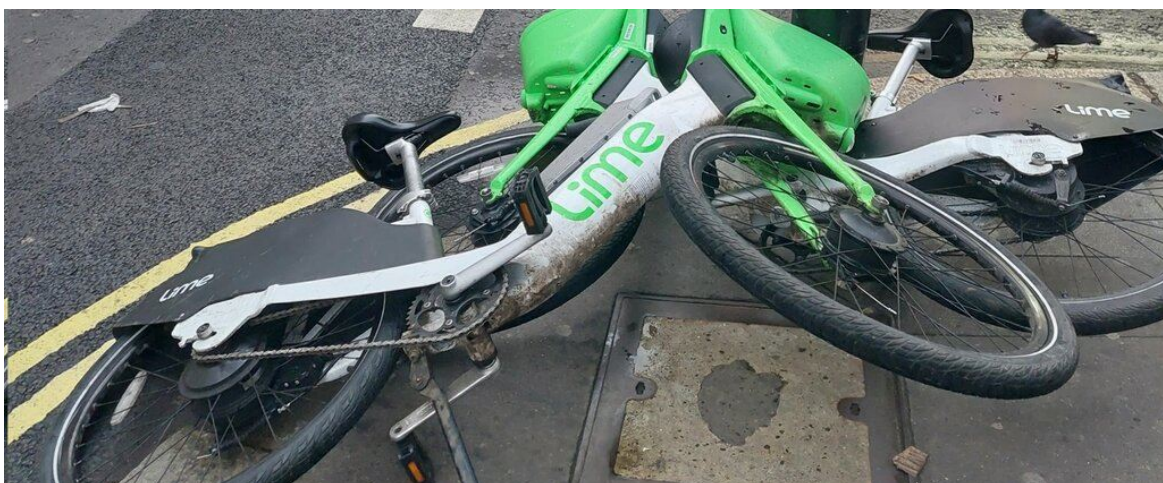
The first issue was that it would not promote sustainable development, since almost all retrofit projects require a degree of demolition, especially when a change of use is involved. Government policy, he said, should also focus on incentivising developers to take on new retrofit schemes, rather than disincentivise development with blanket bans.

Finally, granting listed status to a majority of buildings he felt, risks a lot of commercially viable, under utilised space remaining underutilised. Increasing capacity often means partial or full demolition, which a blanket ban would make very difficult. Charles Begley, writing for EG News, had a similar worry. A lack of clear and consistent national planning policy risks local authorities assuming a 'retrofit only' approach when considering development proposals.

He felt that the government missed an opportunity with the publication of its National Planning Policy Framework in December, which lacked detailed guidance. A one-size-fits-all approach, Begley writes, is not a credible option, and the delivery of net zero buildings must proceed on a case-by-case basis.

You can read both articles in full [here](#) and [here](#).

Lime Bikes



A message from Cllr Patrick Lilley

Let us start to solve the nuisance caused by the careless parking of Lime bikes. It's not just the West End ward or the City of Westminster that is blighted by them. They are dumped on street corners, at zebra crossings, and elsewhere on the streets and roads across London. I have even seen them in Regents Park, on the Westway flyover on the A40 dual carriageway.

They are a nuisance and a danger to other users of our already crowded

They are a nuisance and a danger to other users of our already crowded pavements. Some Lime users leave them on narrow pavements and too often park them at right angles to the direction of travel blocking the pavement entirely and forcing people into the road. The public highway is a shared resource that should not be appropriated by a small number of companies for their own commercial benefit and with no regard to the adverse impact on other users.

Blind and partially sighted people are particularly vulnerable to badly parked Lime bikes. People with prams also are disadvantaged and forced to walk in the path of vehicles. Wheelchair and mobility scooters users are entitled to use the streets too without having to negotiate these obstacles. Lime is using our shared public spaces for their private gain. Westminster Council has had to pay staff to remove these bikes. This diverts the Council's resources from other work such as dealing with fly tipping or preventing noise nuisance.

We are asking Lime to add a button within the Lime app to allow Lime users to solve the problem by reporting badly parked Lime bikes with a photo and its location. A tweak to the Lime App will allow users who want to behave responsibly to report the location of badly parked bikes. This will save Westminster City Council and others the time and costs incurred by having to collect and store the bikes. Also please make the penalty charge for poorly parked bikes £10 to encourage users to do the right thing. The money collected could be donated to a charity that helps the blind or partially sighted.

Councillor Patrick Lilley
West End Ward -City of Westminster

Creeping Pedestrianisation

Over in Soho the council is proposing to pedestrianise Great Chapel Street and parts of Hollen and Dean Street.

The Soho Society is concerned that, if pedestrianised, it will automatically be available for al fresco dining once a pavement licence is granted which the council is obliged to do under national legislation.

Tim Lord, Chair of the Soho Society said "It is really disappointing that this sort of thing is still happening under the new administration. It destroys trust and is either highly incompetent at best or intentionally manipulative".

"A Volatile Year"

Westminster Council has set out its proposals for the next Budget at the latest budget scrutiny meeting.

The council under the Conservative administration had planned to spend £60.5 million before 2025 and the Labour council is expected to spend a similar amount of money according to the deputy chief executive.

Finance officers say that the past year has been particularly "volatile", with rising costs creating a challenging environment for the Labour-controlled council to deliver on its "Fairer Westminster" priorities when setting its budget for 2023 to 2024 (see under Announcements below for more on "Fairer Westminster.")

Labour says it will prioritise support for residents with the cost of living crisis, put a freeze on the Westminster part of next year's Council Tax. and undertake a major

investment in temporary housing, as well as funding for free school meals for all state primary school pupils in the city.

In total the council is expected to spend £2.7 billion in the next five years, which is in keeping with how much has been spent in previous years.

The council has committed huge sums to housing projects in the borough. It is expected to spend £84m over the next five years on redeveloping Church Street in Lisson Grove.

The council has also budgeted £10m for community hubs, £2.5m for electrical vehicle charging points and £1.2m for an extension to the Paddington Arts community centre. A further £30m has also been allocated for future projects.

Meanwhile the Leader of Westminster City Council, Cllr Adam Hug, has announced funding to buy 270 homes for use as temporary housing. He said "For years in opposition, we were calling on the council to invest in temporary accommodation stock. We have a real problem with families being sent to the outer reaches of London instead of being able to remain in Westminster." The most recent budget allocated a total of £170m to the programme through to 2026-27."

"Buoyant Trading" in West End

Savills report that London's West End retailers saw a strong end to the year, with December sales just 9% below 2019 levels.

Landowners Shaftesbury and Capco, who between them control much of the property in Chinatown, Soho and Carnaby Street, have both reported that their tenants had enjoyed "buoyant trading" over the Christmas period with sales in the run-up to Christmas 6% above what was recorded in December 2019.

In contrast Oxford Street vacancy increased marginally, albeit almost entirely due to the closure of temporary gift/candy stores following Westminster City Council's recent campaign to reduce their presence on the street. However, with almost a third of vacant units on the street under offer, Savills expect to see vacancy on Oxford Street resume its downward trajectory later in the year.

However, demand for larger units on Oxford Street, a section of the market which has been typically harder to lease in recent years, appears to be improving, with multiple larger units (25,000+ sq ft) currently under offer.

Looking ahead, Savills say that there is an expectation of further downward pressure on vacancy across the West End and some parts of the City, particularly in those areas close to Elizabeth Line stations. For some areas, this is likely to help generate upward pressure on rents, although unit specifics will be a major factor.

Design Review Panel Plans

Westminster City Council have announced plans for the launch of a new Design Review Panel which will provide 'independent, expert advice' on major developments within the borough.

Cllr Geoff Barraclough (Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development) said "As part of the panel, you will join a multidisciplinary group of

built environment professionals who will provide independent, forward-thinking advice, championing high quality sustainable design across the city.'

The City Council is aiming to recruit around 20 members to the panel with a range of expertise including sustainability, retrofitting, placemaking and estate regeneration.

The panel will offer independent advice and review of major development, planning, public realm and regeneration projects

WCC writes "This is a fantastic opportunity to get involved in some of the highest profile projects in the country, help us to shape the future of central London and deliver a fairer Westminster."

Glass Houses

The Supreme Court has ruled in favour of residents living in luxury glass-walled flats opposite the Tate Modern's viewing gallery, who claim they have "hundreds of thousands of visitors" looking into their homes. The Supreme Court stated that residents have suffered a "nuisance" - and this may well have ramifications for future developments. Cllr Geoff Barraclough, cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development weighed in on the debate to say "The idea that the rights of five wealthy glass-bowl flat owners trumps everything is ridiculous. The Supreme Court have got this badly wrong". Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

In fact most observers have come out against the Supreme Court decision, there is almost tangible outrage at the idea that the rich newcomers can dictate the outcome of a national institution.

The Guardian could hardly contain itself: "It sets an iniquitous precedent, providing an unbridled Nimby's charter that could unleash a wave of unfounded nuisance claims. Might the residents of Nine Elms, home to that aquarium of high-net-worth individuals, the "sky pool", suddenly decide that they don't like being ogled by American diplomats after all, and have the neighbouring US embassy closed?"

"Could the all-powerful bankers in the glass office towers of the Square Mile realise that they're sick of being peered at by tourists on St Paul's Cathedral viewing gallery and have the majestic dome shuttered? The ruling suggests that any developer who builds a glass tower next to an open public space might retroactively have that space cleansed of people, so as not to intrude on their residents' "ordinary use and enjoyment" of their homes".

The ruling does not suggest that, but who let facts get in the way of a good rant?

Is there not too much rubbernecking generally? Why should visitors to the gallery be gawping out at nearby residents? They would be better off staying inside and looking at what they had come to pay to see.

Launch of Early Engagement

Westminster City Council has launched a consultation on a new Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) draft document. The document outlines how the Council will involve residents, businesses, and other stakeholders in carrying out planning responsibilities.

This is a public consultation and we would like to hear from you.

This formalises much of the Early Engagement Guidance introduced last year under the previous administration..

The plan sets out 5 the key objectives and guidelines for all planning engagement:

- Early Engagement
- Inclusive Engagement
- Using a range of appropriate consultation methods
- Clear and simple communications
- Transparent records and feedback

The SCI also outlines the importance of pre-application consultation being undertaken by developers at the earliest possible stage in the scheme development allowing communities to have a meaningful role in shaping their places and allowing developers to benefit from local knowledge.

It encourages engagement to take a variety of in person and digital forms, such as local exhibitions, public meetings, circulation of leaflets, use of social media or online engagement platforms, or the creation of a well-publicised dedicated website, including a facility to make comments.

“Community engagement should be planned across multiple stages and should comprise an inclusive, transparent, and open discussion with all parts of the local community.” WCC.

Consultation will close on 14th March 2023. The document can be found by [here](#) and comments can be submitted to planningpolicy@westminster.gov.uk

A New Planning Policy

The Government published a consultation just before Christmas on changes to the National Planning Policy Framework. The consultation details can be found [here](#) and a tracked changed version of the NPPF [here](#).

The consultation closes on 2nd March

Residents Letters

This month the resident is one of our own committee members, who spotlights her visit to St Marylebone CE School:

St Marylebone CE school, with its premises for 1000+ girls at the top of Marylebone High Street and its Sixth Form for girls and boys on Blandford Street, enjoys all the opportunities of our central London setting; making the most of our city's arts, culture, business and enterprise for students' enrichment. It has achieved success as a Teaching School and region-wide leadership as a Maths Hub, and recently won the bid to lead the Art Council's Creativity Collaborative for London!

Marylebone Association Chairperson, Julie Redmond, and I were so pleased to take a tour of the school with impressive Head Teacher, Kathryn Pugh. As we walked through their campus, all I could think about was how I wished I had gone to school here! The atmosphere feels vibrant and exciting; the students were alert, engaged and happy. We were wowed by stunning pupil artworks throughout, and noted its modern facilities which include a sports hall, dance studios, fully equipped theatre, music rooms and art rooms. Within their spaces

studios, fully equipped theatre, music rooms and art rooms. Within their space limitations, the school is cleverly laid out, and optimises every nook and cranny to its maximum. We even spotted a colourful rock-climbing wall, on our way to their cosy underground school library.

Notwithstanding all its wonderfulness, running a school of this size and scope is not without its challenges as you can imagine. St Marylebone is a state-funded school, constantly squeezed by reduced per-pupil funding and rising costs. We later sat down with Deborah Loades, Business Development Manager, who briefed us on current issues which included fixing the school roof, figuring out funding and location for a new dining hall, and how to increase support for pupils with special educational needs or whose families cannot afford full cost of school trips. If you, or your business, have an idea on how you can help support this wonderful Marylebone School, in the heart of our community, please get in touch with me.

Niamh O'Keeffe, Families, Marylebone Association Committee

niamh.okeeffe@marylebone.org

The Marylebone Diary

Residents could be excused for mistaking Marylebone for Los Angeles over the last few weeks with reports of gunmen outside Bonne Bouche on the High Street, pranksters flying fake spy balloons over the Chinese Embassy on Portland Place and Leonardo Di Caprio and Justin Bieber partying in The Chiltern Firehouse!

The first incident is no laughing matter. On 6th February, the police were called by the London Ambulance Service following reports of a man with a knife wound to his hand. He was treated for his injuries and a suspect was arrested on suspicion of possession of a firearm and a blade and causing grievous bodily harm. According to the police the incident does not appear to be gang related. However, it is deeply worrying. Let's hope a little calm returns as we move into spring.

The Marylebone Association Committee at The Farmer's Market





The Farmers' Market will be celebrating its tenth year in Marylebone in June this year. However, following local changes (including the Moxon Square development) the Farmers Market is being forced to weigh up whether it still has a future in the area. The MA supports the Farmers' Market staying on Aybrook Street following consultation with its members and local residents and families in the area. Representatives of the MA will be at the Farmer's Market on the last Sunday of every month. Come along and say hello, share any concerns you have about the area or join up and become part of our wonderful area association! By way of reminder the Farmers' Market is open every Sunday from 10am to 2pm rain or shine.

Rough Sleeping

Rough sleeping continues to be a growing issue in Marylebone. Whilst walking past Pret A Manger on the High Street recently, one Marylebone resident noticed a young man who had apparently passed out and was unconscious on the street in the middle of the day. Busy shoppers and passers-by were simply stepping over him so the quick-thinking resident rang Streetlink (an amazing not-for-profit organisation that allows members of the public to connect people sleeping rough with the local services that can support them) and asked for advice. Given the apparent youth of the individual, Streetlink advised informing the police which the resident did. Thankfully he was ok but it feels like only a matter of time until a more serious incident occurs.

It was great to see HRH The Prince of Wales and Cllr Adam Hugg open the Bentley House facility in Victoria with 20 flats for rough sleepers, £2.1 million grant was given in collaboration with The Passage to support rough sleepers. Westminster City Council spends more than any other authority more than 12 million a year to help those sleeping rough, but is it enough?

Crime in Marylebone

The MA is hearing of numerous worrying reports from residents of car robberies and home burglaries in Marylebone. Marylebone is lucky enough to have three fantastic police officers who are assigned to the area. However, they are kept very busy and spread very thinly. Alongside domestic crime, there are reports of an increase in brothels, both on the High Street and on Gloucester Place.

To help tackle this issue, the police are working closely with TAMAR, a charity based at All Souls church which provides essential support and advocacy to people suffering sexual exploitation and modern slavery in Westminster. However, the areas many, well-funded, private landlords must have a role to play here too, better monitoring their property portfolios and making sure that security is maintained and anti-social and illegal uses are not allowed to continue. Only by working together as a community will we keep Marylebone safe for residents.

Tesco Goodge Street

Just to the east of our area in Marylebone the Tesco's here is still under threat from downsizing. This will be unfortunate if it goes ahead for the many residents nearby who rely on it.

Westminster Council reject plan for adult gaming centre on Oxford Street

A Westminster Council planning committee has refused permission for a new adult gaming centre (AGC) on Oxford Street because "the business would undermine the street as a globally recognised shopping district."

New Openings and Events

It's great to see more businesses choosing to make Marylebone their new home.

Watchhouse (Marylebone. • WatchHouse.) has opened on New Cavendish Street in the former Chiron House. This is the brand's eleventh London location and it styles itself as a "multi-level brunch café offering the full Modern Coffee experience". All the MA can say is that its coffee and sandwiches are delicious!

The beloved Masons Arms pub on Devonshire Street is also back in business. Now going by the name, The Lucky Saint, the pub has been re-imagined as a base of operations for the UK's number 1 independent alcohol-free beer brand (Our Story – Lucky Saint). The pub will serve Lucky Saint beer and other no/low alcohol drinks alongside more usual alcoholic offerings. Having been forced to close during the Covid lockdown, the MA was very worried that the pub, which has been a Marylebone institution for over 170 years, might be gone for good so it wishes Lucky Saint all the best for its new venture!

Whilst not new to the area, the MA can't resist mentioning the delights of the Crystal Palace Spa on Crawford Street (Crystal Palace Spa | Hair & Beauty Salon and Turkish Bath Spa). This unisex spa provides a unique relaxing sanctuary for Marylebone residents and visitors. The spa's Turkish Hamman and Moroccan bath uses deep cleansing and soap massages and full body masks using rose, honey or chocolate. It comes highly recommended!

Turning to events, with Valentine's Day just behind us and International Women's Day almost upon us, the launch of Maxine Mei-Fung Chung's new book "What Women Want" at Daunt Books on Marylebone High Street was well timed. In her book, the author examines this very topical question in the context of 21st century women with insights drawn from her 15 years working as a psychotherapist. Thanks as ever to Daunt Books for hosting such an interesting evening.

Daunt Books has some great launches planned for the next month (Events | Daunt Books) so MA members should make sure they pop in.

Finally, our very own MA events committee organised a fabulous event in Home House on Portman Square. It was great to see many of our members there and the committee is already working on plans for its next event.

Announcements

Fairer Westminster

The council launched its new Fairer Westminster strategy in October 2022, which sets out how the council will work with the local community to support them and tackle inequality.

The introduction of resident ballots aims to deliver more Council homes for social rent. As part of the new Fairer Westminster strategy, the target is for approximately 70% of affordable homes on council-owned developments to be Council homes for social rent.]

The Church Street regeneration programme will see brand new council homes delivered for social rent and affordable rent, and new homes for sale.

The council is also holding a resident ballot for the Ebury Bridge regeneration scheme. The ballot will open on 23rd January 2023 and run for three weeks to give residents an opportunity to have their say.

Across the council's two major regeneration schemes, the GLA funding could enable the delivery of over 300 additional new council homes for social rent (at least 150 at Church Street and 171 at Ebury Bridge)

The council announced its commitment to increase the number of affordable

The Council announced its commitment to increase the number of affordable homes in Westminster in October last year. Subject to confirming the GLA funding for both Ebury and Church Street, the additional affordable homes at Church Street will take the total to at least 1,519 new council homes for social rent.

Working with our local BID's



Did you know there are four BIDs or Business Improvement Districts in the Marylebone Association area?

These are Baker Street Quarter Partnership, Harley Street BID, part of Marble Arch London and a small area of New West End Company. BIDs are not for profit companies funded by local businesses to enhance the local area.

They include the street teams many of us encounter, working to keep the area safe and clean for all of us. Members of the Marylebone Association Committee met with the four BID CEOs this month and we will now be meeting twice annually to explore how we can work together on matters of joint interest and concern such as air quality, anti-social behaviour, significant planning applications and public realm proposals.

At the last meeting we talked about the BIDs street management programmes, projects to reduce emissions, programmes harnessing support for local charities and community groups and recent placemaking consultations. The ensuing discussion identified many areas we could effectively work together on for the benefit of everyone in the area and it was very positive to see such commitment to Marylebone and its community.

Penny Alexander Chief Executive
Baker Street Quarter Partnership
www.bakerstreetq.co.uk

Quartet for the End of Time

The Hellenic Centre - 2 March 2023 - 7pm tickets £12 Book 0207 4875060

The Waldstein Piano Trio in collaboration with clarinettist Benjamin Mason are bringing the Quartet for the End of Time

15 January 1941 – A premiere performance of an influential piece is about to be given at Stalag VIII-A prisoner-of-war camp in Görlitz, Germany during that chilly day of winter. Four prisoners: a clarinettist, a violinist, a cellist and a pianist are about to perform together the Quartet for the End of Time before the eyes of their fellow prisoners and German guards.

The composer of the piece, Olivier Messiaen, who also takes the role of the pianist later recalls: “Never have I been heard with as much attention and understanding”. Thus, in the midst of war and death an apocalyptic quartet like no other comes to life. Musicians: Greta Papa – violin, Miguel Ángel Villeda Cerón – cello, Christos Fountos – piano

London Handel Festival

This year's Festival starts in late February and goes through most of March too. It's just outside Marylebone but only a short walk to Hanover Square and St Georges Church <https://www.london-handel-festival.com>

The Wallace Collection



Queen Elizabeth II of England at Balmoral Castle with one of her Corgis, 28 September 1952. (c) Bettmann / Contributor via Getty Images

A photography exhibition featuring the late Queen and her long association with Pembroke Welsh corgis will be opening in March at the Wallace Collection in central London. Each decade of the Queen's life will be marked by a single image that captures Her Majesty and her love of the breed.

The display will coincide with the Collection's major exhibition, Portraits of Dogs from Gainsborough to Hockney, which explores our devotion to four-legged friends across the centuries. Through carefully selected paintings, sculptures, drawings, works of art and even taxidermy, the forthcoming exhibition highlights the unique bond between humans and their canine companions.

The Queen's own passion for the fearless breed of herding dog began in 1933 at the age of 7, when she and her sister, Princess Margaret, were given a pair named Jane and Dookie by their father, the future King George VI. From then on, they were always by her side. Being a constant presence in her life often led to them being immortalised with her in photographs taken by the press – a selection

of which form this display.

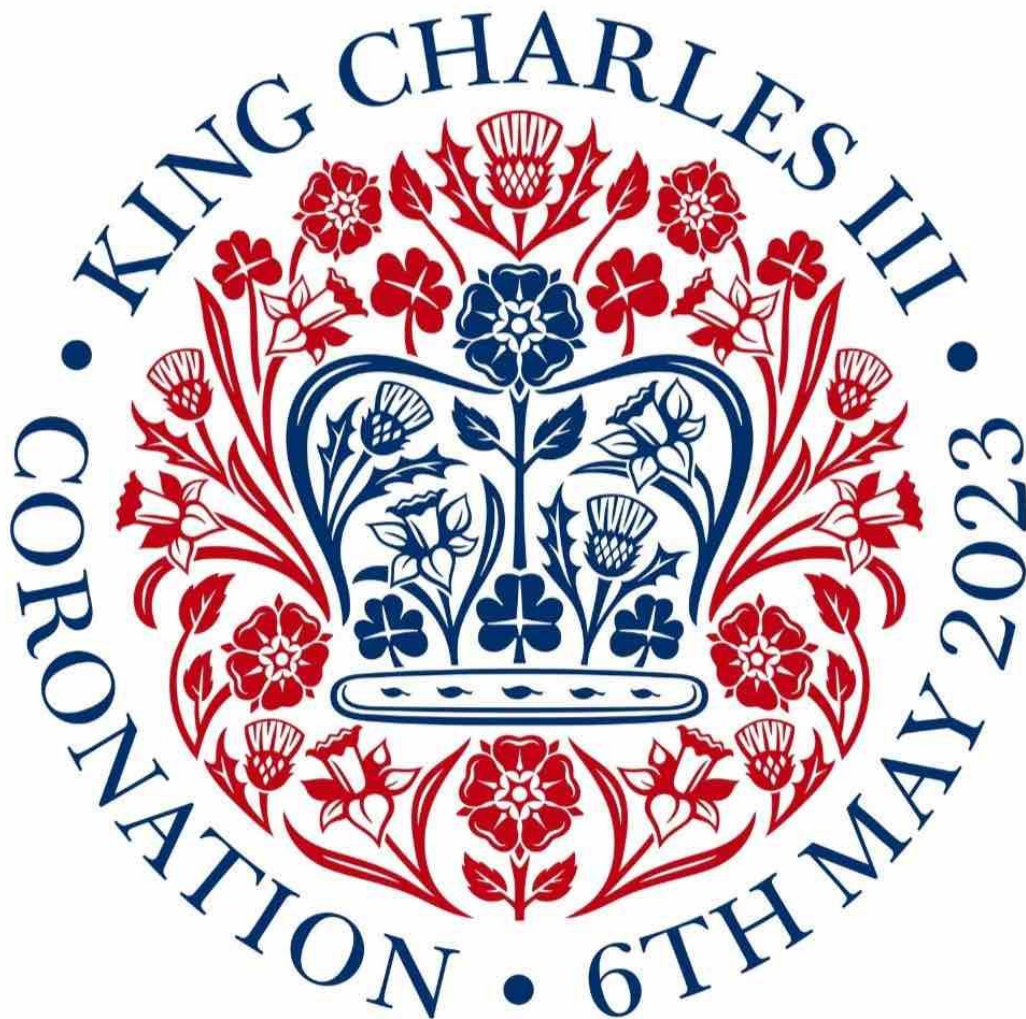
The earliest image in the exhibition dates from July 1936 and is of the young Princess Elizabeth playing in the large garden of 145 Piccadilly – the London house where she lived much of her early childhood – with Jane and Dookie.

Other images show corgis accompanying The Queen during her work, which often led to them appearing at important events. A photograph from 15 October 1969 shows The Queen with four corgis in tow, returning from Balmoral to King's Cross in order to meet the astronauts of Apollo 11 at Buckingham Palace.

The exhibition will end with the photo of two Corgis waiting at Windsor Castle on the day of Her Majesty The Queen's funeral.

The exhibition, The Queen and her Corgis, opens on 8th March at the Wallace Collection and runs until late June. It's free to visit.

Nickie Aiken MP's Coronation Card Competition



The King's Coronation is less than three months away and the Two Cities will be in the spotlight with the world's eyes firmly on our neighbourhoods.

To celebrate this historic occasion, I'm inviting everyone across the Two Cities to take part in my Coronation Card Competition.

take part in my Coronation Card Competition.

All you need is to design a picture on an A4 sheet of paper and email it to me at nickie.aiken.mp@parliament.uk, or post to Nickie Aiken MP, House of Commons, SW1A 0AA.

The winning design will be made into the card to be delivered to Buckingham Palace on behalf of everyone across the Two Cities to send our very best wishes to His Majesty The King and Her Majesty The Queen Consort and thank them for their service to the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth.

Entries must be received by 23:59 on Wednesday, 12 April. Find out more [here](#).

Association Events

The logo for Madame Tussauds, featuring the name in a stylized, cursive, orange-yellow font.

MADAME TUSSAUDS LONDON

Thursday 16th March at 12 noon - meeting time 11.45am sharp

We have probably all marvelled at the long queues for Madame Tussauds, scaling their way along Marylebone Road? Now there's a chance to find out what goes on inside. Join us for a talk at this enduring attraction who make wax figures.

Discover how they create these wax figures by meeting their Studio Expert, stepping behind the scenes at Madame Tussauds London. Learn about the beautiful history of the building and Marie's story, the incredible founder, artist and business women.

The Studio Expert will talk through the process and history, allowing time for questions and photos. Please note that this is just access to the talk and not to the attraction itself. The talk will last for 45 minutes plus 15 minutes for questions and photos. Open to all members both Residential and Business, but places must be booked.

The cost is £10 per person. To reserve your place please email Lois German on lois.german@marylebone.org or telephone 0207 487 2706.

MAYFAIR WALK - Lords, Ladies, Musicians and Film Stars

Saturday 25th March at 11am

Do join us for our first walk of 2023 with Janice Liverseidge, our local blue badge guide who will be sharing stories and scandal associated with Lords, Ladies, Musicians and Film Stars on Saturday 25 March from 11am.

We'll be exploring three famous squares in Mayfair and learning about their history, the residents and the goings on from the 18th Century through to the current day. Along the way we'll discover more about a mix of musicians (something for everyone!), a high society church, a hidden gem of a garden, links with America's leaders and not one but three famous or infamous hotels!

We hope you can join us for a fun and entertaining morning ending at 1pm in time

we hope you can join us for a fun and entertaining morning ending at 1pm in time for lunch.

Cost per person £13

Limited to a maximum 20 walkers to ensure you all enjoy this excursion. Open to all members both Residential and Business, but places must be booked. To reserve your place please email Lois German on lois.german@marylebone.org or telephone 0207 487 2706.

Starting point: outside Bond Street Elizabeth Line entrance/exit in Davies Street (near start of South Molton Street) End Point: Piccadilly near Green Park underground.

Regular Association Events

BOOK CLUB

Monday 6 March 2023 at 6.30 pm

The King's Head, Westmoreland Street, W1G 8PJ
'The Kings of Shanghai' by Jonathan Kaufman

Book Club now meets on the first MONDAY of each month, upstairs at The King's Head pub in Westmoreland Street. All book choices are available in paperback and on e-readers. For further details – and anyone interested in joining us - please contact Liz Queenan (liz.queenan@marylebone.org) or tel: 020 7486 3709.

PUB EVENING

Monday 13th March at 6.30 pm

The Prince Regent, 71 Marylebone High Street, W1U 5JN

Continuing with our regular bi-monthly pub evenings at this popular London pub with plush bar menu and real ales. Everybody is welcome so do come along whether you are a regular or new to our pub evenings, where you will be greeted by our hostess for the evening Anne Hamilton.

SCRABBLE CLUB

Tuesday 14 and 28 March 2023

The Duke of Wellington, 94a Crawford Street, London W1H 2HQ

The Scrabble Club normally meets in the private dining-room at The Duke of Wellington pub in Crawford Street on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month, from 5 until 7, with Scrabble sets and dictionaries provided – and all levels of players very welcome. Anyone interested in joining and/or wanting further information should contact rosemary.forgan@marylebone.org or 0788 789 1977.