



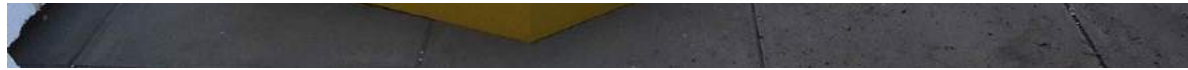
# Marylebone Association

Dear Tim,

## MARYLEBONE NEWS

Bus Gridlock set to return in Oxford Street?





Westminster Council have begun the “ambitious renovation” of Oxford Street reported in last month’s newsletter in order to attract the shoppers back. This is part of the 150 million pound Oxford Street District project.

Work is now underway on the temporary pavement widening. WCC says, “they are part of a huge programme of works and activity to reinvent the nation’s high street.”

Leader of Westminster City Council, Cllr Rachael Robathan, said: “These initial measures will literally pave the way for an economic recovery. They will create a new visitor-friendly environment and reinforce the area as one of the best places in the world to live, work, shop and visit.” Without wishing to nitpick, nothing is being literally paved, but just infilled with composite material. Between Selfridges and Oxford Circus, no lay-by is safe, they are all being filled in, and some enlarged, to ensure the road is as narrow as it can possibly be whilst still retaining the function of a road.

Bus bays are being consolidated, but buses will still stop there, consolidating the traffic that will be stuck behind them. We had lobbied for the Council to at least retain bus lay-bys and not have buses stopping in the middle of the road, emulating the nonsense we now have in Regent Street. Otherwise we fear that two narrow lanes down Oxford street with no pull in areas will be a recipe for semi-permanent congestion once the shops do reopen and traffic returns to normal.

This first phase of work will be in place for an initial period of 18 months, subject to monitoring and review. What are the benefits on offer in exchange for snarling up the traffic? Apparently to make space for pocket parks complete with play areas and lighting installations. The idea is to place planters, seating areas, and play areas where once there was traffic.

It remains to be seen if wider pavements cluttered with planters and seating will sufficiently delight shoppers to lure them back to Oxford Street. It will certainly do nothing for the residents, although the money to do it is being borrowed on their behalf.

Meanwhile, while we wait to find this out, the consequence of congestion in Oxford Street when traffic volumes return to normal, will be that those vehicles that can avoid it will do, and reroute through Marylebone and to a lesser extent, Mayfair.

## WCC grants itself planning consent for Marble Arch Hill





This Tuesday Westminster Council sought permission from its own planning committee for “the erection of a visitor attraction on the Marble Arch traffic island for a temporary period of 6 months from June 2021”. Consent was duly granted.

This project is another designed to lure back the shoppers once lockdown ends. Reminiscent of the widening of pavements and the creation of flowerbeds, above, but on a bigger scale. Is this a “horrendous misuse of public money particularly given the economic crisis” or will it, “give people an opportunity to look afresh and with wonder at this well known, but sadly increasingly overlooked, area” - as described by Cllr Rachael Robathan, Leader of Westminster City Council.

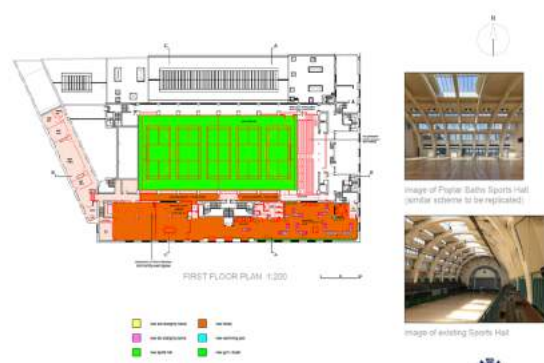
This is supported by big business and the local estates who see any investment in the area as a positive incentive to draw visitors back into the district. It however has many opponents, not least the 51 written responses against the granting of planning consent. Amongst the concerns raised were the expense, the damage to the siting of the Grade 1 listed monument and that a better and more permanent structure should be found for the large expenditure that is proposed.

You can read the committee report [here](#) and watch the meeting [here](#). The MA response is on our website.

## Marylebone Library - Vol 6 - the final chapter?

### Seymour Leisure Centre 2.0

Building on our previous work



In our January newsletter we featured an article about the 13 year wait for our new permanent neighbourhood library. The Covid crisis has taught us many things, and valuing local amenities and services is one of them. The City Council have throughout maintained their commitment to provide a new library but with little progress to show for it. This appears to be about to change. We are pleased to report that on 16 March 2021, WCC held an update meeting where it was confirmed that the £25m Capital Budget for this project remains unchanged and is secured for the refurbishment of Seymour Leisure Centre and new library.

Below is the main part of the statement of intent released by Westminster Council:

“The Council remains committed to taking this major project forward, which will incorporate a new library and will also provide a better leisure centre and wider services for the local community. The delivery of this project remains a priority for the council and as such is endorsed by three Cabinet Members:

- Councillor Paul Swaddle, Cabinet Member for Finance and Smart City
- Councillor Melvyn Caplan, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for City Management
- Councillor Tim Barnes, Cabinet Member for Young People and Learning

Building upon the hard work undertaken to date, the team will now explore options for the building which we will consult on. Our aim is to start the formal planning process before the end of the year. The new high-level options will explore opportunities and will use residents' knowledge and experience to help guide this approach. The overall use of the building will be flexible and provide services that meet the needs of local residents. We will appoint a full professional team that will create an innovative and inspirational design for a newly refurbished and multi-service leisure centre. The focus of the project will be to:

- establish a new, permanent home for Marylebone Library, with multifunctional spaces.
- provide leisure facilities, including large swimming pool with an area set aside for teaching,
- sports hall, fitness suite (gym) and studios.
- incorporate our cleaner and greener aspirations of becoming a net zero carbon organisation, in line with City for All.
- capture improvements that can be made to the spaces around the building as well as investment in the building.
- ensure the building is fully accessible. As the building will require changes, benefits to the public will need to outweigh any potential harm to its listed status.

Ideas and high-level options from the architect will be available to share with local residents. In parallel we will be procuring the professional team that will create the detailed design options. Stakeholder feedback in May will inform how to proceed to the next phase.

Full consultation from July to December with residents. Formal planning processes commence.” If you are interested in shaping what ends up in the Seymour Centre please do get in touch. You will be able to return your overdue library books in 2024/5.

## Or.....Debenhams to house Marylebone Library?



An alternative to the official WCC proposal above has been put forward by the [Westminster Labour Group](#). They have noticed that there will be rather a lot of large redundant buildings on Oxford Street post crises. Marks & Spencer and John Lewis are downsizing, but Debenhams and House of Fraser have gone into administration and they no doubt won't be the last.

The Labour Group however have a solution. They have put forward a bold, but uncosted, plan to convert the vacant Debenhams department store into 'The Oxford Street Art House' as a way of drawing UK and international shoppers back to the West End. They suggest that the ground floor could be split in two. The Oxford Street facing half could be dedicated to selling the arts and crafts produced from workshops in the basement - which sounds slightly Dickensian.

They go on to suggest that the rear half of the ground floor could become the new home for the long-awaited new Marylebone public library. "This would be a perfect location for the adults, children's, reference and local history libraries, serving local residents north and south of Oxford Street." We were not aware that there were many Marylebone residents living south of Oxford Street. We are however aware that rents have dropped significantly on Oxford Street but we don't believe that this idea offers good value for money for Westminster residents.

Our understanding of what is actually going to happen to the old Debenhams is redevelopment. 334 Ramsbury Oxford Ltd are developing proposals for the site which seek to retain the existing structure but introducing new facades and three additional storeys of office accommodation, and also to introduce urban greening and active uses at ground floor. We will share with you the plans when we are able to. In the meantime if you want to rent 341,559 sq ft of retail and office space we are sure the developer is open to a deal!

## Another Cycle Route stops short

After the announcement that the "Hyde Park to Camden Quietway" is now to

terminate at Gloucester Place, we now understand that the cycle route from St John's Wood to Marylebone will also not be completed. We have seen the following communication from Melvyn Caplin who took over the Cabinet Member portfolio for City Management in the New Year and has been reviewing a number of these schemes.

“Currently the Council does not have the full funding available to deliver the whole cycle route from St John's Wood to Marylebone and until this becomes available we will not be progressing this scheme”.

“The Cabinet Member Report for this cycle route was approved in May last year and it agreed to move to detailed design, traffic management consultation and then installation. I appreciate that this decision may not have been directly communicated to you at that time, however I do know that there has been engagement with yourselves to move the design forward from the original design in 2015/16.”

“However, while the design of the cycle route past the Landmark Hotel has moved forward, we do recognise that there are still challenges that require a resolution”.

“We will consider the position and consult and engage should funding become available in the future.”

## ‘Slow Horses’ in Marylebone





Filming a Spy Thriller TV series on Devonshire Place

Even TV's Dr Pixi Mc Kenna (from Channel 4 Embarrassing Bodies) came out of her clinic to see what the buzz was about on Devonshire Place this week. The star attraction Oscar Winner Gary Oldman and an all star cast with Kristin Scott Thomas, Olivia Cooke, Jonathan Pryce and Jack Lowden. 'Slow Horses' is a TV drama and will air on Apple TV, it is based on two novels by best selling author Mick Herron. Gary Oldman is Jackson Lamb, a brilliant intelligence officer who ends up in MI5's dumping ground because of his career wrecking mistakes.

The MA spoke to Locations Manager Sarah Kate Lewis for Apple TV and George the Assistant Director about why they chose Marylebone. They needed a grand house as in the series it belongs to an MP. They will also be filming some action street scenes over the weekend.

We asked her how hard it has been to film during the pandemic and she said it was postponed for six months and now they adhere to strict covid guidelines. The crew and actors do weekly LFTs, they wear a fob around their necks which tells them whether they have come into contact with anyone with covid and of course wear masks.

## Busking Finally Regulated

Street Busking is now regulated. Following a meeting of the full council on Wednesday 3 March, Westminster City Council has passed its resolution designating licensed streets for busking and other entertainment. The designation is the final part of the Westminster Busking and Street Entertainment Policy.

This policy sets out a code of conduct for all buskers and street entertainers in Westminster, provides guidance on self regulation and will see the centre of Westminster become a regulated area for performers. This means that from 5 April performers will need to apply for a licence in order to perform in these areas and perform only at a designated pitch.

Marylebone is now a regulated area and busking is forbidden anywhere except designated areas in Oxford Street, Regent Street and New Bond Street.

This is the result of a long and arduous 3 year process and will bring welcome relief to those unfortunate enough to live in earshot of this nuisance, providing it is enforced with more than the normal rigour. Certainly most buskers appear at present blissfully unaware of the impending descent of a new and harsher regime. The lack of regulation has been enormously disruptive and stress-provoking and many had hoped for it sooner, but now it is here, let's hope it is properly enforced.

A full list of regulated areas can be found in [WCC policy document](#).

Make a Complaint

## Marks & Spencer sizes down



Marks & Spencer has [revealed plans](#) to knock down and redevelop its flagship Marble Arch store to take into account the big consumer switch to online shopping during the pandemic.

The new 10-storey building will include just two-and-a-half floors of shop space with several floors of offices and leisure space such as a gym. M&S has a long lease on the property, where it currently has around 160,000 square feet of trading space across five floors. M&S said the new proposal would offer “a modern retail environment” while also allowing it to “unlock value” through prime office space. A planning application is expected to be submitted later this year.

The M&S consultation document says: “The nature of retail is changing and customers are less likely to progress up numerous levels. The upper floors also suffer from poor floor to ceiling heights further discouraging customers from visiting.”

Low ceilings or not, even before the pandemic spurred on the trend for online shopping, department stores faced particular difficulties as their large sites with long leases have been slow to adapt to changing shopping habits.

## WESTMINSTER WIDE

### Re-opening of the City

Pubs restaurants and the hospitality trade generally will reopen on 12 April. WCC have confirmed that alfresco dining licensing hours will be the same as last year and run until 30 September. A full consultation will take place with



regard to extending licenses and they would not be extended without the consent of residents.

City Inspectors, we are told, will be available and ready to help. Residents are encouraged to contact them if they have any concerns about any particular establishment not complying with regulations. Toilet facilities must be available where businesses are open. WCC has opened public toilets in Soho and Covent Garden. Drinks must only be served to seated customers and guidance is to be made clearer.

## Al fresco in Soho - 32% of Residents want to leave



The Soho Society is protesting against plans to revive al fresco dining in the West End. Last year, the streets of the West End had a distinctly European feel. Throngs of diners sat outside and enjoyed the sun as traffic was diverted off busy restaurant streets causing widespread disruption and congestion to surrounding areas.

Meanwhile residents discovered that the noise of people dining late into the night on the streets outside their properties can be very disturbing.

Westminster Council has now indicated that it will continue the scheme into

summer when restaurants, pubs and bars are allowed to reopen, so people can socialise outside and reduce the spread of the virus as lockdown lifts. Residents are concerned with the resulting likely recurrence of noise and disruption suffered last year and complain that this scheme is to be reimposed again without any meaningful consultation with Soho's residents or with people who will live on the streets which are closed. This is in spite of a commitment given in 2020 to consult before reimposing the scheme.

The Soho Society has run an online survey on Westminster Street dining proposals for the summer. To date:

- 32% are planning to leave Soho because of Al Fresco - many are long term residents of 20 years and over.
- Over 50% have issues with noise and access in the impacted streets including children being unable to sleep because of noise.
- 53% do not trust the council to protect the interests of residents.
- 60% agree that the council is mainly concerned to drive economic growth and protect the interests of property developers and largely ignores the concerns of residents.
- 55% think the scheme should be abandoned because of the risk of creating a spike in COVID transmission.
- 62 people want a community meeting to discuss the proposals.

However, it is also clear that many residents are keen to help businesses in Soho, the economy and employment and have not been adversely impacted by noise, access or street fouling issues. The problems are quite localised - but sometimes severe.

The Soho Society said "The longer term issues about the future of Soho if this scheme is made permanent (as is now on the cards) are arguably more concerning for the community as a whole. We asked for a 2 year moratorium from Sept 2021 for Soho to recover and the issue to be tested at a local election in 2022 - the council has refused point blank".

## Hyde Park and the Art of Consultation



A body that is consulting on the effect of road closure is The Royal Parks. However are they consulting the right people? In August 2020, The Royal Parks launched a series of traffic related trials across five parks to reduce the impact of cut through traffic, to "improve the park visitor experience and open

impact of cut-through traffic- to improve the park visitor experience and open new spaces for park visitors to enjoy.”

In November and December, they claimed to undertake widespread public consultation seeking views on these schemes and received almost 18,000 responses. “While the consultation results varied across the parks, overall they indicated support and a desire to see less cut-through traffic in the parks.” That may well be the case, and it obviously carries a superficial appeal to the day tripper, but what evidence is there that the majority of people actually living near these parks are that keen?

Certainly, as far as Hyde Park is concerned, the problem is that a lot of the locals living adjacent to the park are not so impressed as they have seen an increase in traffic through their streets as a result of these closures.

Are the views of those who actually live in the area being drowned out by those of visitors? We are at present endeavouring to obtain a full breakdown of the consultation figures - to actually see the level of enthusiasm for a full time closure from those living locally to Hyde Park.

The Royal Parks will keep the measures in place for the coming year whilst they monitor additional data.

## Repeal the Vagrancy Act?

The Vagrancy Act was first established in 1824. Much has been spoken about repealing this archaic legislation. Charities, police, and politicians from across the political spectrum all agree that it's time for action.

Nickie Aiten MP argues that the Vagrancy Act is simply not fit for purpose. It fails to address the acute 21st century problems that local authorities and charities are working tirelessly to deal with amongst the street population. She wants it repealed and replaced with legislation that puts protection, not criminality, at its heart. Here is the [link](#) to her article. Nickie Aiten has been selected to lead a Westminster Hall debate entitled Repealing and replacing the Vagrancy Act 1824, on Tuesday April 13th, after the Easter Recess period.

## Westminster - lowest vaccination rate in the country?

According to data published as recently as 18th of March, Central London Clinical Commissioning Group which covers most of Westminster Borough has the second lowest vaccination rate in the country.

For example, in the Central London CCG area (Westminster), only 60.3% of over 80-year-olds have been vaccinated, only 62.8% of 70-74-year-olds have been vaccinated and only 58.6% of 65-69-year-olds have been vaccinated. In Stoke on Trent, for example, these figures are 100%, 94.6% and 92.5%.

WCC said that low uptake in Westminster was being investigated with a report due shortly. All over 60s were being contacted individually to ascertain the reasons for non-attendance. All practical problems will be addressed (home

reason for non-attendance. All practical problems will be addressed (home visits needed, transport, assisted help, pop ups clinics, multilingual leaflets etc.) to ensure as many people as possible were vaccinated.

Rachel Robotham said WCC is taking a proactive role in supporting the NHS with this endeavour. She acknowledged the superb efforts of all concerned in delivering an excellent programme. Lord's is now closed in preparation for the cricket season. New sites (Edgware Road), GP surgeries and pharmacies are now ready to offer vaccinations. There are private booths at Edgware Road for those who require privacy.

## Westminster City Plan Approved

The draft City Plan 2019 - 2040 has been found sound by the planning inspectorate and can now be formally adopted leaving Westminster on a path to becoming carbon neutral by 2040.

The new City Plan sets out the blueprint for all development in the borough.

Focused on three key themes, creating more affordable homes, the right environment for business growth and more open, green spaces to enjoy, the planning framework is intended to set a clear direction for developers and householders.

The City Plan will now be brought to the next meeting of Full Council for formal adoption.

In the interim, this endorsement from the planning inspectorate means that the policies within the new City Plan will have significant weight in the determination of all future planning applications with immediate effect.

To read the Planning Inspectors' Report, please click [here](#).

## Westminster Goes Green - Carbon Neutral by 2040

To follow the adoption of the City Plan, Westminster City Council council has committed to producing a new Environment Supplementary Planning Document Environment SPD (ESPD). It will provide additional detail to the new City Plan environment policies, specifically air quality, energy, noise and light pollution, waste, sustainable retrofitting, green infrastructure and flooding. The process of developing and introducing this SPD has begun with papers published ahead of a Scrutiny Committee Monday week saying the objective is for the SPD to:

- Act as an ambitious statement on the Council's response to the Climate Emergency;
- Set out the Council's expectation of what net zero carbon means and looks like in the Westminster context;
- Assist and guide developers and landowners so that they can play their part in addressing the climate emergency.

The City Plan is due to be adopted in late April/early May and public

The City Plan is due to be adopted in late April/early May and public consultation on the ESPD will therefore follow later in May. You can read more [here](#).

## Early Engagement Guidance for Development

Draft guidance has been published for developers on what Westminster City Council expects when engaging the wider community in development proposals.

The draft guidance sets out examples of good practice and provides a template timeframe for engagement to show how community engagement should be scheduled relative to other pre-application engagement with other stakeholders and officers.

It also explains the level of information that should be submitted with pre-application requests to officers and with formal planning applications to demonstrate the community engagement that has been undertaken and how the engagement has helped to refine the finalised development proposal.

The key change is the expectation that an Early Engagement Strategy (EES) be submitted prior to pre-application advice being issued and potentially engagement taking place prior to pre-application meetings with the Council. The guidance states “we therefore strongly recommend that initial community engagement is carried out prior to seeking pre-application advice from officers wherever possible, especially on larger schemes and those where more than two phases of community engagement are planned”

The new protocol formalises many of the consultation methods that are already being undertaken, but the guidance goes further to suggest specific approaches for developments of a certain scale. It also encourages the use of digital consultation regardless of development size and for the largest of developments, new Early Engagement Forums to collaborate with the local community.

An informal consultation on the proposals has been undertaken and views from members are now being sought. The expectation is for Cllr Matthew Green, Cabinet Member for Business, Planning and Licensing, to review the final document ahead of expected adoption in May 2021.

You can read the draft document [here](#).

## Petition to Stop Noisy Cars

Noise pollution has been shown to be detrimental to our mental health, sleep and wellbeing. It comes from many sources, but can be particularly disturbing at night from people revving and racing fast cars, something that in recent years Kensington and Chelsea had suffered much from.

Now the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea have announced the

installation of [acoustic cameras](#) to identify vehicles producing illegal levels of noise.

The problem for us may well be that these rogue drivers will now migrate to other areas such as Marylebone for their practice sessions. If you feel Westminster should therefore also install them, then help bring this about by signing the [petition](#).

## New West End Company gets 5 more years to push Sunday trading

Businesses have renewed New West End Company's mandate to deliver a further five years as a Business Investment District across the West End's International Centre of Bond Street, Oxford Street, Regent Street & Mayfair.

The plan, [there plan](#) which got 98% support from participating businesses, guarantees £40m of investment across the district: "We will continue to strive to meet the challenges we face to restore the West End's International status, working with others to fully achieve the benefits of the £150m investment being made by Westminster City Council."

Writing in The Times last week Jace Tyrrell (Chief Executive of the New West End Company) said that the government "can and must do more" to support the UK's retailers and leisure businesses. "A thriving West End has long brought benefits for high streets across the UK and we must continue to look ahead with ambition for long-term growth".

One of his key demands is the extension of Sunday trading hours to help "struggling business". They have however been pushing for this long before the pandemic became an issue. Our view is that if businesses are struggling when they are allowed to reopen for six and a half days, allowing them to stay open for all seven days will make little difference to business, but deprive residents of the one half day a week that, in normal times, remains quieter than the rest.

## Hugo Boss signs for new store on Oxford Street

In a sign that there is still life left in retail, luxury fashion brand Hugo Boss has taken 8,000 sq ft at Selfridges' The Parcels Building on Oxford Street. The retailer will open its new store in spring 2022, after a refurbishment of the building has completed. Workspace provider Fora will also occupy some of the building.

The 45,000 sq ft Parcels Building has been part of Selfridges' neighbourhood since 2011 and the refurbished building is, like the Qatari Diar hotel, aiming to achieve a BREEAM 'Excellent' sustainability rating.

## Priced Out of Burlington House

The Guardian reports that some of Britain's most distinguished learned societies say they may be forced to leave their central London premises because the government has imposed rent rises of more than 3,000% over the past few years.

Last week the Geological Society and the Linnean Society announced that they had united with the Society of Antiquaries in a campaign to try to stop the government pricing them out of their premises at Burlington House, on Piccadilly, where they have been since 1854.

According to the President of the Linnean Society, their annual rent was £4,000 in 2012 and by last year it had risen to £130,000. The Linnean Society is the world's oldest society devoted to natural history. Its building was the setting, in 1858, for the first reading of papers by Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace that outlined the theory of evolution by natural selection.

## Convent's Crowing Cockerel Crises

Finally... a problem that we didn't think we would encounter in Central London - noise nuisance, not from the sound of drills, but from the sound of a crowing cockerel.

The Tyburn Convent on Bayswater Road acquired a cockerel in mid-January. Apparently it starts its crowing even earlier than the builders start their drilling - at dawn. It continues regularly all day until it gets dark, for "at least 40 times in one hour the other day" according to a nearby unnamed resident.

The Westminster Noise Team were duly called in to investigate, and have reported with their usual rigour: "We have been in contact with the Prioress and have been advised the matter is in hand and will be resolved, however at this time we do not have a timescale, but would hope this will be soon."

This all sounds rather vague. Our agricultural correspondent however thinks he has the solution - a low cage at night will prevent the animal stretching its neck at dawn, which it needs to do to crow. This is not however a solution for the whole day, otherwise the Prioress will be in danger of another visit, this time from the RSPB.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Mayoral Election on 6th May - Voting by post

The Government has announced that the London Mayoral and GLA elections will be going ahead on 6th May 2021. Some people may be concerned about going to the polling stations in person, having to wear a mask and waiting in a socially-distanced queue.

It will be much easier, quicker and safer to vote by post. You can use [this form to apply](#) for a postal vote

You can email your completed form to [electoralservices@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:electoralservices@westminster.gov.uk) or post it to Electoral Services, Westminster City Council, 14th Floor City Hall, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP.

## Covid-19 Update

As more people are getting vaccinated and the number of people testing positive for coronavirus is falling, we hope that the pandemic will soon be coming to an end. We are doing all we can to help the local community and individual residents and their families.

### Free Travel to Vaccination Centres

We have welcomed the news that Age UK is now offering a free taxi transport service to local vaccination centres for anyone over 50 in Westminster. This service will run to the end of March 2021. For further details please get in touch with Amy Shallon at [ashallon@auk.org.uk](mailto:ashallon@auk.org.uk) or call 07947 188 221.

### Dispelling the vaccination myths

Here is the link to a video featuring Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic celebrities dispelling myths about the vaccine and encouraging people to have the vaccination. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b2Ald\\_\\_Ahbl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b2Ald__Ahbl)

### Test and Trace Support Payments

You may be entitled to a Test and Trace Support Payment of £500 if you are self-isolating because of COVID-19 and you are either employed or self-employed. The payment is to support people on low incomes who are unable to work from home if they are told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace and lose income as a result.

Westminster Council's advice and [response website](#).

Westminster Connects COVID-19 phone line – 020 7641 1222

Beware the [Coronavirus scammers](#)

## Census Time

It happens every 10 years, and it is happening now. It provides a picture of all the people and households in England. The deadline to complete the census is 4 May 2021.



The census only takes 10 minutes to complete online.

- Every household should have received their unique access code 1-13 March – in your census pack which includes a letter explaining about the census, the questionnaire, paid return envelope, info on how to request a paper questionnaire and privacy statement. Not received your access code? Contact the ONS to request yours.
- You can fill yours in online as soon as you get your access code in the post. If your household circumstances change on Census Day, let the ONS know.
- Non-responding households receive up to three reminders after the 21 March.
- Information is confidential and protected by law . That means government officials
- dealing with payments, public services and immigration, cannot see it.

Help available to residents:

Residents can request your census access code if you do not have this, or a paper census questionnaire via phone, online at [census.gov.uk](https://www.census.gov.uk) or Web Chat, or by asking a field officer when visiting houses.

Westminster libraries facilities will be open for anyone wishing to fill in the census online. Questionnaires can also be filled in via phone support, with an appointment in 49 languages

Online Support: [www.census.gov.uk](https://www.census.gov.uk)

Phone Support: 0800 141 2021 or in other languages 0800 587 2021

## Blood Donors Wanted

The NHS Blood and Transplant service is appealing for donations from people who have recovered from coronavirus to help save lives as London moves from “medium” to “high” alert. Donating blood plasma is a simple procedure and very similar to giving a normal blood donation but the red blood cells are returned to the patient and the process takes a little longer.

The nearest donor centre is at 26 Margaret Street, W1. Anyone who has had coronavirus, either a test result or the symptoms, can offer to donate by calling 0300 123 23 23 or visiting <https://www.nhsbt.nhs.uk> to arrange an appointment to donate.

## Warm Homes Discount Scheme

You could get £140 off your electricity bill for winter 2020 to 2021 under the Warm Home Discount Scheme. The Warm Home Discount Scheme for winter 2020 to 2021 will open on 12 October 2020. The money is a one-off discount on your electricity bill, between September and March. See [here](#) for more details.

## Marble Arch Maintenance works on Escalators

Since early 2020 TFL has been carrying out essential maintenance works on the escalators at Marble Arch station.

They are now commencing the next phase of the project and starting works on the second escalator. Therefore, there will be no down escalator in operation at the station from 22 March until early July.

There will be no change for customers arriving at Marble Arch station but starting a journey from there will require a walk down around 170 steps to platform level. Passengers of a less athletic disposition are therefore advised to start their journeys at Bond Street station, which has step-free access to the Central and Jubilee lines.

## Oxford Street Closures Overrun

As a result of the pavement widening above, the Council's contractors have published the schedule of closures listed below. We are now at the beginning of April, but the works appear to be only half finished. We have requested, but have yet to receive the revised timetable.

Initial proposed locations for the temporary scheme including planned footway widening at the following locations:

- West Oxford Street: Marble Arch islands, Bird Street junction, Davies Street junction, outside Selfridges
- Oxford Circus: Hills Place junction, Great Titchfield Street/ Market Place, Winsley Street junction, Old Cavendish Street junction, Holles Street junction
- East Oxford Street: Newman Street junction, Rathbone Place junction and Soho Square (north)
- 8 March 2021 until 21 March 2021 – eastbound closure with diversion in place
- 22 March 2021 until 2021 – 1 April 2021 westbound closure with diversions in place

The proposed works are likely to impact traffic flow on Oxford Street between Regent Street and Marble Arch.

## Retail Opening

EVOKE London is set to open its first UK showroom in The Howard de Walden Estate's Marble Arch Village. The showroom, which will be located on

valuer Estate's Marylebone village. The showroom, which will be located on 27a Devonshire Street, will be a space dedicated to platforming an array of beautiful, handcrafted pieces for interior spaces, made by traditional artisan communities in India, Africa and across the world, through fair networks of sourcing and collaboration.

## Jackson Beecha - Stop the Spread

Jackson Beecha Ltd is a small MHRA CE-IVD approved Covid-19 test supply business based in Marylebone, that supplies tests to Harley Street, Pharmacists, GPs, Health Centres, Schools, Nurseries and Parents.

We are very keen to help our local community in Marylebone, particularly services involving close contact such as Hairdressers and Beauticians. Due to 1 in 3 of us being asymptomatic it is imperative that anyone in close contact with the public should be tested regularly.

Saloni Jackson's (Ex Cranfield EMBA) mission is about stopping transmission. Simple, fast, painless and extremely sensitive Antigen/ lateral flow tests are available for same day delivery in Marylebone in boxes of 15. As these tests are non-invasive (no swab through the nostril or throat), not only are they great for children and adults but there is also a decreased chance of a false negative result. These tests can be used in a variety of ways, either testing via Saliva, Sputum or Faeces. With 79.49% ~ 96.24% sensitivity.

If retailers would operate a regular weekly/monthly subscription-based model, then a free poster and a discount could be provided. The poster would highlight that regular testing of staff was taking place and encourage a more confident footfall thus boosting the local economy.

Additional details of all tests (Antigen, antibody and PCR) are available on [jacksonbeecha.com](http://jacksonbeecha.com)

# EVENTS

## Association Events

As the famous 'light at the end of the tunnel' begins to burn a little brighter there are big plans for Marylebone Association events and activities from mid May. Life should seem a little jollier for everyone, on an individual basis, from mid April with shops, hairdressers and nail bars reopening on the 12 April

We are busy planning the social calendar for when we leave lockdown and there will be at least one outdoor event after 17th May with more ideas for after the 21st June when restrictions will, hopefully, be lifted. These will be revealed in our May newsletter – and it goes without saying that all this depends on the road map.

## BOOK CLUB

Tuesday 6 April 2021

Members normally meet at The King's Head pub in Westmoreland Street – but recently have been meeting via Zoom. Anyone who is interested in joining in should contact Liz Queenan. Meetings on the first Tuesday of each month at 6.30 – but our next Zoom meeting starts at 5. Useful as these zoom meetings have been, hopefully it won't be too long before we can all meet again 'for real'!

This month's choice is "Where The Crawdads Sing" by Delia Owens.

All books read are available on paper and on e-readers. For more information contact Liz Queenan [liz.queenan@marylebone.org](mailto:liz.queenan@marylebone.org) or tel: 020 7486 3709.

**PUB EVENINGS** - suspended until further notice.

### **COFFEE MORNINGS**

Details of the first coffee morning of the year will be in the May newsletter. A welcome return to a favourite spot for MA coffee mornings – watch this space for details in May.

### **SCRABBLE CLUB**

The club had got used to meeting twice a month (the second and fourth Tuesday of each month) at The Natural Kitchen. Then Covid struck and The Natural Kitchen doesn't show any signs of opening again. We are looking for a new venue – all suggestions welcome! We hope that we may be able to get going again soon.

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*Mailing Address: Marylebone Association, 229 Great Portland Street, London, W1W 5PN*  
If you have news get in touch by emailing [news@marylebone.org](mailto:news@marylebone.org)  
[Unsubscribe](#)