



# Marylebone Association

## Newsletter November 2021

Our AGM this year is to be held on the 15th November at 7.00pm as previously circulated directly to all members by email or post. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible then, we regret that this will be a virtual meeting but aim to ensure that next year all will be back to normal.

If you have any questions you would like to put to the committee please remember to submit these by 8 November.

## Mound Scrutinised





WCC have now published their Review as commissioned by the Chief Executive of Westminster City Council to establish the facts surrounding the Marble Arch Mound project. In addition he and other officers recently attended a Scrutiny Committee hearing specifically on the subject last week.

The report is narrow in scope but robust within its remit. It seeks to establish why the Mound opened early and how costs overran, and sets out recommendations to prevent similar issues occurring in future. It notes that the prevailing view around the Oxford Street District Scheme was that, "doing nothing is not an option" The upshot of this however was that: "This meant that we would try new things, operate at a quicker pace than we had previously and be prepared to make mistakes and learn from those mistakes." This in retrospect turned out to be a dangerous philosophy.

In the case of the Mound it resulted in a laissez-faire approach where anything went to serve the higher purpose of "doing something".

The problem started right from the beginning. The Mound was part of the Oxford Street District (OSD) Programme. A Project Director was appointed on a very high salary to run the programme but he had no experience in project managing anything like this previously. The report criticises the appointment process which failed to properly assess his previous experience and lacked rigour. As a result the council appointed a Project Director without the competency to see the project through, and worse than that, no one spotted it.

In June - the original programmed completion date, there were many visits by councillors and officers to the unfinished project, but not one of them identified any problems, least of all the Project Director's immediate boss, the Chief Housing Officer. She was told everything was going well and accepted that at face value, although now she apparently regrets not being more personally involved. She is criticised in the report as she "did not proactively seek an appropriate level of assurance and therefore could not and did not brief upwards. This led to missed opportunities for robust challenge of the officers leading the Marble Arch Mound project to better understand deliverability and costs".

At the same time short cuts were being taken, the usual procedures overruled and warnings from officers ignored: "Despite clear and repeated warnings around the likely cost of undertaking such a project from experienced officers and the suppliers tasked with building the Mound, overly optimistic financial updates were given to senior leaders".

Income estimates were revised upwards with no evidence provided to support these assumptions. These actions were taken in the run up to the publication of the May 2021 Cabinet Member Report.

In order to meet the cost expectation, set by the responsible Cabinet Member at the time, the Review Team found evidence that the senior officers responsible for the project "descoped and omitted critical elements of the Marble Arch Mound project". What is more incredible is that it is alleged that this was done deliberately with a view to mislead: "It was known that there were significant additional costs associated with the build of the Mound. These costs were not covered by the May 2021 Cabinet Member Report and instead they were either reintroduced at a later date or dishursed across other

instead they were either reintroduced at a later date or absorbed across other budgets and not attributed to the cost of the Mound.” This appears to be alleging very serious officer misconduct.

Decisions were also taken to fund various elements of the Marble Arch Mound project separate to the £150 million budget assigned to the OSD Programme. This was contrary to the instructions of the Executive Director of Finance and Resources and included “legacy” costs as well as contractor fees. The contractor fees were also omitted from the May 2021 Cabinet Member Report and were to be charged to the main Highways contract.

So having had the wool well and truly pulled over their eyes, Cabinet Members approved a project on a wholly falsified set of costs, then the “descoped” items were added back into the project scope after the May 2021 Cabinet Member Report had been approved, thereby of course escalating the costs. “This was done without the approval of the Cabinet Member and without further formal authorisation for the increased total project cost.”

All this could happen because, it is revealed, there was a lack of effective governance, grip and oversight on the project. There were checks and balances that should have been followed, but “In the case of the Marble Arch Mound project many of these checks and balances were circumvented to facilitate the timetable and in order to obscure the actual costs for delivering the Mound.” The fact that the Mound, which was a capital project, was put in the Highways budget meant that the usual overview given to capital projects was bypassed.

So the report finds that finances were mismanaged and misrepresented by the senior officers responsible for the Marble Arch Mound project. It is emphasised, and accepted that this was done in the misguided attempt to push the project through, and not for personal gain. Nevertheless, this fundamental project failure meant that the Cabinet Members and other senior officers were unaware of its progress. This in turn contributed to the mismanagement of costs and the lack of control over costs increased them significantly beyond those approved.

All in all, this is a salutary lesson in abandoning those built in methods of control established within the council.

Even this, as damning as it is, may not be the entire story. It has to be remembered that WCC ignored calls for an independent review and we cannot be certain that the Chief Executive has been entirely objective in identifying all the parties responsible. The main blame is focused on those who have now left. It is silent on the collective responsibility for the debacle. It does not ask why not one councillor, cabinet member or otherwise, sought to raise any concerns about this, even privately, any time after the May Cabinet meeting prior to the opening of the Mound in August.

Either no one dared challenge the accepted view, the prevailing status quo, when to do so would be seen as disloyal, or maybe worse, no-one was able to see that things weren’t and wouldn’t be ready on time.

The immediate legacy of this is that we are left with an attraction which is losing £150,000 a month until it closes in January and that to date has had about 150,000 visitors. At present this represents a ratepayer funded subsidy of £40 per visitor.

In the longer term it is clear, and it is admitted, that all this has had a

devastating effect on the Westminster Council organisation, and on its councillors, and it would be most undesirable if the outcome was a tendency to micro-manage all future projects to ensure no recurrence. At the same time if it deters the council from further brave gestures that carry the risk of going wrong, and encourages councillors to start more rigorously questioning council initiatives, particularly the more unusual ones, and those brought in with no public consultation, then it may be no bad thing.

## Manchester Square Consultation



Westminster City Council in partnership with The Portman Estate and The Baker Street Quarter Partnership has developed a scheme to pedestrianise the north part of Manchester Square outside the Wallace Collection as part of the wider Oxford Street District program. There is a short consultation on this which commenced on the 28th October and finishes on the 19th November 2021.

The brochure detailing the changes can be found on the [osd.london](https://osd.london) website.

Pavement widening is proposed at various locations, “to improve the pedestrian environment and create safer crossings.” With the northern section of the square proposed to be pedestrianised, eastbound vehicle flows will be prevented. This measure is combined with raised tables at junctions and a new fountain is planned to supply drinking water to the public.

The Association was not asked to contribute towards the development of the proposals which appears at odds with Westminster Council's own latest



proposals, which appears at odds with Westminster Council's own latest engagement guidelines which advise on community engagement at the earliest opportunity- see article below- Engaging the Community. A presentation of the finalised scheme was made last week to members of our committee and we will be responding to the consultation.

The questions we need to ask include, are these proposals of sufficient merit to balance the inevitable disruption that they would entail? Also from a heritage point of view would the Square's integrity be compromised by this? It was set out in 1776 as a square and a high-level of public amenity needs to be demonstrated to show it should not stay functioning as one. It still contains many fine 18th Century houses on the east and south sides, with Hertford House, now home to the Wallace Collection, closing the Square to the north.

On initial viewing, the design of the scheme does appear over-complicated in parts and could be difficult to maintain. Also, some of the detailing is not in keeping with the heritage of the Square.

The proposal offers a dedicated cycle lane in one direction, but it is not on a cycle route. Whilst we are in favour of high quality segregated cycle infrastructure in Marylebone, we are generally against piecemeal approaches that do not follow the London Cycling Campaign design guidelines and make cycling more dangerous or difficult. This scheme is at odds with Westminster Cycling Strategy February 2021 in promoting Fitzhardinge Street as a route over George Street.

Whilst the pavement build-outs on four of the five junctions may be welcomed by pedestrians, they may not be by cyclists as they are funnelled with other traffic into the same small space. In addition, the design does not work well for disabled cyclists or cargo bikes.

The circuitous route that this scheme will impose on through traffic is a concern. The Baker 2 Way Scheme has already prevented north bound vehicles coming from or across Oxford Street turning right into Wigmore Street and they now need to proceed east via Portman Square North- into Manchester Square. Blocking the Square will therefore increase traffic on George Street, Manchester Street and Spanish Place -as this is the proposed route to get round the blocked area. However these roads all are part of the proposed Westminster Cycling Grid.

It is stated that the scheme is needed on safety grounds, but Manchester Square currently has seen no logged accidents in the past 8 years, whereas accident levels on George Street and other surrounding roads are worryingly high.

A large open, empty space at night could easily turn into a perfect spot for anti-social behaviour. We understand that the Wallace Collection supports the scheme but we feel it does not enhance the Square and surrounds for residents. We suspect that it will be less safe for pedestrians to walk through after dark. It will also be a good skateboarding destination.

The existing Pedestrian Comfort Level (PCL) in Manchester Square appears moderate, but as the streets enter at the midpoint of the Square, pedestrians often choose to walk in the road to cut the corners off. Maybe a more modest scheme could address this, one that recognised this behaviour and allowed for it through design. For instance, a connected walkway to the north of the Square, incorporating crossings, and offering pedestrians priority by widening out the pavements here with extensive greening to the NE and NW corners.

where there is presently car parking.

So in summary, is there a problem in the Square that needs a solution? And is this it?

## Marylebone Station Air Quality Action



There have been frequent calls for clean hybrid trains to replace the dirty, polluting diesel trains currently operating from Marylebone to Birmingham. Currently, Marylebone is the last entirely diesel powered station in London but the line is unlikely to be electrified in the foreseeable future due to the high costs involved. However Chiltern Rail, the current operators, are currently testing a hybrid DMU train which can be introduced at a fraction of the cost of full electrification. But there is no guarantee they will convert all trains quickly without a requirement to do so.

The franchise for this rail service will be renewed in December, and there is a campaign for a requirement in the franchise so that whoever gets it must convert all the trains to hybrid in a given (short) time period. Residents have formed the Marylebone Station Environmental Action Group which meets regularly with Chiltern Railways.

Westminster City Council leader, Rachael Robathan and Ward Councillor, and Barbara Arzymanow (both pictured above) have liaised with Chiltern railways to lobby Government Minister Chris Heaton Harris. MP Nickie Aiken arranged for a meeting with the Minister to alert him to the strength of feeling among residents and launched a petition. Only the Department of Transport can resolve the problem. The Leader has also joined forces with Council leaders in Birmingham and Oxford to campaign for clean air. BNP Paribas employs 6,000 of their 9,000 staff in the UK very close to the station and they have also joined in the clean air campaign.

Last Friday the Leader, Rachael Robathan, organised Air Quality action day

Last Friday the Leader, Rachael Robathan, organised Air Quality action day at Marylebone Station to gather further support and highlight the importance of evidence based work. She has arranged for a new Breathe London air quality sensor to be installed at the Station. The evidence-based work was started in 2015 by local activist and former Councillor, Sheila D'Souza. She directed a pollution-survey and proved that pollution at the station was 13 times worse than that on the Marylebone Road.

Another green initiative, Westminster Wheels, was also present on Friday offering free advice on bikes. Two-wheel travel, air monitoring and EV charging points are all helping to clean our air in Marylebone.

Those wishing to lend support to the campaign should write to the addresses below to: "request that the Minister of State for Transport should insert a requirement in the new Franchise for Marylebone Station and the Rail operator for that service that the new operator should convert all diesel DMU coaches to diesel/battery bi-mode hybrids over the duration of the contract,"

Secretary of State for Transport: [POCorrespondence@dft.gov.uk](mailto:POCorrespondence@dft.gov.uk)

Postal addresses:

FAO The Minister of State for Transport  
Department for Transport Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road London SW1P 4DR

MPs

Office of [Name] [Surname] MP House of Commons  
London SW1A 0AA

Councillors:

For attention of Cllr [Name] [Surname] Westminster City Hall  
64 Victoria Street  
London SW1E 6QP

## Free Pop-Up Space on Oxford Street

Westminster City Council is offering up-and-coming labels free pop-up space in the run-up to Christmas and into the New Year at 500 Oxford Street, in the former New Look flagship store . The council has signed up for the large site and will target multiple start-up labels, Property Week reported. [Read more here](#)

## Grey Wornums for Harley Street



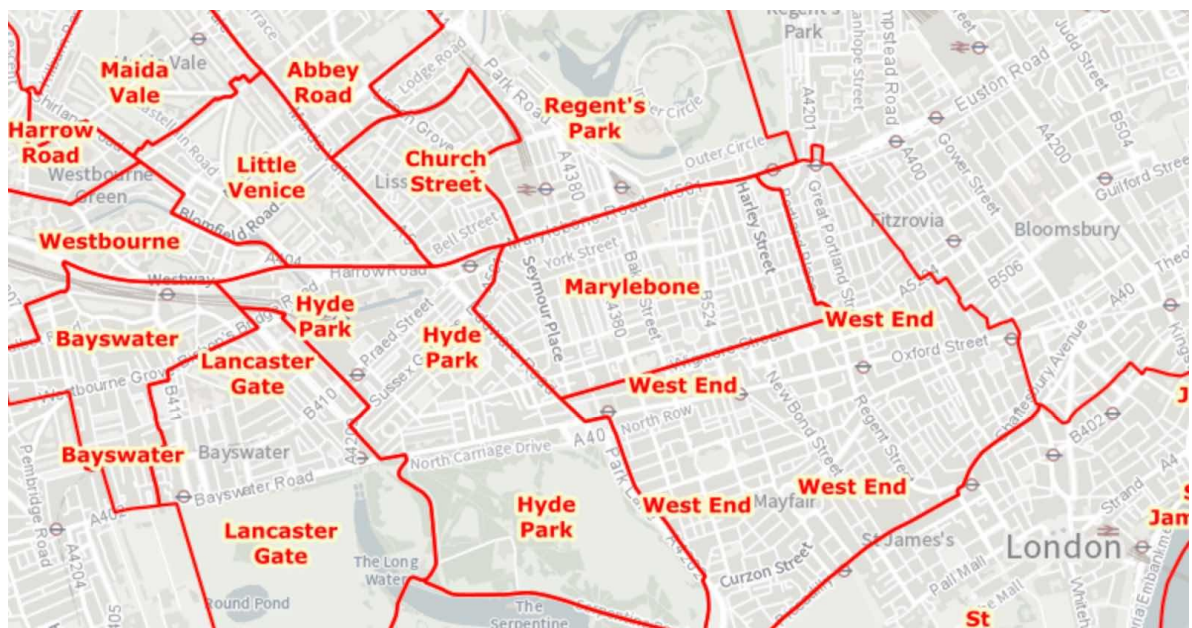




At last Harley Street is to get some upgraded lighting, there is a consultation to install the Westminster standard Grey Wornum lights there. We support this but have asked for EV Plugs to be incorporated in them.

The lights were designed in 1953 by George Grey Wornum, best known for designing the Royal Institute of British Architects' own headquarters in Portland Place, and the interiors of the original "Queen Elizabeth" liner. These classic looking lights are a great improvement on their predecessors. Their success lies in their ability to successfully reference Westminster's gas lamps of an earlier vintage, on which topic, there is less good news- see article below in Around Westminster

## Ward Councillor Changes





Last month we listed the three Conservative candidates for the new Marylebone Ward leading up to the 2022 local elections. The new ward will cover the area shown above. We are listing the 3 candidates below again, with some corrections and additions. We had hoped to be able to list the candidates standing for the other main parties but they are still apparently in the process of selection. As rather more of Marylebone will be in the West End Ward, than previously we will also be reviewing these candidates in due course.

Cllr Rowley has represented the existing MHS ward since 2007, and in that time has covered crime and disorder, housing, financial, commercial and strategic matters. Ian is currently the Chair of both WCC Audit and Performance Committee and WCC Conservative councillors back bench group. He also sits on WCC Investment Board, Property Board and Commercial Opportunities Board.

Cllr Karen Scarborough also represents the existing MHS ward, she is Chair of the Policy & Scrutiny Committee for Business Planning Licensing and Children, Chair the Westminster Scrutiny Commission, Chair a Licensing Committee, sit on the Leader's Climate Action Group, Lead Member for Air Quality, Trustee of the St Marylebone Almshouses, the Young Westminster Foundation and on the Board of the Harley Street Area Partnership as well as Governor of St Vincent's and St Mary of the Angels primary schools.

Cllr Barbara Arzymanow currently represents Bryanston and Dorset Square Ward (which will be lost as a result of the boundary changes). Barbara has worked with residents and many organisations on issues associated with air-quality, public protection, public realm and planning, and has served as Governor of two maintained Westminster schools. She is Deputy Cabinet Member Children's Services, Schools Finance and sits on the licensing committee. Barbara also sits on the Pensions Fund Committee which has pension funds under management circa 2 Billion.

## Blandford Street Excavations



Prior to the Development of 19-35 Baker Street The Museum of London Archaeology, (MOLA) were invited to explore beneath the Car Park in Blandford Street.

Local people may be interested to see the photos taken by MOLA following

Local people may be interested to see the photos taken by MOLA, following their investigations as to what lies below.

## Firehouse Compromise

The Firehouse Hotel on Chiltern Street applied for a variation of a condition on a previous planning application which sought to enable the courtyard for outside dining/drinking between the hours of 09:00 and 22:00 each day for a temporary period until 30 September 2022, instead of the previously agreed times of 0900-2100. However local residents who have been greatly troubled by noise coming from the Firehouse courtyard objected to this. The Association also submitted an objection on behalf of the residents.

After a detailed explanation of the residents' concerns about the noise, and consideration of the various submissions, the planning committee reached a compromise: to allow the one-hour extension from Thursday to Saturday and maintain the normal hours of 0900-2100 for the rest of the week.

The residents regard this as a good result, and it might be a helpful precedent in other similar future cases where the council needs to weigh in the balance helping businesses and the safeguarding of residential amenity.

## Portman Problems

Piers Portman, 51, from Marylebone, was sentenced at Southwark Crown Court in October for racially abusing Campaign Against Antisemitism chief (CAA) Gideon Falter in 2018. He was found guilty last month of one count of racially aggravated intentional harassment, alarm or distress.

Portman's family owns the Portman Estate and his father is the 9th Viscount Portman.

He was ordered to pay £10,000 in court costs and a further £10,000 to his victim, who pledged to donate the full amount to CAA.

Justice Gregory Perrins told Portman: "You said you're an honourable British gentleman. You're anything but."

Reacting to the news on Mr Falter said he was "extremely reassured" by the sentencing which he added "sends a very clear message to antisemites that even the wealthiest and most privileged cannot escape British justice."

## Police Matters





Our Ward officer, David (Troy) Miller has retired after serving for a long period in the Marylebone area. He was always cheerful and ready to help and will be missed. He will be replaced by PC Will Clancy and PC Kyme Edward and we look forward to working with them. They will be supported by Francisco Franco-Mendes as neighbourhood coordinator. Police Sergeant Martin Noon Will have overall responsibility for Marylebone High St

Helen BurrIDGE has resigned as chair of the Safer Neighbourhood Panel (Marylebone H/S) after three months and a new chair is in the process of being appointed.

A discussion involving our local MP Nickie Aiken and Commander Owain Richards -the Borough Commander highlighted the usual concerns of local residents:

- Drug use and trading - often in public areas
- Residents feeling unsafe at night particularly in poorly lit or managed spaces
- Anti-social behaviour
- E Scooters

## Around Westminster

### Gas Lights to Go

Westminster Council have put in place a programme – initially stated as 4 years but more recently as 2 years, to remove all the 299 gas lights across the City that come within their jurisdiction. The reason cited is: “Unfortunately, gas lighting is increasingly difficult to maintain and doesn’t provide sufficient



light to illuminate the highway.”

The lamps controlled by the council light up some of London's most famous landmarks, including the Embankment and Trafalgar Square.

They intend to replace some or all with a ‘faux’ version copied from the original appearance but utilising LED lamps within a 3-D printed mantle shape and including copies of all the gas details such as pipework and control clocks. “We’re sympathetic to the look and feel of the city and have a solution replicating the aesthetic of the gas lighting to ensure we respond to the climate emergency and keep street lighting in good working order, while also not significantly changing the appearance of the area”

Of course the light given off by the LED versions cannot replicate the soft glow of the originals and would fool no one, but worse is the willingness to remove and damage part of our irreplaceable heritage. It sometimes seems that Westminster Council is liable to neglect its role as protector of an ancient city, host to a number of World Heritage Sites, and to be cavalier with the history that goes with it.

Westminster saw the first demonstration of a gas lit street in the world, in Pall Mall, back in 1807- which was a great innovation at the time. In 2007 Council officers and the then Deputy Mayor even attended a ceremony unveiling a green plaque commemorating this in Pall Mall

Surely then, the Council should recognise the importance of retaining- and protecting the few original lamps left to us, they are the sole survivors of the many iterations and developments of this means of lighting.

Some lamps will still remain even if Westminster proceeds with this ill-advised policy. Nearly 140 of Westminster's lamps are grade-II listed, meaning these would need the approval of Historic England to replace the gas-powered heads with 'sympathetic' replicas.

Gas lamps which are not under threat include ones within the Parliamentary estate, which is part of the Palace of Westminster and so not controlled by the council.

## Engaging the Community

Westminster Council are encouraging developers to engage at the very earliest stage of scheme development and should be undertaken ahead of pre-application advice from officers. The guidance states the following: “We expect that initial community engagement will be carried out prior to seeking pre-application advice from officers, especially on larger schemes and those where more than two phases of community engagement are planned, unless there are exceptional site-specific circumstances to justify otherwise.”

It also sets out expectations for how applicants and developers can improve community engagement and engage with local communities at the earliest stage of scheme development. Explaining the information applicants should provide to demonstrate the engagement they have undertaken and how it has positively influenced the evolution of the proposals.

The scope and timetable for the proposed community engagement activities should be captured in an 'Early Engagement Strategy' (EES). The EES should be submitted along with other documents when making a pre-application advice request to the council

The document can be read in full [here](#).

## Labour challengers Stand/Aldwych Pedestrianisation

Labour councillors in Westminster are demanding to know why the Council went ahead with the £32million Strand/Aldwych pedestrianisation scheme despite receiving no financial contributions from the private sector.

This project creates a car-free plaza in front of King's College on the Strand with a budgeted cost of £32m.

It was designed in partnership with high-profile local organisations including King's College London, London School of Economics, Somerset House, The Courtauld Institute, High Commissions, theatres, restaurateurs and hoteliers. King's College received over £250 million in endowments in 2020 yet neither King's nor any of the other local organisations will be making any financial contribution. "King's College is the main beneficiary of the scheme, yet this fabulously wealthy institution won't be paying a penny. Following the Marble Arch Mound, this is another example of Westminster splurging taxpayer money on fancy designs for central London with no business plan to back up their plans." The Labour Group.

## Fitzrovia Changes Direction

Traffic direction has changed for 2 major streets in Fitzrovia: Newman Street, which is currently one-way northbound for vehicles, has been changed to southbound. Berners Street, which was two-way between Eastcastle Street and Oxford Street and one-way southbound from Mortimer Street to Eastcastle Street, has become one-way northbound along its entire length.

"Changes will be made to the traffic direction on two streets to help improve pedestrian safety, improve the traffic flow in the wider district, reduce congestion, improve the experience for cyclists travelling through the area and facilitate further improvements to Berners Street, Newman Street and Eastcastle Street," states a letter sent to residents and businesses. However residents are suspicious that the real reason for the changes is to facilitate north-south traffic on these routes to try and compensate for the congestion now on Regent Street due to the lane removals.

These changes are made under Experimental Traffic Orders, which many of us had understood would no longer be used on major projects owing to the

lack of any prior consultation.

Other major changes in the area to be made by ETO's have been dropped; these would have included changing Mortimer Street to two-way along its entire length; and reversing the current southbound traffic flow of Great Titchfield Street south of Mortimer Street.

The traffic switch itself took place over the weekend of 23 and 24 October.

Westminster Council has been reluctant to make public all details of the proposed changes under its "Oxford Street District" plans and has refused a Freedom of Information request made by Fitzrovia News. That decision is currently under review. Fitzrovia News says, "Fitzrovia is already blighted by motor traffic passing through its narrow streets particularly eastwards along Mortimer Street and Goodge Street, and also Clipstone Street and Maple Street."

## Gambling Consultation

The Council is inviting comments on the proposed extension of the current policy and the new Gambling Policy. Full details of the consultation, new Gambling Policy and Local Area Profile documents are available to view and download via [westminster.gov.uk/gambling-policy-2022](https://westminster.gov.uk/gambling-policy-2022). Consultation responses can be submitted using the online consultation form or via email [tolicensingconsultation@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:tolicensingconsultation@westminster.gov.uk).

The Council will be consulting on the adoption of a new Gambling Policy and to extend the current Gambling Policy, which policy period ends on the 30 January 2022 until the new Gambling Policy is adopted in early 2022.

Of note is the new hours policy and new spatial policies developed to focus the consideration of risks on the location and those who live, work and visit the area to which a proposed gambling operation would relate.

One of these policies designates seven zones within the City that have been identified within the Council's Local Area Profile as areas that have a higher density of residents who may be at greater risk to gambling related harm. A policy has also been created to address the risks and concerns associated with clusters of betting premises within the City.

The consultation on the proposal to extend the current Gambling Policy until the new policy comes into effect started today, 27 September and will be open for a period of four weeks ending on the 24 October. The consultation on the new gambling policy will be open for nine weeks ending on the 28 November.

## Veolia Contract Extended

The Council have announced that following extensive negotiations, they will be extending the waste and cleansing contract with Veolia by three years (to Sept. 2024.) Waste collections and street cleaning are consistently ranked by residents as being amongst the most important services provided by the



residents as being amongst the most important services provided by the Council and also those with the highest satisfaction ratings.

As well as continuing these important services, a new food waste collection service will be introduced to all households over the next 12 months at no extra cost to the Council. There will also be significant improvements to the bulky waste collection service to reduce waiting times – the new service will operate 7 days per week.

## Recovery Watch

### **Derwent reports 96% office rent collection in last quarter**

Property Week reports that Derwent London has received 96% of its September 2021 quarterly office rents, up 3% from collection rates reported in June 2021. The company has also received 94% of total rents and expects a further 3% by the end of the quarter. Only 64% of retail and hospitality rents have been received across the last quarter, with 20% due by the end of the quarter, with a total of £2.3m expected. Office rents are expected to total to £38.4m for the quarter. The company is still receiving rents that have been deferred from previous quarters, with collection rates at March 2021 and June 2021 now at 96% to 97% respectively.

### **Central London investment hits £2.5bn for Q3 2021**

And in more good news for business, Property Week reports that investment in central London totalled to £2.5bn in Q3 2021, up from £1bn recorded in Q3 2020, according to data from CBRE. The Q3 figures brought year-to-date investment to £6.4bn, a 95% increase on the same period last year. CBRE, said: "We have certainly seen a bounce back in the investment market as the year has progressed, with year-to-date volumes almost doubling from the same point last year.

### **IKEA to open on Oxford Street**

In another sign that footfall is rebounding in Oxford Street, the owners of Ikea have purchased Topshop's former flagship store on Oxford Street for £378m, creating a new central location for the Swedish furniture brand. The transaction is expected to be completed in January 2022 and will see Ikea take over 239,000 sq ft of retail and office space, alongside the current long-term tenants NikeTown and VANS. The deal forms part of Ikea's strategy to open new store formats in city locations, in response to increasing "urbanisation and new shopping behaviours".

The site will host one of Ikea's smaller stores. The format targets shoppers less able to travel to the large, edge-of-town stores Ikea is known for. The building is also home to other retail brands such as Nike Town and VANS.

Peter Jelkeby (Chief Executive of Ikea) stated that, "Even though online shopping continues to accelerate, we think the physical experience is as important for shoppers who want to touch, see, feel our products and be inspired."

### **Other New Openings**

Chourangi on New Quebec Street is set to be one of London's restaurant openings of the year, bringing Kolkata cuisine to Maydharan's discerning

openings of the year, bringing Kolkata cuisine to Marylebone's diners

## Announcements



From Marylebone Village: We are so excited to invite and welcome you on Wednesday 10th November to the Merry Marylebone Christmas lights switch on and shopping event in Marylebone Village!

This year we are thrilled to be working with charity partner, Mind Brent, Wandsworth and Westminster to create a day of activities and shopping and dining offers in celebration of the illumination of our Christmas lights.

To celebrate the special event, over 50 retailers and restaurants will be offering exclusive promotions, festive experiences, gifts with purchase and specially curated menus throughout the day. Alongside our special discounts, a variety of exciting activities will take place in the village including a charity tombola, wreath making, food and gift stalls, live music, Santa's grotto, fairground rides and a celebrity switch on moment, to name a few. Our resident artist Eleni will also be back, creating bespoke illustrations for you to display at home.

Shop until your heart's content with extended store opening hours and take advantage of the special menus and offers in selected restaurants across the village.

Meet with colleagues, family and friends and make your way to the stage to enjoy live performances and capture the 6pm switch on moment.

This is a Christmas celebration you won't want to miss.

## The Marylebone Diary



### **Selfridges Visit**

It may have been two years in the waiting (thanks to Covid-enforced cancellations) but our MA visit to Selfridges did not disappoint!

The International Client Development Guide – John Sheahan - entertained us from start to finish: starting outside, in front of the famous Selfridges clock, he traced the history not only of the store but of retail in London. Moving inside, our tour led us through the ground floor where we were regaled with a combination of history involving the development of the building and changes made to it. We learned about luxury products – from handbags to perfumes – alongside an early ‘computer’ for scrambling phone lines, housed in the basement, taking up 70 metres of space, but vital for secret telephone conversations with our allies during the Second World War.

For anyone who hasn’t visited the Toy Department recently – go now, before the Christmas crowds gather! It’s a truly remarkable place where Paddington Bear’s creator, Michael Bond, is said to have got his inspiration, having found just one little bear left on the shelf, desperately waiting for someone to take him home.

The stories kept coming from our enthusiastic and knowledgeable guide who also made us aware of what a visionary Harry Gordon Selfridge was: he not only supported the Suffragettes, long before it was fashionable to do so, he also installed a restaurant where women were admitted and allowed to eat on their own (without a male companion) – an equally revolutionary idea at the time. A miniature museum following the store’s history was well documented and completely absorbing.

But breakfast called! We moved to the Brasserie of Light, the stunning Art



Deco restaurant within the store where we enjoyed a full and delicious breakfast – and were presented with a gift token for £10 to spend in the store.

Perhaps not surprisingly, this amazing tour was oversubscribed the first time around so there is now a second chance to enjoy what Selfridges has to offer – but there are only a few places left so book without delay – see details in the Events section towards the end of this newsletter.

### **Air Quality Action Day**

MP Nicki Aiken and Leader of The Council Rachael Robathan and Cllr Barbara Arzymanow and Westminster City Council and Marylebone residents and businesses met at Marylebone train station on Friday to gather support to rid the station of diesel trains and improve Marylebone's air quality.

Marylebone train station has the only diesel trains left in London. It is a great concern to residents with increasing noise and pollution in the neighbourhood. Westminster wheels was just one of the great green ideas on offer. Two wheel travel, air monitoring and EV charging points are all helping to clean our air in Marylebone.

### **Frieze and Frieze Masters and Sculpture Regent's Park**

We really enjoyed Frieze this year, in particular Frieze Sculpture although in order to enter there was a very strict double vaccination policy or negative covid test before entering. The atmosphere was truly harmonious. The dealers, gallery owners, buyers, curators and artists and the general public were grateful to be back in the midst of such creativity and beauty after one of the darkest periods we have had. It attracts 60,000 visitors to central London every October. Frieze Masters coincides with and is within walking distance of its sister fair, Frieze London, in The Regent's Park. Frieze London focuses on contemporary art and living artists, showing work created mainly post-2000 whereas Frieze Masters presents work made before the year 2000. Connecting Frieze Masters and Frieze London, Frieze Sculpture is a free display of major works.

### **Retail Changes**

Changes are happening all the time at the moment, at every turn another vacant premises pops up into something new and exciting. The newest one to be seen is Lina Stores on Wigmore Street. The first one opened in Soho 75 years ago. Lina Stores takes its name from the original founder Lina, a formidable lady from Genova who established the delicatessen in 1944. Antipasti, cheeses, pasta and ragu will be enjoyed by the residents and businesses in Marylebone. Next up is Hagen, a new Danish coffee shop on the high street. Two unlikely contenders are Wyse and Olivia Rubin, women's fashion both of which we have followed on social media for a long time. We are looking forward to meeting them. It is the first time they have opened a store and we are happy they have chosen Marylebone.

Willows on the Roof Restaurant in John Lewis is very children friendly and on our visit the staff were really lovely and the pizza was fabulous. Highly recommended! Chef Gizzi Erskine and musician Professor Green have partnered to bring their hottest recipes to the rooftop.

### **Chiltern Street**

The Gallery of Everything - is a commercial space for non academic artists and is one to visit. The proceeds from the gallery of everything help support

and is one to visit. The proceeds from the gallery of everything help support the museum of everything a registered UK charity.

### **Post Office**

Many residents and businesses have contacted us with regard to the lack of a Post Office in Marylebone. Certainly the Post Office on Baker Street is now overcrowded and you can easily wait 45 minutes in a queue. We need our Post Office back on the high street as soon as possible.

### **Daunt Books**

Boris Johnson and his son Wilfred were in Daunt Books last week. Apparently he goes there a lot according to the manager- and we wouldn't blame him! He was supporting his father, Stanley Johnson's book launch - From Antique Lands.

Hollywood actress Angelina Jolie was out in H&M with her children shopping on Oxford Street during the week.

### **Halloween**

With Halloween this weekend and Christmas around the corner everywhere is buzzing. We are told that the Qatari royal family have bought Selfridges. IKEA is taking over Top Shop. However, the Pret index exclusive to Bloomberg saw London's West End had a slight fall back from last week, but transactions are still above the pre-Covid level.

After two years of lockdowns we are looking forward to the Marylebone Christmas Lights Fair and celebrating the Christmas spirit together as a community. On Wednesday 10th November the Christmas lights will be turned on and there will be a shopping event.

# Association Events

### **SELFRIDGES TOUR & BREAKFAST**

Wednesday 17 November at 9.00 am  
400 Oxford Street, W1A 1AB  
(Just a few places remain for this second of our Selfridges events)

In 1906 Harry Gordon Selfridge arrived in London from Chicago with a singular desire to create the greatest shopping experience in the world. Over 100 years later Selfridges continues to honour and celebrate that vision and to create a shopping experience that promises to surprise, amaze and amuse its customers – and this is MA members' chance to share that vision.

Selfridges are delighted to welcome you for an exclusive tour before-store-opening to share the extraordinary story of this iconic building and how Selfridges revolutionised the art of shopping. Following our tour we will move

to the Brasserie of Light for breakfast. This stunning art deco dining space will in itself be an experience not to be missed.

The combined tour and breakfast is being charged at £25.00 per head BUT this includes a £10.00 Selfridges Gift Card which can be spent in the store however you choose. To reserve your place please email Lois German on [lois.german@marylebone.org](mailto:lois.german@marylebone.org) or telephone 0207 487 2706. Immediate booking is recommended and as advised previously, priority will be given to those who booked on last year's (cancelled) tours.

## **THE WALLACE COLLECTION AFTERNOON TEA**

Wednesday 8 December 2021 at 3.00 pm  
The Wallace Collection, Hertford House, Manchester Square, London W1U 3BN

Join us for the annual pre-Christmas afternoon tea in the lovely surroundings of The Wallace Collection. The tea, to include a glass of Prosecco, is being maintained at the previous cost of £25 per person including service and is payable on the day. To book your place email Lois German on [lois.german@marylebone.org](mailto:lois.german@marylebone.org) or telephone 0207 487 2706

A date for the diary: Thursday 27 January 2022

**ANNUAL DRINKS PARTY** at The Oriental Club – further details to follow shortly

## **REGULAR ASSOCIATION EVENTS**

### **COFFEE MORNING**

Wednesday 24 November at 10.30  
Durrants Hotel, George Street, W1H 5BU

We are delighted that our next Coffee Morning will be at another new venue, Durrants Hotel, a treasured Marylebone institution which is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year. In the lovely Spy Room MA members will be able to enjoy tea, filter coffee and a pastry for the cost of £5.00 per person. Booking is required as we must give numbers to Durrants. To book your place email Lois German on [lois.german@marylebone.org](mailto:lois.german@marylebone.org) or telephone 0207 487 2706.

### **BOOK CLUB**

Wednesday 3rd November 2021 at 6.30 pm  
At last members are meeting up again 'for real' upstairs at The King's Head pub in Westmoreland Street. Anyone who is interested in joining in should contact Liz Queenan. Meetings have changed to the first WEDNESDAY of each month but will still commence at 6.30. This month's choice is Trustee From The Toolroom by Nevil Shute. 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 EVENING**

Monday 8 November at 6.30 pm  
The Prince Regent, 71 Marylebone High Street, W1U 5JN



Continuing with our regular bimonthly 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, our hostess Anne Hamilton will be there to greet you. A great opportunity to meet local fellow residents in an informal and friendly atmosphere.

### **SCRABBLE CLUB**

Tuesday 9 and 23 November 2021 at 5.00 pm

The Duke of Wellington, 54a Crawford Street, London W1H 2HQ

The Scrabble Club is alive and well and enjoying our new upstairs venue at The Duke of Wellington pub in Crawford Street. Members normally meet on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month, from 5 until 7, with Scrabble sets and dictionaries provided – and all levels of players welcome. Anyone interested in joining and/or wanting further information should contact [rosemary.forgan@marylebone.org](mailto:rosemary.forgan@marylebone.org) or 0788 789 1977.

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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)

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