



# The Marylebone Association Newsletter September 2020

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Dear Tim,

## ASSOCIATION NEWS

Life in Marylebone is slowly getting back to "normal". Last month saw 22 guests attend the annual wine tasting lunch at Ishtar. Their very popular regular Sommelier, Antonio Julio, guided everyone with choice wines entertainingly and expertly described throughout the excellent lunch. Everyone was very pleased to be there to enjoy and share the good food, wine and company. Members will no doubt also welcome the return of informal pub evenings; see events at the end for all the details.

## MARYLEBONE NEWS

### England Tree of the Year 2020?





## Woodland Trust Tree - vote for your tree of the year - The Marylebone Elm

This Huntingdon Elm stands tall over Marylebone High Street, a survivor of both the bombs of the Blitz and Dutch Elm Disease, which by 1980 had killed most of Britain's Elms. The tree is situated next to the Garden of the Rest, the site of the old Marylebone parish church. The Church was demolished after being damaged during the bombing raids of the Blitz in World War 2, but the tree escaped unharmed. Here, many new elms have also been planted thanks to the [W1W Tree Planting Scheme](#).

With so many elms across the country lost, including in London, the Marylebone Elm is a remarkable example of resilience. Not just as an Elm, but also as an urban tree: growing strong despite the confinement of the pavement and the surrounding buildings.

The magnificent Marylebone Elm is now one of the finalists in The Woodland Trust's English Tree of the [Year competition](#). It would surely make a worthy winner. You can vote for it [here](#).

## All change on the High Street

As mentioned in last month's newsletter, a revolution is upon us with regard to the relaxation in the rules governing the use of commercial premises. The government has introduced regulations to reform and simplify the Use Classes Order to make it easier for high street uses to change without the need for a planning application. This will create a new broad category of 'commercial, business and service' uses, the idea being to allow commercial, retail and leisure uses greater freedom to adapt to changing circumstances.

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The changes may appear technical with their amalgamation of A1, A2, A3 and B1 (and some D1/D2 uses) into a single use class - Class E, but they could have a major impact on the quality of life for the residents living over or near commercial premises. They drive a coach and horses through the Council's City Plan and decades of carefully honed legislation designed to ensure that the complex mix of different uses meets the needs of the various stakeholders living and working in the area. The West End Community Network, comprising of all the West End's recognised amenity societies, including the Marylebone Association has written to the Secretary of State expressing some of the widespread concerns, summarised below.

Many existing uses in the West End do not have hours of use attached. The assumption was always that A1 and A2 - shops, would operate retail hours, closing in the early evening. B1 offices would operate office hours, closing at similar times. If any shop or office can now become a restaurant and there are no hours of use on the original permission then it appears that the restaurant will have no hours of use restrictions attached. In mixed use areas like the West End this could have significant impact on the immediate area and more widely.

There are also significant servicing impacts - restaurants have around 10 times the number of deliveries compared to offices, with retail around 2.5 times. If the change to E class increases restaurant use in the West End, this will increase both road and kerbside congestion as well as increasing the issues related to waste management.

Previously these could be addressed through the planning process, but this option will no longer be available.

There will be further environmental health Impacts: noise and cooking smells are common issues associated with restaurant uses. Smells can also be a major nuisance to surrounding buildings as well as increased noise generated from kitchen extraction ducts, etc.

The existing legislation to manage these issues requires significant effort and resources and is difficult to use. In response to the changes we believe that that the Council will need to increase the resources in this area and also seek changes to the legislation to make it easier to manage the impacts of the planning changes.

## 20mph for Westminster

Consultation on the 20mph proposal took place between 17 September 2019 and 10 December 2019. 66% of respondents to the consultation were in support of the proposed scheme. Further details

on the consultation responses and the Cabinet member's decision can be found at <https://bit.ly/20mphwcc>

The council's highways teams have now begun the installation of signage across the city to highlight the new 20mph speed limits. The process will take place over the summer, with the new limit being introduced on a street by street basis.

The 20mph speed limit in Westminster will apply to all roads apart from TfL red routes and those in the Royal Parks.

## Spate of car crashes in Marylebone



Despite the present low traffic volumes Marylebone has seen a spate of car crashes in recent months with several occurring on Wyndham Place and Upper Montagu Street.

Above, a neon pink McLaren 570 supercar worth £150,000 is left a mangled wreck after driver loses control and crashes in Marylebone. It's understood it happened in a 20mph limit by Montagu Mansions on 12 August.

# Trouble on Edgware Road



Following our comments last month on the vast areas of cordoned off and unused road space resulting in permanent traffic congestion in Euston Road, matters are no better to the west of our area thanks to the TfL Edgware Road interventions there.

The residents of Marylebone close to the Edgware Road urge TfL to come and revisit the bollards they put up along the Eastern side of the Edgware Road between Old Marylebone Lane and Marble Arch to assess whether they are achieving their original aim. We would argue that not only are they not achieving this aim but that the knock-on effects are disastrous and the sooner the bollards are removed the better.

Edgware Road - a major thoroughfare - was reduced to one lane so that the pavement could be widened to accommodate the pedestrians who would be walking down the road and needed to social distance. The original aim may well have been worthy at a time when no one quite knew how many pedestrians there would be. It turns out that no one uses the extra space created for the pedestrians as the pavement has proved to be quite wide enough. The space created is either empty or causing confusion – it is not suitable for bicycles as the space is regularly closed off because of a crossing or a loading bay.

The net result is that unnecessary traffic jams have been created in the Edgware Road, which carries a good deal of heavy traffic. This in turn creates more pollution – the very problem that TfL and others are trying so hard to reduce. They are also encouraging people to cycle more. By reducing the road to one lane the cyclists now have to choose between cycling illegally along the pavement (and many of them are choosing this option) or risking getting squashed between the bollards and a heavy goods vehicle!

The bollards were put up in great haste with insufficient thought. A further unwelcome effect is that deliveries to the businesses along

further unwelcome effect is that deliveries to the businesses along the Edgware Road such as Waitrose or McDonald's do not have enough room to park their delivery trucks in the spaces available. The delivery drivers have been forced to use residential streets to make their deliveries. This has caused excessive noise disturbance to residents often at unsocial hours. It has been a nightmare for the residents of Brendon St in particular.

The residents in this area feel that it is time for TfL to review these measures and take stock. If they were to come and look they would see that these bollards are causing much more damage than good and the sooner they are taken down the better. They are not helping pedestrians, they are endangering cyclists and they are causing traffic jams along a major trunk road. Please remove them as soon as possible.

## New Secure Cycle Storage Units



Westminster City Council is proposing to introduce a number of "FalcoPod" secure cycle storage units, at various locations throughout Marylebone to provide residents with a safe place to park their bicycles. The storage units will help promote the use of bicycles within the City as well as offer protection from theft and the elements. We welcome the updated design as they are more in keeping with "Westminster street style" than the present storage units. Details of the proposed locations can be found [here](#). They included Harley Street, Carburton Street, Clipstone Street & Great Titchfield Street, Harcourt Street, Bryanston Square.

# Reopening the West End

As many areas of London now appear to be returning to normal it has become apparent that the same cannot be said for central London, where footfall is still significantly down and many offices are still either closed or being run on a skeleton staff.

Westminster Council is calling for coordinated and decisive action that needs to be delivered in order to reopen the West End successfully. In a letter to Robert Jenrick MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Leader of the Council, Cllr Rachael Robathan, has called for joint support in key areas to enable the successful and safe reopening of central London as the engine of the UK economy.

*Cllr Robathan said: "Westminster Council has always been quick to support our businesses and communities proactively throughout this pandemic with a number of eye catching and effective initiatives. We have welcomed the very significant Government support for the business sector and remain absolutely committed to working constructively with all partners who have an interest in the long-term success of the West End. It's vital that we all pull in the same direction, coordinate our activity and are given the flexibilities we have requested in order to reopen the West End safely, which is such a key driver for the London and UK economy."*

Read the letter to the Secretary of State [here](#).

# Westminster Council News

Westminster Council proposes freight and waste consolidation as part of its Zero Emissions City commitment This is designed to lower emissions and allow greater flexibility in the way we use our streets, improve air quality and reinvent the city for cycling, walking and other forms of zero emission transport.

Parts of Westminster were recently served by as many as 50 waste management and delivery companies, with multiple pickups from businesses on the same street and large numbers of delivery vehicles carrying out duplicating trips. Pilot projects in Mayfair to coordinate waste collections and reduce the number of operator and service vehicles have shown that significant improvements can be made.

Before lockdown, deliveries and commercial waste collection accounted for up to 20% of traffic on Westminster's roads and made a significant contribution to the 15% of total emissions from transport in the city.

During lockdown we saw a dramatic improvement in Westminster's air quality. Oxford Street saw daily average NO2 drop by 47%, while Marylebone Road saw a 48% reduction.

Below a reminder of some useful contact details at WCC:

You can report dumped rubbish, broken pavements, defective street lights and more on the Report It service. <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/report-it>

You can register here <https://www.fixmystreet.com/alert> for alerts of everything reported in your area (just use your post code and it will offer you options).

## **Coronavirus (Covid-19) UPDATE**

For the latest information, visit the following:

### **Health advice**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

### **Westminster Council's advice and response website:**

<https://www.westminster.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-and-information>

Westminster Connects COVID-19 phone line – 020 7641 1222

### **Beware the Coronavirus scammers**

<https://www.westminsterlabour.org.uk/westminster-news/2020/03/27/beware-the-coronavirus-scammers/>

### **Help for small businesses**

For details of how small businesses can get access to Government financial assistance.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19->



# Westminster News

In the news: Pedestrianisation of Soho enables 90% of hospitality businesses to reopen; The Howard de Walden Estate drops dividend amid low rent collection; Shaftesbury transforms part of Chinatown into 'open air food destination'; and London rents plummet as Airbnb lets flood the market.

## West One at Distance Development Engagement





NBIM and British Land want to refurbish and redevelop part of the site that forms a 1970s office and retail building in Oxford Street, to provide additional and more efficient office floorspace whilst retaining circa 60% of the existing structure. They say that: *"the proposals will also introduce a new high-quality façade, reconnecting the building to the surrounding area. At the same time, the entrance to the Bond Street station and retail outlets in the first, ground and basement floors will remain open while any development is taking place. We are keen to hear your feedback which will help to shape our proposals before we return for a further round of consultation in the autumn."*

The first round of consultations will run from **Tuesday 18th August to Friday 11th September**. <https://westoneconsultation.co.uk/have-your-say/>

# Events

## Association Events

Although lockdown has put a temporary rein on our Marylebone Association social events we have discovered an ingenious alternative which complies totally with Government regulations - 'a virtual walk' via Zoom. In many ways it's the best of both worlds – an insight into a particular subject, brought to you live by our Blue Badge Guide, Janice Liverseidge – which you can enjoy without getting footsore, from the comfort of the sofa, with a cup of tea in hand. Prices are per household so if you want to enjoy 'the walk' with friends or family what better way to do it? For anyone who hasn't used Zoom yet it couldn't be simpler – just ask for further info.

Everyone really seemed to enjoy our previous virtual walk, focussing on Florence Nightingale's Marylebone, so here's another chance to join in:

**Thursday 17 September 2020 at 4 pm Fee £10 per household**

**King's Cross Walk – another virtual tour via Zoom**, this time of the super cool development with a canalside walk from Marylebone, led by Janice Liverseidge, London Blue Badge Tourist Guide.

The great thing about a virtual walk is that we can transport ourselves further than would normally be possible so join us on this virtual walk along the Regent's Canal from Marylebone to Kings Cross where we can explore the amazing transformation that has taken place over the last few years. I learn how part of the former

taken place over the last few years. Learn how part of the former gasworks are now elegant new homes, see the new public art for all, discover what Thomas Heatherwick of 2012 Olympic flames and Routemaster buses has been up to, how bats are being protected and how the area has repurposed old railway buildings and even received a new postcode. This 25 year project is nearing completion so find out what more is planned and the best places to eat, shop and relax with friends and family. Once again this is a virtual walk so you can see and hear everything clearly and can relax in the comfort of your own home. After the presentation from Janice there will be an opportunity to ask questions too. For further details contact Lois German on 020 7487 2706 or email: [lois.german@marylebone.org](mailto:lois.german@marylebone.org)

## Regular Association Events

(For more details click on the event)

**All events subject to compliance with government directives on meeting at the time.**

### Pub Evening - The Larrik

Monday, 14 September 2020 from 6:30 PM *The Larrik, 32 Crawford Place, W1H 5NN*

The Larrik is open and following the latest guidelines in their layout. It is a very enjoyable evening and informal opportunity to meet local fellow residents and make new friends in the relaxed surroundings of one of our nicest gastropubs. Everyone is welcome, with a pay-as-you-go bar and delicious light supper snacks, always available so do come along.

### Book Club

**Tuesday 1 September 2020 at 6.30 pm**

Members normally meet at The King's Head pub in Westmoreland Street – although sadly this is not possible right now. Instead the meetings are via Zoom so anyone who is interested in joining in should contact Liz Queenan. Meetings on the first Tuesday of each month at 6.30 – but our Zoom meetings start at 5.

This month's book is: *Fey's War* by Catherine Bailey

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.

## **Scrabble Club**

Normally meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at The Natural Kitchen in Baker Street. Sadly this is not possible at the