

Minutes of MHNF meeting 29th August 2019.



Minutes Mill Hill Neighbourhood Forum Committee Meeting 29 August 2019 Adam and Eve Pub 7.30 pm

Present:

John Gillett, Stuart Kershaw, Bonnie Overlander, Anesta Weekes, Paul Edwards, Patricia Kershaw, Susan Connolly, Alan Connolly, Peter Neal, Cheryl Farrow, Marion Gillett.

Apologies from Clive Blass, Limor Nuriel, Jonathan Cumming, Roger Tichborne.

1. Resignation of Chairman John Gillett

- 1.1. The current Chair, John Gillett (JG) stated that he wished to step down from the Chair. This was accepted with regret from the Committee.
- 1.2. Re the position of JG, it was proposed and agreed that JG would in future act as a consultant to the Committee.
- 1.3. JG agreed but stated that he might wish to put a time limit upon this position. It was noted that the position of a consultant was a normal procedure in the case of a number of Forums in other areas.
- 1.4. Stuart Kershaw (SK) then expressed gratitude for the enormous contribution made to the MHNF by John Gillett over the previous five years. This was agreed by all Committee members.

2. Acting Vice Chair of Forum

- 2.1. A motion was then proposed that SK take up the position of Acting Vice Chairman. This was accepted unanimously by the Committee, the position to be confirmed at the next AGM.

3. Appeal application against decision not to Re-Designate the Forum

- 3.1. It was agreed that the support of local Councillors was essential if the Appeal against Barnet Planning Committee's refusal to Re-Designate the MHNF were to succeed.
- 3.2. Apparently, the change in Chair would make this more likely, but, of course, this could not be guaranteed. No date for a hearing of the Appeal had been received from the Planning Committee (PC). SK also thanked Anesta Weekes (AW) for her considerable contribution to the Appeal itself.
- 3.3. There then followed a brief discussion about the reasons for the PC's refusal to Re-Designate. Some Committee members felt that the major problem was the apparent

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failure to achieve a membership of at least 21, a statutory requirement. (This was disputed in the Appeal document). Others felt that a Safeguarding issue was at the root of the problem, and the reason for the withdrawal of support, and non-attendance at Committee by local Councillors. (See below, Point 6.1).

- 3.4. **It was noted that unless the PC accepted the Appeal mentioned above, the MHNF would cease to exist in its current form after 17 September 2019.**
- 3.5. SK apologised at this point, for having sent out the Appeal document without having consulted the full Committee. It was sent in error as he did intend that the committee discuss and agree its contents before it was sent. He then invited, nevertheless, comments about the subject matter of the Appeal itself.
- 3.6. The Committee then expressed consent to the Appeal document that had been submitted to Barnet Council on 28 August 2019.
- 3.7. SK stated his intention that, in future, a collegiate MO would be followed rigorously.
- 3.8. There then followed a discussion about other shortcomings that might have contributed to the PC's refusal to Re-Designate. There had been a failure to produce Minutes in good time, certainly before the next meeting, and the absence of Financial Accounts.
- 3.9. JG pointed out that there was no statutory duty for any Forum to produce such accounts, however, this was thought to follow 'good practice'. Accounts would shortly be placed before the Committee, and following agreement, such accounts would be placed on public record.
- 3.10. Re Minutes, some members preferred minutes to be written shortly after the relevant meeting, whilst fresh in the memory. A draft was to be circulated to the Committee, and if agreed, the Minute was then to be placed online. There was some dissent on this point with other members wishing to approve Minutes at the following Committee meeting.
- 3.11. JG confirmed that the delay in producing the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) had resulted in part because of the work he had been involved in for the NW7Hub. However, he pointed out that a "Final draft" of the NDP had been submitted to the PC on 25th June 2019, but no reaction or comment had been received from the PC.

4. Search for a new Chairman for the Forum.

- 4.1. SK had circulated to the Committee a draft Job Specification for the newly to be appointed Chair. This was agreed with the addition that the new Chair had to have undergone a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check. The Job Specification is attached to this Minute. There was then discussion about the necessity for all Committee members to be subject to DBS check, and for this measure to be included in a revision of the Forum's Constitution. This subject was particularly sensitive because there had been a business arrangement with

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the Forum in the recent past in which an individual who was allegedly on the Sex Offenders' Register, had provided media services to the Forum. JG had ceased all contact with this individual in writing on 18 July 2019.

- 4.2. It was certainly agreed in future, that any Committee member who was likely to have any contact with children through Forum events would have to obtain DBS clearance.

5. Meeting with Marshall Hoffman

- 5.1. AW and SK then informed the Committee that they had had a meeting with the Chair of the Local Ward Council, Marshall Hoffman together with local Councillor Val Duschinsky.
- 5.2. The objective of this meeting was to elicit Mr Hoffman's help in recruiting the new Chair. (Mr Hoffman had been one of the objectors to the Forum's application for Re-Designation on the ground of safe-guarding). Councillor Duschinsky had suggested that we meet Marshall because he had indicated to her that he knew a number of persons who might be able to assist the Forum in the future.

6. Councillors' position in respect of the supporting the Forum

- 6.1 SK informed the Committee that Councillor Duschinsky had written to the Vice Chairman on 28 August to reiterate the fact that she and other councillors had had to 'distance themselves' from the Forum following advice from Barnet Council. This advice was given on 28 April 2019. The reason for this action was the Safeguarding issue referred to above.
- 6.2 A final decision on the subject of DBS clearance, and its inclusion in the Forum's constitution would obviously have to await the PC's decision on the Forum's Appeal.

7. Written contribution from Roger Tichborne.

- 7.1 A fellow Committee member Mr Roger Tichborne had sent his apologies to the acting Vice chairman for his absence. He submitted a series of questions to the Committee by email on 28 August. SK read these points to the Committee. All were discussed. The committee found the points made on the Forum's constitution, were helpful but such points would have to await the PC's decision on the Appeal.

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8. Other Business.

- a. Markets in Mill Hill. It was agreed that the French market should proceed but the Christmas Market should be cancelled.
- b. Details of how future market were to be run would have to await the Council's decision on the Appeal mentioned above.
- c. Susan Connolly made the point that market activity attracted and engaged the Community, a very important part of Forum activity.
- d. Bonnie Overlander made the point that the markets should be more diverse, not just selling food.
- e. JG had drafted a letter re the Pentavia development. This should be sent in SK's name to the Secretary of State.
- f. Sian John had resigned from the Committee citing lack of time and too many other commitments.
- g. Financial Accounts. These were in draft form and should cover the period up to 16 September 2019. All financial contributions/donations must be shown, similarly, any money lost/gained from previous markets and the Mill Hill Guide. This information was then to be placed online.
- h. SK was to gain permission from MHPS to use their letter of support included in the Appeal document