



## **Castlefield Forum Quarterly Meeting**

Minutes of a meeting held at  
19.00 Monday 26th April 2021  
Online via Zoom

### **Attendees**

B Hunter  
Calum McGowan  
Debbie Hubbard  
Cllr Joan Davies  
Carol Middleton  
Cllr Lee-Ann Igbon  
Gary Rumens  
Giles Grover  
Ian McIlveen  
James Bowers  
Kirk Davies  
Liz Burrage  
Lou Pullan  
Cllr Marcus Johns  
Mark Hubbard  
Persephone Galanis  
Rob Devlin  
Sid Williams  
Serpil Lindsay  
Stephen Broadhead  
Steven Lindsay  
Alan Redford

### **Guests**

Sid Williams - Embassy Village Project

### **Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**

**19.00** James Bowers - Forum Secretary, started the meeting and thanked everyone for joining. James also outlined the meeting setup virtually and explained how questions could be asked.

James also confirmed the apologies received were from:

- Cllr William Jeavons

### **Minutes from the last meeting on 8th February 2021**

**19.05** James checked if anyone had any comments or corrections from the minutes published from the last meeting - there were none. There were also no further matters arising. .

## **An introduction from our new chair**

- 19.07** James explained how Carol Middleton had now stepped down as Forum Chair. James presented the names of trustees and explained the changes which included:

- Calum McGowan - New Castlefield Forum Chair
- Lou Pullan - New Castlefield Forum Vice Chair

James therefore handed the meeting over to be conducted by the Forum's new Chair - Calum McGowan.

Calum started by thanking Carol for her hard work over the last decade in her instrumental role as chair and how she is now staying on as trustee and mentoring Calum going forward.

## **A Community 'Thank You' to Carol**

- 19.08** Calum presented Carol with the value of the present that was collected for her from the community members. This totaled £700. The attendees thanked Carol for her support.

## **Financial Updates**

- 19.09** Giles explained that it was nearing year end and the accounts needed to be looked at at the end of the month and reported on.

Giles mentioned some recent credits, including:

- £6000 grant has come in for the Roman Gardens from NIF granting.
- £530 as a grant toward Manchester Cladiators funding
- £1000 Castlefield Clean and Green Funding.

At the point of the meeting, the current bank balance stood at: £32,784.45.

## **'Safer' Updates**

- 19.10** Cllr Joan Davies - Standing in for GMP, Joan mentioned that PC Matt Hilton was our community Police Officer, has moved on, Dane Farrow, is our new community officer. Joan would share his contact details and he would be attending future Forum meetings. Joan thanked Matt for his work.

Officers couldn't attend the meeting today due to being too close to an election.

Lou Pullan, Vice chair, explained how we are looking at the Safer objective and to achieve this is working with the residential buildings in the area to bring them together. This is to try and join Forces to combat crime such as theft of post etc. She asked for members to submit ideas for implementing this or if anyone would like to get involved.

## **Embassy Village Project Presentation**

- 19.15** Sid Williams introduced himself as part of the Embassy Village Project using a slideshow to accompany. Background to the project was the charity purchase of a tour bus, to house homeless males 18-70, totally 130 men as a stop stay. This has since enlarged to the project.

Partnership with Tim Heatly of Capital & Centric developers and also Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester.

The project approached James Whittaker of Peel Holdings to acquire land and the Project would act as landlords so they were able to give a tenancy recommendation going forward.

The Location: Adjacent to St George's Island, on the boundary between Castlefield and Hulme, Bridgewater Canal on one side, River Irwell on the other. One way in and out, homes stacked two high.

Currently abandoned land needs to be cleared out and repurposed.  
Homes located on the northern end, then a village hall that will provide training and food etc.

Planning application has already been submitted, 18 companies have helped get it this far and offered their time. Corporates in the city giving CSR.

Sid showed the proposed sizes of the homes/units, stacked 2 high and clusters of 8 in each archway. Designed for single people - all including bathroom and kitchenette, Single bed and small amount of storage. 4-12 months is the average time people will be envisaged to stay with the project.

Sir Richard Lees (MCC) has agreed a maximum stay time of 2 years.

Learning and workshops will be provided to show how to manage a home.

Houses are operated already elsewhere, where you cannot bring alcohol or drugs. Never had to use the threat of eviction.

There is an interview process involved, taking people who want to work and can work and also want to take the opportunity to change.

Meet and greet hut/security hut. Located at the main frontage to the site. Searching for people entering will take place. There is also a village hall, a multifunctional space, where all training will take place. Kitchen, laundry, staff office included.

**Q&A** 1) Question regarding security at the site and how it would be handled:

Sid responded that there were 3 options they were looking at:

- Either a combination of staff in daytime and outsourced security overnight.
- Additional home as a live in janitor/security.
- Or full security package but this may be too costly.

2) Covering literacy, numeracy, and skills training - how do you plan to do that?

Sid said that they do a lot of this in house, and teach people how to pay bills etc but they will Also outsource specialist skills such as languages, and other courses where possible. They have partnerships with a lot of training providers.

3) Christian faith element - please could this be expanded on.

Sid mentioned about the religious aspect, it drives Sid's life but he does not force this way of life on his staff nor will it be pushed on residents. No faith is compulsory.

4) A question was raised about how this was just aimed at men, and not women.

Sid explained that there is a woman's site launched elsewhere, with much different priorities, surrounding domestic violence. All female staff. Just not at this location.

Calum thanked Sid for his presentation and for joining the meeting.

### **'Greener' Updates**

**19.40** Gary explained the change of name and the chances to build on the successes of the original group. It will now be called 'Clean and Green Castlefield'.

They have many volunteers and equipment, but they are lacking experiences so are always happy for volunteers.

The initial concentration will be focusing on replating the Visitor Centre garden and then expanding this to other areas.

Year to date overview:

- 17 events
- 315 volunteering hours
- 8 volunteers at each event on average - following 2m distance guidance.
- 242 bags or rubbish picked.

Publicity has been gained across many media outlets and platforms including: BBC North West Tonight and BBC Radio Manchester

97 new members joined the group last month.

Current activities include:

- Former Visitor's Centre garden, replanting, including rockeries and maybe a herb garden.
- Clearing other beds in the area too - easier to get help with gardening than litter picking.
- Great British spring clean coming up in May, plan is to have litter picks across 3 weekends.
- 1 mega litterpick, drop in stations in Castlefield. Plan is to try and get local businesses involved. Updates will be on Facebook.

Ignition project - City of Trees. Investment in the Manchester environment. Free workshops are offered to look at climate resilience by having more plants and trees in city centres - we are interested in this as a possibility for Castefield. Gary is looking at a survey to go out to residents to gauge opinions and possible location of trees if successful.

Pioneer Quays project, set up by Sam Williams, to create a community garden and education hub on the Pioneer Quay site. More to come soon.

Contact made with friends of Peel Park. Reaching out beyond the community to share resources and information. They have helped us with gardening in return for a volunteer swap and knowledge on group setup.

Calum added that we are in touch with the Salford Community forum. Someone is setting up a friends of Heaton Park group also - maybe these joint approaches can be extended here too.

## **Councillors Update**

**19.50** Councillor Marcus Johns gave the update.

Marcus first explained the ward boundaries, and which councilor looks after which area. Inside of Mancunian way is Deansgate ward, outside of Mancunian way is Hulme ward.

Marcus looks after Deansgate, and Cllr Lee-Ann Igbon looks after Hulme, who will be sharing this update.

Final allocations of NIF funding was given, with Castlfeild being awarded as part of this.

Parking problems on Water Street - Rhino barriers have been installed, bollards to be installed at the end of May to combat illegal parking.

Science and Industry Museum - The museum has agreed to aim for a target net zero carbon emissions by 2023. Move towards renewable energy in the future. More info to come soon and will answer questions from local residents.

Anti-social behaviour at Castlefield Bowl - On 31st march a dispersal order was given to GMP with powers to move those causing ASB on. Lighting has been switched off around the bowl to discourage gatherings and there is also going to be an increase in patrols of GMP. The walkways will be kept lit and this will be relooked after summer.

Neighbours of the bowl have been given details of how to contact Police if future problems arise.

Marcus thanked 'Clean and Green' volunteers and the Biffa staff for their help in recovering the area.

The councillors have received complaints about a boat fly tipping in the basin. The boat in question has now been vacated and the council are in talks with the Canal and River Trust on how to combat going forward.

Sounds of the City - Series of gigs cancelled last year have now been rescheduled for September. Dates booked in provisional at the moment and will only go ahead if Covid restrictions allow.

There are currently national trials for large events going ahead in Liverpool with regard to Covid track and trace initiatives - the council is following the results of this.

Peakylinders Filming - there will be more filming coming to Castlefield and information of this will be circulated when known.

Council and Mayoral Elections - Polling station at the Castlefield Hotel will be retained. Polling districts have however changed - please check your cards for location as there is a new location in Knott Mill.

Marcus ended by thanking the Forum for their hard work, explaining that he will be standing for re-election after standing since 2018 and very much hopes he can continue to serve in this capacity.

Cllr Lee-Ann Igbon continued from Marcus, explaining how she chairs the new climate change committee, with the aim of encouraging grass route change across the city. This includes Cycling routes, linking of initiatives in Hulme and Castlefield. Wildflower, flower and herb garden planting and getting assistance from developers and residents. To help, Leanne is working with an illustrator and a regeneration photographer, Len Grant. [www.lengrant.co.uk](http://www.lengrant.co.uk)

A book is being created and Len is hoping to speak to residents and businesses about what the area needs are and future regeneration aims.

There has been investment from the council already for a new leisure centre, a future new school. Leanne will try and share the work.

Connecting the Hulme and Castfield areas - There is less traffic due to the pandemic and the council trying to utilise that and turn to public transport and cycle routes. There have also been legal proceedings around St Georges Basin to try and combat illegal parking. There is now a residents parking scheme in place.

Hulme is also going to have a 'spring clean' over the same two weeks as Keep Britain Tidy mentioned earlier - Leanne is aiming to outreach to developers as well as the community to make this a success.

Safety - Police have reported that 22 people have received covid fines this weekend, theft from person and drug dealing is still the biggest problem in the Hulme area. The challenges are a reduced number of Police officers available and the differing priorities of the city.

Leanne reported that speeding is becoming an issue across the city and they are looking at ways to combat this.

Development of the Hulme and Moss Side Food Partnership that has derived from a response to the pandemic. This has been setup as an emergency food response acting as a community grocer.

This project also is looking at mental health and how growing food at home or on allotments can also help. There is also a plan for help and training on debt management and food purchase and cooking ideas.

Leanne offered to share any details on any of the items mentioned.

Calum thanked both Marcus and Leanne for their updates, and also highlighted the work of the Forum's Spirit of Place initiatives to link the wards.

### **Forum Objectives and Outcomes**

- 20.05** Calum explained the objectives of the Forum going forward. Since January, the trustees have moved towards objective and goal settings and presented these as planned for the next quarter (April, May, June).  
These will be split into themes of Greener, Better, Cleaner and Communications. It allows us to set aims and see what has been achieved in Good, Better and Incredible categories.

Calum briefly covered the objectives envisaged for the next quarter and we will report back on successes at the next quarterly meeting.

### **Any Other Business**

- 19.10** Calum asked if there was any other business.

Cllr Leanne Igbon explained that six additional wards in Manchester has been offered support with Climate Change initiatives. This involves picking 12 people to come forward with projects to combat climate change. More Information on this and how to apply will be communicated in due course.

### **Date of the next meeting**

- 19.15** Proposed for Monday 26th July 2021, an alternative date would be Monday 12th July 2021. Once decided, this will be communicated across social channels and via the mailing list as usual.

### **Meeting Close**

**20.15**