

Whalley Range Community Forum AGM

12 th November 2020

Via Zoom 7 PM start

Attendees	
Bill Williams - Chair	Ashraf Ali - Secretary
Martin Rathfelder	Chris Ricard - Forum Worker
Laura Cassidy – Buzz	Carol Packham – Vice Chair
Drew Walsh – Treasurer	Angeliki Stogia – Councillor
Paul Benson – Hannam – Planning	Dave Taylor – Management Committee
Naeem Hassan – BMHC representative	Fauzia Khan – Management Committee
Ann Knowles – Management Committee	Devindra Sri
Ian Benson	Nathalie Mullen – Forum Admin

Apologies	
Mary Watson – Councillor	Jack Hunter Lofthouse
Julia Berg	

1. Welcome to the meeting.
2. Election of officers
 - a. Chair
 - b. Vice Chair
 - c. Treasurer
 - d. Secretary
 - e. Planning officer
3. Annual Development workers report.
4. Treasurers report.
5. Any other business.

1. Welcome and introductions

Bill welcomed everyone to the meeting. Before declaring the offices vacant he thanked all our members, partners, and workers for their hard work during this difficult time. He particularly thanked our councillors, the police, Manchester City council and all the partners we have worked with over the last 12 months. What we usually do at an AGM is set down what our targets are for the next year but with the pandemic our past, present, and future activities are limited. The minutes of the last AGM were accepted and approved without question or comment.

2. Election of officers

All officers stepped down from their posts and Angeliki Stogia was asked to be the returning officer.

Angeliki thanked all the previous position holders for their work during their last term. The Whalley Range councillors really appreciate the work done by the Whalley Range Community Forum.

Position	Position filled by
Chair	Bill Williams
Vice Chair	Carol Packham
Treasurer	Drew Walsh
Planning	Paul Benson Hannam
Secretary	Martin Rathfelder
Committee Member	Freddi Greenmantle
Committee Member	Ann Knowles
Committee Member	Dave Taylor
Committee Member	Fauzia Khan
Committee Member	Vacant

Is Naeem an attendee as a representative of BMHC or is he a committee member?

Naeem replied he would be a representative of the BMHC but not a committee member, as he would struggle to attend meetings as he has lots of evening commitments being a councillor in Cheetham Hill. He will attend meetings when he can.

The Chair responded that it is very important the BMHC have some representation at the WRCF meetings as it is a big and important part of Whalley Range. BMHC is always on our agenda and it is important that we continue to have updates with what is happening there. If Naeem was unable to attend could he advise who to invite in his place. The WRCF has had a great relationship with the BMHC over the past 7-8 years with Ashraf and we want that relationship to continue.

There is one vacancy this can be given consideration at a future meeting if we want to hold it open for someone from the BMHC or if we are happy to have a representative attend our bi monthly meetings with an update.

The WRCF would like to express our thanks to Ashraf Ali for his time on the committee and all the work he has done in its name. He is welcome to attend our meetings any time.

3. Treasurers Report

Chair expressed his and the Forums sincere thanks to Drew as the treasurer for the work he has done over the last 12 months.

Please see attached report from Drew.

Martin – the future looks very uncertain; however, the good news is we have some money in the bank. However, the council unfortunately will not know until at least January how things stand re funding at a council level so it will likely come down their agenda what happens to the voluntary sector organisations. We need to be careful and thoughtful and take care in future planning.

Angeliki – Times are very difficult, and we do not know the funds yet. MCC has extended for 3 months the voluntary and community sector funds as we see them as a real partner to support the community it will be a real shame if then we cannot support this sector going forward however there are no guarantees. WRCF are very good at delivering for this community and there are lots of funders out there and we have been very successful in securing funds from other organisations. Our Manchester is one funding source and we need to be pursuing them. We deliver services that our community wants, and we can deliver quickly.

Chair - it would be very surprising if MCC do not support voluntary organisations as without them in the long term it will cost the council more than the to run the organisations.

Donations for the kitchen were also from the Manchester wellbeing fund of £10K so that should be acknowledged.

Chris – All grants now are very focused on COVID and the pandemic. There has been no opportunity apply for funding that looks to the future, however there will be in time. We have been looking at immediate support for our residents however we now need to and are looking at longer term support.

Devindra Sri and Ian Benson joined the meeting.

They were welcomed by the chair and gave a recap of the meeting so far.

4. Forum workers report

Written report shared on screen and in the chat, a copy will also be sent out with the minutes of the meeting.

Chairs report will be added to this also.

Verbal report by Chris Ricard and Nathalie Mullen.

The report covers from October 2019. It includes the OPeNS fund, this is a partnership funding for working across Whalley Range, Chorlton and Fallowfield. We had to suspend all our meetings at the centre. However, we were able to ask people if they wanted us to stay in touch with them over the coming months, most said yes. From these conversations we were able to see there were items people did not like to ask for when they were struggling i.e., soap, shampoo, cleaning items. We applied to various funders and were successful in these grants to allow us to put together clean and safe packs with a selection of the items above included. We made 250 of these packs for our residents. Through this we developed lots of new partnerships, with different groups, from the food banks to contact hostel and nursing homes, we also used the mutual aid groups that have been set up on what's app. The pack were then distributed to the vulnerable in from these groups. These connections will be nurtured in the future. The link to the clean and safe report is included in the written report if you want to look at it further.

£7500.00 from Coop last year.

Lots of the information that has been shared about the pandemic has been online and social media. There are lots of people we work with that through poverty or lack of devices, or lack of knowledge of how the technology works feel left out and do not know what is going on, and as a result feel less informed. There is a project that the council are running at the moment where they are providing preloaded devices with phone support to set these devices up. This is something that we will focus on when we come back it makes a difference when you can see someone face to face even if it is online. We will continue to offer basic computer classes to address the digital divide. We have repurposed some of the computer class funding to buy screens so that when classes come back, we can offer better protection.

Update given by Nathalie for the admin side of things, this is included in the report.

Chair thanks to you both for your report.

Chair, are there any questions arising from that report or suggestions of activities that we could be more involved in?

- Targets – Two members present are involved with the build back greener group. It would be great if this could be something that we are involved with and work towards. It focuses on being locally sustainable in all parts of life, arts, energy, shops etc.

Member from that group could not access tonight's meeting. NM to ensure they are invited to the next meeting and included when the minutes are sent out.

5.AOB

Chair any other comments?

- Very impressive what has been able to be achieved.
- Laura from Buzz commented "absolutely want to echo what Bill said. it's almost like you didn't close. have had such brilliant contact with your local residents and centre users and managed to keep so many things going and do extra. every time I come and see Chris she is on the phone supporting someone! 🙌🙌🙌🙌"
- Chair notes that the forum has responded quickly during covid 19, from the encouragement of the what's app groups to the packs that have been sent out. All of the work that's been done has taken lots of time and effort. Even the Arts and crafts groups have continued. Many thanks to the workers.
- Other comments that were shared in the chat were "I agree Laura!" and "Thanks everybody for everything"
- There have been other centres that just closed, and you have kept going. Amazing job!

Devinda introduces himself and Ian they represent the Climate Action Group and the Community Well building group, originally the build back better group, but as the government used that name, they are now as above. We have a question for BMHC representative. They have found a tree surgeon who is happy to work with BMHC (Pat Walsh) we have his number to pass on, for the work on the trees. As part of the well building group we are looking to gain contacts with energy groups, and if there is a contact from the council within the energy department that would be great and if any of our councillors know of any contacts that would be great.

Angeliki Stogia requested they email her, and she would direct their email as appropriate.

Thanks again for everyone attending, these meetings are not just designed for groups to report back what is happening in the area but also for residents to attend also. Please encourage residents to come along to the meetings.

Park update

No group activities are happening on the park at the moment. No organised events are allowed in the park during lockdown, not sure if anything will happen this side of Christmas. Calendars are on sale now and if you do want one get in touch with Paul.

Q What's happening with the toilet, as this is preventing people from attending the park.

Not open during this current lockdown, there is a proposal from the café of how to open it but it is being assessed by the council at the moment.

Q Are we going to ask Ashraf Ali at this point to be an ex officio member?

I will accept the position if all it entails is, I turn up to meetings every so often, I have other commitments around south Manchester. However, if there is ever a specific project that I can bring my skills to I am happy to be contacted and will help where I can. As we come to the end of the meeting, I would like to say the forum has been a great organisation to be involved with over the past 8 years.