

Castlefield Forum
Minutes of a meeting held at
7.00pm Monday 21st January 2019
Brindley Room, Dukes 92, Castlefield

In Attendance:

Diana Aleson – resident
Jenny Arnold – resident
Bianca Barnett – resident
Ben Bell – resident
Lucy Benbow – resident
Lloyd Bennett – The Wharf
Ruth Billingham – MCC - Neighbourhood Manager
James Bowers – resident
Keith Bunt – resident
Jill Burdett – resident
Chief Inspector Cherie Buttle - GMP
David Carson – resident
Melanie Charles – Binary Bar
Liam Crichlow – MCC Regeneration
Anouk Curry – Minnow Films
Joan Davies – Ward Councillor & resident
John Dawson – resident
Alex Enos – resident
Stacey Ford – resident
Kevin Foskett – resident
Sarah Foskett – resident
James Fowler – resident
Brian Fulham - resident
Giles Grover – Acting Forum Secretary, Treasurer & resident
Steve Hall – resident
Jade Hanley – resident
PC Matt Hilton - GMP
Kimberley Homer – resident
Andy Hornsby – resident
Jessica Howarth – resident
Debbie Hubbard – Committee member & resident
Mark Hubbard – resident
B Hunter – BBCF & resident
Nicola Hurst – Castlefield Estates
Roy Jackson – Committee member & resident
William Jeavons – Ward Councillor & resident
Marcus Johns – Ward Councillor & resident
Neil Jones – resident
Isaac Jones – resident
Ross Kenyon – resident
Gordon Kermode – resident
Lucinda Kirby – resident

Karolina Kivera – resident
Mike Kumar – Binary Bar
Rebecca Lambert – resident
Vince Lee – resident
Serpil Lindsay – resident
Laura Linford – resident
Jo Logan – resident
Anna Longjaloux – resident
Helen Lusty – resident
Jose Martinez – resident
Tracy Mason – Binary Bar
Lisa Massey – Castlefield Estates
Natalie May – resident
Roisin McCann – resident
Calum McGowan – Vice Chair and resident
Ian McIlveen – resident
Natasha Metcalf – The Wharf
Carol Middleton – Forum Chair & resident
Andrew Middleton – resident
Anish Nambiar – Castlefield Beauty Bar
Dougie Orton-Wade – The Trilogy Apartments
Vincenzo Puca – resident
Louise Pullan – BBCF Chair & resident
Chris Rider – Manchester Road Runners
V Robinson – resident
William Robinson – Manchester Road Runners
Alan Rooney – resident
Jonathan Schofield – MCR Confidential
Natalie Shahlavi – resident
Jon Stopp – Canal & River Trust
M Sutton – resident
Rachel Teebay – resident
Laura Thomas - resident
Colin Torr – resident
Charlotte Tyree – resident
PC John Ward - GMP
PCSO Aimee-Kate Whittle – GMP
Dan Yuen – resident
Andrea Yule – resident

Apologies:

Alana Barlow
Tom Brothwell
Ian Christie
Karl Gamble
Rebecca Gamble
Sheralee Lockhart
Andrew Morland
Beth Rose-Hopper
Jeremy Shine

<p>1.</p>	<p>Welcome, Introductions and Apologies</p> <p>Carol Middleton welcomed everyone to the meeting and provided an overview of the Castlefield Forum and its work for those who were joining for the first time.</p> <p>Apologies were given as above.</p> <p>CM confirmed that, whilst the meeting had not been called specifically in response to the recent crime-related issues, given the importance of the subject a large part would be dedicated to the Police update section.</p>	
<p>2.</p>	<p>Minutes of last meeting 15th October 2018</p> <p>Agreed as an accurate record</p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p>Police update & Castlefield Crime Issues</p> <p>Chief Inspector Cherie Buttle introduced herself as the Chief Inspector for Manchester city centre and welcomed those attending citing the numbers present as reflective of strong community involvement.</p> <p>CB went on to provide an overview of recent crime reports in Castlefield and the neighbouring areas.</p> <p>CB updated those present on the reported incident of rape on Sunday 13th January. CB advised those in attendance that the incident had been identified as a “stranger rape” which was a very rare occurrence.</p> <p>CB noted that GMP understood the concern surrounding the incident which had clearly left the community feeling unsafe but, as the case was ongoing, she would not be able to share sensitive information on the incident.</p> <p>CB noted the procedure by which GMP had communicated with local Councillors to share as much information as possible and GMP’s press officers had been engaged to share the information with the community who had responded in numbers with useful information.</p> <p>CB reported that a male was arrested on 18th January and had appeared in court the day of the meeting.</p> <p>CB went on to confirm that, given the concerns which had been raised relating both to this specific incident and in general terms had been noted by GMP and visibility of police presence in the local area had been increased including the location of a mobile police station on Liverpool Road.</p> <p>CB advised that the matter was continuing to be treated as a high priority case and that there had been no further reports of such incidences.</p> <p>An attendee asked whether the incident related to the recent spate of muggings.</p> <p>CB responded that there was no information to suggest any connection.</p> <p>An attendee noted that credit should be given to GMP for the swift action taken and the arrest made; they went on to suggest that the “lower-level” crime incidents should be given similar priority.</p> <p>CB reassured those present that action had been taken since the increase in</p>	

reports in both the Deansgate and Hulme areas.

CB went on to discuss the incidents of personal robberies in the area and the spike since the end of November and the data she had indicating nine such incidents in one month in the Castlefield area.

CB noted that, when viewed in the context of Manchester city centre as a whole, Castlefield was viewed as a relatively safe area with a small percentage of all city-centre crime occurring in the area (3% based on the most recent figures available).

At the same time, CB noted that she and GMP understood that the spike in crimes would be keenly felt by the Castlefield community.

CB confirmed that personal robbery is a GMP priority and GMP's actions over the last six weeks reflected this. These actions included increasing patrols in the area and utilising Operation Valiant to focus on the vicinity (including allocating mounted and tactical police to the area) with two arrests made in relation to personal robberies in Castlefield in December and a commensurate reduction in the number of reported personal robberies.

CM noted that it should be clarified that many residents will view Castlefield as an area distinct from Hulme but that the Forum covered the Castlefield Conservation Area including part of Hulme.

CB confirmed that there are specific geographic responsibilities but that the police's work did not stop at these boundaries and joint operations were in place with neighbouring GMP divisions and Manchester City Council partners to include working closely to share information and not looking at incidents in isolation simply because they may have occurred in separate boundary areas.

An attendee asked whether a recent incident of a lady being mugged near Dukes on 16th January had been included in the figures which had been provided.

CB responded that she believed the statistics she had to-hand did not include this incident as they were compiled up to an earlier date than 16th.

An attendee noted that she had lived on Ellesmere Street and had joined the WhatsApp chat where she had seen a number of pictures of what she believed to be the three youths causing the recent incidents and asked why these images were not being fully investigated by GMP.

CB advised that she appreciated the reporting and sharing of information informally between the community but requested that all such photos be shared with GMP as there may be cases where reports appear via social media channels but did not appear to be reported to GMP directly.

CB advised that reporting such incidents could be through 999 if there was an immediate danger or the 101 telephone number or GMP's live-chat. CB further advised that those wishing to report could do so via the email address available on GMP's website (citycentre@gmp.police.uk)

Giles Grover noted his understanding that the photos being referred to related to incidents occurring in February 2017 and it was not certain that these were directly related to the recent incidents. GG further noted that, whilst he in no way disputed or denied people's individual feelings given the recent reported increases in crime and that there was a role for social media and WhatsApp to play when sharing information between residents, there may be a danger that such incidents are potentially amplified when being viewed via a number of distinct channels.

An attendee noted concern at the recent robbery at McColls where a member of staff was assaulted. There was CCTV available and a witness but, over eight days after the incident, nobody from the police had attended. CB apologised for the lack of attendance and advised that she would look into the specifics of the case.

An attendee asked whether the increased presence in the Castlefield vicinity was at any specific times. CB responded that presence had been increased in the area since December and this was both uniformed and plain-clothed police at differing times.

Louise Pullan noted her role in setting up the Britannia Basin Community Forum which had previously and continued to engage with developers in and around Ellesmere Street, one of the successes of which was developers agreeing to fund the cost for a private security firm patrolling Ellesmere Street during the night hours.

PC John Ward, Hulme Neighbourhood officer, advised that there had been five personal robberies in Hulme in January and reminded those present to ensure all information such as photos etc. was provided to the local officers.

An attendee asked whether GMP considered that the Castlefield area was being targeted by youths committing personal robberies. CB responded that there was no intelligence to confirm that this was the case but it was understood that the statistics may not reflect how people personally feel.

The attendee then asked if there was any advice that could be given to a single woman and CB responded that crime prevention advice was available and this was in no way “victim-blaming” or “scaremongering” and the over-arching message was that people should be as aware of their personal safety as possible.

An attendee asked if there were any deterrents in place and how the recent increase in reported cases of crime could be reduced. MCC Neighbourhood Manager Ruth Billingham noted that her team was located in nearby offices at the Council as GMP and met weekly to discuss these issues. RB further advised that there were clearly areas where lighting was a huge problem and work was ongoing to resolve these instances on both public and private land.

Councillor William Jeavons also responded to advise that he could speak on behalf of Deansgate Councillors who all lived in the area and completely understood the community’s feelings about crime. WJ requested those present to please contact him/Joan Davies/Marcus Johns if they believe there are issues with lighting in the Deansgate/Castlefield area.

WJ understood that areas needed improving as quickly as possible but that the problem may lie with partners and the inhibitor may be the owner of the private land.

WJ informed attendees that there was a map at the rear of the room where the meeting was taking place and residents were welcome to review the map and use the available stickers to **identify areas where there are concerns with lighting which could then be taken away by the Councillors with the aim of applying as much pressure as possible to resolve expeditiously.**

RB noted that, as Neighbourhood Manager, she would be in a position to drive the required action when it comes to areas under the Council’s responsibility such as street lamps and additional lighting was being installed on Liverpool

JD/MJ/
WJ

Road. RB further advised that she/Councillors hoped to see movement in the short term with regard to lighting on the Towpath and the areas along the canals were also being surveyed particularly in light of recent Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents report.

LP confirmed that there had been some progress in resolving street lighting issues in the Ellesmere Street area and that this was an ongoing process.

An attendee advised of the recent crime incident she had suffered on 14th January and her surprise that no police had attended to take evidence or a statement. In the intervening period, she had emailed PC Matt Hilton and he did eventually attend.

An attendee asked GMP to commit to joining the Castlefield WhatsApp Chat group for real-time feedback.

CB responded to the two above comments by noting that officers were being trained in social media and the need to improve two-way communication in the 21st century was understood.

CB went on to note the reduction in police resource and advised that GMP police numbers were at the same level as the 1970s and this was not an excuse but context around the fact that a decision has to be made at the triage point on the risk and likely harm when allocating available resource to reported crimes. GMP did scan these incidents and look for opportunities to bring offenders to justice but difficult conversations had to be had in terms of which crimes can be investigated and which cannot. CB advised that, in the last twelve months, personal robberies in the city centre (including Piccadilly) had been prioritised with 150 offenders arrested and 12 Criminal Behaviour Orders issued.

CB noted that, in specific terms of GMP joining WhatsApp groups, that, whilst feedback in as speedy a time as possible would be helpful, the proposed solution may not be effective. CB reminded those present that all crimes reported were recorded even if not investigated and this intelligence was used in targeting culprits and allocating resource.

GG noted that he understood the reason for the suggestion but queried the practicality around implementing this given his experience of social media channels and group WhatsApp chats.

GG agreed that links and communication between police and residents should be strengthened and this could potentially be achieved in a number of different ways, e.g. by an operation similar to Neighbourhood Watch with individuals in specific areas working together as the conduit between the police and residents to ensure two-way feedback of issues and areas of concern.

Action: GG and LP to discuss further when next meeting Justin Munding, the Council's Community Safety Officer in February.

GG/LP

Roy Jackson noted that Castlefield Forum had been working to progress the issues with the canal lighting but that he believed the delay was due to a lack of action on the part of Peel Holdings and that dialogue between Manchester City Council and Peel Holdings was progressing. RJ further noted the forthcoming Spirit of Place summit meeting being arranged by the Forum in conjunction with Manchester Council to invite key stakeholders to discuss ongoing issues such as the above.

An attendee noted that statistics on the number of incidents were useful but that the information on outcomes should be shared.

CB noted that this information was recorded.

	<p>GG advised that such statistics were available on the police.uk website.</p> <p>An attendee asked for information regarding incidents at Cornbrook tram stop as there had been a further incident there today. CB noted that Cornbrook appeared to be a problem area and she would look into taking further action on this point. (GG later noted with this attendee that Cornbrook was under the jurisdiction of Trafford GMP & Local Authority however, as CB noted, cross-border collaboration does take place.</p> <p>An attendee noted that the general mood of a number of residents was that the personal robberies were being committed by a specific group of boys and the community felt that these children could not be prosecuted. CB responded that youths can be given custodial sentences and that, whilst the age is taken into account, significant sentences can still be handed out in court and there were also other ways to deal with such offenders including Community Behaviour Orders which could ban offenders from certain areas or associating with other offenders.</p> <p>Councillor Joan Davies noted her experience in the area over the last thirteen years and that, whilst her recent lifestyle may not be wholly commensurate, she could empathise with people in the current situation. JD clarified that the live-chat functionality had been a relatively recent enhancement to the GMP crime-reporting service and was a consequence of feedback on the time it can take for calls to 101 to be answered.</p>	
<p>At this juncture, given the above session had continued for 65 minutes and the number of questions had abated, it was agreed to pause the session for a brief interval to give attendees the opportunity to liaise with the police and review the map at the rear of the room to note areas where lack of lighting was an issue.</p> <p>Following this, the ordinary business of the Forum continued.</p>		
<p>4.</p>	<p>Update on Application to the Charity Commission to become a Charitable Incorporated Association</p> <p>CM provided an update on Castlefield Forum's application to become a Charitable Incorporated Association – the update received from the Charity Commission on 14th January was that there was a very high demand for the registration service but that the Commission was now working on applications which were initially assessed in June 2018 which was the time the Forum submitted its application.</p>	

<p>5.</p>	<p>Action Groups</p> <p>Debbie Hubbard updated on <u>Events, Marketing, Media & Signage</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Christmas get-together was held on December 10th for which the Forum wished to thank Forever Manchester for funding. Thanks were also given to Bar Eight for hosting and providing live music and food. The attendance was lower than expected but it was understood that it was held during the busy pre-Christmas build-up; DH asked those present to let her know if this may have been due to a lack of awareness of the event as this would assist promotion of the next such event. • Website – The website has been down whilst issues with access to the domain name were being resolved. DH is working with Forum member Vince Lee to develop the new website and asked members to get in touch if they wished to be involved in putting content for the site together. • DH advised that the Forum had funding for five new signs to be installed across the Castlefield area and content was being created to adorn these signs. DH asked members to contact her if they wished to help, particularly those who had an interest in researching Castlefield’s history. <p>Calum McGowan updated on the <u>Spirit of Place</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CMcG provided an overview of the Spirit of Place Group which is working with the National Trust to establish what makes Castlefield distinctive and cherished to the people who live, work and visit the area. • CMcG advised that the Group had recently recruited new members and was now working with MCC’s Strategic Development Director to co-ordinate invitations to key stakeholders to the Summit on 5th April. <p>CM relayed the update provided by Beth Rose-Hopper on <u>Gardening & Environment</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendees were reminded of the garden tidy-up session arranged for Saturday 2nd February and those members with an interest in gardening were invited to join, whether for the full session or even half an hour. • The ongoing work, being done in conjunction with the Canal River Trust, was noted and Jon Stopp would discuss later on in the meeting. • The award of Level 5 – Outstanding received for Castlefield at the annual North West In Bloom Ceremony was highlighted and thanks were given to those who had contributed their time and effort, with particular reference to the community work which was clearly in evidence at these gardening sessions. <p>CM updated on the <u>Roman Gardens (between the Oxnohle and White Lion)</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The historically developed Roman Gardens Masterplan was noted with CM advising that the Group was working incrementally towards the objectives in the plan. • Funding to light up the North Gate of the Roman Gardens and resurface the pathway through the Gardens had been secured and were due to be scheduled in the Spring. <p>GG updated on <u>Fundraising</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GG provided a brief overview of the recently created Fundraising Group which had been formed in line with the Forum’s application to become a Charitable Incorporated Association. • GG advised that the Forum had been, and continued to be, reliant on 	<p>ALL/DH</p> <p>ALL/DH</p> <p>ALL/DH</p>
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	<p>applications to the Council for funding and contributions (both financial and non-financial) from Forum members. Whilst this was not necessarily expected to reduce, the focus of the Group was to work towards Castlefield Forum becoming a sustainable and self-funded organisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GG asked those present to contact him if they had an interest in fund-raising activities. 	ALL/GG
6.	<p>Pioneer Quay</p> <p>Jon Stopp of the Canal & River Trust and Friends of the Rochdale 9 (FOR9) provided an overview and update on ongoing work at Pioneer Quay. JS noted the historical issues with rough sleepers and needles in the area and the work being done in conjunction with Transport for Greater Manchester (who own the land) to ameliorate such issues and that this was being assisted by Councillor Jeavons.</p> <p>JS advised that, whilst there are constraints, the process is ongoing and interested stakeholders such as TfGM are continuing to be engaged. JS noted that there had been a great deal of canal activity including refurbishment of the locks and that there was an Open Day on 9th/10th February with the aim of maintaining this momentum.</p>	
7.	<p>Ward Councillor reports</p> <p>Councillor Marcus Johns provided an update on behalf of the three Deansgate Councillors present.</p> <p>MJ advised those present that an AirBnB “taskforce” had recently been created to assess the growth of AirBnB in the city centre and that there appeared to be emerging, enforcement power on this issue.</p> <p>MJ noted that a lease agreement on the planned new school in the area was in the process of being delivered and there was a meeting with Council staff to discuss delivery. The Elizabeth Tower planning application (forming part of the Great Jackson Street development) had committed to provide the shell of a school with the intention to have fifteen pupils per year and the next step was to find a suitable provider.</p> <p>MJ also noted the scrapping of the planned 54-storey skyscraper at the St John’s development, on Quay Street, which had been pulled due to issues with the funding of the residential element of the scheme and plans were being revisited.</p> <p>Councillor Joan Davies noted the positive action by developers to install a new temporary crossing on Quay Street near the Marks & Spencer Spinningfields store.</p> <p>JD further noted a meeting with regard to the scaffolding around the Air and Space Hall to assess the impact on the St John’s area.</p> <p>JD further noted that there had been an increase in reports of graffiti and this was a focus of the Councillors as well as the surfeit of rubbish in the canals including at Giants Basin (Potato Wharf) where barrels had been removed from the water.</p> <p>JD also noted the recent fire at the site of the Commercial Hotel. JD confirmed that the developers did not yet own the building so the Council had boarded up the premises. JD noted that there had been a fire in the same building only a year ago and that, on this occasion, it was, thankfully, not serious.</p>	

	<p>RJ asked what commitments were in place for developers to add facilities to the area during the planning permission process. MJ noted that certain developers do commit to deliver key items, such as the aforementioned school, and that he was also aware of plans for a medical centre on First Street.</p> <p>Liam Crichlow, MCC City Centre Regeneration Officer, noted the ongoing discussions with Renaker with the aim of implementing a similar model and work was being done to understand what is in the framework and to map future population growth against services required. MCC had given a firm commitment for space and work was ongoing with NHS colleagues to deliver a medical centre in liaison with Renaker. JD noted the changes in population demographics over time and LC agreed noting the aim of the Regeneration team was to assess the utility of existing facilities when seen through the prism of ongoing demographic change.</p>	
8.	<p>AOB</p> <p>Forum member Vince Lee queried whether there were any further planning applications in the area. CM responded that Ian Christie, in his recent role as Forum Secretary, was monitoring applications and was usually provided with this information. CM confirmed that such applications would continue to be sent to those on the Forum’s database subject to further discussions with the Council on the preferred process to do so. MJ advised that the Deansgate Councillors were not aware of any new planning applications specifically in Castlefield but there was one in Oxford Road which would be opposed. Liam Crichlow noted the work being done nearby to refresh the framework for the Great Northern warehouse where the owner wished to deliver commercial workspace in the listed structure and consultation on these plans to deliver open-plan office space would end in the last week of February. These plans were available on the Council’s website but LC would send to CM to distribute.</p> <p>RJ asked if there had been any update on the “Flintoff Tower” planning application which had previously been rejected. MJ advised that the application was in the Hulme ward and any further information would be available via the usual online channels.</p> <p>GG noted the consultation currently being undertaken by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, where respondents would have the opportunity to feed directly back on proposals to increase council tax to pay for improved police services in 2019/20. WJ noted that 80% of GMP funding was provided by the Government and 20% from Manchester Council and that the consultation closed on 27th January. GG confirmed that he would post the direct link to the consultation on the Forum’s Facebook group https://www.gmconsult.org/police-and-crime-team/police-funding-2019/?fbclid=IwAR22sOMw29MPRaWZofZ9MGZGBpSNTIgh-sJ3Ki9QHig8LY1NgVLD0YM5qP4)</p> <p>CMcG noted that it was pleasing to see the increase in attendance at the meeting; whilst the reasons for this were understood given the more “specialised” nature of this meeting, those who had joined this meeting were kindly requested to maintain attendance at the next quarterly meeting due in April.</p>	<p>CM</p> <p>LC/CM</p> <p>GG/ALL</p>

	<p>A member of the audience queried the apparent increase in graffiti in certain local areas and the delay taken to remedy these. MJ noted that there was a reporting system in place for such matters but he was aware that the responsiveness when using that channel could be improved.</p> <p>RJ noted that the Forum Committee was always looking for additional members to get involved in Forum activities if they had an interest to do so. CMcG confirmed that members may invest as much time as they wish to and this could be via any of the previously discussed Action Groups.</p> <p>DH noted the Forum's new email address: info@ourcastlefield.co.uk</p> <p>JD noted that, due to the local elections in May, the next Castlefield Forum meeting may be affected due to Council Officers being unable to attend due to "Purdah". JD went on to give her heartfelt thanks to the Castlefield Forum Committee for its ongoing work in the area with particular focus on positive aspects to counter recent negative sentiment in the local and wider area due to the crime issues. JD noted the Forum was a "proper democratic organisation" which clearly spoke on behalf of residents.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>Next meetings</p> <p>The date of the next Forum meeting was agreed as 29th April. CM noted that she would establish whether Purdah would affect and confirm this date in due course.</p>	<p>CM</p>