

Minutes of the Mildmay Ward Partnership Meeting Via Zoom on 23 March 2022

Attendees

Cllr Jenny Kay (Chair)

Charlotte Glazier (CG), LBI, Islington Greener Together (presentation, questions and answers)

Tom Dobson (TD), Public Works Architect (presentation, questions and answers)

PC Goodall, Mildmay Safer Neighbourhood Team Islington

Valentina Sbrana, LBI, Project Manager for Mildmay Library Upgrade

Cllr Santiago Bell-Bradford

Cllr Angelo Weekes

Timothy Evans, LBI (minutes)

+ 3 members of the public

1. Introduction and Welcome by Cllr Kay


Cllr Kay: This meeting is following on from a successful open day with members of the public regarding the library upgrade. This meeting will also cover local issues including the Islington Greener together project and a chance to talk with the Safer Neighbourhoods team representative, PC Goodall.

2. Islington Greener Together with Charlotte Glazier

CG: Islington Greener Together was launched on 2nd March, by Cllr Champion, at Highbury Quadrant community garden. This garden was established during lockdown and a good example of what other places in Islington could aspire to become. Islington Greener Together programme enables residents, community groups and businesses to submit ideas for greening proposals within their neighbourhoods, such as parklets, vegetable beds, rain gardens etc. The aim of which is to bring local Businesses and Community Groups together to enhance the biodiversity of the borough and provide new opportunities for gardening and getting involved. The deadline for applications is the 29th of April 2022.

Question. Who are you expecting to apply?

Answer. Residents, community groups and businesses.



Question. What is the budget per project?

Answer. The council has established an overall grant of £300,000 and is expecting to fund at least 50 projects. We will also consider match funding, crowd funding and additional funding opportunities.

Question. Have you had any applications from Mildmay?

Answer. Currently the information on which ward the applications are for have not been made available, but I can confirm that 14 applications have been made so far.

Question. Can you use existing green spaces which could be in need of improvement?

Answer. Yes you can. All ideas are welcome. Grey spaces (e.g spaces between building, underutilised, or on wide areas of highway footways) which are not already green are of particular interest, so that we can increase the overall amount of greening.

Question. Would any age group be able to volunteer to assist with the greening of the local area?

Answer. We welcome anyone who is interested in volunteering to get in touch greenertogether@islington.gov.uk. We are seeking to build capacity specifically for this purpose, through our Champions programme, which we are currently developing. Any general queries in relation to this programme, should also be sent to this email address.

3. Mildmay Police Safer Neighbourhood Team Islington – PC Goodhall

Cllr Kay mentioned that the mailing list for the police panels had gone wrong and that police have committed to fixing this issue.

PC Goodall gave a commitment to try and align WP and Police Panel meetings in the future if schedules permit it (to increase engagement).

It was agreed that the minutes from the recent ward panel meeting would be circulated with the minutes as there were no questions from members of the public for the SNTI.

4. Mildmay Library Improvement Presentation by Tom Dobson

TD: Islington is one of the few local councils currently investing in Library infrastructure, Public Works has also been involved with 2 other libraries in the west and south of the borough. Ideally after the works to Mildmay Library have taken place there will be an increase of foot traffic and an enhanced use of the space.

We are in the early stages currently trying to develop a brief for the improvements. In order to do this we need to get feedback from the public and staff on what they would like to see as a result of the project and looking for as much public input as possible. The later stages will be coming up with a design and then costing/ setting a schedule for the project.

The ground floor of the library has a large floor space but this is not well laid out and is under used.

The first floor is currently being used as office space but ideally this would become more of a local hub for council services. For example support with benefit applications, housing support. This will hopefully bring a wider range of services to residents.

Member of the Public and former Islington Librarian: Libraries have always had a range of services beyond just providing books, Library act as an information hub and can support communities by sign posting other council services. If only the local community knew of the information and support already available in Libraries they would be more highly regarded and better used. Part of the improvements to Mildmay Library should include a publicity campaign to enhance the public's understanding of this resource.

Question. Whom will be providing the new services at Mildmay Library?

Answer. Cllr Kay: this will be a mixture of council employees, family support officers, Islington Income Maximisation Team. Hopefully there will also be a big role in providing new services from the voluntary sector.

TD: Outside we are looking to improve the landscaping, provide a seating area, new bins and some digital notice boards. Outside of our remit but another thing that is required would be a new and improved website.

Currently at the front of the Library there is an open undercroft area which attracts fly tipping we would hope to enclose this area and turn this into an extended foyer.

In the area being used for adult and children's books there is a potential for an activity/ multiple purpose space. This would be ideal area for talks, lectures or performances/ life drawing classes.

Currently the toilets are upstairs and are only accessible with a code from the librarian which limits the time that visitors are likely to use the space. We intend to establish 2 accessible toilets downstairs on the ground floor.

There is also a small unused outside space at the rear of the building which has to the potential to become a community garden.

A need has been identified for more bookable rooms we intend this to be on the ground floor.

Question. Would we consider changing the name of the Library in order to highlight its broader use in Tower Hamlets they call their Libraries 'Idea Centres'?

Answer. Cllr Kay: Our feedback from residents is that there is some resistance to changing the names of Libraries due to the fact that Library closures have been happening in so many local authorities and this can worry residents. Islington is unique amongst local authorities in that it has committed to not close any libraries.

Comment from Disability Action In Islington Forum: As representative of a wider panel of disabled people can I ask if the Architect meet with us at one of our bi-monthly meeting to discuss the plans of the upgrade works.

TD: Would gladly accept further input from the panel.

Question. Will there be a lift to the first floor?

Answer. TD: Yes there will be a lift additionally we intend to make the first floor more open plan in order to reduce barriers to moving around this space.

Anyone wishing to submit feedback can do so via the [council website](#).

5. AOB

No AOB. Councillors are considering holding the next Ward Partnership meeting in the Summer.