

Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum

Trustee meeting minutes

Date and time of the meeting	Wednesday 16th September 2026 – 6-7.45 pm
Location	online
Attending	Ilaria Esposito (IE) (Coordinator), Sandra White (SW), Ebrahim Piperdy (EP) (Treasurer), Romael Ferguson (RF), , Carol Morris (CM)
Guests	
Apologies	Duane Pearson (DP)Andrea Burris (AB) Julieta Galarza (JG),
Absent	Attendance note: The final attendance list should be checked against the meeting invitation. Sonya may have joined during the meeting, but this could not be confirmed from the recording.

Time	Agenda Item	Discussions, Decisions & Integrated Notes	Document/s	Lead	Actions

10 min	1. Welcome, Introductions, Minutes & Conflicts	* Minutes Approved: Minutes from the previous session were formally agreed and approved. The meeting opened with an update on trustee membership. Andrea's resignation had been received. A further trustee had been asked to step down because work and performance commitments made it difficult for them to attend regularly and contribute to the Forum's work. It was agreed that the vacancies would allow the Forum to recruit trustees with the time, availability, and commitment needed to participate actively. Declarations of interest Ilaria confirmed that declaration-of-interest forms had been sent to Romel, Sonia and Carol. These forms are required to record trustees' employment, roles in other organisations, involvement with charities, political affiliations, and any other interests that could create an actual or perceived conflict. The declarations will allow the Forum to manage conflicts transparently. Where a decision affects a trustee's other interests, that trustee may be asked not to participate in the relevant discussion or decision. Trustees were asked to complete and return their forms as soon as possible. Ilaria offered to resend the document if anyone could not locate it.	W 13...	Sandra	Romel, Sonia and Carol to complete and return their declaration-of-interest forms. Ilaria to resend the form where required. The Forum to maintain an up-to-date register of trustee interests.
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45 min	2. Organisational Status & Development	Organisational strategy and trustee portfolios The trustees discussed the distinction between: 1. The Neighbourhood Plan, which sets out the Forum's long-term aspirations and policies for improving the area; and 2. The Forum's organisational strategy, which will cover governance, finance, staffing, volunteers, trustee recruitment, operational arrangements and the organisation's future development. Ilaria and Sandra had begun work on the organisational strategy. Ilaria will focus particularly on completing the strategy and recruiting new trustees. Once a draft is ready, the Forum intends to hold a trustee away day between October and November 2026. The purpose will be to: • Review and finalise the strategy; • Give trustees ownership of the final document; • Agree trustee portfolios and responsibilities; • Discuss fundraising and financial sustainability; • Clarify the strategic rather than purely operational role of trustees; and • Strengthen collective working and accountability. Sandra stressed that, although trustees are responsible primarily for governance and strategic oversight, the Forum is a small organisation. Trustees will therefore sometimes need to contribute practical work, particularly when developing strategy and determining the organisation's future direction. Trustees were encouraged to act strategically: identifying how the Forum can influence the council, police and other institutions, rather than simply attending public meetings or reacting to individual incidents. Decisions		Sandra / All	Actions Ilaria and Sandra to continue preparing the organisational strategy. Ilaria to consult trustees about the date, venue and format of the away day. Each trustee to consider the portfolio areas in which they would like to lead or contribute..
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		• A trustee strategy away day will be organised for October or November 2026. • Trustee portfolios will be confirmed through the strategy process. • Fundraising will be a substantive item at the away day.			

35 min	4. Strategic Developments	Chair succession It was noted that Sandra expects to complete her six-year term with the Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum in May 2027. Trustees agreed that succession planning is therefore increasingly important. The Forum needs to consider who might become the next Chair and how leadership responsibilities will be transferred. Action: Chair succession and leadership development to be included in the organisational strategy and trustee away-day discussions. Staffing and volunteers Ilaria provided an overview of the Forum's current staffing and volunteer arrangements: • Ilaria works four days per week. • Marco works on cultural, historical and environmental heritage projects on a project basis and has also volunteered with the Forum. • Kushima works mainly with the Working in Neighbourhoods team and the community-power work that preceded Pride in Place. • The planning team and the majority of people supporting Forum projects are volunteers. • Member organisations contribute to different projects according to their interests and expertise. The Forum's strength lies in its broad community membership. Different organisations and residents can participate in different strands of work, including		Sandra / Ilaria	Ilaria to follow up with prospective trustee candidates. Ilaria to arrange an introductory call with the Youth Parliament representative when their interest is confirmed, involving Romel where possible. The Forum to follow up with the College of North West London about suitable volunteering opportunities. Trustees to encourage suitable local candidates to apply. Ilaria to send Romel the youth-related sections of the draft revised Neighbourhood Plan for review. Romel to provide comments from a young person's and
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	planning, ageing well, public toilets, active travel, heritage and community activity. Trustees agreed that widening membership and volunteer involvement remains important because the Forum’s work must be led by and rooted in the community. Trustee and volunteer recruitment Potential trustee candidates discussed included: • Millie, a former councillor who had previously expressed interest but had recently started a new job; • Susan Grace, formerly an assistant headteacher at Newman Catholic College and an active community participant; • A young Brent resident involved in the UK Youth Parliament. Trustees welcomed the possibility of recruiting a younger trustee. Romel expressed support for meeting the Youth Parliament representative so that the prospective trustee would know that other younger people were involved in the Forum. The College of North West London had also contacted the Forum about volunteering opportunities. These might not initially be trustee positions, but volunteers could support the Forum’s projects and potentially progress to positions of greater responsibility. Romel’s proposed portfolio Romel identified two areas in which he would like to contribute:			practitioner’s perspective. Romel, Marco and partners to continue developing the relevant funding application. The Forum to map member organisations and local opportunities to which young people can be referred.
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		1. Community safety and young people, including prevention, mentoring and positive opportunities for young people at all levels of risk; and 2. Youth climate action, using music, film, art and other creative media to involve more young people in climate awareness and action. Romel is already working with Marco and his father on a funding application related to this work. Decisions • Community safety and young people will form a key part of Romel's trustee portfolio. • Youth climate action and creative engagement will also be included in his portfolio. • The Forum will explore a partnership and signposting model rather than trying to deliver every type of youth activity itself. • Relevant youth priorities should be reflected in the revised Neighbourhood Plan.			
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20 min	3. Finance & Core Funding	Finance report Ibrahim reported that the Forum held approximately £75,000 in the bank. This represented a significant increase from the previous year, when the balance had been approximately £20,000–£30,000. Recent expenditure had mainly related to: • The Roy Mehta exhibition; • 1000years of Harlesden • Community event in the park • General organisational expenses. The Forum was considered to be in a healthy financial position and preparing for its charity accounts examination. There was some uncertainty during the meeting about which funders had made the most recent payments. The Young Brent Foundation was mentioned, but the trustees agreed that the bank statement should be checked rather than relying on recollection. Fundraising strategy Trustees agreed that the current healthy balance should not reduce the urgency of fundraising. The Forum must continue developing its future income and should always be preparing the next funding application. The proposed fundraising strategy should cover a period of approximately three to five years. It should identify: • The Forum's priority themes; • Suitable charitable, public and corporate funders; • Opportunities for donations and corporate volunteering; • The balance between restricted and unrestricted income;	Finance Status Reports	Ebrahim / Sandra	* Rewrite National Lottery grant application. Ibrahim to send Ilaria and Sandra an up-to-date bank statement or transaction report so that recent funding receipts can be identified and any outstanding payments followed up. Sandra to continue leading the development of the fundraising strategy with support from other trustees. Trustees to identify suitable funders, corporate partners and unrestricted-income opportunities. The Forum to review the unsuccessful National Lottery
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	• The conditions attached to grants; • The resources needed to deliver funded work; and • How the Forum can protect its independence and avoid funders exerting inappropriate influence. Priority themes likely to attract support include climate action, young people, community safety, addiction and gambling harms, drugs, heritage, community development and improvements to the local environment. Sandra reported that an earlier National Lottery application, prepared with paid external support, had been unsuccessful. She suggested revising and resubmitting the proposal. The Forum now has stronger evidence to add, particularly from its work as a community convener. Sandra had also registered with a service that connects charities with corporate support, including small grants and employee volunteering. Current and recent applications included: • An Arts Council application relating to heritage, exhibitions, photography and other media; • A small application for an exhibition connected with the “1,000 Years of Harlesden” work; and • A developing application involving Romel, Marco and Art for Dimension, using art, intergenerational learning and storytelling to connect young people with other members of the community. Decisions • The Forum will develop a three-to-five-year fundraising strategy. • Fundraising will be a core topic at the trustee away day. • Trustees should contribute ideas and contacts rather than leaving fundraising solely to staff or the Chair. • The earlier National Lottery application should be reviewed and strengthened for possible resubmission.			application and incorporate evidence from its community-convening work. Progress on current funding applications to be reported at the next meeting.
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25 min	5. Events, Partnerships, and Projects	Community safety and work with young people Trustees discussed the recent fatal stabbing at Brent Civic Centre and the wider issue of violence involving young people. Condolences were expressed to the victim's family and friends. There was concern that conventional public meetings often repeat familiar statements from councillors, police and residents without producing a clear programme of action. Trustees agreed that the Forum should help move the discussion towards practical, evidence-based and collaborative interventions. Questions were raised about safeguarding arrangements at Brent Civic Centre, including: • Whether appropriate measures were in place; • Whether security and other staff were properly trained; • How the incident was able to take place inside the building; and • What lessons Brent Council should learn around contextual safeguarding The discussion also addressed the wider causes of youth violence, including trauma, lack of opportunity, harmful influences, poverty, social isolation and the absence of positive activities or trusted role models. Trustees agreed that intervention should start before young people become involved in violence or the criminal justice system. Work should include children and young people generally, rather than focusing only on those already considered at risk. Romel described previous music-video workshops delivered with the Safer Communities team. The programme had engaged young people positively but ended when ongoing support and funding were no longer available. He proposed developing similar opportunities through music, film, photography and other creative activities.	Partnership Briefings	Sandra / Romael	* Drive the Wellbeing Strategy. * Lead Cultural Strategy and set Brent Smart / Triangle planning for Sept/Oct. * Leverage corporate networks for funding/support. Ilaria to contact Romel the following day to confirm his speaking role and contribution. Romel to prepare a short contribution on mentoring, youth engagement and positive activities. Trustees to confirm their attendance and likely arrival/departure times. Volunteers and trustees to assist with setup from
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	It was recognised that not every young person will be interested in arts or sport. The Forum should therefore act as a connector and signposting body, linking young people with a broad range of opportunities, including: • Creative arts and media; • Sport and physical activity; • Employment and enterprise; • Finance and accountancy; • Practical environmental work; • Mentoring and personal development; and • Activities delivered by other community organisations. Trustees noted that mentoring could help identify a young person's interests and direct them towards the right organisation or programme. The Forum's network of member organisations is a major asset in providing this breadth of opportunities. The Pride in Place programme may offer funding for suitable interventions. Sandra stressed that to be approved in PiP, proposed projects must be supported by evidence and demonstrate that they are likely to make a measurable difference. Saturday community-safety event The trustees discussed the community event scheduled for Saturday, 19 September 2026, from 1:00pm to 5:00pm, with setup beginning at approximately 12:15pm. Community safety had been selected as the main theme following earlier discussions with residents. The event was intended to be proactive and solution-focused rather than simply another opportunity to repeat concerns. The proposed programme included: • An introduction to Pride in Place; • Examples of work already being carried out by local organisations;			approximately 12:15pm. Event facilitators to capture practical ideas from residents for consideration by Pride in Place and partner organisations.
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	• Contributions on support for vulnerable residents; • Women's and girls' safety; • Community and neighbourhood policing; • Health or integrated-neighbourhood work, subject to availability; • Youth violence prevention and positive youth engagement; and • Facilitated resident discussion leading to practical suggestions. Possible contributors included B3, Sport at the Heart, Sasha, Leroy from the Safer Neighbourhood Team, and representatives from VIA or the integrated neighbourhood team, subject to confirmation. Residents would be encouraged to identify practical ideas after hearing what was already being delivered locally. These ideas could then be taken forward through Sandra, Georgia, Pride in Place and the neighbourhood team. Romel was invited to give a short contribution of approximately five minutes about youth engagement, mentoring, music and creative opportunities. His practical experience and connection with young people were considered especially relevant. He also offered to help facilitate discussions at the tables. Trustees agreed that it was important to publicise positive local work. Residents often hear about failures and negative incidents but may not know what community organisations are already doing. Trustees were strongly encouraged to attend, even if they could only remain for part of the event. Their visibility would demonstrate collective leadership, allow residents to recognise them and help trustees build local relationships and community intelligence. Indicative trustee attendance • Romel confirmed that he could attend and expected to arrive in time to assist before the event. • Ibrahim expected to attend from around 1:00pm, although he might not be able to stay for the full event.				Ilaria to keep trustees updated on the bowling green, heritage work
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- Carol hoped to attend but needed to confirm because of family commitments.
- Sonya expected to come - confirmed by whatsapp

Other project and partnership updates

Brent Active Together

The Forum continues to participate in Brent Active Together, which aims to increase physical activity and activate local spaces. A partnership officer was due to be interviewed, which should reduce the amount of coordination currently being carried out voluntarily by partner organisations.

Bowling green and activation of local spaces

Progress had been made on plans relating to the bowling green. Agreement had been reached on:

- A communications plan;
- Terms of reference; and
- Recognition by the Parks Department of the work undertaken by the consortium over the previous six years.

Building work was expected to begin soon. Further opportunities for events and activity would be shared as the growing and events areas developed.

Heritage projects

Existing heritage projects begun during the previous year were nearing completion. The Forum had applied for further funding to continue and extend this work.

and opportunities for trustee involvement.

	6. Any Other Business (AOB) & Next Steps	Pride in Place update Sandra provided an update in her capacity as Pride in Place Chair. She informed the community that she will step down from her role in HNF as previously planned in April 2027. The proposed structure consists of: • One main board of up to 15 members; and • A number of advisory panels feeding recommendations into the board. The advisory panels will identify needs, projects, organisations and potential uses of funding. The main board will carry out due diligence and make final funding decisions. Sandra outlined three overarching outcomes: 9.1 A healed Harlesden This strand will address: • Mental health and wellbeing; • Trauma-informed work; • Support for families affected by trauma; • Community cohesion; and • Stronger relationships between Harlesden’s different communities. 9.2 A wealthier Harlesden This strand will focus on: • Employment; • Job creation; • Business development; • Skills and opportunity; and			Confirm date, time, and location for the next Trustee and Forum meeting.
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- Helping residents and local businesses build income and wealth.

9.3 A safe, clean and attractive Harlesden

This strand will include:

- Community safety;
- Street and public-realm improvements;
- Better-looking shopfronts and buildings;
- Murals and other improvements;
- Cleaner streets and spaces; and
- The wider beautification of Harlesden.

It was emphasised that Pride in Place funding must not be used simply to replace services that Brent Council is already responsible for providing. A clear distinction will be needed between the council's statutory or funded responsibilities and additional community-led activity.

More than 40 applications had reportedly been received from people interested in participating. Rather than relying solely on formal interviews, applicants would be invited to join the board or an advisory panel aligned with their interests. This was intended to secure broad representation and allow different communities and areas of expertise to be heard.

Potential panels may cover subjects such as:

- Young people's voices and leadership;
- Public realm;
- Community safety;
- Culture;
- Health and wellbeing;
- Employment and wealth creation; and
- Other themes emerging from community consultation.

		Once the board and panels have been formed, their membership will be published. The structure must then be reported to the relevant government department for approval before the next tranche of funding is released. The Pride in Place team will also identify “quick wins” so residents can see early evidence of investment. Proposals will need more than a general idea: applicants should consider cost, delivery responsibility, expected results and practical feasibility. Funding-application process Romel asked how residents and organisations would apply for Pride in Place funding and what criteria would be used. Sandra explained that the process had not yet been finalised because the wider team and panels were still being formed. Government guidance was available, but local procedures had yet to be agreed. The intention is to create a process that is simple and accessible while retaining sound due diligence. Approaches used elsewhere in the country will be reviewed.			
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		Closing reflections Sandra encouraged trustees to listen carefully to residents while also challenging the belief that nothing can change. The Forum should acknowledge frustration with the council and police but redirect conversations towards practical plans, collaboration and action. Trustees agreed that the Forum should help change the local narrative by: • Highlighting positive work already taking place; • Connecting organisations and residents; • Developing evidence-based plans; • Supporting young people to thrive; • Improving safety and trust; and • Building stronger relationships across Harlesden’s diverse communities. The meeting closed with thanks to all trustees for their time and contributions and particular thanks to Ilaria for organising the meeting and supporting the Forum’s work behind the scenes. Meeting closed: Approximately 7:40pm			
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Consolidated Action List

No.	Action	Lead	Timescale
1	Complete and return declaration-of-interest forms	Romel, Sonia and Carol	As soon as possible
2	Resend declaration forms where required	Ilaria	As required
3	Publish the approved previous minutes	Ilaria	Following the meeting
4	Continue drafting the organisational strategy	Ilaria and Sandra	Before the away day
5	Arrange the trustee strategy away day	Ilaria	October–November 2026
6	Consider preferred trustee portfolios	All trustees	Before the away day
7	Send youth sections of the revised Neighbourhood Plan to Romel	Ilaria	When available
8	Review the youth sections of the Neighbourhood Plan	Romel	Following receipt
9	Continue developing the youth/community-safety funding proposal	Romel, Marco and partners	Ongoing
10	Follow up with prospective trustees	Ilaria	Ongoing
11	Arrange an introductory call with the Youth Parliament candidate	Ilaria and Romel	Subject to confirmation

12	Follow up on volunteering opportunities with the College of North West London	Ilaria	Ongoing
13	Send an up-to-date bank statement or transaction report to Ilaria and Sandra	Ibrahim	Immediately after the meeting
14	Develop a three-to-five-year fundraising strategy	Sandra with trustee support	Initial discussion at away day
15	Review and strengthen the previous National Lottery application	Sandra and relevant trustees	To be agreed
16	Identify suitable funders and corporate partners	All trustees	Ongoing
20	Confirm Romel's contribution to the community-safety event	Ilaria and Romel	Before 19 September 2026
21	Confirm attendance at the community-safety event	All trustees	Before the event
22	Include Chair succession in strategy discussions	Ilaria, Sandra and trustees	At the away day
23	Update trustees on the bowling green and heritage projects	Ilaria	At a future meeting

Date of next trustee meeting: To be confirmed.