

Patel, Kreena

To: Baldwin, Nancy (Cllr)
Subject: RE: Letter of support for 21/0847/FUL Marble Hill Community Project

From: Baldwin, Nancy (Cllr)
Sent: 12 April 2021 14:15
To: Patel, Kreena
Cc: Dale, Nicki; Neden-Watts, Julia (Cllr); Crouch, Roger (Cllr); Chard, James (Cllr)
Subject: Letter of support for 21/0847/FUL Marble Hill Community Project

Dear Ms Patel,

Please add this correspondence to the list of support letters for the above referenced planning application.

This project is crucial to the future of some of the best and most respected charities providing services to our children with special needs. It also provides a much needed boost to the borough in terms of play activities for all children and a chance for young families to meet and form friendships and build community.

In my year as Mayor (2019-2020) I became very aware of these charities' work in our borough. Indeed, one of them, OKMT (a music therapy charity for children and adults with additional needs), was one of my chosen mayoral charities and I am now one of their patrons.

There are many reasons to support this application but here are some that are particular to OKMT:

1) They have been searching for suitable premises for 5 years. At the moment they operate from 3 different venues in the borough making it extremely difficult for them to meet the complex needs of their clients - for example, autism, physical disabilities, learning difficulties - allowing them to make music without disturbing others. The Marble Hill Community Project will be purpose-built to provide suitable rooms for music therapy and larger music rooms with full disability access, soundproofing and sufficient storage and space for their many instruments including a grand piano. They would be able to reduce their waiting list and help yet more vulnerable people.

2) It would provide the opportunity for children with SEND coming to OKMT , as well as the children coming to Skylarks, to access inclusive and accessible play opportunities and mix with mainstream children. This will help improve the communication, language and social interaction skills. It is important to note, that this would not be one way traffic. Mainstream children will also have the opportunity to learn from our SEND children. They have much to teach us.

3). Having three charities working from one hub with overlapping aims could clearly benefit parents and carers when accessing different services. It would also mean they could be signposted to other services and groups which could widen their children's horizons. Vitaly, parents and carers would be able to build relationships within and across communities reducing their feelings of isolation and strengthening their mental health.

There is so much more to be said in favour of this application. To end on a personal note I remember bringing my own children, now aged 32 and 28, to the One O'Clock Club and remember thinking it looked tired then. The children of the borough deserve better and this project would provide that.

With kind regards,

Councillor Nancy Baldwin
Deputy Chair - Joint Pensions Committee
Councillor - North Richmond Ward