

BARBICAN ESTATE RESIDENTS CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

Monday, 28 January 2019

Minutes of the meeting of the Barbican Estate Residents Consultation Committee held at the Guildhall EC2 at 6.30 pm

Present

Members:

Christopher Makin - Speed House
Gordon Griffiths - Bunyan Court
Jane Smith - Barbican Association
John Taysum - Bryer Court
Janet Wells - John Trundle House
Mike Bristow - Cromwell Tower
Fred Rodgers - Breton House
Sandy Wilson - Shakespeare Tower

Prof. Michael Swash - Willoughby House
David Lawrence - Lauderdale Tower
Mark Bostock - Frobisher Crescent
Heather Hawker - Speed House
Vivian Fowle - Gilbert House
Adam Hogg - Andrewes House
Jane Samsworth - Defoe House
Fiona Lean - Ben Jonson House
Rodney Jagelman - Thomas More House

In attendance:

Mary Durcan – Ward Member for Cripplegate and Chairman of Underfloor Heating Working Party
Ted Reilly – Underfloor Heating Working Party

Officers:

Julie Mayer	- Town Clerks
Barry Ashton	- Community and Children's Services
Beth Humphrey	- Markets and Consumer Protection

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from David Graves (Seddon House), John Tomlinson (Cromwell Tower) and Jim Davies, (Mountjoy House). Mike Bristow represented John Tomlinson

2. MEMBERS DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN

Being the only Member willing to serve, Christopher Makin was elected as Chairman of the RCC for the ensuing year.

4. TO ELECT TWO DEPUTY CHAIRMEN

Jim Davies and Graham Wallace both tendered their resignation as Deputy Chairmen and the Chairman thanked them for their contributions. Graham Wallace was invited to speak as a past Chairman and as Deputy Chairman. Graham wished the RCC well and asked the Committee to investigate the

benefits of some forms of social media to communicate the work and aspirations of the RCC.

In the absence of any nominations, two Deputy Chairmen were not appointed. In the event of any Member giving this further consideration, they were invited to contact the Town Clerk.

5. **ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the infrastructure for electric vehicle charging on the Barbican Estate. Members of the RCC were asked to comment on the report, ahead of being presented for approval by the Barbican Residential Committee (BRC). Members noted the time sensitivities connected with this report, in that the Local Emission Neighbourhood (LEN) funding would end in March 2019 and therefore, this report was being presented to a Special Meeting of the BRC later this week.

During the discussion the following points were noted.

1. There had been a positive response to the pilot and there were 2 options before Members. There was a general consensus from the RCC that Option 1 was preferable; i.e. residents should pay for what is used, as Option 2 could penalise those who used only a small proportion of electricity.
2. A Member expressed concern about the Zipcar hire cars using the bays and the difficulty this might present to Concierges. The Car Park Manager agreed to investigate.
3. There was some confusion as to where the cost would fall for two parking bays, if there was adequate space for them and whether this option was worth pursuing. Also, were there any bays which might be unsuitable for conversion?
4. It was suggested that charging for two bays would be prohibitively expensive and would penalise electric car use. However, it was noted that to remove a usable bay and not charge for it would reduce potential car park income.
5. The recommendations in the report were based on forecast demand over the next two years and it was acknowledged that technology moved rapidly in this area. Furthermore, there would be far more choice in electric vehicles in the next couple of years and residents might delay taking a decision to buy one until they have an EV charging point.
6. The Pilot had been set up with different charging speeds; slow, medium and rapid. The pilot found that residents' preference was for a bay of their own; with 7 kw charging units – i.e. the medium rate of 6hours charging. If wanted, communal bays would have a rapid 22 kw charge.

For either option, cabling could be installed and scaled up to respond to increasing demand.

7. It was suggested that it would be hard for residents to sign up for this service until a detailed estimate of the costs involved in terms of the cost of electricity and whether residents would be charged for one bay or two had been finalised.
8. It was suggested that the cost be shared, for about 6 months, while the Working Party continued to meet and review the project.
9. The listed car parks within the report should display their other blocks (i.e. Defoe House / Shakespeare Tower)

RESOLVED, that:

1. The above comments in respect of the Barbican Estate Residents Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure be forwarded to the Special Meeting of the Barbican Residential Committee on 31 January 2019.
2. Members of the BRC be asked to note the RCC's preference for Option 1

6. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the following meetings were approved as a correct record:

1. The RCC's Annual General meeting on 29th January 2018.
2. The RCC's Extraordinary General meeting on 25th June 2018.

Matters arising

The Chairman advised that he would be a guest speaker at the Barbican Association's (BA) Annual General Meeting in April. His comments would cover the division of the roles of the BAGC and RCC and provide an opportunity to open debate across both BA and RCC matters. Members welcomed this, in addition to the Chairman's regular input to the BA newsletters.

7. **ANNUAL REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Members considered the RCC's current Terms of Reference Map referred to in ToR and made the following comments.

1. Could the map of the Estate Boundaries be appended to the Terms of Reference.
2. Members noted the BRC's Terms of Reference in respect of 'other occupiers', which includes; *'the management of all completed residential premises and ancillary accommodation on the Barbican Estate, e.g. the commercial premises, launderette, car parks, baggage stores, etc. (and,*

in fulfilling those purposes, to have regard to any representations made to it by the Barbican Estate Residents' Consultation Committee)'. It was suggested that the RCC's Terms of Reference be specific in respect of 'other occupiers'.

3. Could there be a reference to reducing costs and investment; i.e. an example being the work of the Asset Maintenance and Underfloor Heating Working Parties.
4. The integrity of the Estate falls within the remit of the Barbican Association, who closely monitor Licensing and Planning Applications.

RESOLVED, that – the Town Clerk include the above comments in a re-draft of the RCC's Terms of Reference, for Members to consider further at their next meeting on 4th March 2019.

8. **ANNUAL REVIEW OF WORKING PARTIES**

Members considered the Membership and Terms and Reference in respect of its working parties and the following points were noted.

1. Fann Street Wildlife Garden is called Barbican Wildlife Garden.
2. The SLA Working Party is highly valued as the keeper of the Estate's 'to do' list.
3. Members look forward to receiving the Asset Maintenance Working Party's report.
4. The Chairman and Members thanked David Lawrence and his Team for the work of the Leaseholder Service Charge Working Party.
5. Report of the Underfloor Heating Working Party

Ted Reilly provided an update on the work of the Underfloor Heating Working Party, following the concerns raised at the last meeting about a perceived lack of progress. Members noted a recent and very constructive officer meeting, with Mary Durcan in the Chair, and the Working Party now had a short shopping list of 'quick wins'. Members agreed that the new control system had been an excellent step forward.

Ted advised that the quick wins included an audit of the 3 different loadings and how they are charged for. The potential to produce , a web page providing information as to how long the heating had been on the previous night, with the profile of temperatures. Officers had devised a mechanism to enable the Estate Office to move some of the power from January and February to the 'shoulder' months of October and May. Feedback on the latter proposal would be sought at the BA AGM. The proposal would be cost neutral.

There was a discussion as to how some flats were warmer or colder than others, depending on their position. The Working Party had an objective whereby flats would be able to have some control of their own heat and a trial was underway for 'trimmers' in 2 flats, whereby the temperature could be turned down but not up.

Members were asked to note the covenants of the Lease that sets the basis of the background heating system. Whilst some were happy with this, some residents would appreciate the option to purchase more heat, if required. There were further suggestions in respect of double glazing and the bulk-buying of electricity falling within the remit of this Working Party. More positively, the survey had found that the underfloor heating kits within the flats were in excellent condition and the failure rate of the heating pads was very low, at just 2 or 3 a year. .

In concluding, the Chairman and Members commended the Working Party on an excellent project.

9. RECOGNISED TENANT ASSOCIATION (RTA) AUDIT 2018

Members received a report of the Town Clerk in respect of the recent RTA Audit and noted that the following; i.e. all those who had applied, had achieved RTA Status. Two blocks which currently had RTA Status; Bunyan Court and Mountjoy House, were invited to submit their returns in time for when the report is formally recognised by the BRC, at its meeting on 18 March 2019.

Andrewes House*
Ben Jonson House*
Cromwell Tower*
Defoe House*
Gilbert House*
Frobisher Crescent*
Lauderdale Tower*
Seddon House*
Shakespeare Tower*
Speed House*
Thomas More*
Willoughby House*
Barbican Association*

**indicates existing RTA, from the last Audit in December 2016*

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

10. UPDATE ON HOUSING GOVERNANCE

The Town Clerk advised that, at the last meeting of the Court, two new non-resident Members had been appointed, which would considerably reduce the risk of future BRC Meetings being inquorate. Members noted that the Policy and Resources Committee had delayed taking a decision on Housing Governance, pending the outcome of the Standards Committee's decision on a

report on Policy and Guidance on Dispensations under the Localism Act, 2011, which had subsequently been agreed on Friday 25th January 2019.

Whilst noting the restriction on voting under the 1985, Housing Act, there was some discontent expressed in that the new Policy had not adequately reflected the directions from the Court of Common Council in December 2018. The Chairman of the Barbican Association advised that the matter had been discussed at the Barbican Association General Council meeting the previous week and she would be writing to Aldersgate and Cripplegate Ward Members, setting out their concerns.

11. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

The Ben Johnson House Group representative raised the matter of water ingress, had caused anxiety to residents and, whilst works would commence in the new financial year, they had been waiting for some two years.

The House Group also felt that the issue of car parking charges, taken together with the installation of stores, which were set to occupy a very considerable area of their car park, needs careful and sensible consideration. The final decision should take into account the overall income from the floor area and any additional costs; i.e. whether the current number of car park attendants can manage all their additional duties without compromising security.

The House Group were very reassured that the question of smoke ingress was under review, but disappointed that relatively simple matters, such as the installation of signage and development of fire management plans were taking some time.

The Defoe House representative raised concerns more generally in respect of the shop below Lauderdale Tower, the 'yellow box' on Ben Jonson Highwalk, new storage, tube noise and the culture mile.

The Chairman encouraged Members to submit written questions in advance of regular RCC Meetings on these and similar issues.

There was some discussion in respect of a vision for residents in the next 10 years, based on the discussions during this meeting; and including Culture Mile, noting what does and does not fall within the RCC's remit. Sandy Wilson (Shakespeare Tower representative) was happy to lead on this, and feedback a shortlist to the Chairman, and residents were mindful of some having cost implications. It was suggested that contributions be via email, or as a sub group, without City officer involvement.

Members were also encouraged to look at the City Corporation's Draft Local Plan in respect of the future of the Barbican and feed back to the next meeting of the RCC, in respect of service charge matters, as this presents an excellent opportunity for making representations. Members noted that the BA had already produced a detailed response to the Local Plan. The Chairman encouraged this and asked Members to canvas their house groups. Fred

Rodgers offered to put together some ideas in respect of social media, as suggested earlier by Graham Wallace.

In concluding the discussion, it was acknowledged that a lot of modern blocks do not enjoy the benefits of a consultation committee such as the RCC.

12. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

There were no items

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm

Chairman

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