BARBICAN ESTATE RESIDENTS CONSULTATION COMMITTEE
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday, 9 February 2015

Minutes of the meeting of the Barbican Estate Residents Consultation Committee held at Guildhall, EC2 on Monday, 9 February 2015 at 6.30 pm

Members:
Tim Macer - Willoughby House
Randall Anderson - Shakespeare Tower
Averil Baldwin - Thomas More House
Robert Barker - Lauderdale Tower
Mark Bostock - Frobisher Crescent
Robin Gough - Defoe House
Gordon Griffiths - Bunyan Court
Helen Wilkinson - Speed House
John Tomlinson - Cromwell Tower
Gillian Laidlaw - Mountjoy House
Fiona Lean - Ben Jonson House
Jane Smith - Barbican Association
Prof Michael Swash - Willoughby House
Graham Wallace - Andrewes House
Janet Wells - John Trundle House

1. **APOLOGIES**
Apologies were received from Averil Baldwin, Dr Gianetta Corley, David Graves and John Taysum.

2. **DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**
There were no declarations.

3. **MINUTES**
The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 3rd February 2014 were approved.

4. **PROPOSAL FOR THE COMMITTEE TO BE ABLE TO ELECT TWO DEPUTY CHAIRMEN**
The Town Clerk was heard in respect of a proposal to appoint 2 Deputy Chairmen to the Barbican Residents Consultation Committee (RCC). An email from the current Chairman of the RCC, to the Chairman of the Barbican Residential Committee (BRC) was appended to the agenda, asking the BRC to give consideration to this proposal, in order to share the workload and make the roles more attractive to a wider range of candidates in the future.

The Town Clerk advised that, as the BRC had approved the establishment of the RCC in March 2003, an urgent decision had been taken by the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the BRC, as the BRC was not due to meet again until 16 March 2015. The Town Clerk had canvassed all Members of the Barbican Residential Committee before the decision was formally signed off. The feedback had been extremely positive about the work of the RCC and supportive of this proposal.

5. **TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN**

Being the only Member willing to serve, Tim Macer was duly elected Chairman of the Barbican RCC for 2015-16.

As the Chairman accepted his third year of office, Members proposed a vote of thanks to Mr Macer, commended his fresh perspective; ie the introduction of questions in advance and the proposal for 2 Deputy Chairmen, in order to sustain a 'hands on' approach and encourage succession planning. Mr Macer thanked the Working Parties and the Barbican Estate Officers for their hard work and commitment. He reiterated his objective to ensuring that communications with officers, both in and out of meetings, continued to be productive, relevant and respectful.

6. **TO ELECT A DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

Being the only Member willing to serve, Robert Barker was duly elected Deputy Chairman of the Barbican RCC for 2015-16.

The Chairman thanked the retiring Deputy Chairman, Prof. Chris Mounsey, for his work and support during the previous year.

The Chairman asked Members to give further consideration to the opportunity to serve as a second Deputy Chairman. The Town Clerk confirmed that further nominations could be considered at an Extraordinary General Meeting and, for convenience, this could be held directly before one of the scheduled RCC meetings.

7. **COMMITTEES TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee considered its Terms of Reference and during the discussion the following matters were raised:

- It was suggested that the nature of RCC meetings could be perceived as a little bureaucratic and corporate and, therefore, would a 'lighter' format be more appealing to new and/or younger members? The Town Clerk explained that, as the Minutes from the RCC meetings were received by the BRC, they need to be in an appropriate City of London Committee format. However, both the Chairman and Town Clerk would welcome further suggestions.

- The 6.30 pm start time might be too early for residents working full time.

- Item 1 in the Committee's Terms of Reference might be too wide in its definition of 'other occupiers', as this could stray into areas outside the remit of the RCC. Members were reminded of the role of the Barbican Association in local authority matters and their regular engagement with third parties; ie their quarterly meetings with the Barbican Arts Centre.

- The Disputes Resolution Panel had not met for some time but could reinstate on an ad-hoc basic.

RESOLVED, that:
The Terms of Reference be noted, with the suggested amendment to item 1, as set out above.

8. **BARBICAN ESTATE OFFICE REVIEW OF COMMUNICATIONS**
The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the Barbican Estate Office's Review of Communications. During the discussion on this item, the follow matters were raised/noted:

- Barbicanews had not been produced since December 2013, as it was extremely time consuming and current staff resources were limited.

- Members suggested that some of the past newsletters had been a little repetitive and asked officers to be mindful of information overload. A central information resource would be more desirable. It was suggested that one of the Barbican Association's publications could offer the Estate Office a regular slot.

- It was accepted that not all residents were online and therefore the concierges and car park attendants could be a valuable resource, given they were all had pc's and printers. It was suggested that the concierges/carpark attendants maintain ring-bound copies of the website material.

- It was noted that the Estate Office were occasionally asked to send out communications that did not fall within their remit, ie Crossrail. However, they generally kept communications relevant to a particular block or area, and this was considered a useful service to residents.

- It was accepted that the residents information pack would need updating and this should be available online with printed copies available for viewing with the car park attendants and concierges.

- It was suggested that the new fibre installation could facilitate electronic 'bulletin boards' and Estate-wide broadcasts over the television network in the future

- The Chairman reminded Members that the Communications Strategy fell within the remit of the SLA Working Party and welcomed new members with skills and interest in this area to participate in the review that the SLA Working Party was undertaking. Mr Graham Wallace volunteered his editorial skills.

RESOLVED, that:
The review of communications and the comments, as set out above, be noted.

9. **REVISED PROCEDURES FOR MEMBERS' WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services, which sought to review the current questions procedure and offered suggestions for a more formal process. The Chairman advised that the review had been prompted by an exceptionally high number of questions for the last meeting, which had been scaled down from 29 to 12, once the subject matter had been streamlined and duplications removed.

Members welcomed the new procedure as it would prioritise and streamline the process and give officers sufficient opportunity to research those questions of a more technical nature. The Chairman suggested that a well-structured, relevant question would assist in keeping the RCC's business relevant and prompt attendance from other Departments; ie the Barbican Centre or City Surveyors.

RESOLVED, that:

The Draft Protocol for the Pre-Residents' Consultation Committee Questions be approved, subject to the deadline for submitting questions being amended to 9 am on the Tuesday before the meeting and not 5pm on the Monday before.

10. **REVIEW OF WORKING PARTIES AND SUB COMMITTEES**

The Committee reviewed its list of Working Parties, noting those with vacancies and those which could be disbanded, as follows:

- All vacancies would continue to be advertised estate-wide and, if oversubscribed, the volunteers would be invited to participate as part of an advisory group; ie as had been the case with the Underfloor Working Party. Generally, membership should be 8-9 maximum.

- The Gardens Advisory Group had canvassed for members from the Wildlife, Allotments and Horticultural Societies.

- The TV Working Party would soon be disbanded. It was suggested that monitoring of the service could be handled by the SLA working party from now on. The Chairman commended this as a good example of a Working Group improving on an original proposal.

- In respect of Beech Gardens, should issues arise after planting, they would be referred to the Gardens Advisory Group and, if the contract was extended, this might also fall within the remit of the Asset Maintenance Group.

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

In response to a question about the forthcoming underfloor heating report, it was noted that an urgent decision might need to be taken in order to appoint a consultant for the control system.

12. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**
There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting ended at 8.10 pm

Chairman

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