

BARBICAN ESTATE RESIDENTS CONSULTATION COMMITTEE
Monday, 30 November 2015

Minutes of the meeting of the Barbican Estate Residents Consultation Committee
held at Guildhall on Monday, 30 November 2015 at 7.00 pm

Present

Members:

Tim Macer (Chairman)
Robert Barker (Deputy Chairman) - Lauderdale Tower
Graham Wallace (Deputy Chairman) - Andrewes House
Mark Bostock - Frobisher Crescent
Gordon Griffiths - Bunyan Court
John Taysum - Bryer Court
Prof. Michael Swash - Willoughby House
Averil Baldwin - Thomas More House
Robin Gough - Defoe House
Fred Rodgers - Breton House
Richard Dykes - Seddon House
Christopher Makin – Speed House
Monique Long – Mountjoy House

In attendance:

Gareth Moore – Chairman of the Barbican Residential Committee
Prof. John Lumley – Member of the Barbican Residential Committee (BRC)

Officers:

Michael Bennett	- Community and Children's Services
Anne Mason	- Community and Children's Services
David Padfield	- Community and Children's Services
Mike Saunders	- Community and Children's Services
Barry Ashton	- Community and Children's Services
Helen Davinson	- Community and Children's Services
Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlain's
Julie Mayer	- Town Clerk's

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Fiona Lean (Ben Jonson House); Jane Smith (Barbican Association); Randall Anderson (Shakespeare Tower); David Graves (Seddon House); John Tomlinson (Cromwell Tower) and Ann Holmes (Deputy Chairman of the Barbican Residential Committee (BRC)).

2. DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no items.

3. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th September 2015 were approved, subject to an amendment to paragraph 5, as follows, in respect of the length of time to complete the drainage works at Frobisher Crescent :

'.....astonished at the length of time' and not 'disappointed'.

The Frobisher Crescent representative suggested that this was more appropriate, given that the drainage works at Frobisher Crescent had taken 2 years to resolve.

The Assistant Director advised Members that the works would start on site next week.

4. **'YOU SAID: WE DID' : ACTIONS LIST**

The Committee received the '*You Said; We Did*' Actions List, covering actions from the September 2015 Meeting and other outstanding matters. During the discussion, the following matters were raised/noted:

- The Bunyan and Bryer Court representatives offered to work with the Estate Office on the forthcoming survey on the Beech Gardens fountains and timings and officers would provide an interim update on the lighting in this area.
- The redecorations at Frobisher Crescent remained outstanding and there would be an update in the next edition of '*You Said;We Did*'
- An analysis of the associated water penetration works orders for 2014/15 at Andrewes House as well as Ben Jonson House was taking longer than anticipated and an update would be provided by the next Committee, with an interim update provided to Members before the next meeting if possible.
- There would be quarterly updates on short term holiday lets and the email bulletins would continue to provide updates to residents with links to the recent committee reports. Staff briefings with the Estate Concierges had resulted in some leads and the web sites were being monitored weekly. Members had expressed their gratitude to officers for the way this matter was being managed.

5. **RECOGNISED TENANTS' ASSOCIATIONS - ANNUAL REVIEW 2015**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk setting out the Annual Review of Recognised Tenant Associations. Members noted that all of the house groups, which had applied, had retained their RTA Status. At the time of publication of the report, Ben Jonson House's result was pending the outcome of their AGM, which had been scheduled for 9 December 2015. The Town Clerk advised that the result would be confirmed at the Barbican Residential Committee on 14th December 2015.

RESOLVED, That – the outcome of the 2015 RTA Audit be noted.

6. SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS QUARTERLY REVIEW JULY - SEPTEMBER 2015

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services, which set out the Service Level Agreements (SLA) quarterly review from July–September 2015. Officers advised that, since the questions received in advance of this meeting related to the SLA report, they and any in the future would be worked into the action plan, in order to ensure they receive an appropriate level of scrutiny and visibility at SLA Working Party and RCC Barbican Residential Committees.

The following items were raised:

- Noisy redecoration works - were being reviewed as part of the Residents Alterations Pack by officers and the SLA working party. Early engagement with contractors was encouraged and/or use of an approved list of considerate contractors. It was also suggested that resident representatives be invited to contribute to the alteration booklet and be fully aware of the appropriate channels for any complaints, if necessary. Officers agreed to investigate an allegation about a contractor using the communal electricity supply. (Post meeting – officers had already been in contact with the relevant contractor).
- Lift performance for Frobisher Crescent - future data would be included in the KPIs and was welcomed and Members asked if this could be presented on an individual basis, particularly for those lifts with heavy public usage.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

7. PROGRESS OF SALES AND LETTINGS

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services, advising Members of the sales and lettings which had been approved by officers since the last meeting.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

8. SERVICE CHARGE EXPENDITURE AND INCOME ACCOUNT - LATEST APPROVED BUDGET 2015/16 AND ORIGINAL BUDGET 2016/17

The Committee received a joint report of the Chamberlain and the Director of Community and Children's Services, which set out the latest approved budget for 2015/16 and the original 2016/17 budget (for revenue expenditure proposed to be included within the service charge in respect of dwellings). Members noted that the report did not include expenditure or income pertaining to car parking or stores and the amount charges to individual lessees would depend on the percentages set out in their leases.

RESOLVED, that - the report be recommended for approval by the Barbican Residential Committee.

9. **REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS - LATEST APPROVED BUDGET 2015/16 AND ORIGINAL 2016/17 - EXCLUDING DWELLINGS SERVICE CHARGE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE**

The Committee received a joint report of the Chamberlain and the Director of Community and Children's Services, which set out the annual submission of the revenue and capital budgets overseen by the Barbican Residential Committee.

RESOLVED, that – the report be recommended for approval by the Barbican Residential Committee.

10. **ASSET MAINTENANCE PLAN**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services, which updated Members on the work of the Asset Maintenance Working Party. Members of the working party had expressed a wish to retain their group, with its specific skills set, to ensure progress beyond the gap analysis (as set out in the appendix to the report).

Given that the RCC's AGM (early 2016) would review the Terms of Reference for each Working Party, the Chairman suggested and Members agreed that the Terms of Reference of the Asset Maintenance Working Party be reviewed, in order to allow the Asset Maintenance Plan to be developed and in place, before the work is subsumed into the SLA Working Party. Members also noted that officer time on working parties was chargeable to the resident service charge account and was scrutinised by the Barbican Residential Committee.

In response to a query about a possible sinking fund, the Assistant Director explained that the Barbican Leases did not make provision for this.

RESOLVED, that - the report be noted.

11. **CAR PARK CHARGING**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the charging policy for car parking on the Barbican Estate for another year. Members were reminded that car parking was not a service charge account, however, comments and feedback were invited from residents, ahead of the Barbican Residential Committee taking a decision on 14 December 2015.

In response to a question about card payments, officers confirmed that this facility would be retained and staff had been fully trained to assist residents and their guests with the various payment methods.

Officers explained that the 5% increase was very competitive, when compared with other parking charges within the City and they had been tasked with generating income from the car parks. Members noted that the car parking subsidy was expressed in the Revenue and Capital Budgets Report (at item 9 on this agenda).

In response to a query about electrical charging points, officers reminded Members that this had been the subject of an early residents' survey and would soon be progressed as a City of London Corporation project. Members noted that the Barbican Association has been chasing progress and a further update would be provided in the next Winter Bulletin to residents. A Member raised a concern about the possibility of toxic fumes from charging batteries in enclosed car parks, but officers reassured Members that all health and safety responsibilities, such as this, would be fully discharged as part of the tendering process.

12. UPDATE REPORT

The Committee received the regular update report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.

Members noted that there had been a 25% uptake on the TV network installation and that the free installation period had closed that day, but that Frobisher Crescent residents' free period had been extended due to a health and safety issue which had delayed the contractors.

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

Questions submitted in advance of the meeting are appended to these minutes. There were no further questions.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

Members noted that the AGM would be held on 8 February 2016 at 7pm.

The Chairman of the BRC, RCC Members and the Estate Office staff gave their thanks and best wishes to Tim Macer, as this would be his last meeting as Chairman of the RCC before a new appointment is made at the AGM. They particularly commended Tim's energy and commitment and the spirit of cohesive working which had ensued under his Chairmanship. This productive and non-confrontational working relationship had been recognised and highly valued by both resident and non-resident Members of the Barbican Estate Residential Committee.

The Chairman thanked Officers, Elected Members and RCC Members for the considerable support they had given him during his Chairmanship.

The meeting ended at 8.35 pm

Chairman

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RCC Pre Committee Questions – 30 November 2015

Agenda item 4, “You Said; We Did” Actions List - Page 9 Redecoration costs at Frobisher Crescent

Q. Here, there is a comment on the redecoration of the metal work on the north elevation which is not correct. We are still awaiting information on when this metal work was last painted together with sight of the condition survey made at the time of the development. This information has remained outstanding now for months!

A. City Surveyors do not have a copy of the condition survey of the metalwork at the time of development. We are awaiting confirmation of the date when the works were last carried out from the Barbican Arts Centre.

Agenda Item 6, SLA Quarterly Review - Page 20 Noisy works generated by flat refurbishments

Q. A flat in Defoe is currently undergoing extensive refurbishment including the installation of a suspended ceiling to accommodate new wiring and down-lighters. A number of residents have experienced extremely noisy episodes and have requested the committee to look into the issue of permissions and management of refurbishments on this scale. It is apparent that the current Alterations Booklet is now out-dated and in need of rewriting so that refurbishment of this scale are managed considerably by the Contractors and the City. The Defoe Committee understands that the SLA Working Party is looking into this with Michael Bennett, we would like representation the next time this issue is discussed at the SLA Working Party but would also suggest that this issue warrants the establishment of a separate body. Is the SLA Working Party the right place for this issue to be looked at?

A. The BEO are reviewing a number of publications including the alterations guide. The latest draft will be passed to SLA Working Party in December at which stage requests for additional resident representation will be sought.

Agenda Item 6, SLA Quarterly Review - Page 20 Barbican Estate Office Call Out Charge

Q. There has been a query raised by a Defoe Resident as to why she has had a call out charge levied by the BEO when the issue was initiated by the flat owners below her. The cause of the leak which necessitated the insurance claim below her was in fact situated in her flat (her water

cylinder) and in due course she paid for the replacement of said cylinder. Can the BEO please issue a clarification notice to residents so that we better understand in which circumstances residents are liable for a call out charge and also where the delineation is between Leaseholders and City ownership of water pipes causing leaks and damage. For example some flats have immersion heaters in riser cupboards with access panels and others have soil pipes and vents accessed via external riser cupboards?

A. In this particular instance, the callout was requested by the resident affected by the leak. The charge for the investigation was put to the Long Lessee of the flat where the leak originated. This is standard practice and happens frequently as the flats most affected by leaks are often underneath where the leaks originate. Delineation between Landlords and Long Lessees plumbing occurs at the stop valve.

Agenda Item 6, SLA Quarterly Review - Page 22 Fire Escape Strategy

Q. Defoe House has twelve staircases with two dedicated fire-protected stairwells. There are also a number of flats situated below podium with access routes out into public areas via a car park. This year new way-finding signage has been installed in the car park with exit routes shown through doorways which have fire shutters. Is there an up-to-date Fire Escape strategy for Defoe House? If so can it be publicised and if not can we have one developed please?

A. This year new signage has been installed as an upgrade to the old signage. The strategy has not changed. This signage is within the car park and some does point toward doors that have fire shutters on them. However the roller shutters are heat sensitive and therefore would not all come down at the same time. If one shutter were to come down due to fire, the illuminated new signage clearly indicates other exits from the car park. These arrangements were approved by an on-site visit by the City's Fire Officer this week.

Fire advice for the flats remains as it ever was: *to remain in your flat unless directly affected by the fire or by smoke. Resident should familiarise themselves with their fire escape routes.* If residents require assistance with this, they should contact their House Officer.

Agenda Item 6, SLA Quarterly Review - Page 22 Security of residents

Q. Estate staff are placed in a position of trust, because staff have access to private areas such as balconies and roofs, and occasionally to people's homes too.

We would like to know what measures are in place to protect the privacy and security of residents in their homes, both when new staff are recruited and in practices routinely followed for staff with access to these private areas.

A. In 2014 an audit of all positions within the Department of Community and Children's Services was conducted by HR in close liaison with Service Managers to review the level of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks required for each position. The DBS helps employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children. It replaces the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA).

Following this review an exercise took place to ensure all staff had the required DBS check associated to the position in which they were working. This exercise was completed by December 2014.

Agenda item 6, SLA Quarterly Review - Page 27

Frobisher Crescent Lifts

Q. I am not sure where this question fits in with the agenda and supporting papers. The House Group notes that there is, at present, no regular reporting on our four lifts. Can we please request regular lift performance statistics for each of them together with their performance history from 2010?

A. The BEO is working with Barbican Centre and City Surveyors Department to provide this information to Frobisher Crescent House Group. When received we will request that we receive this information quarterly in order that it can be presented as part of the KPIs with the other lift performance measures in the SLA quarterly reviews.

Agenda item 6, SLA Quarterly Review - Page 27

Podium Maintenance

Q. A below podium flat in Defoe has suffered from a bad water leak coming through an expansion joint above. This is now being repaired only

after some considerable inconvenience for the resident below. The cause of the leak is likely to be down to the failure of the expansion joint but could also have been caused by blocked drainage cast into the podium structure. Can the BEO please outline any strategy in place for cleaning out the drains and also any budget available to replace or maintain the expansion joints across the podium as they likely to fail in numbers over time?

A. A drainage clearance programme is currently in place. An additional £100k is being sought for our drain clearance programme for 2015/16 pending approval at December 2015 BRC. The longer term strategy for dealing with leaks through the expansion joints and leaks from other areas on the Podium is currently being reviewed. A report, outlining the options, will be presented to a future committee.

**Agenda Item 10, Asset Maintenance Plan - Page 57
Capital Works**

Q. When is the Working Party that will look into the management and expenditure of Capital Works be reconvened?

A. A separate report is being presented to this committee.