



## Barbican Estate Residents Consultation Committee

**Date:** MONDAY, 8 FEBRUARY 2016

**Time:** 7.00 pm

**Venue:** COMMITTEE ROOMS, 2ND FLOOR, WEST WING, GUILDHALL

**Members:**

Tim Macer - Willoughby House	Ted Reilly - Shakespeare Tower
Robert Barker - Lauderdale Tower	John Tomlinson - Cromwell Tower
Mark Bostock - Frobisher	Graham Wallace - Andrewes House
Gordon Griffiths - Bunyan Court	Mary Bonar - Wallside
Fiona Lean - Ben Jonson House	Fred Rodgers - Breton House
Jane Smith - Barbican Association	David Graves - Speed House
John Taysum - Bryer Court	Richard Dykes - Gilbert House
Janet Wells - John Trundle House	Brian Parkes - Speed House
Professor Michael Swash - Willoughby House	Monique Long - Mountjoy House
Averil Baldwin - Thomas More House	Natalie Robinson - Andrewes House
Robin Gough - Defoe House	

**Enquiries:** Julie Mayer - tel.no.: 020 7332 1410  
Julie.Mayer@cityoflondon.gov.uk

**John Barradell**  
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

# **AGENDA**

1. **APOLOGIES**

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

3. **MINUTES**

To agree the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Barbican Residents' Consultation Committee (RCC) held on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2015.

**For Decision**  
(Pages 1 - 6)

4. **TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN**

Town Clerk to be heard.

**For Decision**

5. **TO ELECT TWO DEPUTY CHAIRMEN**

Town Clerk to be heard.

**For Decision**

6. **COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Members are asked to consider the Terms of Reference of the Barbican Estate Residents' Consultation Committee.

**For Decision**  
(Pages 7 - 8)

7. **REVIEW OF WORKING PARTIES**

Report of the Barbican Estate Office.

**For Discussion**  
(Pages 9 - 10)

8. **PROPOSAL TO FORM A LEASEHOLD SERVICE CHARGE WORKING PARTY**

Report of the Immediate Past Chairman (Chairman as at 29 January 2016).

**For Decision**  
(Pages 11 - 16)

9. **2015 RESIDENTS' SURVEY**

Report of the Barbican Estate Office.

**For Discussion**  
(Pages 17 - 18)

10. **2015/16 COMMUNICATIONS PLAN**

Report of the Barbican Estate Office.

**For Discussion**  
(Pages 19 - 22)

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

## **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	John Tomlinson - Cromwell Tower
Randall Anderson - Shakespeare Tower	Gillian Laidlaw - Mountjoy House
Averil Baldwin - Thomas More House	Fiona Lean - Ben Jonson House
Robert Barker - Lauderdale Tower	Jane Smith - Barbican Association
Mark Bostock - Frobisher Crescent	Prof Michael Swash - Willoughby House
Robin Gough - Defoe House	Graham Wallace - Andrewes House
Gordon Griffiths - Bunyan Court	Janet Wells - John Trundle House
Helen Wilkinson - Speed 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 basis.

**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**

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Chairman

**Contact Officer: Julie Mayer**  
**tel.no.: 020 7332 1410**  
**Julie.Mayer@cityoflondon.gov.uk**

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## **Barbican Residents Consultation Committee -Terms of Reference**

1. To be the main formal channel of communication between tenants\* and the Corporation of London in all landlord and tenant matters which affect the Barbican Residential Estate, including interfaces with other occupiers, and to present the views of tenants on the general management of the estate
2. To enable consultation and the flow of information between the Corporation of London and tenants and to work towards a partnership approach to management
3. To develop, in conjunction with the Corporation, Service Level Agreements between tenants and the Barbican Estate Office for the Estate as a whole and for individual House Groups and to be involved in the modification of these agreements as required
4. To oversee delivery of services against any Service Level Agreements with tenants, third parties and Corporation departments, monitoring their performance and satisfaction with the service and making suggestions where appropriate for alterations or improvement
5. To identify Service Charge items and monitor service charge costs, receiving reports of all accounts relating to the estate
6. To discuss routine and major repair works and to consult on how these will affect tenants
7. To receive reports of the Disputes Resolution Panel as appropriate

\*tenants refers to all persons who have a tenancy agreement with the Corporation and includes also any resident who no longer retains the Corporation as a landlord but still pays a service charge to the Corporation.

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## Working Parties (WP) January 2016

Please find detailed below a list of working parties dealing with Barbican Estate issues.

Name	Chairman	Attended by:
<b>Residents Consultation Committee</b>		
<b>Gardens Advisory Group</b>  Meeting Dates: 15/01/16 29/04/16 16/09/16 18/11/16  <i>Report to RCC: 6 June (WP minutes for previous year)</i> <b>Action: Terms of Reference to be reviewed at June RCC</b>	Helen Davinson	BEO Officers: Helen Davinson, Michael Bennett  Open Spaces Officers  11 resident representatives: Paula Tomlinson, Nancy Chessum, Sarah Hudson, Nathalie Robinson, Judith Serota, Maggie Urry, Candice Gillies-Wright, Colin Slaughter, Mary Winch, Mark Mallindine, Jenny Addison  <b>Vacancies: 0</b>
<b>SLA Review</b>  Meeting Dates: 18/01/16 25/04/16 25/07/16 24/10/16  <i>Quarterly Report to RCC</i>	Michael Bennett	BEO Officers: Michael Bennett, Helen Davinson, Sarah Styles, Sheila Delaney, Luke Barton  8 resident representatives – David Graves, Tim Macer, Randall Anderson, Robert Barker, Jane Smith, Gianetta Corley, Graham Wallace, Fiona Talbot  <b>Vacancies: 0</b>
<b>Asset Maintenance</b>  Meeting Dates: w/b 7 or 14/03/16 TBC	Mike Saunders	BEO Officers: Mike Saunders, David Downing, Asset Monitoring Officer (TBC), Michael Bennett  8 resident representatives – Randall Anderson, Robert Barker,

w/b 6 or 13/06/16 TBC w/b 26/09/16 or 03/10/16 TBC w/b 28/11/16 TBC  <i>Report to RCC: 28 November (WP minutes for previous year)</i> <b>Action: Terms of Reference to be reviewed – agenda for March WP meeting</b>		Tim Macer, Nigel Walmsley, Ted Reilly, Fiona Lean, Robin Gough, Richard Collins  <b>Vacancies: 0</b>
<b>Background Underfloor Heating</b>  Meeting Dates: 26/01/16 w/b 11 or 18/04/16 TBC w/b 13 or 20/06/16 TBC w/b 12 or 19/09/16 TBC w/b 05/12/16 TBC  <i>Report to RCC: 6 June (WP minutes for previous year)</i>	Gareth Moore (Lead Officer Mike Saunders)	BRC representative  BEO Officers: Mike Saunders, Mick McGee, David Downing, Michael Bennett  8 resident representatives – Mary Hickman, Tim Macer, Ted Reilly, Kate Wood, Sarah Bee, Renu Gupta, Craig Allen & Garth Leder  <b>Vacancies: 0</b>

**Officers:**

Luke Barton, House Officer

Michael Bennett, Barbican Estate Manager

Helen Davinson, Resident Services Manager

Sheila Delaney, House Officer

David Downing, Asset Programme Manager, Barbican & Housing

Mick McGee, Senior Resident Engineer

Mike Saunders, Head of Asset Maintenance, Barbican & Housing

Sarah Styles, House Officer

## **Residents Consultation Committee Discussion Document**

### **Proposal to form a Leasehold Service Charge Working Party**

#### **For discussion at the RCC AGM 8 February 2016**

A report of the Chairman of the RCC, 29 January 2016.

### **1 Summary**

RCC has a small number of working parties that allow for more detailed examination of specialised topics than is possible in committee. Two of these working parties are focused on the RCC's 4th term of reference (the Service Level Agreement) and others from time to time are formed to discharge its 6th (Major works). There is, however, no working party specifically tasked to look at the service charge budgets which is the object of item 5 in the RCC's terms of reference.

This absence confines discussion to Committee, where there is limited scope to do more than raise questions in a reactive way or seek clarification over information presented in large and complex reports. This largely characterises how the RCC has engaged with Service Charge matters to date.

Several questions raised in the past, and a paper now submitted by a resident for consideration by the RCC indicate that the RCC would benefit by having a working party to discharge its responsibilities to monitor service charges, and to apply the same principles as practiced in other areas where it is involved, in actively and co-operatively seeking improvements – in this case by actively controlling costs and exploring ways to avoid unnecessary increases, or even reduce them (without impacting on services provided).

This report therefore proposes that the RCC forms a specific Service Charge working party to work closely with City officers in discharging the RCC's responsibilities with regards to monitoring Service Charge costs.

### **2 The background**

#### **2.1 Responsibilities of the RCC**

Item 5 of the RCC's terms of reference (TOR) state that one of the responsibilities of the RCC is:

5. *To identify Service Charge items and monitor service charge costs, receiving reports of all accounts relating to the estate*

This falls between item 4, which describes similar responsibilities with respect to the Service Level Agreement, and item 6 which covers major works.

I consider these three items form the substance of the work that the RCC undertakes in monitoring the work of the Barbican Estate Office in managing the residential estate.

## **2.2 Service Charge finances and the RCC**

The RCC currently fulfils its duties to residents under items 5 by receiving and reviewing financial reports produced by the BEO, according to an annual cycle which is defined in the BRC's published agenda cycle, which the RCC follows, receiving the financial reports relating to the Service Charge immediately prior to BRC receiving them. According to the typical agenda plan, the financial reports that provide information about the Service Charge are received as follows:

<b><i>Report Title</i></b>	<b><i>RCC Meeting Date</i></b>	<b><i>BRC Meeting Date</i></b>
Revenue & Capital Budgets	November	December
Revenue Outturn Relationship of BRC Outturn Report to Service Charge Schedules – RCC Only	September	September

These reports are presented to the RCC "For information" and to the BRC "For approval". RCC members can – and do – ask question in response to the reports, and the comments they raise are minuted and presented to the BRC.

Increasingly, since written questions were introduced, more detailed questions are put by members in writing but questions are also put verbally by members at the meeting, One or more officers of the department preparing these reports always attends RCC meetings in order to provide answers to question, or clarify their responses to written questions. The information provided is rich and comprehensive – but the ability for members to interact with it is constrained.

## **2.3 Questions raised by residents**

Questions raised by members about Service Charge related items tend to fall into three categories:

1. Questions relating directly to the financial reports presented in the September and November meetings
2. Questions raised by members at any meeting, in relation to the Service Charge implications of other reports being presented
3. Questions raised spontaneously by members, which may have been asked by House Group committees.

Officers have also run special induction or introductory sessions to explain the reports and more generally how the costs are organised and this has had the effect of reducing the number of questions, especially those seeking clarification. At several recent meetings when these reports have been presented, your Chairman has observed that there have been no questions raised at all, and little or no ensuing discussion or comments this important subject.

Those raised at other times (categories 2 and 3) are often to clarify what will be rechargeable to residents, rather than examining the actual cost, processes or assumptions within those costs and the scope there is to vary them.

Overall, then, discussion around Service Charge can be characterised as being about receiving information, and not around any active participation in making changes that could achieve a better outcome.

## **2.4 Electricity recharges**

One significant departure from this practice has been the formation of the Underfloor Heating Working Party. For this, the primary goal was to explore options when the incumbent supplier announced a change in the tariff structure which would have meant much higher electricity charges for the Estate. This outcome was achieved by the Estate moving to a new tariff structure and type of contract which was novel to the City at that time, and avoided the cost increases that initially seemed almost inevitable.

The Working Party worked closely with officers in a highly co-operative manner, with the result that everyone benefited from the skill and experience that different members of the group could bring (both residents and officers). Furthermore the high quality of discussion and analysis during meetings of the group meant that officers were better able to prioritize how to apply resources, define what to procure and recognise what offered best value. Most importantly for residents, costs were controlled without affecting the quality of service received.

## **2.5 Discussion of budgets**

At present, though, the experiences of the UHWP in achieving better cost outcomes in the Service Charge account are an isolated one. Though both the September and November meetings provide an opportunity for RCC members to discuss budgets with officers, discussions are reactive in nature, and the Committee approach does not allow for the kind of creative reappraisal of the situation experienced with the UHWP.

In the past, members have asked about the scope there is for them to influence the budgets, and have been informed that the majority of the costs are essentially pre-determined, but there could be scope for some modest changes around setting priorities. To date, no action has been taken to make this effective.

## **2.6 Budget planning and inflationary assumptions**

I have received a paper prepared by Jane Northcote, a resident of Cromwell Tower asking that the RCC should take steps to examine Service Charges particularly with regard to the built-in assumptions that baseline costs will normally increase in line with inflation, and some preliminary analysis showing that over time, costs increases appear to have exceeded general consumer price inflation.

While these observations may be explainable by other factors, I consider the questions raised in this paper are entirely reasonable, and warrant investigation by this Committee.

## 2.7 Experience from other working parties

RCC currently has two on-going working parties – the Service Level Agreement working party which meets quarterly, and the Gardens Advisory Group, which covers a specific area of service provision.

All of the RCC's current Working Parties can provide example of where resident and officers working together have brought about improvements in service delivery or amenity to residents. However the UFHWP shows that this model can also include achieving better cost outcomes as well.

## 3 Proposal: A new Service Charge Working Party

RCC participation in discussion of the Service Charge could be improved by setting up a specific Working Party to engage more closely with officers involved in the budgeting and operation of the Leasehold Service Charge account.

There is no specific working party undertaking this responsibility. Other working parties have from time to time focused on specific aspects of achieving better cost outcomes for residents, but these are usually secondary to their objectives.

Taking into account that this committee may wish to investigate the questions raised by Ms Northcote, the absence of a relevant working party means that a more detailed examination would fall to this committee as a whole, which will limit the time allowed for discussion and not allow for the depth of inquiry or understanding needed to (a) establish what is happening to the underlying costs of both regular and cyclical expenditure and (b) to work with officers to bring about change.

The proposal is that this committee:

1. Forms a new working party specifically to engage with officers in discussions about Service Charge costs
2. Appoint four members from this committee and a further four by open invitation to residents to apply, who (a) have relevant experience to bring to the work of the WP (b) represent diverse areas of the estate and offer a diversity of views
3. Ask the Working Party to prepare terms of reference for RCC to approve at its May/June meeting.
4. Request that the Working Party meets at least four times within the year and reports back to this committee through minutes and an annual report.
5. Require that any proposed changes are presented back to the RCC for it to approve or determine whether wider consultation with residents is necessary.
6. Ask for an officer appointed by the CoL and agreed by this committee to chair the meetings

Tim Macer,  
Chairman, Residents Consultation Committee



## A REQUEST TO THE RCC TO EXAMINE SERVICE CHARGES

*Note for Tim Macer, Chairman, Barbican Residents Consultation Committee  
From Jane Northcote, Cromwell Tower, Barbican Estate*

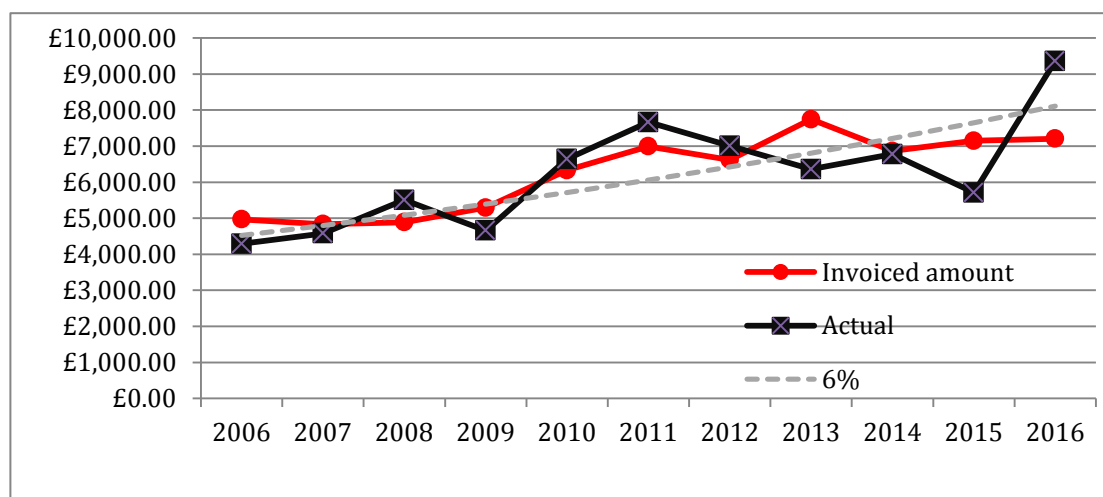
As long-leaseholders of a flat in Cromwell Tower, we have seen Service Charges increase over the years. We plan to stay here for the long term so we are concerned about these above-inflation increases, and wonder if the RCC is able to investigate.

There are three points for enquiry:

1. Rate of increase of Service Charge
2. Business processes to manage and reduce the Service Charge
3. Forecast and prediction of Service Charges

### ***1. Rate of increase<sup>i</sup>***

The graph below shows the Service Charges we have paid for our Tower flat over a ten-year period. These are *total* Service Charges, including both “annual recurring” and “major items”. The red line shows the amount that left our bank account in that year as invoiced by the City. These invoices are based on estimates, and include a balancing charge from the previous year. This figure is only known after year-end, so the amount for 2016 shown is the estimate. Both lines show a marked upward trend.



Since inflation was at between zero and 3% during the period in question, we would like to know what other factors are at play here. Why are our costs rising faster than inflation? Why are they not going down, as efficiency improvements are made?

### ***2. Business processes to manage and reduce the Service Charge***

In a meeting in November 2015, David Padfield, Interim Assistant Director for Property Services at the BEO, told me that there is currently no business process in the BEO to find ways to reduce the Service Charge while maintaining or improving customer service. They have not been asked to do this, so they don't do it. Individual departments variously have efficiency targets. But no-one looks at the aggregate cost passed on to leaseholders. He said they would do so if asked by the BRC. We would like them to be asked.

In common with other commercial businesses, it must be possible for the BEO to reduce costs while improving service. This is typically achieved by, for example:

economies of scale, use of technology, streamlining inefficient processes, doing things once “right first-time”, doing things more quickly and so removing chase-up calls, efficient management of contractors, reduction of management overhead.

### ***3. Forecast and prediction***

We currently receive a five-year forecast for “Major Items” from the BEO.

We receive no five-year forecast for “Annually Recurring costs”. We suggest it would be a good idea for the BEO to do a five year forecast of both components of Service Charge. This would have two benefits.

Firstly it would ensure everything is covered. For example in Cromwell we suddenly discover that lift lobby carpets need replacing. This is a significant cost. It does not appear on the “Major Items” forecast. Nor is it covered by the “Annually recurring” costs. So it is a surprise, both for the BEO who have to manage it, and for the residents who have to pay for it. We suspect that there are other items in this category, such as re-lining water tanks, refurbishing lift damage by contractors, and repainting public areas.

Secondly it would impose a discipline on the BEO to contain and manage costs. At the moment, they simply incur costs and pass them on. They make a comparison between what they estimated 12 months ago, and what was incurred. The commentary we receive each September explains the difference. However what matters to us is not why the actuals in the past year are different from the recent estimate, although that is of interest. We are more interested in the future: do we expect lobby porter costs to increase year-on-year by upwards of 20%, which is the difference between last year’s actuals and this year’s estimate? Is this a trend, or an isolated occurrence? What other items will hit the service charge? (carpets, lifts, redecoration, concrete). House Officers, contractors and other staff timesheet their hours and allocate costs to our Service Charge ‘cost-centre’ without, it seems, the concept of a “budget” or constraint on the time they can bill. Obviously costs go up and down and some, such as heating costs, are hard to predict. But many costs are well within the control of the BEO. It is a normal and helpful, if imperfect, management discipline to make five-year cost predictions and to report against them.

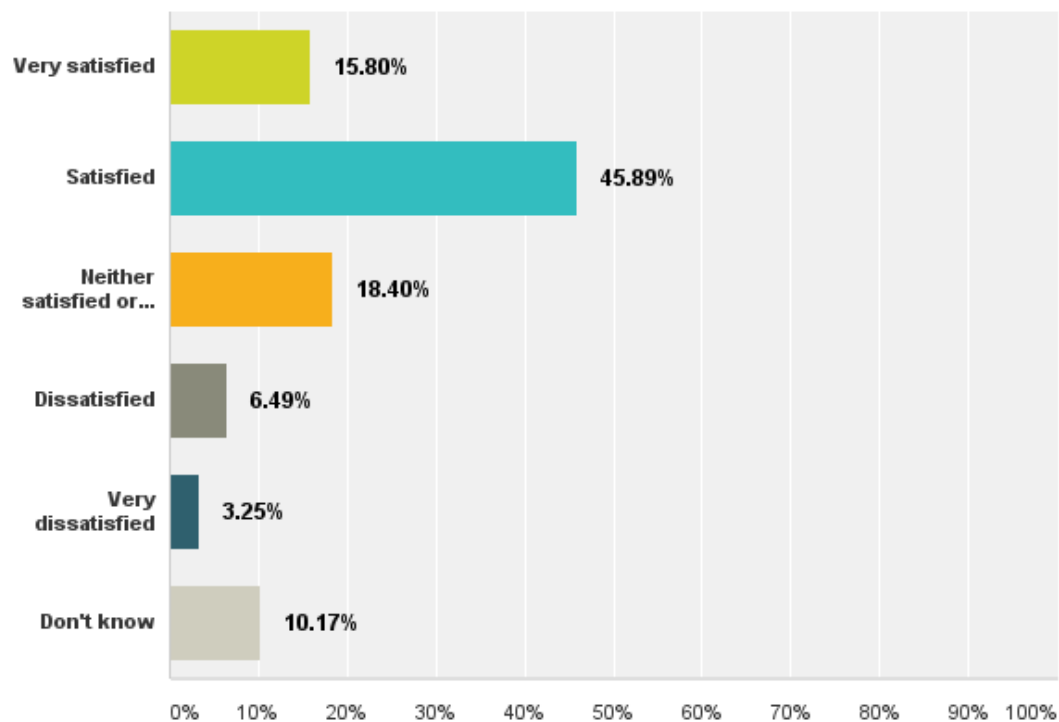
I assume that other cost-centres have budgets and limits, and are managed downwards as part of public sector efficiency drives. The cost-centre labelled “recharge to long-leaseholders” is not so constrained. Hence the need to ask for some vigilance, management and monitoring.

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<sup>i</sup> Sources of data for these graphs: We file quarterly invoices for Service Charge. I went through 10-years’ worth of quarterly invoices to get this data. I may have made a mistake. Ideally I would like to reconcile our invoices with data provided by the BEO. Anne Mason has helpfully provided a 10-year dataset. At time of writing, I have not yet been able to analyse this data and compare it to our invoices.

**Q16 How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the involvement of residents in the management of the Barbican Estate and consultation over decisions or new initiatives eg. through the Residents' Consultation Committee, your house group or direct consultation with residents?**

Answered: 462 Skipped: 3



## Residents comments from 2015 Residents Survey

- The residents representation is very opaque. Elections are a shoe in, meetings are annual, sometimes during school holidays. The fibre rollout and redecoration where a farce. Those involved represent the elderly but not families. There is no similar questionnaire to this one asking residents how they feel, what their priorities are.
- More transparency over who is elected/appointed to represent each block on the RCC, and have a term limit of 3 or 4 years.
- Most of the time meetings are held at times when those of us at work are unable to attend. If a few meetings or online input could be provided then a cross generation reply could be given and the views of many more taken in to account.
- A web page that explained the structure of the various residents consultation or working groups in relation to City of London as Landlord, along with information about how to get involved or find the minutes from these meetings.
- If we are consulted, nothing much seems to come of it.

- More on line surveys from the BA, RCC or House Groups.
- More direct interaction via individual households via email/ online surveys...rather than being filtered through the committees made up of people who have time to represent minority interests.
- For a start, the residents consultation committee could let residents know when it is meeting and what is on the agenda. I have never had a single communication from them. Sending round "surveys" and then taking decisions regardless (eg. the video cameras) is not encouraging, either.
- We'd like to be consulted as individuals, not via committees or house groups, because we don't want decisions made on our behalf behind closed doors and then be told about them afterwards.
- There needs to be better communication of : 1. what is being discussed on our behalf 2. how and when we can input if we wish 3. when a decision is to going to be taken 4. what the decision was and rationale for the decision clearly and directly communicated to residents. To rely on the minutes from committed is inadequate. Communication should be issue by issue and cover all 4 stages equally well and transparently.
- minutes of House Group meetings should be displayed on block notice boards; are all responses to consultations published (for instance, over CCTV) and, if so, where?

**Barbican Estate Office  
Communications Plan 2015/2016  
January 2016**

ACTIVITY	FORMAT	AUDIENCE/ NUMBERS	FREQUENCY	CONTENT	IMPROVEMENTS/ACTIONS ( <i>in italics</i> )
Email Broadcasting (EB)	Email	Residents email database/ 1,400	As required (average 5-10 per week)	Updates on service issues, fringe developments, information provided by the Barbican Association & other COL Departments.	To review how BEO can increase resident engagement in joining BEO's email broadcasting service via all of our communications, as well as AGMs, Estate Concierge team.  Publicity campaign to collect email addresses including letters to absent leaseholders.  <i>Produce schedule of current activities to increase database.</i> <i>Produce schedule of potential activities to increase database.</i>
Bulletins	Mailchimp via EB	Residents email database/ 1,400	Quarterly (Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter)	Projects, works, estate-wide issues & updates on services. Key EB over the previous quarter. Committees 'You Said; We Did'	Developed Mailchimp service – following Winter 14 EB.  Copies available in the BEO & Concierge Offices/Desks for residents that do not use email, access to a computer.  Autumn & Winter bulletins completed.  <i>Schedule for 2016:</i> <i>Spring - March</i> <i>Summer - June</i> <i>Autumn - September</i> <i>Winter – December</i>

					<i>Develop 'You Said; We Did' for House Group Committees – review Spring 2016.</i>
Messages to leaseholders & absentee landlords  MB	Letters	Leaseholders absentee landlords/ 2,500	Quarterly (Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter)	Key messages & updates	Develop a programme of quarterly messages. June 15 – lease enforcement. October 15 – short term holiday lets.  <i>Schedule for 2016 (to review regarding number of key messages/bulletins/costs)</i> <i>Spring – March</i> <i>Summer – June</i> <i>Autumn – September</i> <i>Winter – December</i>
Car Park Offices & Lobby Desks	Notice boards, folders	Residents	24/7	'Information Points' updating residents on key issues	Trial of 1 car park office (review possible equipment, displays, content).  <i>Bunyan Car Park Office to be used as trial with noticeboard/leaflet holder.</i>
Residents Information Pack (RIP), Service Level Agreement (SLA) Handbook, Alterations Pack  SD/LB/SS/H D	Booklet	Residents/ 2,000	All residents when printed. New residents thereafter included in Welcome packs. Those leaseholders considering alterations.	RIP (A-Z format of facilities/aspects of Barbican living)  SLA – definition of agreed services.	SLA Handbook/RIP (to include alterations pack) to be reviewed by BEO & COL legal Department.  First stage – BEO to redraft SLA Handbook/RIP to be then reviewed by SLA Working Party.  Second stage – documents to be reviewed by RCC representative for each block.  <i>Draft Alterations Pack to SLA WP January. Set up trial of basecamp (web based discussion grouping) for Alterations Pack</i>  <i>Alterations Pack – draft to RCC representatives –</i>

					<p><i>February.</i>  <i>RIP – BEO draft March.</i>  <i>SLA – update only – date TBC.</i></p>
<p>Welcome packs</p> <p>HD</p>	<p>Booklets</p> <p>Website</p> <p>Letters</p>	<p>New leaseholders, residents &amp; registered sub-tenants</p>	<p>New leaseholders, residents &amp; registered sub-tenants</p>	<p>RIP/SLA handbook &amp; BEO contact details</p>	<p>Review of email links with welcome letter &amp; RIP/SLA handbook &amp; BEO contact details.</p>
<p>Website</p> <p>SS Pa Q 1</p>	<p>Website</p>	<p>Residents COL staff</p>	<p>As required, monthly</p>	<p>Concept Design, Resident Information &amp; resident representation &amp; consultation</p>	<p>Review website profile with COL.  Review website pages &amp; content.</p> <p><i>Live - December - update in Winter bulletin asking for feedback.</i>  <i>Review in conjunction with EB feedback &amp; changes to RIP.</i>  <i>Residents survey July 2016 – ask for feedback</i></p>
<p>Residents' Open Day</p> <p>MB</p>	<p>Presentation &amp; Q&amp;A</p>	<p>Residents</p>	<p>Annual</p>	<p>Presentation &amp; Q&amp;A</p>	<p>Possible annual event with an opportunity to offer open Q &amp; A, celebrate achievements, make residents feel valued &amp; present important messages.</p> <p><i>Summer 2016 – review with new AD.</i></p> <p><i>2017 - plan for 2019 50<sup>th</sup> Barbican Estate Anniversary – set up Officer Working Party.</i></p>

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