

BARBICAN ESTATE RESIDENTS CONSULTATION COMMITTEE
Thursday, 17 February 2022

Minutes of the Virtual 'Teams' Meeting held at 6.30 PM

Members:

Christopher Makin
Gordon Griffiths - Bunyan Court
Jane Smith - Seddon House
John Tomlinson - Cromwell
Mary Bonar - Wallside
Sandy Wilson - Shakespeare
Prof. Michael Swash - Willoughby
David Lawrence - Lauderdale
Adam Hogg - Chair, Barbican Association
Fiona Lean - Ben Jonson House
Rodney Jagelman - Thomas More - represented by Graham Bulpitt
James Ball - Brandon Mews
Guy Nisbett - Speed House
Andy Hope - Breton House
Jim Durcan - Andrewes House
Dave Taylor - Gilbert House
Sandra Jenner - Defoe House
Helen Hudson - John Trundle Court

In attendance:

Mary Durcan - Ward Member for Cripplegate

Officers:

Julie Mayer – Town Clerks (for items 3 and 4)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mark Bostock, Ted Reilly, and Rodney Jagelman

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 for the ensuing year.

4. TO ELECT TWO DEPUTY CHAIRMEN

Being the only Members willing to serve, Jim Durcan and Sandra Jenner were elected as Deputy Chairmen for the ensuing year.

5. **MINUTES**
The minutes of the Annual General meeting on 25th January 2021 were approved.
6. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**
There were no matters arising from the minutes.
7. **ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE RCC'S TERMS OF REFERENCE**
The Terms of Reference were approved.
8. **ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE RCC'S WORKING PARTIES**
 - The chair's paper showed that the membership of four working parties had been 'refreshed' during 2021.
 - The membership of the service charges working party had not been refreshed because it was in the middle of a busy workload.
 - There is a new working party for electric vehicle charging
 - A question was asked as to why working party memberships had not been decided by the full RCC per the AGM minutes
 - The Chair reminded members that a subsequent working meeting of the RCC had agreed that review by the full RCC was inappropriate and the decision would be made by chair, deputies, and the chairs of the working parties.
 - It was suggested that house group chairs might be consulted about volunteers from their houses in future to stop decision making being concentrated.
 - The chair was congratulated on managing the refresh process - at least 50% of each working party now consists of new members.

Review of the working parties

- The chair noted comments during Barbican Association Governance discussions that the RCC does not create its own agenda and highlighted that the RCC can create its own agenda.
- The chair also noted comments that the RCC agenda was too high-level and does not address the detail residents care about. The chair observed that the RCC is already working with officers on a range of detailed items through its working parties and each produces a report for the RCC. However, these reports are always at the bottom of the agenda.
- The chair suggested that working party reports should be higher up the agenda. At least one per meeting. This was supported.
- It was suggested that the working party reports should feature in the Estate Office's weekly email bulletin.
- Recommended the RCC should review the working party reports prior to the full RCC to maximise effectiveness.

Asset Management Working Party (AMWP)

The Chair provided an update of the work of the AMWP which reviews the Estate's communal physical assets - roofs, windows, lifts etc.

- Savills Stock Condition Survey: this report, that will outline a multi decade maintenance plan for the Estate, is awaited.

- A separate survey looking at window frame condition - focusing on windows not sheltered by fire escapes/balconies will be starting soon.
- Garchey: the five-year review is underway. The use of the Garchey for waste is declining. However, rainwater from the roofs and other 'grey water' also goes through the same system, so that needs to be dealt with if garchey is decommissioned. The consultants' initial solution was not cost effective.
- Other AMWP issues include replacement fire signage, fire door replacement, redecorations, lift refurbishment in the towers. Roofs are part of the Savills survey

Members observed that progress is slow. The Chair agreed and advised that the AMWP had increased its meeting frequency to alternate months to try and get traction.

Gardens Advisory Committee (GAG)

- The GAG inspects all the Barbican's gardens once a quarter and provides a report to the Estate Office and Open Spaces.
- The gardens provide relaxation for residents – but strategically they need to respond to climate changes and biodiversity. Made real progress.
- The proposal to renew the podium envisages an expansion of the garden area. They will require extra maintenance or intelligent planting to minimise maintenance.

Leaseholder Service Charges Working Party (LSCWP)

- The work of the LSCWP has been diverted to focus on concierge / car park attendant funding.
- We have reiterated core principles; The City should have consulted earlier; We should have fixed budgets; There should be a fixed level of services and a debate each year about additional services; We don't think that the BEO is run efficiently and have a meeting fixed with Andrew Carter; We have questions about whether some charges are valid.
- A small group is efficient to work on costs and would like to take on two new members.
- Naïve to think this will be quick – it needs resilience and hard work.
- A question was asked about the extra money blocks are being asked to pay to cover the car park deficit and the options for future years.
 - The LSCWP has not been involved in the additional charges to cover CPAs. Focus has been on quick opportunities to offset those increased charges.
 - City officers are looking at different ways of servicing the car parks as directed by the Barbican Residential Committee. The RCC and Barbican Association will to be given first sight of these options before a consultation with residents.
- A question was asked about the attempt to keep costs capped. That remains a work in progress
- A discussion was held about the timesheets used to justify costs and the need to examine these in detail.

Service Level Agreement Working Party (SLA)

- The SLA is working with the Estate Office to refresh the SLAs and the way they are to be monitored, with the aim of delving down further into services and performance levels.
- It was noted that the Key Performance Indicator report for Jan-March 2021 was missing. The chair surmised that it was probably due to covid.

Electric Vehicle Charging Working Party

- In the absence of the chair of the working party, the chair RCC provided a high level outline of the work of the group to date, including trying to determine demand, preferences and technical constraints.

Background Underfloor Heating Working Party (UFHWP)

- Concern was raised that the UFHWP has moved beyond its original remit from its original objective and potential duplication with the AMWP that will be discussed at the next AMWP meeting.
- Need to take account of / prioritise climate change and the increase in the cost of energy. What we can do to reduce any waste?
- The UFHWP would like a couple more members.
- A question was asked about individual heating controls. These are under consideration by the UFHWP and would allow a minimum and maximum temperature.

9. IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE RCC

The chair facilitated an open discussion on this matter. Contributions included:

- We didn't have enough people engaged. Need to get a professional in.
- RCC has an official role and officers are required to listen. We should be sterner. Just changing the name isn't enough.
- Impossible to audit the BEO's activities on major works.
 - Want the RCC to be about that process of procuring and tendering, but that is not what is happening.
 - Found that water tanks have to be redone – even though he had pointed out missing elements at the outset, and that work had never been done.
 - The RCC should get the answers to these questions in detail, and he doesn't feel that is what is happening.
- The chair invited anyone who wanted to work on improving the effectiveness of the RCC in a working party to contact him.

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

There were no questions.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

- Michael Bennett is due to retire very soon. The Chair had talked to Officers about engagement in the replacement of his role. Officers had suggested a small group of residents.

- A Member referred to government guidance on fire signage said that said blocks of flats with single staircase did not need fire signage. That needs following up. Chair asked for the report to raised at the AMWP.

The meeting ended at 8.30pm