

BARBICAN ESTATE RESIDENTS CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

Monday, 2 September 2013

Minutes of the meeting of the Barbican Estate Residents Consultation Committee held at Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 2 September 2013 at 6.30pm

Present

Members:

Tim Macer (Chairman) – Willoughby House	Mary Hickman - Andrewes House
Randall Anderson (Deputy Chairman) - Shakespeare Tower	Gillian Laidlaw - Mountjoy House
Robert Barker - Lauderdale Tower	Fiona Lean - Ben Jonson House
John Tomlinson – Cromwell Tower	Prof C Mounsey - Breton House
Mark Bostock - Frobisher Crescent	Philip Sharples - Speed House
Matt Collins - Defoe House	Jane Smith - Barbican Association
Dr Gianetta Corley - Gilbert House	John Taysum - Bunyan Court
David Graves - Seddon House	Janet Wells – John Trundle House
	Helen Wilkinson – Speed House

In Attendance

Officers:

Michael Bennett	- Community and Children's Services
Helen Davinson	- Community and Children's Services
Karen Tarbox	- Community and Children's Services
Anne Mason	- Community and Children's Services
David Bacon	- Chamberlain's
Julie Mayer	- Town Clerk's

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Gordon Griffiths and Michael Swash (the new representative for Willoughby House).

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

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the RCC Meeting held on 3 June 2013 were approved as a correct record.

4. TOWER CONCRETE INVESTIGATIONS AND REPAIRS

The Chairman agreed to table a representation from the Barbican Association, setting out further queries and concerns in his matter. The Town Clerk had received the document earlier in the day and forwarded it to the Chairman of the Barbican Association (BRC). The Chairman of the BRC had agreed that, in the interest of fairness and to give officers an opportunity to respond to the BA's further concerns, he would defer the report until December 2013. A member of

the Barbican Association, who had attended the meeting in April with the Consultants (at appendix 3 to the report), asked for officers to focus on 'structural defects' and 'defects affecting the structure'. The Chairman of the Barbican Association thanked the Chairman for his co-operation.

5. **BACKGROUND UNDERFLOOR HEATING**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services and noted the questions submitted in advance. *(All written questions and their responses are contained in Appendix 1 to these minutes).*

The Chairman asked for nominations, from each House Group, to set up a new Background Underfloor Heating Working Party. Members noted that the membership should be a mix of professional/technical expertise and lay persons with an interest in the project. The Chairman felt that the Sustainability Working Party could also make a valuable contribution and suggested that 1 or 2 of their members should also join.

Members suggested a general appeal via the Barbican Estate Office and Barbican Talk, with a link to the report on this agenda. It was also suggested that the time commitment be made clear and that the Working Party should represent the different types and sizes of accommodation on the Estate. Officers advised that the new Background heating contract would need to be in place by autumn 2014, so the project would be time limited.

6. **REVENUE OUTTURN**

Members received a report of the Chamberlain. During the discussion and questions, the following points were raised:

- The City Corporation is always seeking to achieve more efficient and effective ways to provide its services such as the IS reorganisation now taking place. This would necessitate setting up costs but this will result in longer term efficiencies
- Though the City Corporation is faced with financial restraints any service charge expenditure would not be affected.
- It has been agreed that £5,000 of the underspend will be carried forward to 2013/14 to carry out a concrete survey and testing of soffits at the Breton Car park. Members thanked officers for the tiling outside Lauderdale Tower and the reglazing of the fire escape; both of which had resulted from this process.
- Members were concerned about the drains on St Giles Terrace, which blocked regularly. Officers advised that they were being investigated and the Landlord Account would cover the repair.
- Premises costs on the Service Charge account have increased by 12% over last year. This was mainly due to increases in energy costs partly offset by a reduction in repairs and maintenance expenditure.

7. **RELATIONSHIP OF THE BARBICAN RESIDENTIAL COMMITTEE OUTTURN REPORT TO SERVICE CHARGE SCHEDULES**

The Committee received a joint report of the Director of Community and Children's Services and the Chamberlain noted the questions submitted in advance.

During the discussion and supplementary questions, the following points were raised:

- One of the reasons for the variation between the outturn cost and that billed was the reversal of an adjustment made to the 2011/12 Service Charges.
- IRS system total – Anne Mason agreed to investigate and report back.
- The time that the Engineers had spent elsewhere had been slightly over-estimated. However, the underfloor heating projects had fully engaged the Senior Engineer.
- The underfloor heating estimate was a combination of average consumption multiplied by the expected unit price. Should EDF terminate the Contract in January and there is a cold winter, then this estimate would be understated; anything above 'Economy 7' could be at the standard unit rate and the afternoon 'boost' could be much higher. The Chairman suggested a further estimate on this basis and that this be referred to the new Underfloor Heating Working Party.

Finally, residents were asked to note that **2 service charge workshops had been scheduled for 11 September at 1pm and 6.30pm at the Barbican Estate Office (in the Lilac Room)**. If RCC Members were unable to make it, Anne Mason offered 1-1 sessions. The sessions were open to non-RCC members but officers asked if the RCC Representative/House Group Chairmen could co-ordinate numbers and advise the Town Clerk of expected attendance. Members asked if officers could be mindful of the attendance of non-accountants.

8. **RESIDENTS' SURVEY**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services about the recent survey. During the discussion and questions, the following points were raised:

- All the notice boards on the Estate had advertised the survey, in order to include non-internet users. The response rate had been good but the number of responses on paper had been very low (just 5 or 6).

- It was difficult to offer a comparator to the last survey as the format had changed but this could be done next time. The Chairman offered to assist with the formatting of the next survey.
- Further information on the out of hours service would be advertised shortly.
- Given that on-line processing of surveys was less time consuming, officers would consider conducting an annual survey

In concluding, members thanked the Estate Office for a helpful survey.

9. **SLA REVIEW**

The Committee received a joint report of the Director of Community and Children's Services and noted the questions submitted in advance. *(All written questions and their responses are contained in Appendix 1 to these minutes).*

The Defoe House representative advised that he had provided feedback on the improvement to the LED lighting at staircase 10 (i.e. the exterior lighting to the name of the house and flat numbers). The Officer advised that this would be incorporated into the next report.

10. **UPDATE REPORT**

The Committee received a joint report of the Director of Community and Children's Services and noted the questions submitted in advance.

During the discussion and supplementary questions, the following points were raised:

- In respect of **Frobisher Crescent**, a response had been received late that afternoon and would be forwarded to the House Group. The Officer agreed to chase an outstanding query about the proposals for maintenance following sign off.
- **The London Film School (LFS) development** had been delayed due to fundraising. The development would be subject to planning permission and full consultation with residents. The School were keen to foster good relationships with residents and expected their offer to enhance the amenity of the estate. The Chairman of the Barbican Association advised that LFS had met with the residents last year and that the meeting had been well attended. Breton House had been in consultation with the School about the enabling works to the Art Centre; Professor Mounsey offered to contact them again and feed back to the RCC. Members noted that the development would be for about 30 students and any licensing facilities would be inclusive and low key.
- Further to queries raised at the last meeting about **tiling**, Karen Tarbox advised that there were 4 different types of tiling in use on the Estate. For Beech Gardens, it was intended to use smooth tiles, if they were of a suitable non-slip quality but design would not be compromised.

- Karen Tarbox agreed to investigate and feed back on the plinth tiles; the availability of white tiles; the ramp at Alban Gate (which could be extremely slippery in winter); the Upper Podium area (above the Art Centre) and the broken tiles at Defoe House. Members noted that Ms Tarbox had been working with the City Surveyors on an Asset Management Strategy, which would ensure a standard approach for dealing with the above issues, and thanked her for her valued input.
- The Chairman asked for nominees to fill a vacancy on the Asset Maintenance Working Party and Fiona Lean (Ben Jonson House) volunteered.
- The Deputy Chairman (Mr Anderson) had received a response from VFM (in the last hour) about the **TV upgrade**. Mr Anderson would forward this to the Working Party and arrange a meeting in the next week or so. The Chairman thanked Mr Anderson for his intervention in keeping this project on track.
- The Meeting on **Beech Gardens** had been postponed, pending a decision of the Court of Common Council. Ms Tarbox agreed to investigate why a work Health & Safety platform had been left behind, following the removal of the scaffolding.
- **Two Lift Reports** would be presented to the Barbican Residential Committee on 16th September (one on the maintenance contract for Barbican Lifts and the other by the City Surveyor on performance generally for the public lifts and escalators adjoining the Barbican Estate). Both reports would be in the public domain on Friday 6th September.
- Karen Tarbox was on the Planning Delivery Board for the **YMCA** and would provide an update on the progress of the planning permission and consultation with residents.

11. **MEMBERSHIP OF THE BEECH GARDENSLANDSCAPING WORKING PARTY**

The Chairman asked for nominations for the above working party, which would need to convene fairly quickly in order to present a plan to the December BRC Meeting. The Committee noted that members of the Garden Advisory Group and the Asset Maintenance Group would be included and the Chairman asked for representation from the House Groups overlooking Beech Gardens; i.e. John Trundle, Bryer, Bunyan, Defoe, Lauderdale and Shakespeare. The Chairman asked for nominations by 16th September, but if there were no nominations from a particular house, then the House Group Chairman or RCC Member would be co-opted. The Officer advised that the Working Party would work with the Consultant on the planting regime, soft landscaping and soil types etc.

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

There were no further questions.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

The Chairman thanked members for their advanced questions as they mad for a more efficient and focussed meeting.

The meeting ended at 8.30 pm

Chairman

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