

BARBICAN ESTATE RESIDENTS CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

Monday, 7 September 2020

Minutes of the meeting streamed live to
You Tube - <https://youtu.be/f-F-yXbYJEw> at 5.30 pm

Present

Members:

Christopher Makin - Chairman	Mark Bostock - Frobisher Crescent
Adam Hogg - Deputy Chairman	Guy Nisbett- Speed House
Ted Reilly - Deputy Chairman	Jane Samsworth - Defoe House
Gordon Griffiths - Bunyan Court	Fiona Lean - Ben Jonson House
Jane Smith - Barbican Association	Rodney Jagelman - Thomas More House
John Taysum - Bryer Court	Mike Cribb - Andrewes House
John Tomlinson - Cromwell Tower	Nadia Bouzidi - Gilbert House
Mary Bonar - Wallside	James Ball - Brandon Mews
David Graves - Seddon House	Joe Reeves - Mountjoy House
David Lawrence - Lauderdale Tower	Tim Hollaway - Lambert Jones Mews
	Fionnuala Hogan – Willoughby House

In Attendance:

Michael Hudson – Chairman of the Barbican Residential Committee
Mark Wheatley – Deputy Chairman of the Barbican Residential Committee
Helen Fentimen - Ward Member for Aldersgate

Officers:

Paul Murtagh	- Assistant Director, Barbican and Property Services, Community and Children's Services
Helen Davinson	- Community and Children's Services
Michael Bennett	- Community and Children's Services
Anne Mason	- Community and Children's Services
Julie Mayer	- Town Clerks

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Sandy Wilson - Shakespeare Tower, Fred Rodgers – Breton House and Professor Michael Swash – Willoughby House (sent a representative).

2. MEMBERS DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that – the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March 2020 be approved.

Matters arising

- Members had received a brief update report from the Gardens Advisory Committee ahead of this meeting and noted that the request for an additional post had been halted due to the pandemic. However, the Open Spaces Director was now looking to fill this.
- Subsequent to the meeting, John Taysum asked that his apologies be recorded.

4. **BARBICAN ESTATE OFFICE RECOVERY PLANNING COVID-19**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which provided an update on the provision of services during the Government lockdown and subsequent recovery planning. In response to questions the following points were noted:

The officer agreed to investigate as to why Brandon Mews and Ben Jonson's comments on the management of the Estate during Lockdown had not made it onto the appendix. With regard to the pink card system, there was a general agreement that, whilst the system was popular with residents, it was also somewhat archaic and admin intensive and officers should, therefore, investigate a modern alternative. The Chairman asked for consultation with residents before the introduction of a new system and Members noted that this would be discussed further at the next SLA Working Party Meeting in October.

Concerns were raised by the Frobisher representation in terms of poor communications between the Barbican Arts Centre and the Estate Office during lockdown in respect of; (1) Security works to the Barbican Arts Centre on the 6th floor, which the Estate Office had received no information about and necessitated engagement with the City Surveyors to ensure works were undertaken at a reasonable hour and; (2) failure to communicate with residents about the reopening of the Barbican Arts Centre and the lack of residents' access to the Silk Street lift. The officer advised that this issue was being considered by the Frobisher Crescent Liaison Group.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

5. **CONCRETE REPAIRS TO THE BARBICAN ESTATE - GATEWAY 6 - OUTCOME REPORT**

The Committee received an outcome report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the concrete repairs project, which was now complete. Members were pleased to note the sound concrete structure of the vast majority of the Barbican Estate.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

6. **2019/20 REVENUE OUTTURN (EXCLUDING THE RESIDENTIAL SERVICE CHARGE ACCOUNT)**

The Committee received a report of the Chamberlain and the Director of Community and Children's Services, which compared the revenue outturn for the services overseen by the Barbican Residential Committee in 2019/20 with the final agreed budget for the year. The income and expenditure in relation to dwellings service charges was the subject of the next report on this agenda.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

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

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which provided information on residential service charge expenditure for 2019/20. The report compared the outturn with the 2019/20 estimate and the 2018/19 actual expenditure.

The Deputy Chairman had submitted a written question prior to the meeting in terms the specific actions taken by the Barbican Estate Office to provide residents with evidence that they were managing expenditure and providing value for money across all costs.

Members noted that there had been a discussion on this question at the 'callover', just prior to this Committee. The officer suggested that this was a matter that should be dealt with at the Service Charge Working Party. The Deputy Chairman had responded in that he agreed that it ought to be the appropriate group but that, for more than two years, the WP had been trying to get a response to this question without success. The officer suggested that the Deputy Chairman should write to him outlining the difficulties and the Deputy Chairman appraised the meeting of this conversation.

The Service Charges Working Party (SCWP) had also been discussing use of the City of London Corporation's Housing System to examine repairs in order to avoid repetitive costs for some years. No action to make use of the system had been taken. There were similar concerns raised by the Frobisher Crescent representative in terms of escalating costs for general repairs and a request that this too be considered as part of the report. The Chairman also asked to attend the next meeting of the SCWP.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

8. **'YOU SAID; WE DID' (OUTSTANDING ACTIONS LIST)**

The Committee received the outstanding actions list.

The officer agreed to investigate why the Asset Maintenance WP's lift reports had not been sent to the House Group Chairs.

The representative for Cromwell Tower (also the Fire Safety Champion for the Estate) raised the following points in terms of fire safety:

- a) Fire safety notices had been appearing in various lobbies in the towers and were due to be rolled out, however, the House Group representative had raised concerns. The Project Manager was currently on leave and the matter would be progressed on his return later this week. The concerns were mainly in respect of confusion in terms of the 'stay put/evacuate' instructions, how they had been affixed and any contravention of Listed Building regulations. The Assistant Director assured Members that the wording on the notices was standard and had been approved by both the City of London Corporation Fire Officer and the Fire Brigade. However, the roll out had been suspended whilst the concerns were investigated and resolved.
- b) In terms of the fire door replacement project, the Assistant Director reminded Members that a mid-year capital bid had been submitted to replace all doors and door sets following destructive testing. Members noted that a lot of the background work had already been undertaken for the HRA properties and this knowledge would be transferred to the Barbican works. If the capital bid were to be approved in September, there would then be a lead in period of 3 months, with a maximum completion timescale of 18 months to 2 years.
- c) The Assistant Director had regular meetings with the City of London Fire Safety Officer and the Fire Brigade and Members noted that, whilst the fire risk to the Barbican was low, due to its construction, there was a significantly higher smoke ingress risk. The door replacement had been recommended as a result of additional safety works and any interim measures were likely to take as much time and cost the same as the full replacement programme.
- d) The Fire Safety Champion was concerned that a test undertaken on one of the tower blocks had found that the Fire Brigade's method of working had blocked the fire escape with their firefighting equipment. Furthermore, vertical risers could carry smoke and there were concerns that some residents' works to their properties might not have been declared to the Estate Office. It was, therefore, essential for them to be checked as a matter of priority.
- e) Just prior to the Lockdown, Arup (a company very experienced in the construction of the Barbican Estate) had been engaged to undertake a survey. Unfortunately, they had been required to furlough staff but would soon be operating again and hoped to start the survey at the beginning of October. The Assistant Director advised that these works would remain a top priority. An initial report had been submitted to the BRC earlier in the year and the Assistant Director offered to recirculate this to RCC Members. The survey would take 4-6 weeks and any serious matters would be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

- f) In respect of the Listed Building Guidelines, Members were reminded that the City had collated these, with input from stakeholders, and suggested they be a part of all relevant staff inductions. The Assistant Director was very familiar with the guidelines and had suggested they be reviewed, in consultation with residents and Planning.
- g) Members noted that officers were fully aware of the challenges in terms of fire safety not being compromised by LB regs; every effort would be made to replicate existing fixtures and residents would be fully engaged. If the existing ironmongery were found to be up to the British Standard, then it could be re-used. The Assistant Director further advised that fire doors would need to be accredited on final installation.
- h) The Chairman appreciated that every effort would be made to replicate existing fixtures but highlighted that, given the difficulties encountered with the installation of new fire safety signage, it is vital that residents are consulted as early as possible with regard to the design of the new fire door sets.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

9. SALES AND LETTINGS UPDATE

The Committee received a report on the sales and lettings which had been approved by officers, under delegated authority, since the last meeting.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

10. UPDATE REPORT

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

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

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

There were no questions.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There were no items.

On closing the meeting, the Chairman thanked Members and Officers for their input and those members of the public watching the You Tube Stream for their interest in this meeting of the Barbican Residents' Consultation Committee. It was noted that a pre-meeting with Members had resulted in a more streamlined and productive meeting.

The meeting ended at 6.40 pm

Chairman

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