

BARBICAN RESIDENTIAL COMMITTEE
Monday, 21 September 2020

Minutes of the meeting Streamed Live to You Tube:
<https://youtu.be/ZuJU1ENpe3M> at 9.30 am

Present

Members:

Randall Anderson - *ex-officio*
Adrian Bastow
Mark Bostock
Deputy David Bradshaw
Henry Colthurst*
Mary Durcan
Michael Hudson*
Jeremy Mayhew*
Andrew McMurtrie*
Barbara Newman (*in the Chair*)
Susan Pearson*
Deputy John Tomlinson
Mark Wheatley*
Dawn Wright*

*indicates non-resident Member

Officers:

Paul Murtagh	- Assistant Director, Barbican and Property Services, Community and Children's Services Department
Alan Bennetts	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department
Jason Hayes	- Community and Children's Services
Helen Davinson	- Community and Children's Services
Barry Ashton	- Community and Children's Services
Anne Mason	- Community and Children's Services
Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlains
Julie Mayer	- Town Clerks
Kerry Nicholls	- Town Clerks

It was moved by Deputy David Bradshaw and seconded by Mr Jeremy Mayhew that Mrs Barbara Newman take the Chair

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies. Mr Anderson was attending a Home Office Meeting and would join the meeting as soon as possible.

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

The Town Clerk advised that the decisions taken by the Dispensations Sub (of the Standards Committee) on 18th September 2020 had been circulated to Members ahead of this meeting.

There were no declarations.

3. ORDER OF THE COURT OF COMMON COUNCIL

The Committee received the order of the Court dated 16th July 2020, appointing the Committee and approving its Terms of Reference. The Town Clerk reminded Members of the amendments in terms of the composition of resident and non-resident members; i.e. 7 non-resident and 6 resident, and the quorum, which was now 3 and not 4.

4. TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER 29

The Committee proceeded to elect a Chairman. Being the only Member declaring a willingness to service it was:

RESOLVED, That – Michael Hudson be elected as Chairman of the Barbican Residential Committee for 2020-21.

On taking the Chair, Mr Hudson welcomed Andrew McMurtrie to the Committee and thanked the retiring Members, Chris Boden, who had stood down to make way for a new Member and thereby avoiding a ballot, and Stephen Quilter and William Pimlott who had been Cripplegate Ward members. Members also noted that Randall Anderson, formerly a Resident Member for Aldersgate Ward, was now ex-officio, by virtue of being Chairman of the Community and Children's Services Committee.

5. TO ELECT A DEPUTY CHAIRMAN IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER 30

The Committee proceeded to elect a Deputy Chairman. Being the only Member declaring a willingness to service it was:

RESOLVED, That – Mark Wheatley be elected as Deputy Chairman of the Barbican Residential Committee for 2020-21.

6. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED, that – the minutes of the meeting held on 16th June 2020 be approved.

Matters arising

- a) A Member asked for the points raised at the last meeting, in respect of the expenditure and the valuation on the car parks being overstated, to be recorded. The Chairman advised that he and Deputy Bradshaw had been in contact with the Chamberlain and Estate officers, asking for a more detailed analysis.
- b) The demand for electric cars was very likely to increase and the officer agreed to investigate whether some bays could be made larger.
- c) The Town Clerk advised that the Car Park Charges Working Party was still in existence and would meet once a year, before the annual report on car park charges was presented to the BRC's June meeting.

- d) Mobility scooters and access via the staircases is considered on a case by case basis, given the unique nature of the Barbican Estate.
- e) Officers had a legal right to obtain access to any abandoned storage units.

7. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BARBICAN RESIDENTS' CONSULTATION COMMITTEE (RCC)

The Committee received the draft minutes of the meeting held on 7th September 2020.

Matters arising

Members noted that the Deputy Chairman (of the RCC) had submitted a written question, prior to the meeting of the RCC on 7th September 2020, enquiring as to whether the Barbican Estate Office could provide evidence that residents were receiving value for money. The Assistant Director advised that it had been agreed that the Service Charges Working Party would be looking at this in detail before a report was presented to the RCC and the BRC.

8. TO CONFIRM THE APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIRMAN (OR THEIR REPRESENTATIVE) TO THE CULTURE MILE WORKING PARTY

Members noted that a position on the Culture Mile Working Party (CMWP) fell to the Chairman of the Barbican Residential Committee (BRC), or their representative. Mr Randall Anderson had served in this capacity for a number of years. Mr Anderson was also the Chairman of the Community and Children's Services Committee (CCSC) and, whilst this Committee did not appoint to the Working Party, the CMWP played a considerable role in terms of outreach projects with the surrounding communities. Whilst there had been some speculation that the Working Party might roll into 'business as usual', there was still uncertainty as to when this might be. Members also noted that Mr Anderson was in his final year as Chairman of CCSC. Mr Bostock had also expressed a willingness to serve on the Working Party and, therefore, the Chairman decided to put this to a vote of the full Committee and would only exercise his casting vote in the event of a tie.

RESOLVED, That - following a ballot of 8 to 4, Mr Randall Anderson be elected as the BRC representative on the Culture Mile Working Party.

9. 'YOU SAID; WE DID' - OUTSTANDING ACTIONS LIST

The Committee received its Outstanding Actions List.

In respect of concerns raised about fire signage and the temporary suspension of the project, Members noted that a meeting of the Fire Safety Group would be convened once all the information was available and, colleagues in Planning had been consulted. As explained at the Residents' Consultation Committee (RCC) meeting on 7th September 2020, a temporary measure in respect of upgrading some 2000 doors on the Estate would likely take as long as the entire replacement programme and there were insufficient resources to do this. Members of the RCC had been advised that a lot of the work has already been undertaken on the replacement of front entrance doors on the City's HRA

Estates, and the information gathered and, the lessons learnt, would enable savings in both time and resources for the project on the Barbican Estate. As a latest estimate, the project was likely to take 18 months to two years, but it might be completed sooner.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

10. UPDATE REPORT

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

The Chairman of the Underfloor Heating Working Party reported on a recent survey which had received a very good response; i.e. - 543 responses out of 2000 residents. The survey asked whether residents would be happy for the heating supply to be turned off for approximately half an hour in the middle of the night in January and February, to allow for extra supply in the shoulder months of May and October. The results were: 347 voting yes (63.9%) and 196 voting no (36.1%). Members asked if this could now be implemented.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

11. 2019/20 REVENUE OUTTURN (EXCLUDING THE RESIDENTIAL SERVICE CHARGE ACCOUNT)

The Committee received a report of the Chamberlain and Director of Community and Children's Services which compared the revenue outturn for the services overseen by the Committee in 2019/20, with the final agreed budget for the year. Members noted that income and expenditure in relation to dwellings service charges was the subject of the next report on this agenda. Members were pleased to note an increase on the surplus and the increased income from the stores.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

12. 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. It also compared the outturn with the 2019/20 estimate and the 2018/19 actual expenditure.

Concern was expressed in that, if costs continued to rise ahead of inflation, there would be a serious impact on those residents on fixed incomes and pensions. It was, therefore, very important that these concerns were captured by the Working Party's analysis, referred to at item 7 above, along with the need for a balance between those able and unable to pay for additional services. The Assistant Director and Revenues Manager have looked in detail at the increases over the past 10 years and this too would feed into the work.

Members noted that the largest expenditure was in respect of front-line staff. The Assistant Director advised that the City of London Corporation's

procurement process was always followed to ensure transparency and provide value for money, and he welcomed further observations from Members and residents which could be considered by the Working Party. Another high area of expenditure was electricity (heating). The provision of electricity was subject to a regular procurement process and, officers had recently written to all residents about the introduction of a new, more dynamic procurement process. Repairs and Maintenance works were also subject to rigid procurement processes.

Frobisher Crescent Residents would be able spread service charges over four quarters, on request. Members also noted that service charge letters had gone out to residents and the schedules had been published on the internet.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

13. BARBICAN ESTATE OFFICE RECOVERY PLANNING COVID-19

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which updated Members on the provision of services during the Government lockdown and subsequent recovery planning.

Residents had been very pleased by the commitment shown by the Estate staff and lack of disruption to key services. It was suggested that some of the streamlining could remain in place to achieve savings, without detriment to the overall quality of services to residents. The phone calls to elderly residents had been particularly well received. Whilst the pink cards were very popular, Members asked to be advised when a less labour intensive and more modern method might be available. Members noted that two parcels had been mislaid during the period of lockdown, but this had since been rectified.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

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

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services seeking to close the above project. Members noted that the Projects Sub Committee had commended the way in which the Gateway 6 report had been written and would be using this as an example of best practice for all future Gateway 6 reports.

RESOLVED, that:

1. The content and report of this report, together with the lessons learnt be noted.
2. The closure of the project be authorised.

15. SALES AND LETTINGS UPDATE

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services advising Members of sales and lettings that had been approved by officers since the last meeting, under delegated authority and in accordance

with Standing Orders. The report also provided information on surrenders of tenancies received and the number of flat sales to date.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

16. ARREARS

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services, advising Members of the current arrears in respect of tenants and leaseholders on the Barbican Estate.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

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

In response to concerns raised about some residents exercising on their balconies during lockdown, particularly on paving slabs which were unstable and noisy, officers advised that the recent Residents' Bulletin had asked residents to refrain from doing so. Members asked that any unstable paving slabs should be reported in the usual manner for investigation and repair.

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

1. Lord Lisvane's Governance Review of the City of London Corporation.

The Chairman felt that Lord Lisvane's recommendation to abolish the Barbican Residential Committee was disappointing and, should the recommendation be implemented, he questioned how the City of London Corporation would exercise its duty to support the Barbican residents. The Chairman asked Members to be mindful of the BEO's workload but, suggested that they might need to work with the Chair of the RCC in facilitating a ballot as to alternative management arrangements. There were considerations in respect of GDPR, but the Barbican Association was likely to have the majority of the residents' contact details.

Concerns were expressed in that some scrutiny might be lost, noting that the Barbican formed a large percentage of the City's resident population. It was very likely that the proposed new Property Committee would set up a sub-committee to represent the residents, should they decide not to form a management committee, as it would be necessary to retain some form of Governance which officers were accountable to.

Members observed that Barbican residents were generally very strong supporters of the City and the Committee. Concern was expressed in that those seeking to abolish the BRC might be unfamiliar with its work and likely to have never served on it. However, it was also noted that the BRC was perceived by some as unwieldy and expensive and there might be alternatives that would be more fit for purpose and representative of the commercial market.

There was a discussion about possible fragmentation generally across the various Barbican Committees and Boards, in that some cross working

might be lost in terms of considerate contractor practices ;i.e. – works during school exam times and disturbance to residents at anti-social hours.

2. Officers were thanked for bringing an outstanding matter relating to a garage at Brandon Mews to a conclusion.
3. Members received an update on two recent non-public decisions taken under urgency provision in respect of Covid rent concessions

19. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED – That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act as follows:-

Item	Paragraph
21	2,3
22	3
24	2,3

20. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

RESOLVED, That – the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 16 June be approved.

21. ARREARS APPENDIX

The Committee received an appendix in respect of item 16 on the Agenda.

22. FIRE SAFETY WORKS - FROBISHER CRESCENT RESIDENTIAL PREMISES - GATEWAY 1-4 - PROJECT PROPOSAL AND OPTIONS APPRAISAL

The Committee considered and approved a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.

23. NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

There were no questions.

24. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED

There were 2 items while the public were excluded.

Meeting ended 11.29am.

Chairman

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