

BARBICAN ESTATE RESIDENTS CONSULTATION COMMITTEE (RCC)
Monday, 1 March 2021

Minutes of the meeting streamed live to
You Tube: <https://youtu.be/JlzwR6ynlWI> at 6.30pm
(please note the recording is available for one year from the date of the meeting)

Present:

Christopher Makin - Chairman	Fiona Lean - Ben Jonson House
Ted Reilly - Deputy Chairman	Rodney Jagelman - Thomas More
Mike Cribb - Deputy Chairman	James Ball - Brandon Mews
Gordon Griffiths - Bunyan Court	Joe Reeves - Mountjoy House
Jane Smith - Seddon House	Tim Hollaway - Lambert Jones Mews
John Tomlinson- Cromwell Tower	Guy Nisbett - Speed House
Mary Bonar - Wallside	Helen Hudson - John Trundle House
Sandy Wilson - Shakespeare Tower	Dave Taylor - Gilbert House
Prof. Michael Swash - Willoughby House	Andy Hope - Breton House
David Lawrence - Lauderdale Tower	Jim Durcan - Andrewes House
Mark Bostock - Frobisher Crescent	
Adam Hogg - Barbican Association	
Jane Samsworth - Defoe House	

In attendance:

Michael Hudson – Chairman of the BRC
Mark Wheatley – Deputy Chairman of the BRC
Helen Fentimen – Ward Member for Aldersgate

Officers:

Paul Murtagh - Assistant Director, Barbican and Property Services, Community and Children's Services
Jason Hayes - Community and Children's Services
Michael Bennett - Community and Children's Services
Helen Davinson - Community and Children's Services
Anne Mason - Community and Children's Services
Barry Ashton - Community and Children's Services
Phil Black - Chamberlains
Julie Mayer - Town Clerks

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

Before commencing the business on the agenda, the Chairman welcomed the following new Members to the Committee

- Jim Durcan – Andrewes House – replacing Mike Cribb who was elected as Deputy Chairman of the RCC at the AGM on 25th January 2021
- Andy Hope – succeeding Fred Rodgers (Breton House)
- Dave Taylor – succeeding Ian Dixon (Gilbert House)

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 30th November 2020 be approved.

The Committee noted that Fiona Lean (Ben Jonson House) had attended by telephone on 30th November 2020, and would do likewise for today's meeting.

4. **'YOU SAID; WE DID' - OUTSTANDING ACTIONS LIST**

The Committee received its outstanding actions list and during the discussion and questions, the following points were noted:

Despite best efforts from officers, the high-walks funding issue remained outstanding, and it was unlikely that any works would progress in either this or the next financial year. In respect of the recent announcement in respect of extensive renovation works planned for the Arts Centre, concern was expressed about potential implications on improvements to the high-walks. The officer advised that the Barbican Estate Office (BEO) enjoyed a good working relationship with the Art Centre and would raise this with them.

In response to the pre-committee question concerning the Consultant making recommendations in respect of the Towers' lift replacement programme also proposing to bid for the project management of any eventual works. The officer advised that all tenders were managed by the City Corporation's Procurement Department and the opportunity would be open to any suitably qualified company, and evaluated in the same way as other major projects.

5. **ORAL UPDATES**

The Committee received the following Oral Updates:

5.1 **E-Billing for Leaseholders**

An officer from the Chamberlain's Department was heard and provided an update on the availability of electronic billing, which had also been referenced in the recent residents' newsletter. Members noted the email address provided, which could be recirculated if helpful. The officer advised that Chamberlains were still receiving a lot of cheques but, as the majority of staff were not attending Guildhall due to the pandemic, residents were asked to use alternative means of payment wherever possible. Finally, the Committee noted that council tax bills would be sent out at the end of this month. The City Corporation was fully aware of the hardships experienced over the past year and council tax support was available, with top ups available for working age claimants. Residents were asked to contact the Chamberlains for more information and to assess their eligibility.

5.2 Fire Safety

The Assistant Director, Barbican and Property Services was heard in respect of fire safety matters. The Committee was advised that Arup had commenced the fire safety review of the four blocks on the Estate. Due to the restrictions, the review had been limited, to date, to the desktop survey and background research. It was hoped that the site survey work would commence within the next four weeks, subject to the lifting of further restrictions. The Assistant Director commended staff for their hard work in facilitating the desktop research under very challenging circumstances. The Committee noted that Arup's report would, hopefully, be ready in time for the June meetings of the BRC/RCC.

The Committee noted that the new fire risks assessments were due this year and the Corporate Fire Safety Advisor had recommended that the tower blocks be assessed first. A supplier had been procured to carry out the risk assessments and there a framework was already in place. The Assistant Director stressed, however, that there would be little point in proceeding until officers were in receipt of Arup's report and residents would receive updates on progress.

The Committee was reminded that the City had agreed in principle to a £20m fire door replacement programme. The Assistant Director advised that a 'Gateway 2' report on the door replacement project would be presented to the BRC on 15th March, in the public part of the agenda. The Gateway 2 report would seek £275k funding, to start the project, and the next stage would be a 'Gateway 4' report, which would also be presented to the Barbican Residential and Projects Sub Committees.

In respect of Frobisher Crescent, the Committee noted that the specification for the compartmentation works was almost complete and due to go out to tender the following week. It is expected that works should commence in the Spring/Summer this year and complete in early Autumn. It was also noted that the initial estimate for the works had been revised upwards, from 600k to 800k, and the Chamberlain had agreed this in principle, pending a further bid once the tenders had been returned.

The Committee was reminded that the fire signage project had been suspended for the time being, pending checks with Planning colleagues. The Assistant Director advised that, whilst Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent would not be required, a bespoke fire strategy was being developed to ensure that the signage complies not only with the requirements of the Regulatory Reform Order, but also, satisfies the specific requirements of the London Fire Brigade, the Corporation's Fire Safety Adviser and Planning. The Committee noted that procurement for a fire engineering company to prepare the fire safety strategy had gone out to tender, with the returns expected on Monday 8th March. The Assistant Director advised that the fire engineering company would carry out site visits to familiarise itself with the structure and status of the buildings as part of the development of the strategy. Once the strategy is complete, it will be discussed with the representatives of the BRC Fire Safety Working Group before seeking the approval of Planning colleagues.

Members were reminded that the number, type and location of the fire signage is determined by statutory requirements and not officers or residents. However, a Member was aware of some legal challenge to this, particularly if the resulting signage was not easy to read.

In response to a question from a Member, the Assistant Director assured the meeting that Brandon Mews would be included in the programme for the new Fire Risk Assessments to be done in 2021.

6. **SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT REVIEW**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services, in its original pre-pandemic format, which updated Members on the review of the estate-wide implementation of Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and Key Performance Measures (KPIs) for the quarter October – December 2020. The report also detailed comments from the House Officers and the Resident Working Party and an ongoing action plan for each of the SLAs.

In response to a question about the recruitment process to replace an existing House Officer, officers agreed to share the job description with the Committee. The Committee also noted that the post was being filled internally; a handover and training were underway, and an announcement confirming the appointment would appear shortly in the bulletin. It was noted that the existing postholder, Sheila Delaney, was highly valued and would be available to attend the next meeting of the Shakespeare Tower House Group, prior to her departure.

In respect of concerns raised about the fire risks associated with rubbish being left out too early and contractors using corridors for the storage of tools and materials, the Estate Office would be considering these points this week and report back to the respective RCC Members. It was noted that the question had sought a solution as to how 'we' could resolve this and, therefore, it would be joint venture of officers and residents. The officer advised that, as this would have implications for the whole Estate, any findings would appear in the residents' bulletin.

In respect of a query about the KPI on lift performance, this would be clarified either with the circulation of the minutes from this meeting or at the BRC on 15th March.

It was noted that the 0.04% quoted in respect of the new KPI on repair checks was a historic figure for the previous year; i.e. to the end of 2019 - and there was a gap for the final quarter - October to December 2020. This would be followed up and corrected, either with the circulation of the minutes of this meeting or the BRC agenda. The officer also confirmed that, in the event of failures, the contractor would be instructed to return and there would be no charge for rectification. The percentages represented all jobs checked and was not related to value.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

7. **PROGRESS OF SALES AND LETTINGS**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of sales and lettings approved by officers, under delegated authority, since your last meeting. The report also provided information on surrenders of tenancies received and the number of flat sales to date.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

8. **WORKING PARTY UPDATES**

The Committee received updates from the following working parties:

8.1 **Gardens Advisory**

8.2 **Asset Maintenance**

8.3 **Background Underfloor Heating**

8.4 **Leaseholder Service Charge**

8.5 **Electric Vehicle Charging – report and resolution**

The Deputy Chairman introduced a late report and resolution from the Electric Vehicle Charging Working Party (EVCWP), which was convened at short notice, and thanked the Estate Office for their timely responses. Members of the Working Party were keen for the lessons learnt in the first phase to be implemented in the second phase and were seeking full engagement. The Deputy Chairman also acknowledged that the Estate Office's EV project was considerably advanced, when compared to some similar developments.

The officer advised that the EVCWP was originally established a few years ago but attendances had dwindled to just a few Common Councillors. Further to the briefing provided to the Working Party a few weeks ago, the officer advised that the charging policy had originally been agreed by the Barbican Residential Committee (BRC) and any proposals for amending it would need to go back to the Committee. The briefing had stated that that the funding bid required a speedy response in terms of developing a specification for the infrastructure. This had been agreed at site meetings, and with a number of stakeholders, and more detail would emerge over the next few weeks. The Deputy Chairman had compiled a questionnaire for an all-resident survey to be carried out over the next few weeks.

The Shakespeare Tower representative advised that electric vehicle charging was raised at all of their house meetings and residents felt they could make a valuable contribution.

There were a couple of suggestions made in respect of strengthening the resolution circulated before the meeting, to fully reflect joint working and resident involvement and it was RESOLVED, that :

The RCC would like to congratulate the Barbican Estate Office (BEO) and City Corporation officers in winning funding for an expansion of electric vehicle (EV) charging capability within the Barbican Estate. This has been achieved during challenging times.

The RCC would like City officers to acknowledge that, despite the best efforts of BEO officers, and the stalwart efforts of our car parking attendants, the current provision is creaking, with poor availability, little maintenance, unrealistic charging, and an obscure commercial relationship linking the three parties involved in this process; i.e. - the residents, the providers of the EV charging and the BEO.

The RCC hopes that the lessons learned over the last two years will inform officers, and that they will join with residents and the Electric Vehicle Charging Working Party to ensure that this second, and any future phase of EV provision, is a success, rather than working in isolation as has been the case.

9. UPDATE REPORT

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

In response to a question about the poor state of repair of Bunyan Court, the Committee noted that there would be a full report to June Committee on the rescheduling of the redecorations programme.

RESOLVED, That – the report be noted.

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

In response to a question on podium waterproofing, the Assistant Director advised that the Phase 1 project had not yet been closed. There are still issues with leaks from the areas resurfaced under Phase 1 and, these are being progressed with the original design consultant and contractor. The Committee also noted that there would eventually be a Gateway 6 (Project Closure Report) but the Assistant Director would not sign this off until he was satisfied that contractual obligations had been fulfilled. The Assistant Director also advised that Phase 1 of the works had predated the officers currently engaged on the project, however, a lot of lessons had been learnt, and an update report on Phase 2 of the Barbican Podium Waterproofing Project would be presented to the June meetings of the Residents' Consultation and Barbican Residential Committees.

In terms of further concerns expressed about the poor maintenance and condition of the surrounding landscaping, the Committee noted that this was not within the original contractor's remit but officers would investigate.

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

The Town Clerk advised of the following:

There was currently a 3-week gap between the June and September RCC and BRC meetings. As the convention was for a 2-week gap, which was also the most practical in terms of agenda planning, Members would be contacted shortly in respect of alternative dates.

The RTA Audit would take place this year and, as it was five years since the House Groups' Constitutions had been required as part of the submission, they would be required year. The Town Clerk would email all RCC Members shortly advising them of the requirements for the audit and for confirmation that the correct contact details in respect of Chairmen and Secretaries were held on file.

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm

Chairman

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