

Background Underfloor Heating Working Party (BUHWP) January 2022

The membership of the BUHWP was renewed in 2021 following the decision of the Barbican Residents' Consultative Committee to revitalise its working parties. We now need to reconsider the agenda of this Working Party and our work for the following year. Some of the issues we face are set out in this report.

In October 2021 the load shifting experiment concluded. We were able to shift heating from the mid-winter months to October and April. It is being repeated this coming year following a favourable review. Although this has had some benefits in the months where many residents felt the heating was insufficient, it has not addressed the issue for those residents who live in what are termed 'hard to heat flats'. These are those on the ends of buildings, the top floors and those above the Podium. Our focus must be on trying to alleviate this problem. This means insulation and draught proofing.

I know that some residents are keen to install double or triple glazing. With large windows and the increasing cost of electricity this is an option to be considered. I am concerned about duplication of work and, as windows and doors are being discussed by the Asset Management Working Party, it would be sensible for us to discuss with them the responsibilities. I have no doubt that many residents would like to see progress on this. With the Etude Survey, the Saville's Condition Survey, the Climate Action Strategy and other work, I am keen that the UHWP concentrate on our remit of improving the underfloor heating system and do not duplicate.

We plan in 2022 to pursue the installation of individual controls of the heating system in residents' flats. There will be a cost to this and so the controls will only be installed where the resident makes a request and is prepared to pay. We will be providing more information to residents so that they can make their decision.

We must also consider if the hours in which the heating is available are suitable for 21st Century living. Times have changed and, especially since Covid with more working from home, the demands of residents are very different. There is a need to consider the technical flexibility of the current system. If there is flexibility then we need to consult residents on possible changes – bearing in mind that this may result in higher charges

Although we purchase green energy we must ensure that we are always purchasing the most environmentally friendly energy at the best possible price.

There is clearly a lot to do. Consulting with residents to get their involvement, opinions, views and suggestions is essential. This consultation will inform our work with officers to pursue the best options and provide the best service. We need to clarify our objectives and prioritise our work.

Mary Durcan

Common Councillor and Chair of the Underfloor Heating Working Party