

The Barbican Association General Council

Minutes of the Meeting on Thursday 22nd August 2024

At 7 pm in The Lilac Room

Present (crossed out not present):

Elected Members: Adam Hogg (Chair) Jan Marc Petroschka (Deputy Chair) Roy Sully (Hon Sec) Jane Smith (Planning Subcommittee Chair) Brendan Barnes David Bradshaw Randall Anderson Miranda Quinney Deborah Oliver	House Groups Represented: Lionel Meyrinnger (Andrewes) Helen Hulson (Ben Jonson) Humfrey Brandes (Brandon) Andy Hope (Breton) John Taysum (Bryer) Derek Penney (Bunyan) Paul Moriarty (Cromwell) Martin Farebrother (Defoe) Linda Partridge (Frobisher) Ian Dixon (Gilbert) Richard Collins (Lambert Jones) Gail Beer (Lauderdale) Martin Luff (Mountjoy) Ania Korszun (Seddon) Sandy Wilson (Shakespeare) Graham Spickett-Jones (Speed) Brenda Szlesinger (Thomas More) Miranda Quinney (John Trundle) Mary Bonar (Wallside) Fionnuala Hogan (Willoughby)
Other Members: Tony Swanson (Hon Treasurer) Sandra Jenner (RCC) Hannah Logan Co-Opted Member (Parent Rep) Helen Hudson (Membership)	
Deputies and Guests: Frits van Kempen (representing Speed)	

1.	Apologies for Absence and Welcome to Deputies
	The Chairman welcomed Frits van Kempen from Speed. Lionel Meyringer, Linda Patridge, Richard Collins, Sandy Wilson, Mary Bonar, Tony Swanson, Martin Luff, Paul Moriarty, Graham Spickett-Jones and Fionnuala Hogan had sent apologies for absence. The Chairman noted the substantial number of apologists and urged them to send a deputy where they could not attend. He reminded the meeting that discussion should be through the Chair. Observers could only speak by invitation.
2	Approval of Minutes of meeting held on 27th June 2024
	Under item 4 the year should be 2025 not 2024.

	Under item 5 the WHG Chair had suggested significant changes. Under item 10 the WHG Chair had suggested an additional paragraph. In view of the scale of the changes suggested to item 5 it was agreed to defer agreement of the minutes until the October meeting. In the meantime, the additional paragraph would be added to the draft minute of item 10. A discussion of the desirability of posting draft minutes on the website followed. Some preferred the posting to wait until the minutes had been agreed, others saw merit in publishing the proceedings of the BAGC in draft form as soon as possible, as had been the standard practice. A compromise was agreed whereby the draft minutes would be sent around to members as before. If any wished to make significant changes they should do so within a fortnight, whereafter (assuming no significant changes) the draft minutes would be posted on the website.
3.	Procedures for BAGC meetings
	Prior to the Meeting, Jane had sent around a paper on procedures for BAGC meetings which had received at least two negative comments though their objections were not very clear to either the author or the other BAGC members present. Some helpful amendments were suggested to the paper and a vote was held approving the paper, subject to the suggested rewording. Jane agreed to send a copy of the revised paper to the Chair as soon as the changes were made.
4.	Failure of the City to Consult on the Hay's Contract
	The Tribunal had accepted that the City had taken £1.5m from leaseholders unlawfully but said that the City could seek retrospective dispensation. The tribunal ruled that it did not have jurisdiction to determine the service charge liability of other leaseholders. The tribunal accepted that the maximum the City could charge for cleaners in 2023/24 was £300,000 and therefore the appellant was entitled to a refund. The City was expected to seek dispensation shortly. At that point it might well award compensation for the cleaning overcharge to all leaseholders. No further action was recommended before then. No further monies on legal fees should be expended. The matter may become clearer at the September meeting of the RCC as it is on the agenda.
5.	Residential Reset
	A note of a meeting with Jacqui Webster, Resident Engagement Lead Role and the Chairs of BA, GLERA and Middlesex Street had been circulated. The meeting was asked for its views on what might be perceived as the City's intent to demonstrate a real reset. The following examples were suggested: demonstration of the City's commitment to residents as outlined in the Corporate Plan 2024- 2029; engagement with residents' representatives in addition to <i>City Question Time</i> sessions; prevention of building work alongside residential areas on Saturday mornings; a drive to prevent light pollution from offices. House Groups were asked to address the question: "How can life in the City be made better" and this should be reported back to the BAGC. In addition, the question would be put to those attending the summer party on 1st September and a Doodle Poll constructed that could go round to leaseholders. Action: Jane and Adam would write to House Groups. Humfrey would co-ordinate the Doodle Poll.
6	Destination City

	The Chairman wished to know if the BAGC felt it should take a position. The idea had been floating around the City for several years but, rather like the previous item, there was more heat than light to show for it. Randall felt that the thrust of Destination City had shifted so that it was now less of a culture initiative and more focussed on getting firms to relocate to the City which may be helped by additional cultural offerings. He suggested that as the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee had been charged with developing a Culture Strategy, residents' weight should concentrate on influencing the committee. There was concern that the full costs of these additional offerings were not always considered. For example, if there was more nightlife there would be a need for more policing and more cleaning. Action: Adam and Deborah to meet with the Deputy Chair of the Committee.
7	Closure of London Wall
	Mary Bonar had circulated a paper outlining concerns of Wallside residents over the extended closure of London Wall which had reduced road access and brought with it additional nuisance. The BAGC did not support the extended opening of the Moor Street barrier. On wider issues the BAGC could little to stop the anti-social behaviour of cyclists which was endemic across the country. The forthcoming consultation on healthy streets would provide the opportunity to make opinions known.
8	Transformation Board
	Sandra reported that Dan Sanders was doing a very good job as the new head of the BEO. He was recutting good staff and had implemented a cultural change so that staff were more customer-focussed. A resident newsletter was being produced. The BAGC commended Sandra for her work on the transformation board.
9	Security
	There had been a couple of very recent cases that amounted to rather more than the usual Ant-Social behaviour: the defacing of the Brandon Mews car park with graffiti, and malicious damage to the Shakespeare Tower and the throwing of heavy seats over the podium. Sandy Wilson and Deborah Oliver had engaged the City police who seemed to be taking the matter seriously. Local Policing Chief Inspector Nikki Gander, assisted by Inspector Kerry Goodwin, had undertaken a fast time review of these reports. They are working closely with the Corporation's Community Safety Team in coordinating the partnership response. Immediate action has included: Short term: - Key information shared with residents to facilitate timely reporting incidents. - Increased patrols during risk periods - Dedicated Neighbourhood Ward based officers have stepped up engagement and intelligence collection activities. Medium-term: - Plan for a multi-agency problem-solving meeting with local stakeholders, to prevent ASB and explore wider problem-solving options and solutions - Safer City Partnership Support

	The idea of extending the remit of the safety firm who look after the Barbican Centre was discussed. David Bradshaw felt this could be done at comparatively low cost but to the extent it would cost it should not be charged to residents as problems almost always occur on the podium which is a public space. The long-awaited ASB leaflet from the BEO would now go into the forthcoming newsletter (see 8 above).
10	Planning
	Jane briefed the BAGC. The City seemed keen to extend “Al Fresco” dining with more chairs and tables in public spaces. House Groups were urged to comment as there was potential for these facilities to be the source of noise and other nuisance. A consultation on Healthy Streets was due to start shortly and again House Groups are urged to comment. Jan Marc was leading opposition to the development on Silk Street which would mean construction of two tall towers that would dominate that side of the Barbican. There was still time to object before 30th August. Actions: Jane and Jane Marc to contact House Groups .
11	Barbican Centre
	Ian Dixon had circulated a paper concerning changes to the Visitor Management Plan which defines the Centre’s licensing obligations. The centre is keen to attract new audiences and therefore wishes to update the plan. The Centre are planning to widen the scope of discussions beyond residents and include other elements of the relationship between the Centre and residents. A significant concern must be that a revised Plan does not dilute the fundamental reason for its existence (being compliance with licensing conditions to control public nuisance caused by their activities) nor its importance for the immediate neighbours of the Centre to protect their amenity and quality of life. Ian has secured a meeting with Centre management to discuss this in more detail. The Centre seem very likely to proceed with the planned survey in September. Ian requested that House Groups respond to this plan. A strong response rate would be welcome. In particular a robust response on the need for control of noise and nuisance from those houses most regularly impacted by the Centre’s activities will be essential if we are to prevent any weakening of plan Action: House Groups to Respond
13	AOB
	Given the nature of the AGM it was agreed it should occur during the penitential season of Advent and would therefore be held on Thursday 10th April 2025. Local elections were due to be held on Thursday 20th March so the March meeting of the BAGC would be held on Thursday 13th March.
14	Dates of future meetings
	Thursday 24th October 2024; Thursday 23rd January 2025; Thursday 13th March 2025 with the AGM on Thursday 10th April 2025.

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