

Barbican Association Comms Meeting Minutes – 17 June 2026

The meeting opened with a review of the broader BA communications strategy. The Communications Group was formed in April 2026 to rebrand and reposition Barbican Life and the BA newsletter. Due diligence has shown that several related areas also need attention to support effective communication and good governance across the estate. The group has therefore expanded its scope to define the roles of the BA website, email communications, and underlying governance structures, while addressing clarity, consistency, privacy, reporting, and the overall structure of communications.

Privacy, GDPR, and cookies

The group discussed privacy notices, GDPR wording, and whether the BA website carries the correct notices. The group also discussed whether the BA website has a current privacy notice and whether the BA secretary should confirm this, together with the possibility of adapting one version for the Barbican Life website. Cookies were raised because the BA website now includes user login and digital ID functionality. The preference was to keep the wording in plain English while remaining compliant with ICO guidance.

MailChimp and email lists

The discussion moved on to the BA's email systems and MailChimp use. It was explained that MailChimp has been used for email distribution and for collecting subscribers, though the earlier arrangement allowing non-members to join the email list separately has since been closed so that membership is now linked more closely with email access. The group also noted that MailChimp cannot send attachments, whereas MemberMojo (the club membership software) can. The email function needs to be aligned with membership, practicality, and the wider communications strategy.

Comms group structure and chairing

The group discussed its structure and governance, including whether a chair was needed, whether clearer terms of reference should be put in place, and whether there should be a light-touch annual review process. It was agreed that chairing would rotate between members. Members agreed that, as the group moves into a more strategic phase, a firmer framework with shared responsibilities would be useful.

The possibility of an editorial or communications board for the newsletter was also raised as a way to support decision-making and provide a forum for strategic oversight, particularly where sensitive or contentious matters arise.

Barbican Life

The question of a contingency plan for Barbican Life was raised, alongside discussion of its continued editorial independence.

Newsletter role and content

The newsletter was discussed in more depth than at the previous meeting. The group noted that several newsletters already target City of London residents, and that the BA newsletter should supplement rather than duplicate what is already available. Participants suggested it should become more frequent, more useful, and more recognisable as the place residents go for "how to live in the Barbican" information. Ideas included a monthly rhythm, practical estate guidance, explanation of residents' responsibilities, and a stronger mix of "what's happening now" and "what you need to know" content, delivered in a factual tone.

The group discussed the balance between a rolling content plan and coverage of live issues, and agreed the newsletter should retain flexibility for both. The BA website was viewed as a pull medium and archive, hosting information packs, guidance, minutes, and reference material, with governance information sitting there and linked from the newsletter.

Resident needs and audiences

The meeting then discussed different resident groups and what information they needed. Examples raised included new residents, renters, younger residents, and people who mainly need practical "how it works" information rather than broader estate commentary. The group discussed the possibility of a resident persona or "day one in the Barbican" approach to help shape the newsletter's content from the point of view of someone new to the estate. It was also suggested that residents often only pay attention when something goes wrong, which means clear signposting and practical guidance are especially relevant.

Research and content planning

The group discussed a research piece by one comms team member on back issues, and agreed that research is important as background, but not sufficient on its own. It should inform the next stage of communications planning, alongside resident feedback, topic analysis, complaints, and recurring questions about estate life. The group also agreed that data should support editorial judgement rather than replace it, and supported a rolling six-month or year-ahead content plan so that the newsletter is not assembled reactively at the last minute.

Research, topic analysis, and common resident questions should be used alongside current estate issues to help shape content that remains relevant.

Planning, RCC, and estate issues

The conversation then turned to the RCC, house groups, and the importance of feeding relevant estate issues into BA communications. There was concern that some resident issues, inspection findings, and other estate-management issues do not currently filter

through clearly enough into communications. The group discussed how the newsletter could include more practical updates from the RCC and related working groups, especially on issues that affect quality of life, maintenance, or service delivery. It was suggested that more regular reporting from the RCC and closer links with house-level representatives would help explain what is being done.

Governance and clarity

Governance was discussed, including the relationship between the BA, RCC, house groups, and the estate office. Although structural issues are being reviewed as part of the current third-party governance review, the communications work should not wait for this review to conclude. The group therefore leaned toward developing its own clearer terms of reference and editorial structure now, while staying aware of the broader governance context.

The meeting also touched on the possible use of KPIs to measure group activities' effectiveness. A suggestion was noted that increasing BA membership could be treated as one measure of success, but there was caution about placing too much weight on publications alone.

Design brief and visual identity

The group agreed that the next step is to turn the discussion into a written design brief. That brief should cover Barbican Life, the Barbican Life website, the BA newsletter, and the BA website, and it should set out how these need to feel both related and distinct. The group discussed typography, colour, logo treatment, editorial tone, and the difference between a high-gloss magazine style and a more functional newsprint style for the newsletter. There was also interest in obtaining a design quotation to understand likely costs before proceeding further.

Action points

Governance & Strategy

- Consider drafting terms of reference and selected KPIs for the communications group.
- Consider whether BA membership should be included as one measure within a limited set of KPIs.
- Consider forming an editorial/communications board, defining its structure, scope, and mandate for handling sensitive matters.
- Establish a workflow to upload and maintain an archive of BA Communications Group meeting minutes on the BA website.
- Confirm that governance information will sit on the website with links from the newsletter.
- Continue clarifying the distinction between Association-controlled communications and independent resident publications.

- Review how other working groups can report back more consistently through the newsletter and website.

Privacy & Compliance

- Consult with the BA Secretary to verify that the website's GDPR wording, privacy notice and cookie language are correct.
- Apply the same learnings to the Barbican Life website.
- Confirm the existing privacy wording used in membership processes.

Design & Visual Identity

- Prepare a written design brief covering Barbican Life magazine, the Barbican Life website, the BA newsletter, and the BA website. Obtain an indicative design quotation.

Content & Editorial Planning

- Consider using the BA website more actively as an archive and reference source for residents.
- Build a rolling content plan for the next four newsletter issues, extending to six months, and include a "how to live in the Barbican" framework.
- Ensure the content plan allows for coverage of current and live issues as they arise.
- Review themes, complaints, and recurring resident questions to extract the main recurring topics relevant to newsletter and website content to inform future content.
- Review BA newsletter copies to serve as research background.
- Strengthen RCC reporting lines into BA communications to ensure key estate issues are clearly explained to residents.
- Conduct a small number of resident interviews focused on newsletter needs.

Next meeting: 9 July at 6.00 pm.