

Barbican Association Comms Meeting Minutes – 29 July 2026

The meeting opened with an update on audience segmentation research, followed by discussion of feedback mechanisms, membership strategy, design/branding progress, editorial planning, and a proposal for a post-summer town hall meeting.

Audience segments and feedback mechanisms

The group reviewed ongoing research into audience segments (renters, new residents, older residents) to help ensure future communications feel inclusive across different reader groups. It was noted that there is no formal feedback mechanism for the newsletter or Barbican Life, though scattered contact emails within articles do generate some responses; it remains difficult to attribute enquiries to a specific channel. The group discussed whether website comments could serve this purpose, but noted comments currently require membership login, which may exclude non-member feedback, and moderation status is unclear. It was agreed no formal survey would be introduced immediately, but a short (max six-question) occasional survey could be trialled once the new brand identity launches, run every month or two to track engagement over time.

Membership strategy

The group discussed the membership push, including postcard mailings and a possible targeted campaign to reach approximately 500 remote landlords who no longer receive printed newsletters. It was suggested David (once his role is clarified) could help identify how many remote landlords are already on the database, and re-engagement of lapsed members was flagged as a cost-effective opportunity. The question of raising the annual membership fee (currently £5, with an idea to raise to circa £20) was raised as a way to increase perceived value, but the group agreed this would need a motion at the AGM and house group consultation, and should be parked for now. A suggestion was made to explore whether the City of London might extend its funding (which currently supports the newsletter and David's role) to cover membership campaigns, though there was caution about this being seen as needs-driven given the BA's existing funds.

Design and branding update

Jean Marc and Barnaby provided an update on design agency recruitment. They have met with North (the agency behind the Barbican Centre's branding), who expressed strong interest in the project and would work at a reduced, non-commercial fee. Existing newsletters, Barbican Life issues, and postcards have been compiled to brief the designers, and Helen will provide a written list of regular Barbican Life articles/sections to aid clarity. Hard copies and online archive access will be shared with North ahead of a scoping discussion and fee proposal. The group discussed the use of the City of London crest on BA materials, noting it currently appears due to sponsorship of the summer party, and agreed the BA logo should

take visual precedence going forward, with the City's role framed as a supporting credit rather than the lead brand.

Newsletter and editorial planning

Helen confirmed the August newsletter will proceed with a similar format to previous issues, incorporating some repeated content alongside new material aimed at renters and other underrepresented audiences. Planned content includes a feature on building-related issues (drawing on a resident's personal account, in the spirit of the previous playground campaign but handled carefully to avoid similar backlash) and an article on climate change, overheating, and cooling flats, tying into the AMBUE study and residents' concerns following the heating season discussion. The group agreed articles should present the BEO's recommended process alongside resident concerns, and refrain from newsletter authors giving direct technical advice beyond signposting to the Estate Office. Alberto previously circulated an AI-generated summary of the lease and a Barbican Estate acronym-buster, both seen as good examples of accessible, repeatable content for the newsletter. The Defoe House Q&A format (a one-page interview with Dan covering multiple topics) was highlighted as a strong, well-received model worth repeating with other Estate Office or working group figures, potentially including a Q&A on the governance review once published.

Proposed town hall meeting

The group agreed to pursue a town hall meeting after the summer, tentatively suggested for early October (before half-term and before the clocks change), giving around a month's gap after the 12 September summer party. The meeting would involve the BA, RCC, and Barbican Estate Office at minimum, following the format of a previous well-attended event at Golden Lane covering the London Wall West and Silk Street campaigns. It was suggested this could address heating/cooling concerns, maintenance prioritisation, and the AMBUE project, helping residents understand ongoing work and manage expectations around the maintenance backlog. Minutes from the town hall could then be summarised for all residents via the newsletter, extending its reach beyond those who attended in person.

Action points

Governance & Strategy

- Await clarity on David's role before finalising membership campaign scope and possible fee increase discussion.
- Raise membership fee increase (£5 to potentially £20) at AGM/house groups for consultation, not before.
- Explore possibility of a student work-experience placement (e.g. via City University) to support David.

Membership & Communications

- Investigate size of remote landlord database and target re-engagement of lapsed/remote members.

- Ask Tony (former treasurer) whether City of London funding could extend to membership campaigns.
- Trial a short, occasional resident survey (max six questions) once new brand identity launches.

Design & Visual Identity

- Finalise brief materials (printed newsletters, Barbican Life issues, postcards) for North design agency.
- Helen to provide a written list of regular Barbican Life sections/articles for the design brief.
- Agree fee proposal with North; explore alternative designer if needed.
- Reframe use of City of London crest so BA branding leads, with City credited as a supporting sponsor.

Content & Editorial Planning

- Draft August newsletter content, including building-issues feature and climate/cooling article.
- Continue circulating recurring content (lease summary, acronym-buster) on a rolling basis.
- Consider repeating the Q&A interview format (e.g. Defoe House-style) with other Estate Office/working group leads.
- Prepare Q&A-style explainers once governance review is published.

Events

- Confirm town hall meeting date (early October proposed) and coordinate with RCC and Barbican Estate Office.
- Plan for a post-town hall newsletter summary to reach all residents.

Next Meeting: 8 September at 6.00 pm.