

Barbican Association Comms Meeting Minutes – 12 October 2026

The meeting agreed a new four-section structure and quarterly planning cycle for Barbican News (BN), clarified editorial roles, discussed the websites and the redesign timeline, and reviewed the October BN. It also touched on Barbican Life, ASB reporting and membership growth.

Barbican News structure and content plan

A proposal for a rolling content plan, drawing on the topic suggestions made to date, was adopted as the working model for BN. Two approaches were discussed for the front page: a newspaper-style page carrying short, immediate news items to draw the reader in, and a more introductory page offering a taster of the contents. Both will be tried as part of the dummy exercise to see which works best. The front page is the only page needing last-minute attention. Page two, “Your Barbican”, will hold one or two pre-planned longer features such as a newcomers’ guide or how to get involved in the BA and house groups. Page three, “Viewpoints”, is a rotating slot: alternative perspectives on the Estate, residents’ personal experiences, Q&As with the BEO and other bodies, and news from neighbouring areas. The back page will carry the events calendar, acronym buster, key contacts and website links.

The group agreed to set guide word counts for each article type and to build a dummy to test the structure, format and front-page treatment, with the aim of a clearer, less cluttered BN that residents keep as a resource. A standing note that contributions are welcome and content is included at the Editor’s discretion will be added, together with a third-party links disclaimer for the websites.

Planning cycle and editorial roles

The group agreed to move from planning one BN at a time to quarterly planning meetings, to be reviewed after twelve months, with a consultation point shortly before each issue. Pages two to four should be planned a quarter ahead, allowing time to seek responses from the BEO or other bodies where needed; the front page remains flexible. The Editor leads BN, with the Comms Group contributing ideas and suggestions at the planning points.

It was suggested that the BA Chair and/or co-chair would take the final decision on sensitive content or anything requiring engagement with the BEO or the City. To be agreed.

Longer RCC updates will sit on page two. Planning updates will be signposted on the back page with a QR code, and in the longer term published on the website.

Websites

“Barbican News” should be used consistently, with a dedicated section on the BA website. Readers will be directed online for more on print topics, for committee minutes and for full versions of articles too long for print. Everything in BN should also appear online, each article as its own page with “further reading” links at the bottom of the page.

Ideas for additional website content included a members’ art gallery, design tips for Barbican flats and book recommendations. Website upload access will be limited to a small number of people, and the webmaster will be consulted once requirements are clear.

Redesign timeline

We understand the design agency has been briefed and the brief will be circulated to the rest of the group. As the agency’s work will take time, the group agreed that the October BN should go out in the current format and that the following issue will be drafted using the new four-section structure, serving as a working dummy to test layout, format and word counts in-house. This will inform the design and can be refined once the agency responds.

October Barbican News

The group reviewed the latest draft. While the general content was accepted, the lead article on the process for obtaining consents for works to flats, which includes a response from the BEO, prompted considerable debate and was not agreed.

Concerns were raised about how the article had developed, whether a single resident’s experience should carry such prominence, and the precedent this might set. Others felt strongly that residents’ experiences deserve a voice and that the article did not go far enough: the BEO’s response explains the separate roles of Landlord’s Consent and Building Control, but the article should also cover the role of the Building Safety Regulator and give residents a realistic picture of the timescales involved.

It was also noted that the closing note did not reflect the current position and must be corrected. Further information is being gathered this week and the article may be revised and shortened. The group agreed that the article would be rewritten and signed off by Oct 19, 2026 at the latest.

Barbican Life

The Autumn print issue has gone out. The email version is ready to mail, pending feedback from the group.

Resident Q&As, ASB and membership

The proposed resident Q&A series remains on the longer-term list.

Comms support has been offered to the chair of the ASB WP who suggested changes to the current ASB reporting at the BAGC.

Feedback from the summer party welcome desk was that the membership flyer was very well received and there was no reluctance to join; the challenge is simply reaching people. A number of residents were unsure whether they were already BA members, so the membership strategy should continue to include systematic follow-up of due and lapsed renewals, which the system already flags.

Several practical lessons were noted for future events: the QR code sign-up asked for too much information to complete easily on the spot, so a simpler enrolment route is needed; those staffing the desk should have access to the membership list to check status; the desk team should be more diverse in age and gender; and volunteers should keep circulating throughout the event rather than settling into groups.

Barbican Estate Matters WhatsApp group

Following a request from the BAGC, the group discussed the resident-run WhatsApp group, now renamed Barbican Estate Matters. It was confirmed that the group is independent of the Barbican Association and its description clearly says so; the admins will continue to remind members of this regularly.

A pinned message now asks members to keep posts short and to take extended exchanges to the Barbican Talk forum, and will be re-pinned monthly. The group noted that the forum's original purpose has evolved and that its future may need to be reviewed.

Any other business

Members involved in the lead article will meet this week to revise it. A small group will work together in person on the newsletter dummy as a more creative way of developing the layout.

It was suggested that a shared, visual planning tool would help the group see upcoming and recurring content; ideas will be circulated.

Next meeting: to be confirmed.