

BAGC meeting 22 January 2013 - Minutes

1. Present

Jane Smith, Bruce Badger, Randall Anderson, Garth Leder, Tim Macer, Robert Barker, David Bradshaw, Angela Starling, elected; Cliff Paice, treasurer; Brian Parkes, Speed; Alberto Garciga, Lauderdale; Phil Sharples, Thomas More; Gillian Laidlaw, Mountjoy; John Whitehead, Breton; Gordon Griffiths, Bunyan; John Tomlinson, Cromwell; John Taysum, Bryer; Costa Capece, Frobisher; Stan Booth, Andrewes; Richard Collins, Lambert Jones Mews; Mary Bonar, Wallside; Nigel Dixon, assistant treasurer

Apologies: David Graves, Nigel Walmsley, Pat Spicer, Sarah Hudson, Dianne Vander Cruyssen, Steve Quilter

3. Matters arising

Item 4. The chair suggested asking the new Town Clerk, John Barradell, to the AGM, and the new head of community services, Ade Adetosoye (who starts in April), to speak later in the year about social and health care.

4. New assistant treasurer

The chair welcomed Nigel Dixon as assistant treasurer, and thanked James Lewis for all his work over the past years.

5. YMCA

The chair understood that a report on a shortlist of three (a hostel, a residence and a hotel/hostel) was going to the next BRC; she had asked to have information on this at the RCC. Kurt Bredenbeck, one of the bidders, had presented to Barbican and Golden Lane residents: Gordon Griffiths said the meeting was overwhelmingly opposed to a hotel or hostel, which, even if better managed than the YMCA, would bring traffic and deliveries at all times of day and night. Robert Barker proposed the following resolution to the RCC, which was seconded and approved, with Stan Booth and the common councilmen present abstaining.

The Barbican Association's General Council has carefully considered the range of options for the future use of the former YMCA building.

It is in favour of the conversion of the building to residential use, following the Frobisher Crescent model, retaining the existing Grade II Listed façade, and preferably with the building being managed by the Barbican Estate Office.

It is against the future use of this building as a hostel/hotel, as past experience unfortunately indicates that such use does not offer sufficient protection of the residential amenity of both the Barbican and Golden Lane estates.

We note that a report commissioned by the City on hotels states that hotels should not be located in residential areas (Cushman and Wakefield. City of London Hotel Study: Market Strategy and Policy Advice for New Hotel Development in the City of London. June 2009).

6. GSMD

The joint Arts Centre and GSMD management are to apply to vary the planning condition to allow the new GSMD building to close after 11 pm (ie at midnight), to allow evening post-concert donor receptions and contemporary concerts, and to open before 10 am, to allow morning conferences. The chair had told them the BA would object to staying open beyond 11pm, for which the building had not been designed.

7. Cinemas

Tim Macer reported the BA's sound expert found it hard to object to the sound monitoring approach (although it was not what we expected) but that the baseline testing had flaws. He had written to the Arts Centre and was awaiting a reply. The BA had requested another round of tests, with a better set of measures.

Bruce Badger said the Local Government Ombudsman would be looking into Bruce's complaint about the process. Stan Booth asked whether we audited the value for money of our external advice. The treasurer said we used it when we did not have the expertise ourselves, and the chair said that we didn't explicitly, but she would welcome suggestions on what measures we could use.

8. Concrete surveys

Randall Anderson outlined that in 1986 areas of poor compaction and low coverage had been reported, which were not repaired until the 2012 works on the three towers. The chairs of RCC and BA were seeking a meeting with the chair of the BRC, once officers had responded to the BA/RCC letter, and better consultation over the way the works were specified and managed.

John Whitehead and Gillian Laidlaw sought advice about specifications and tendering for the forthcoming works on Breton and Mountjoy. As the BA/RCC were seeking meetings to understand the works better, it was suggested they meet with the chairs of the BA and RCC after the forthcoming RCC meeting.

9. Planning issues

Randall Anderson reported that the City was again consulting on its local plan. Agreed: a working party to comment on the plan by the mid March deadline.

10. Licensing issues

Robert Barker reported he had not objected to the licence for the Cote brasserie in the new cinemas: Cote had clearly been informed by the Arts Centre management, and had produced 15 conditions that covered everything the BA would have asked for. The licensing department then included only four of these items in the licence, but Cote had agreed to incorporate all 15 into their management plan, and a licensing officer had suggested that such a management plan could be relied on in any review. Robert had also made suggestions for the management plan for the new GSMD building.

11. Sustainability

Garth Leder said the government is insisting local authorities enable sustainability in residential estates: the subgroup will raise at the Sustainability Working Group. Nigel Dixon pointed out that Frobisher had high sustainability ratings within a listed building. Garth and Sarah Hudson and the chair were about to meet the air quality manager for the Mayor of London.

13. Membership

1213 members at the end of 2012, with renewals running as usual.

14. Working party on internet communications

It was agreed to set this up, chaired by Tim Macer.

15. RCC issues

TV. The contract terms were now with VFM; they will respond by the end of the month. Randall hoped the work would begin in the spring. The work will take 6 months.

Bryer Court. John Taysum asked about a large steel structure, with plant machinery on it, attached to two columns which support Bryer Court in the Virgin Active car park. He could find no reference to it in planning documents. It was suggested he should ask the house officer, take photos and email them.

16. Subcommittee updates

Security – Bruce Badger mentioned that Deutsche Bank had been given keys to Ben Jonson car park. Randall Anderson assured him they would only allow access to the car park, and not the flats.

Roofs and access – Robert Barker reported that roof reports for Bunyan, Bryer and John Trundle had been finalised; he still had to do Shakespeare, and the BEO still had to do Ben Jonson/Breton.

17. AoB

Alberto Garciga tabled a letter from the City police saying that practices would change to reduce siren noise on Aldersgate Street at night.

Date of next meeting

14 March [NB – note change of date from original date of 21 March]