

BAGC Minutes

23 January 2014

Present: Jane Smith, Randall Anderson, Bruce Badger, Robert Barker, David Bradshaw, Garth Leder, Sarah Hudson, Tim Macer, elected members; Cliff Paice, treasurer; Gillian Laidlaw, Mountjoy; Brian Parkes, Speed; Richard Collins, Lambert Jones; Pat Spicer, Shakespeare; John Whitehead, Breton; Mary Hickman, Andrewes; John Tomlinson, Cromwell; Janet Wells, John Trundle; Nigel Dixon, Frobisher; David Murray, Bunyan; Gianetta Corley, Gilbert; John Taysum, Bryer; Mary Bonar, Wallside; Averil Baldwin, Thomas More

Apologies: David Graves, Angela Starling, Simon Ebbins, Gordon Griffiths, Matt Collins

1. Welcomes

The chair welcomed Averil Baldwin, the new house group chair and BA rep for Thomas More, and David Murray, chair of Bunyan, who had come for the discussion on consultation and was standing in for Gordon Griffiths

3. Matters arising not otherwise on agenda

Item 12. The chair reported that she and residents, including from Andrewes and Mountjoy, met the manager (JP Morgan) for 125 London Wall just before Christmas. They agreed to turn off the lights on the staircase and spoke of what they could do to minimise light intrusion once the building was open. She thought it was time we followed up.

4. Banking

The treasurer said that the BA's new bank account, to continue to have dual authorisation, became operational 2 days ago.

5. Accounts

The Treasurer said the 2013 accounts were with the auditor. Expenditure exceeded income, due to professional fees on concrete, but debtors fell to an all-time low (£700) thanks to the assistant treasurer, Nigel Dixon.

6. BA membership secretary

The chair proposed Kai Virtanen, who is working in parallel with Gaby on renewals. This was seconded by Cliff Paice and agreed. Robert Barker said it would be nice if house group chairs could have lists of BA members in their houses – it might help with recruitment.

7. Consultation on consultation

The chair said that the consultation was being discussed at this meeting for the BA side of the process and at the RCC meeting on 3 February for the RCC side. She had received written comments from Gilbert, Bunyan, and Defoe, and she and Tim (as chair RCC) would submit all comments, including the results of the survey among residents, to the City together with responses from the BA and RCC, which would be their considered responses to the consultation.

Gilbert had done a grand job putting together a detailed description of how the process looked from the residents' point of view. There was discussion of, and support for, developing such a guide for residents on how to respond to consultations.

Points in discussion included:

-asking for earlier (short and informal) input at stage 1, to squash outlandish ideas. Today, members don't get to see the briefs to consultants

-asking City to take more account of the considered responses of representative organisations than of individuals.

Agreed not to include this point

- more on what a consultation should look like

- expand the bit about feedback

- ask for an acknowledgement to responses

- asking the City to reflect comments accurately – the chair said she would find it difficult to word that in such a way that it didn't sound insulting and daft

- ask City to put all comments to members verbatim – but they wouldn't get read

- the idea of mentioning the complaints process wasn't supported.

- build in an internal review by another department head if things got bogged down. This was suggested to keep for a review

- suggest a review of the process in 18 months-2 years

Gillian Laidlaw suggested a model for projects: tell, sell, consult, join. We wanted genuine consultations, not selling and certainly not just telling. Joining might be possible for RCC matters, such as the underfloor heating working party

8. Concrete

The chairs of Mountjoy and Breton said they were not aware of progress with their blocks, and that they understood that all the terrace blocks would be inspected.

9. Street scene: seating

The Streets and Walkways committee had followed officers' recommendations to remove the seating and replace it with what had been there before, as instructed by the Town Clerk. Robert Barker had written to officers suggesting that they didn't need a middle arm rest to prevent rough sleepers, and that some seats be without an arm rest, to aid wheelchair users.

10. Cultural Hub

John Tomlinson reported that the Beech Street proposals had been put on hold, so they could be integrated into cultural hub project. The chair and Robert Barker had met Sharon Ament, director of the Museum of London, which wants more space and more visibility, perhaps an entrance on London Wall at ground level. They had commissioned McAslan architects to produce a range of options, and would consult when ready.

The chair had been sent a copy of the brief to Publica on the Barbican Area strategy – this aimed to identify the problems before proposing solutions. She had asked when Publica might be in touch. She would call a meeting of the Cultural Hub working party when appropriate.

The City was producing another volume of listed management guidelines – to cover the Barbican Gardens and Walkways (landscape). She and Tim had nominated three residents (Anne Naphine, Garth Leder, Robert Barker), and invited volunteers for an advisory group to act as a sounding board.

11. Residents' meetings

The Town Clerk's meeting had gone well though only about 70 people had come. It was suggested that meetings should be later. The Town Clerk had invited himself back and had offered to report back on three main things: Beech Street, the consultation on consultation, and assessing the impact of extra pedestrians from Crossrail stations. Agreed: the chair to invite the director of the Museum of London to speak at the BA's AGM.

12. Planning

Garth Leder updated his report: the BA had told Redrow that it would object to any roof extension to the YMCA building, as against the Listing guidelines; the BA had arranged for the 21 Moorfields developer to see the site from some Willoughby flats; on the Virgin Active plant at Bryer, Virgin wanted to conduct more tests, and Garth proposed to talk to planning enforcement. Garth now had a quarterly meeting with the local planning officers. The BAGC supported the BA's stance in defending the listed status of the estate.

John Whitehead alerted the meeting that on Fann Street the City of London police will sell its section house within five years, and the Welsh Church may not always turn down offers from developers.

The firm that wants to put aerials on Cromwell Tower had come back with a more modest proposal after a discussion with residents.

13. Licensing

Nothing to report

14. Sustainability

See report. Sarah Hudson suggested that the BA should write in support of the forthcoming consultation on a 20 mph limit on City roads; agreed.

15. St Alphage / London Wall Place

Tim Macer reported that Brookfields had pre-let all the big building and part of the other to Schroders; after demolition finished in April, they would move straight into construction.

16. RCC

Tim Macer reported that the underfloor heating working party was going well and it had become clear that by going to the market the costs will not increase by very much. Also, EDF had agreed to maintain its contract till the end of this heating season (end of May 2014).

TV: the plan awaited City sign off.

Bruce badger asked whether the Beech Gardens work would be extended to Ben Jonson highwalk. Randall Anderson said that the City had not allocated funds but knew similar work would be the only way to stop water leaks into the exhibition halls.

The chair said she had written to Michael Bennett and the RCC to ensure the Girls school pay a reasonable rate for their proposed use of some car parking spaces in Thomas More for a fire escape from their gym extension.

Garth Leder asked how to promote permanent rather than agency staff as car park attendants. Pat Spicer said that of Shakespeare's porters only one was permanent. City staff freezes prevented recruitment of permanent staff. Tim Macer suggested writing to the Town Clerk to get an answer through the RCC.

17. AoB

a) Ted Reilly, the BA's road safety adviser, suggested we support the City's plan to allow right turns for cyclists between Beech Street and Golden Lane and Bridgewater Street, including widening the central reservation barriers. Robert Barker said this would help wheelchair users.

b) David Murray suggested a future agenda item on the relation between BA and house groups, and agreed to write a couple of paragraphs to kick the discussion off.

c) Bruce Badger said that Ben Jonson had been hassling the BEO to improve communications. Tim Macer said he, too, was working with the BEO to make their communications more informative. The BEO was keen to get more people signed up for their email service: Sarah Hudson suggested they have a poster at the BA's AGM.

Meeting ended 10.00 pm

Date of next meetings:

20 March 2014

AGM 29 April 2014 (NB change of date from 30 April to 29 April)