

BAGC Minutes

3 July 2014

Present:

Jane Smith, Randall Anderson, Robert Barker, David Bradshaw, Sarah Hudson, Tim Macer, elected members; Kai Virtanen, membership secretary; Brian Parkes, Speed; Janet Wells, John Trundle; Gianetta Corley, Gilbert; Gordon Griffiths, Bunyan; Tony Swanson, Lauderdale; Helen Kay, Willoughby; Jenny Addison, Frobisher; John Whitehead, Breton; Pauline Pearson, Thomas More; Natalie Robinson, Andrewes

Apologies

Cliff Paice, Richard Collins, Nigel Dixon, Bruce Badger, Garth Leder, David Murray, Gillian Laidlaw, Pat Spicer, Averil Baldwin, David Graves

1. Welcomes

The chair welcomed Pauline Pearson representing Thomas More and Natalie Pearson representing Andrewes.

2. Minutes of last meeting

Approved.

3. Matters arising not otherwise on agenda

Item 3. Short term lets. The Secretary of State had said that he would repeal the law affecting London. Randall Anderson reported that the City and Westminster (and other affected boroughs) were having a meeting with the Department of Communities to seek some sort of workable arrangement for London.

Item 15. Robert Barker, through having a useful meeting with the applicant and the three nearby house groups, had got the applicant to pull back their application to no alcohol after 11, closing at 11.30 pm (10 and 10.30 pm on Sundays)

4. Community Fair

The chair had committed the BA to having a stand at the community fair, organised by Jenny Addison, Kai Virtanen, Brian Parkes and Sarah Hudson. Sarah had organised some plants to give away in exchange for a pledge on air quality; there would be a quiz and useful information – on what the BA does, house group contacts, how to complain about noise etc. *Jenny Addison wants to hear from anyone who is willing to do half an hour or an hour on the stand (from 12 noon to 4 pm) on 20 July*

5. Cultural hub

The chair said that the BA's cultural hub working party had discussed a wide range of issues at its two meetings, and would try to produce a very minimalist core set of messages that a broad range of Barbican residents could agree with, so they could be voiced at all appropriate opportunities. The group acknowledged that individual residents would have a wide range of ideas, but this core set is meant to attract broad support. The document was now open for discussion for the BAGC, after which the chair would invite house groups to comment.

Gianetta Corley mentioned the City's Open spaces strategy, currently being consulted on. Para 3.4.25 had a useful mention of tranquil areas where noise should be kept down. "City Corporation is keen that the City's open spaces offer a tranquil environment for users."

The strategy is at <http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/environment-and-planning/planning/heritage-and-design/Documents/open-spaces-strategy.pdf>

And the closing date for consultation is 25 July

It was agreed that the BEO and house groups should aim to respond to this consultation.

There was a discussion about the Arts Centre's perceived hostility to Highwalks and the fact that Arts Centre managers seemed convinced that residents did not want the Highwalks used. Randall Anderson reported that this had been obvious at a member breakfast on the Cultural Hub. He also mentioned that officers in the Department of the Built Environment said they would like to shift some of the costs of maintaining the Highwalks onto residents.

Agreed: The chair would write to the Arts Centre making it clear that residents were supportive of pedestrian use of the Highwalks and had no problems with seeing more use made of them, so long as some problems were appreciated (ie noise to below podium flats), which meant that the routes had to be indicated carefully. Remind them that Highwalks are public highways.

Robert Barker mentioned that the listed management guidance on the landscape should protect the estate from some encroachment on the public space

Tim Macer mentioned that Publica, the consultants doing the Barbican Area Strategy review, wanted to see some residents' flats – he was organising that. He would ask house group chairs to find volunteers. He wanted to get some below podium and Postern and Wallside flats.

Robert Barker had been alarmed that the Publica consultants wanted to map residents' routes to and from the gardens and wanted access to the gardens. David Bradshaw undertook to find out why from Steve Miles.

6. Community space – should the BA campaign for some

The chair said that she and Tim Macer had received a paper from John Lumley CC making the case for a community centre. Independently of that she had put the item on this agenda, following comments at the AGM and in the Cultural Hub working party.

Randall Anderson was very supportive of the idea; with the possibility of the library moving, the development of Richard Cloudsley, and the development of the police section house likely within 2-3 years.

Robert Barker also thought that space given over to bike racks in 2 Fann Street might be suitable and he wondered if the developers couldn't be pressed on this. Everyone seemed supportive of the idea. There was a suggestion of involving the City Bridge Trust. There was some discussion on inadequate capacity at other spaces, such as on Golden Lane, St Giles and the CLSG.

Agreed that the chair should speak to Vivienne Littlechild, current chair of the City's Culture, Heritage and Library Committee.

7. BA matters

The chair said that Cliff Paice did not want to stand as treasurer again after this year. A call had gone out for possible volunteers and Tony Swanson had offered and discussed the role with Cliff. The chair proposed co-opting him to the BAGC for the rest of the year with the title of deputy treasurer so that he could get on the bank account and shadow Cliff. Agreed.

The chair said that for a while the BA had lacked a social dimension to its work and she thought having a social secretary would help add to the BA's activities and foster the sense of community that people wanted. Tony Croot had expressed interest, and it was agreed he should be invited to become the BA's social secretary.

8. Treasurer's report

Received

9. Membership

Kai Virtanen said that renewals with the new bank details were slowing down – he had about 500. That meant there were still a lot of members who hadn't changed their standing order. Also, he needed to invite associate members to change their standing orders. He thought the BA would

sooner or later need to renew its database, and he and Tony Swanson agreed to talk. Kai was commended for his google diary of events and his BA twitter account – remember to let Kai know of things going on so he can put them in the diary and tweet about them.

10. Concrete

The chair reported that the concrete working group was having a strategic discussion with the solicitor the following week. In the meantime the reports for Breton and Mountjoy were out. Randall Anderson commented that he thought the problems in the towers seemed more significant.

11. Updates

The chair reported: -

-that she had written to 4 City officers seeking City's response on light pollution. She had had no reply yet had been told that the City was likely to produce some best practice guidance. Randall Anderson said they could do more – the National Planning Policy framework allowed them to make some rules and we should urge that they should do so.

- she had circulated a How to complain about noise and nuisance sheet advocating using the City's 24 hour phone number. This would be provided at the Community fair and she would send it to house group chairs too. Tim Macer and Tony Swanson both said they had used the number and found it helpful – it means the City logs the problem.

- The Publica consultation on Barbican Area Strategy (street scene) has started; there will be a public exhibition and website for commenting

- The consultation process between the City and residents is now signed off. It should appear on the City website soon.

-The police want to gather some ordinary residents to speak to

-The BA and nearby house groups are having difficulty getting a meeting with the Girls School to discuss noise in the evenings

-Barbican Arts Centre has agreed sound monitoring regime for cinemas

-Crossrail is about to start defects surveys. Speed and Bunyan are no longer included

-Planning updates – see attached report [now attached]

-Screens facing out from Arts Centre Silk Street entrance. Speed were happy with the conditions that Garth proposed to seek about hours of operation

--Listed management guidelines. Robert Barker suggested asking the BEO to email broadcast the link when it came out for consultation. He commended the draft document and wanted support for it.

-160 Aldersgate Street. Developers wanted all-glass façade and to heighten the building. Garth was seeking a meeting with the developers.

12. Issues register

The register was part filled in. JS had italicised issues of estate management, to show that the RCC should probably deal with them.

Gianetta Corley said that Gilbert doubted the value of the register and worried it might fall into the hands of estate agents. The chair said it wasn't intended as a public document.

Agreed that it should be looked at a couple of times a year. John Whitehead would be the guardian. The BAGC would look at it at its November meeting so house group reps should ensure they sent their information to him. The intention was that the four key issues would be listed and the rest summarised in the last column.

13. RCC

TV TM reported that VFM were going to come in with a new price point – a lower price for a lower speed. They had attracted about 400 expressions of interest and he and the working party had thought that was low. Work is progressing. They will start with the towers and roll out block by block, from September to November.

Heating The working party was now moving onto stage 2 – looking at improvements – and was just finalising a document that would serve as the basis of a brief to the consultants

Frobisher drainage. Jenny Addison reported that recent severe rain had caused considerable damage on the south west corner – she believed because of bad inherent design of the downpipes. The City had taken a legal opinion and was intent on charging the works to residents. There is a warranty on the flats but the developer did no work on the balconies because the City told them not to. It was suggested Jenny should speak to Robert Barker about the previous roofs works.

14. Internet communications

TM reported that he and Kai Virtanen had reviewed the work of the BA's internet communications working group. They thought the next stage was for a subgroup to consider possible tools before convening the whole group again to make recommendations.

13. AoB Royal Mail had reiterated what was meant to happen with post: small parcels in the postman's bag should be delivered to the door and only given to a concierge if they could not be delivered. John Whitehead said there was apparently a problem with one concierge's interpretation of the rules. It was suggested he should report this to the car park manager Barry Ashton.

15. Date of next meeting;

13 November **7.30** Lilac room

Meeting ended 9.25