

BAGC

Minutes of meeting 11 September 2014

Present: Jane Smith, chair; Cliff Paice, treasurer; Robert Barker, hon sec; Tim Macer, deputy chair; Garth Leder, David Murray, Sarah Hudson, elected members; John Whitehead, Breton; Mark Bostock, Frobisher; Gordon Griffiths, Bunyan; Helen Hudson, Defoe; John Taysum, Bryer; Janet Wells, John Trundle; Gianetta Corely, Gilbert; Bruce Badger, Ben Jonson; Alberto Garciga, Lauderdale; Anthony Croot, social secretary; Richard Collins, Lambert Jones Mews; Gillian Laidlaw, Mountjoy

Apologies: Nigel Dixon, Kai Virtanen, Averil Baldwin, Mary Bonar, Brian Parkes, John Tomlinson, Randall Anderson, Jenny Addison, Tony Swanson, Pat Spicer, Helen Kay, David Graves

1. Welcome

The chair welcomed Tony Croot, the new membership secretary; Helen Hudson, the new Defoe rep; Mark Bostock instead of Jenny Addison; and Alberto Garciga instead of Tony Swanson

2. Minutes

The minutes of meeting on 3 July 2014 were approved

3. Matters arising

Item 6. The chair had spoken to Vivienne Littlechild about residents' desire for a community space, for example in exhibition hall 2, which might become a resource centre/library. We would need to produce a plan, probably revenue neutral. David Murray thought we should ask the City for financial support for community activities for residents and house groups, as per other local authorities.

Item 11. The chair will chase for a reply to her letter to four City officers about light pollution.

4. Concrete

Tim Macer clarified that each terrace block would be hammer tested, as Breton and Mountjoy had been. Any judgement at the LVT would probably apply across the estate.

5. Frobisher drainage: request for funds

Mark Bostock explained that two flats at the west end of Frobisher had had water penetration ever since they moved in 4 years ago. In December the heavy rains had caused severe damage, and residents had had to move out for 6 months. The BEO proposed new downpipes, improved drainage and waterproofing on balconies, and new doors on gable elevation. The City solicitor had said that all the costs were recoverable, but Karen Tarbox was proceeding with the works as soon as possible without prejudice; the design costs had been removed from the service charge bill for now. Mark understood that the City was now looking at its obligations and those of the developer. Planning permission had been applied for for the works and no section 20 notices had been issued. Richard Collins pointed out that Lambert Jones Mews had had longstanding problems with water penetration for 9 years; a solution now seemed to have been found but the costs had fallen to the service charge. Garth Leder asked whether the residents had tried to claim on their new building guarantee, and let the developer and the City argue it out. Other comments:

- Different from LJ Mews due to recent renovation;
- That the BA should support house groups in trouble, irrespective of the estate-wide implications;
- We should investigate options, like claiming on the guarantee, before spending money.

Mark Bostock thought the house group had a good strategy but needed technical advice from Trevor Rushton, who had already assessed one of the damaged flats: he quoted £1,200+VAT. Gillian Laidlaw

proposed that the BA should fund the technical advice in full. The treasurer recommended matched funding. The committee voted 13 to 1 in favour of full funding of up to £1,200+VAT on technical advice relating to Frobisher's drainage issue, as described at the meeting, Frobisher to use their best efforts to obtain the advice as cheaply as possible.

Richard Collins asked that the funding policy should be reviewed and the chair agreed to put it on the agenda for a future meeting.

6. Barbican Area Strategy review

The chair asked house groups to find out from their houses any issues to do with footsteps on the podium. There is likely to be more pedestrian traffic following Crossrail, which might cause nuisance to areas below podium and, perhaps, immediately above the podium. This does not include people on higher floors hearing noises from the highwalks in general; it is specifically about pedestrian footfall.

7. Cultural Hub

The chair had sent out a document produced by the cultural hub working party (on which she had drawn heavily in producing the BA's response to the Barbican Area strategy review) to house groups and had received few replies.

David Murray said that Bunyan agreed completely with the document.

Defoe House Group had responded: our two top priorities, where we see the most opportunity:

1. Improving the wayfinding;
2. Streetscene, especially Beech Street.

And a couple of thoughts on emphasis:

3. Be more explicit about 'avoiding noise'.
4. "Need for cultural institutions to upgrade their buildings" is an opportunity as well as a threat."

8. Listed Building Management Guidelines (Landscape)

These were now out for consultation. She thanked Robert Barker, Garth Leder, and Ann Napthine for their hard work. Robert Barker suggested the BA should respond emphasising some points they thought were important but which other organisations on the estate might not think important. He and Garth Leder would draft something. Sarah Hudson, a member of the advisory group, expressed unhappiness that her comments had been passed on in annotated form. The chair said that with disagreements between advisory committee members, the resident reps would have to choose which view to support: this was inevitable as the advisory group was structured as an unofficial group to support the representatives and give them feedback. Robert Barker said the issues to support were probably not the areas of disagreement among residents, but rather where the Arts Centre might campaign against protections the working party had worked hard to win. Agreed: members of the BAGC should send comments to Garth and Robert for inclusion in the BA's response.

9. Treasurer's report

He commented that we had had £31 of interest last year compared with £3,000 in 2007.

10. Membership

Kai reported through the chair that he had processed all the standing order forms, but some would have to be re-done because at least one bank wanted them signed within six months of the first payment. The treasurer commented that a few standing orders were still trickling in to the Santander account. Robert Barker asked if the membership secretary could tell each house group how many BA members there were in that house.

11. Social activities

The chair welcomes Tony Croot to his first meeting. She said that social activities had been a gap in the BA's work recently and she was pleased it would be rectified. He asked for ideas for social activities. Ideas flowed:

Quizzes (John Whitehead has acted as quizmaster)

Summer garden party

Halloween party

Organised outings and events – eg visits to interesting buildings

Informal gatherings – meet on x day of the month at y

Meal out

Something for new residents to the Barbican

Wine tasting

Parties on anniversaries – eg Lauderdale's 40th

Celebrating the opening of the garden on Barbican station

Gillian Laidlaw commented that many of these things would be made easier if there was a local hub – community space

David Murray commented that he thought things with a "hook" worked best – based on a common interest

Sarah Hudson commented that if you do events for children you get the adults along too – eg bulb planting she is organising in Thomas More gardens on 26 Oct and 2 November

12. Plants on balconies

The chair reminded people that there had been support at a previous meeting for encouraging people to plant their balcony window boxes. David Murray explained that in the spring Bunyan, John Trundle and he hoped Bryer would have a party to celebrate the end of the Beech Gardens work and he thought he had, with Sarah Hudson's help, persuaded the City to offer the residents of the three blocks a free plant to encourage them to tend their window boxes, to complement the new landscape below. The chair said that, although the circumstances of the blocks around Beech Gardens were special, she hoped other houses might follow suit. Sarah Hudson was willing to help/give advice.

13. Planning

160 Aldersgate Street – Robert Barker encouraged people and affected house groups to object because the new stories would affect daylight to nearby flats and the children's play area under Seddon. It was commented that London House residents were also opposed to it

2 Fann Street (ex-YMCA) – Gillian Laidlaw said the gardens advisory group should be told that Redrow wanted to fund something in the Fann Street Wildlife Garden: this might be helpful but could be a risk to the wildlife if residents of the new block saw it as their back garden.

14. Licensing

No new applications. Robert Barker said that, although 200 Aldersgate Street had got a licence on modified hours, it had failed to get planning permission for the plant – there were objections from residents of London House.

15. Roofs

Bruce Badger asked about the roof apportionments for Ben Jonson, due at the BRC in December. Robert Barker said he had asked for the documents by the end of September, so he and his subcommittee could scrutinise them before the RCC meeting.

16. Fountains

Gianetta Corley said that only one resident of Gilbert House had wanted the fountains left on till 9.30pm; many others were content with 7.30pm as at present. The chair therefore suggested there was no need for discussion and the current hours should remain.

17. Approach from Petticoat Lane leaseholders association

The chair said that she was fairly sure that the City was not a social landlord to the Barbican. Agreed: friendly relations helpful, including information sharing where appropriate, but no appetite for long meetings.

18. Working party on LFS

The London Film School (LFS) were ready to hold a meeting for local residents. The chair and John Whitehead had proposed a small group to continue detailed conversations between meetings: John Whitehead (chair), Bruce Badger (Ben Jonson), John Taysum (Bryer), Robert Barker (licensing/heritage), Garth Leder (planning/heritage), Chris Mounsey (Breton), Jane Smith (BA).

19. RCC

Tim Macer said the TV work was on track and VFM may be contacting people at the end of October. Shakespeare had arranged a meeting with VFM for 15 September at 6.30pm, to which others were apparently welcome. Gillian Laidlaw suggested mass turning up to show VFM the need for better communication.

20. AoB

Sarah Hudson said that Barbican Talk was reflecting uncertainty about what exactly buildings insurance covered. Tim Macer undertook to have an explanation at the RCC.

Cycling on the podium. Gillian Laidlaw said that the 'no cycling' signs seemed to have disappeared: she will chase the BEO again and Tim Macer said he would raise it at the next SLA meeting, though he warned the BEO had no money. It was suggested that A-boards might suffice for the time being.

Next meeting: 13 November 2014 at 7.30pm.

Meeting ended 9.55pm.