

BAGC meeting 24 September 2015

Minutes

Present:

Jane Smith, Robert Barker, Tim Macer, Bruce Badger, David Bradshaw, Helen Kay, elected members; Tony Swanson, treasurer; Brian Parkes, Speed; Jenny Addison, Frobisher; John Whitehead, Breton; Helen Hudson, Defoe; Richard Collins, Lambert Jones; David Graves, Seddon; Mary Hickman, Andrewes; Aerial Baldwin, Thomas More; Gillian Laidlaw, Mountjoy; Mary Bonar, Wallside

1. Apologies

Sarah Hudson, Janet Wells, John Tomlinson, John Taysum, Kai Virtanen, Randall Anderson, Gordon Griffiths

2. Minutes of meeting on 25 June 2015

Approved

3. Matters arising

Item 3. Events in public areas of the estate. The chair said that in the light of the fact that the Cultural Hub was likely to make more public events likely she was proposing to write to the Town Clerk to suggest a unified “application for events” policy for all public areas of the estate, irrespective of who owned them. The City Events team had an application process that involved consultation with residents and it would be good to build on that. At the moment people did different things depending on where the event was.

4A. Good neighbours

Aerial Baldwin, the chair of Thomas More House group, spoke about the “Good Neighbour” scheme in Thomas More. Recognising that it had a high proportion of older residents living alone and that the design of the block (vertical staircases) was potentially isolating, the house group has set up a loose group of 18 volunteers willing to help their neighbours with small day to day jobs like picking up prescriptions, changing light bulbs, watering plants, and generally “keeping an eye out” for them. The group talked to City social services, Age UK, residents, the estate office, and are clear that the informal help is complementary to that provided by providers of formal care. One disappointment has been that take up has been low so far.

In discussion people mentioned the importance of the Tuesday Club, and one of the things volunteers can do is accompany someone to the Tuesday Club for their first visit, to make it less daunting if someone is shy.

Other points included the fact that some people wanted to keep themselves to themselves; the house officers also keep an eye on people and liaise with social services; the usefulness of the classes at Golden Lane centre

4B. Refugees

See paper by Richard Collins, who proposed that the BA should call on the City of London to identify itself as a City of Sanctuary and work with other bodies to facilitate successful resettlement of refugees to the UK. He said that the government had given local authorities a strong role in responding to refugees and was providing them with funding. In discussion there was much support for Richard’s argument but the majority felt that it was beyond the BA’s remit. People suggested he could get a petition going or suggest individuals lobbied

their common councilmen. In the end the general council decided not to make such a motion; it was agreed Richard should write something for the BA newsletter.

5. Treasurer's report

Tony Swanson reported a continuing good income from Barbican Life.

The council thanked the editor, advertising people, and those responsible for getting the advertising income in.

6. Membership report

Through the chair Kai Virtanen reported that he wanted the new site to be operating by the end of the year, which meant that content needed moving across.

7. Governance issues for housegroups

Bruce Badger outlined the problem he had at getting enough people at his house's AGM to effect a change of constitution. Members of the BAGC agreed that he might have to wind up the house group and start again, but Tim Macer suggested he should consult Julie Meyer of the Town Clerk's office; he thought the Town Clerk was keen to support house groups.

8. Planning update

In discussion it emerged there were three issues

- Did refurbishment need listed building consent (it might not)
- There would be a need for building control
- Landlord's consent covered narrow issues – was the asset being protected? Tim Macer said that this was now handled by the house officers

Agreed that Helen Kay would ask the planners about the process for listed building consent and building control.

Robert Barker would ask a question through the RCC process about what landlord's consent covered and the process for ensuring it was got before work started

Helen Kay also asked house groups to urge their residents to sign up to the BEO's email broadcast because it was a convenient way of warning residents about applications that might affect them. She also urged them to get people to complain to environmental health if there was noise.

Bruce Badger reported that his house group had pursued a complaint about the minutes of the Planning Meeting at which the LFS had been discussed not being accurate. The City had agreed that the minutes were wrong in some respects and their definitive reply was awaited. It was important because what was said at the meeting might form a precedent for other decisions.

Tim Macer reported that Moorgate Exchange had changed its name to Moor Place, 1 Fore Street.

9. Licensing

No applications but use of the terraces on Moor Place had been causing problems. Environmental health had been contacted.

10. RCC Update

Tim Macer reported that the BEO had set in place good arrangements in relation to short term holiday lets – which had been approved at RCC and BRC. The City solicitor had

agreed if the whole process of writing to residents without resolution they would pursue it at the Property Tribunal. The same would apply to wooden floors and keeping pets. Indeed, he was aware of some leaseholders who had withdrawn their properties from AirBNB.

On Central Heating he reported that the Control system is now not maintained so the City is procuring a new one. Consultants had been engaged to advise on this process and they will report in October on this and also on the heating working party's wish list.

CCTV. David Bradshaw reported that the funding for this had now been approved. The security subcommittee supported the proposal subject to residents paying nothing towards it and subject to the issues raised in the consultation process, which included privacy for residents. He had been told there would be a pixelating effect in front of residents' windows. He had been promised a walk round with officers to know where the cameras would be sited. He promised to come back to the BA, house groups and the RCC. Tim Macer also added concerns about the listed building and about the "tone" of the way the cameras were presented. It was agreed that Tim Macer would join the security subcommittee for their discussions on CCTV.

11. Updates from other BA subcommittees and working groups

Bruce Badger wondered why, shortly after getting a refund on the roofs, his house had got a bill twice the previous estimate for repairs because of leaks. Robert Barker advised emailing Anne Mason and the house officer and asking for an explanation given that the roof is under guarantee.

12. AoB

Gilliam Laidlaw reported much better relations with the Girls' school, with the new bursar. Tim Macer reported that a meeting of the London Wall Place group would take place shortly.

13. Next meeting

26 November

Meeting ended at 9.25pm