

Barbican Association Annual General Meeting

Thursday 22nd April 2021 7.30pm (virtual meeting via Zoom)

Minutes of meeting

Agenda

1. Welcome

Adam Hogg, Chair of the Barbican Association (BA), welcomed participants to the meeting

2. Chairman's Report (Adam Hogg)

The Chair paid tribute to his predecessor Jane Smith and thanked her for holding the post with such distinction for over 12 years. He expressed delight that she has agreed not only to stay on as a member of the BA General Council but has also taken on the roles of Deputy Chair of the BA and Chair of the Planning subcommittee where her wealth of knowledge and experience will be invaluable. He also thanked everyone who had contributed to the workings of the BA.

The Chair went on to remind members that even after 50 years the Barbican remains an extraordinary listed urban development and it is important that we ensure that it continues to prosper over the next 50 years despite the number of issues and changes that the City are having to face at the present time. Change can bring opportunities and we should be taking advantage of them. It also has disadvantages which we must try to manage.

The Chair then highlighted the three main issues which the BA has already expressed in its response to Lord Lisvane's Governance Review of the City Corporation.

- 1) The deteriorating condition of Barbican – although 21 committees have an interest no-one has overall responsibility for looking after it. The BA has therefore submitted a Proposal for a Barbican Strategic Authority to look after the Grade II listed site and its way of life
- 2) The need for better control on services and costs. The Residents Consultation Committee (RCC) is working on this with the aim of having a real influence on how residents' money is spent and
- 3) The City's reluctance to listen to Residents, seen as the poor relations to the business community. This is manifested perhaps most clearly in the Planning process and the BA has supported a petition to the Court of Common Council to stop the erosion of residents' interest in planning procedures and decisions.

3. Report on the future of the Museum of London site (Jane Smith)

Jane Smith (Chair of the BA Planning and Licensing Sub-Committee) updated the meeting on the possible future for the Museum of London and Bastion House sites on London Wall. This is particularly important now that the proposed Centre for

Music development is not to be progressed, with a major renewal of the Barbican Centre to be undertaken in its place.

A BA working group has been established to monitor this site and is having quarterly meetings with the City to discuss its future. So far it has been learnt that (i) the City of London will be the site's developer (ii) the designers of the Centre for Music have been retained to take a proposal to the planning stage (iii) a raft of consultants (e.g. planning, heritage, townscape, cultural) have been appointed (iv) two separate buildings are currently envisaged and (v) Bastion House will not be demolished before a planning application has been submitted, which is anticipated by March 2022.

Community engagement agents have been appointed to conduct a thorough consultation process as to how the vacated space should best be developed (commercial/residential/cultural/mix?) – always bearing in mind that the City will clearly seek a development that provides the optimum financial return. This would suggest that any development is likely to be office-led but with some cultural and public realm elements.

4. RCC Chair's update (Christopher Makin)

Christopher Makin, Chair of the RCC, highlighted that a current major issue is that of the future of the Barbican Residential Committee (BRC), the decision-making body which the RCC reports to. Lord Lisvane's Governance Review of the City Corporation has recommended its abolishment and whilst no final decision has yet been taken in this regard, the outcome is clearly an important one for the RCC.

The RCC was formed in 2003 following a vote by residents to provide a voice for leaseholders in the way the Estate is run given that long leaseholders pay for most of that management through their service charges.

In that regard, the Chair informed the meeting of two major works to be undertaken, both of which will be funded by the City of London as landlord:

- 1) **Podium waterproofing** – the second phase of this project is to take place later this year incorporating the area from Bryer Court to the steps leading down to Speed House. The meeting was reassured that the drains will also be addressed in this phase. The budget for this work is set at £12.5m but planning and listed building consent has still to be sought. The future of the "Yellow Shed" has yet to be determined as the costs of its demolition would need to be met from a different fund.
- 2) **Replacement of fire doors** – whilst the full scope of the project has yet to be announced, in the wake of the Grenfell Tower disaster, the City of London has agreed a £20m budget to replace all fire doors across the Barbican Estate. This is a more complex task than it sounds (includes service cupboards – where asbestos is typically to be found – and some blocks have integrated glazing etc) and the City will also have to apply for Listed Building Consent before any work can commence.

Other ongoing issues being addressed include asset management across the Estate (still awaiting the response from Savills following its inspection), redecoration (may have to re-tender the contract agreed last year due to the impact of the pandemic) and the Garchey (looking again at its future – it costs £0.25m pa to run but will cost c£2m to remove it).

The Chair reiterated that much of the work of the RCC is carried out by working parties and asked for more volunteers to join, specifically for the Service Level working party.

5. **Motion - the BA 2021 AGM Motion Resolution (Adam Hogg)**

As set out in detail in the Agenda pack sent out to residents, the Chair put the following motion to the meeting:

The Barbican Association calls upon all the elected representatives of Cripplegate and Aldersgate Wards to:

1. Act as one in the consideration by City Corporation of the future of both the Barbican Residential Committee and the Barbican Estate Residents' Consultation Committee, including the constitution of any replacement; and
2. In particular, to advocate for the adoption of a replacement that will involve both lessees and officers in undertaking the obligations of City Corporation as landlord of the Barbican residential estate.

Proposed: Adam Hogg, Chair, The Barbican Association

Seconded: Christopher Makin, Chair, Barbican Estate Residents' Consultation Committee

A lengthy and sometimes heated debate on the motion ensued.

A number of elected representatives expressed their views on the motion, including David Bradshaw, Helen Fentiman, Barbara Newman, Randall Anderson, John Tomlinson, Vivienne Littlechild, Mark Bostock, Mary Durcan and Jeremy Mayhew. Many expressed the view that whilst they were generally in support of the motion's aims, it seemed premature to vote at the present time whilst the future of the BRC had not yet even been decided. Many elected representatives also expressed concern about the wording of the motion – whilst broadly in agreement to support the 2 principles some elected representatives expressed the view that many may not want to “be instructed” but take an independent view.

A view was expressed that the meeting had heard rather too much from the elected members rather than the residents themselves. A suggestion was made that the motion should be left on the table and an EGM held when more information was available.

Many members expressed their dissatisfaction as to how this item had been handled but to move the meeting on and to try to understand sentiment, the Chair called on the meeting to vote on the motion.

Of the 108 people on the call, only 64 members voted on the motion. Given the confusion around the lengthy debate, some members questioned the validity of the vote. However, of those 64 members who did vote, 55% were in favour of the motion and 45% against.

6. Beech Street update (Ted Reilly)

Ted Reilly, Chair of the BA Road Traffic Advisory sub-committee, confirmed that the current scheme in Beech Street is experimental and that sometime around the end of July, the experiment will end. The City hoped that following a consultation the temporary scheme would be made permanent. He said that he had hoped to be able to offer some guidance on this consultation, but proposals have not yet been published. However, he was aware that no alternative schemes will be offered for consultation.

Most people have formed a view about the scheme.

On the plus side:

- Air quality in Beech street is vastly improved (this is not just covid related)
- Traffic is down (again, not just covid related)
- There are some nice new cuts through the central reservation into Lauderdale Place and the Defoe/Shakespeare car park

On the negative side:

- Traffic levels in Wood St, Fore St, and Moor Lane have increased (but no data yet). This will get worse when the current restrictions are over.
- It's very difficult to get taxis to pick up or drop off at Cromwell, Shakespeare, Defoe, and Lauderdale.
- Deliveries to these addresses are problematic.

Breaking News. The High Court has now decided that the City cannot take any further steps in the continuance of this project until a Judicial Review of the decision to implement the experiment is heard. At the earliest this will be at the end of June. This Judicial Review results from the challenge of Barbican Resident who argued that covid means abnormal conditions which means that there has been no valid experiment.

He is therefore of the view that any consultation is unlikely.

As a result of Covid, there is no real evidence of the success or failure of the scheme. However, if there is a consultation, it will be on the conversion of the scheme as it now operates into permanence, with no alternatives offered.

If there is a consultation the BA will provide up to date information

7. Treasurer's report (Tony Swanson)

Tony Swanson, Honorary Treasurer, reported that the BA had accumulated funds of £185,114 at the end of the financial year ending 31st December 2020. Full details of the BA's financial position were provided in the Agenda pack sent to members.

8. Elections

The Chair indicated that all members had expressed their willingness to stand again for the coming year and hence all positions were uncontested.

a) Treasurer

Tony Swanson indicated his willingness to continue to act as Honorary Treasurer to the BA. The motion was put to the meeting. All members were in favour and Mr Swanson was duly re-elected.

b) Honorary auditor

Anthony Croot FCA indicated his willingness to continue to act as Honorary Independent Auditor to the BA. The motion was put to the meeting. All members were in favour and Mr Croot was duly re-elected.

c) Council members

7 of the 9 current council members indicated their willingness to continue to stand as Council Members of the BA. Michael Bristow and David Kirkby advised that they wished to step down and Ted Reilly and Helen Hudson put themselves forward to stand in their place. Hence there were nine nominations for the nine General Council positions.

The motions to vote on these nominations was therefore put to the meeting. All members were in favour and the following 9 council members were duly elected:

Adam Hogg
Jane Smith
Christopher Makin
Randall Anderson
David Bradshaw
Ted Reilly
Sue Cox
Helen Hudson
Sandy Wilson

9. Q&A

Q - a member asked about the progress made in monitoring and deterring Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) around the Estate.

A: David Bradshaw, Chair of the Security Committee, confirmed that the ASB Web Reporting System has been trialled by House Group Chairs and that no real negatives had been voiced. Details and contact numbers will be distributed to all residents following a meeting to be held on 5th May 2021 with the police to discuss the

feedback received. He urged everyone to make use of the system when it is launched and reassured that no personal details will be revealed.

No further questions were raised and the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.23pm