

THE BARBICAN ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 18th APRIL 2024

194 Members were present.

1. Welcome

The Chairman, Adam Hogg, welcomed everybody and conveyed apologies from Judith Finlay, Director of Community and Children's Services, who had hoped to be present but had been called away to fulfil another commitment in the City. Adam then introduced the guest speaker, Rob Mc Nicol, Assistant Director (Planning and Policy Strategy) at the Corporation of London, together with Daniel Sanders, the Assistant Director under Judith who is responsible for the Barbican Estate Office.

2. Presentation by Rob Mc Nicol

Rob told the meeting of the consultation process for the new City of London plan which was about to go out to public consultation. Rob was keen for residents to let him have their views whether in writing or by e-mail by 31st May 2024. There would also be a series of open meetings which he urged residents to attend.

3. Presentation by Jan Marc Petroszka

Jan Marc told the meeting of progress in developing a Neighbourhood Forum covering The Barbican, Golden Lane, and its hinterland. The development of the plan followed a formal timetable so it would be a few years before it was ready to be voted on at a referendum. In the meantime it was moving forward under the guidance of a strategy board.

4. Treasurer's Report and Presentation of Financial Statements for 2023.

Tony Swanson presented his report.

Barbican Life magazine had generated 23% more advertising revenue than in the previous year (£26,065 against £22,109) and membership revenues had also increased slightly from £6373 to £ 6,840. There was also a significant increase in bank interest from £229 to £1,933. The BA summer party was supported by £ 3,000 of community funding.

On the other side, costs relating to the BA's support of Barbican Quarter Action and the BA's service charge legal challenge over the Corporation's failure to issue a Section 20 notice in relation to temporary staff reduced funds at the bank from £ 164, 129 to £ 150, 763.

In 2024 the BA expects to recoup a significant proportion of these costs from the BQA crowdfunding initiative (which has pulled in about £ 23,000) and repayment of legal expenses incurred in the BA's legal action over the Section 20 notice.

The reduced loss of £ 7,179 for 2023 compared to 2022 leaves the BA with accumulated funds of £ 174,506.

Adam thanked Tony for his presentation and for his diligent management of the BA's finances. Adam also thanked Tony Croot for his examiner's report which provided useful reassurance that all was well.

Mary Durcan asked for an estimate of future expenses that might be incurred in supporting the continuing BQA campaign, bearing in mind that the CoL had just granted itself planning permission for the redevelopment of London Wall West. Jan Marc explained that no figure could be estimated immediately as it was not yet clear if the Secretary of State was going to call the application in (although this seemed highly likely). Alternatively, it might be necessary to implement a judicial review. Either way it would be necessary to relaunch the crowdfunding.

David Bradshaw proposed, seconded by Christopher Makin that the accounts be adopted and the motion was passed unanimously.

5. Elections

Honorary Treasurer.

Tony Swanson offered himself for re-election as Honorary Treasurer and was re-elected unopposed.

Honorary Auditor.

Tony Croot offered himself for re-election as the Honorary Auditor and was re-elected unopposed.

Elections to the General Council.

There were nine vacancies for places on the General Council. Eight existing members had offered themselves for re-election. Randall Anderson, David Bradshaw, Adam Hogg and Jane Smith had all served for at least four years previously. Brendan Barnes, Jan Marc Petroszka, Miranda Quinney and Roy Sully had served for fewer than four years. All eight were re-elected unopposed. Deborah Oliver had offered to fill the ninth vacancy and was elected unopposed.

6. Update on the work of the BA since the last AGM

The Chairman began by paying tribute to Councilman Mark Bostock who had died on 20th August 2023. Mark had worked tirelessly for residents both as a member of the Court of Common Council and as a member of the BA General Council.

Adam went on to reflect on the problem of effecting change in the City of London, a problem that his illustrious predecessor, Jane Smith, had highlighted when responding to the Livsane Report in 2020.

Whilst the problem remained there was some progress to report. At long last the Policy and Resources Committee of the Corporation had agreed last week to reinvigorate a barbican Area Advisory Group.

The Residents' Consultation Committee had a new and energetic Chair, Sandra Jenner, with whom Adam was working closely on many issues. Their major preoccupation had been the strategic review of the Barbican Estate Office. The review showed the need for much improvement throughout, in particular: management capability, repairs and general maintenance of the fabric of the estate.

A step forward had been the appointment in March 2024 of Daniel Sanders as the Assistant Director below Judith Finlay to be responsible for the Barbican Estate. External independent consultants are carrying out audits on the service charge and energy consumption. Residents have been involved in drawing up their terms of reference.

Adam continued to outline other challenges arising from the City's failure to consult with residents. These included the Section 20 appeal over temporary workers and the plans to develop the former Museum of London Site (London Wall West). Adam ended by urging those present to volunteer for their house groups.

(The full text of Adam's speech is attached).

7. Energy Update

Ted Reilly reported on progress, or the lack of it, on two fronts: the installation of individual controls in each flat and load shift, which would achieve a better balance of warmth by day and coolness by night.

An experiment in Wallside was due to happen but it would take a year to understand the results, allowing for the change of seasons and weather patterns within them. However, this should lead to a position where the amount each resident paid was based much more closely on consumption.

8. Residents' Questions.

Jim Durcan asked if there were any plans to improve energy efficiency by better insulation. This was a good idea but beyond the scope of the BA.

Cynthia White asked whether water metering could be introduced. Unfortunately, the way water is supplied would entail three meters in every flat and this would be unworkable in practice.

Sandy Wilson wondered if the slowdown in the Chinese economy was leading to a fall off in development activity. This was beyond the capacity of the BA to answer.

9. Any Other Business

Sally Woodward thanked the Chairman and Officers of the BA for their work during the year. The meeting responded with warm applause.

The Chairman then invited everybody to move to the drinks reception.

