

Barking Reach Residents Association Meeting Minutes
Wednesday 27 April 2022
7.30pm via zoom

Attendance: 38

Meeting started: 7.30pm

The agenda: was agreed.

AGENDA

1. Guest speaker: Matt Scott, director of Thames Ward Community Project (TWCP), on:

*Fire safety action plan

*Ripple nature reserve

*BD giving funds

2. Fielders Quarter gym and visitor parking issues

3. Report from Barking Riverside Community Interest Company

4. AOB

Minutes and matters arising

Service charges pertaining to L&Q have been proposed to be discussed briefly.

Minutes for the previous monthly meeting will be available shortly.

1. Guest speaker: Matt Scott, TWCP, on:

***Fire safety action plan**

***Ripple nature reserve**

***BD giving funds**

Matt said that TWCP first started in 2017, when he was interviewed by Pete Mason, chair of Barking Reach Residents Association (BARRA), and Venilia Amorim, BARRA's treasurer, among others.

He gave a presentation on the projects TWCP is involved which are led by local residents. Presentation attached.

Wanted: resident-led change

1. Green Spaces – community gardens and campaigning to reopen the Ripple Nature Reserve
2. Housing – we want resident run housing – community land trusts
3. Planning Forum with Planning Aid London, Just Space, UCL
4. Growth forums – public meetings on regeneration
5. Health forums, sports activities, holiday activities etc

Wanted: resident-led change

6. Arts: DJ masterclasses and spoken word poetry
7. Safety - with British Red Cross and with BRRRA on Fire Inquiry and Safety Action Plan
8. Skills – we run ESOL classes and business workshops
9. Communications – River View News – resident-led newspaper
10. Young Citizens leadership classes

Asks:

- Ripple Nature Reserve Steering Group – you are invited
- Fire Safety Action Plan – please help secure recognition from LBBB and BRL
- BD Giving - £10,168 fire donations – please help with distribution
- BRRRA trustee role
- Community Organising training

Matt introduced Frankie Webster from Citizens UK, who then spoke on community organising, which is what her organisation is best known for. Community organising is for people who are unhappy with the ways things are and want to do something about it; for people who feel powerless or frustrated with the system, or worried about the direction the country is going.

She explained that Citizens UK teaches people how to listen, form a team, relate to people in power and hold decision makers to account.

She mentioned there is an event – Barking and Dagenham Citizens Accountability Assembly – at 6pm on 28 April at CU London Campus, Rainham Road North, Dagenham RM10 7BN.

TWCP has been working very closely with Citizens UK to identify priority issues through listening campaigns and provide solutions in assemblies where local parties are invited to respond to different manifesto asks. The most important matters chosen by community members to present at the Barking & Dagenham Accountability Assembly include: youth safety, the London living wage, and build a Housing Action Team.

Pete mentioned that he would contact Samuel Garside House residents regarding the BD Giving donations and how that should be distributed and spent.

2. Fielders Quarter gym and visitor parking issues

Pete stated that this item was put on the meeting's agenda at the last minute as residents found out that the gym at Fielders Quarter would be temporarily (two years) set up in the underground garage to give way to an extended sales office for Bellway.

This appears to be breaking the leases of residents and was a health and safety concern. Pete said several residents have sent stern emails to Bellway regarding the gym (see addendum 1) and many are opposing paying a portion of the service charge pertaining to the gym.

A Skinner Apartments resident said residents got a message from Bellway this week informing them that the gym would be moved to a bike store in the underground car park. The communication from Bellway and Pinnacle to residents is very poor to non-existent, residents reported.

Venilia suggested that the BRRRA contact the solicitors' specialised in service charges as she believes this is an illegal matter, directly breaking a lease contract.

Pete proposed that the BRRRA contact the council and Barking Riverside Limited (BRL) regarding this matter, if the response from Bellway to the Hamilton and Skinner residents email (see addendum 1) was not adequate. He posted a draft to the chat, which he had circulated and had discussed in the social media groups in the Fielders Quarter and this was revised following discussion (see addendum 2).

Another resident of the Hamilton and Skinner and Apartments mentioned that the concierge and the gym added considerable value to the properties. He stated that if these services are not provided, compensation should be pursued.

A Hamilton Mansions resident said that they were told there would be a separate entrance into the gym, so the issue of security is also present.

On street parking, Pete mentioned that this has been a problem since the beginning when residents started moving in. Pete said that there is a parking sub-committee for BRRRA where ideas for solutions are discussed. Getting rid of double yellow lines is not possible where there is a cycle lane and cutting through the green to accommodate parking bays is not popular among residents either.

However, the group approached BRL and Tandem to make the car park at The Wilds available for residents, which was successful, but is full 50% of the time.

And the sub-committee has also contacted TFL with regards to the space under the station, but TFL said, (presumably due to obligations it has with the council, such as the section 106 agreement), that parking spaces around the Barking Riverside estate are to be kept to a minimum and would not be provided under the arches of the new station.

BRRRA's parking sub-committee also discussed approaching the Riverside School for residents to use the visitor car park, however since residents already occasionally use that area for free visitor parking, it was considered best to hold off until it became an issue.

3. Report from Barking Riverside Community Interest Company

Venilia mentioned that there was a BRL CIC board meeting on 8 April 2022.

She said that the final recommendations of the Learning Forum with regards to the refreshed governance structure of the Barking Riverside Community Interest Company were circulated for approval. This means that the next board meeting in July will be held with the new board of directors in place (1 BRL staff, 1 L&Q staff, 1 councillor, 2 residents). The process of appointing three more residents, to give a resident majority on the board, and an independent chair will follow on from there.



John Jones, director at Tandem, gave a presentation of their April report at the BRL CIC meeting on 8 April 2022.

Since their appointment in August last year, they have completed a legal document review and created an asset schedule which shows all interests on Phase 1 and 2 and their tenancy agreements, for instance the Coop shop, the bike store, etc.

Their report also mentioned that the Estate Team has been expanded to match up to the requirements of the site and the increased plots and areas. At that meeting John said a new member of staff, Joyce Boxem was hired at the beginning of April.

The process for handovers has been a key focus for Tandem to ensure full documentation is received and the provision and scope of service is understood. Documents which have been handover over on prior completed plots and current plots have been reviewed in detailed to verify completeness.

With the historic issues and handover issues being worked through and coming to a conclusion, the focus and attention is moving to a number of the new projects such as security etc but also on the following -

- Electric Vehicle Charging points
- Enterprise car club
- Increased amenities - ie Amazon Boxes
- Potential revenues
- Additional procedures and policies

John said these would be reported on in detail in future meetings and reports.

This month Tandem will be launching MyBarkingRiverside.co.uk which is an online portal providing information on the estate, guidance on estate matters and how to contact Tandem. Phase 1 will go live first followed shortly by Phase 2.

At the CIC meeting John also mentioned that the work to conclude the financial handover and prior year service charge is nearing completion and auditors are finalising the prior year accounts. All arrears are being actively chased. The budgets are being reviewed and forecasting to the year end is currently being undertaken. It is noted that the service charge budgets will increase in the next financial year due to establishment of appropriate scope of services and improved maintenance.

John mentioned some key arrears:

- Southern Housing (c£7.5K in arrears)– They have a query regarding prior year apportionments. It has been made clear that they cannot withhold monies on the current year. They have been advised that action will be taken to recover the monies if not received in full.
- Adriatic (c£400k in arrears)
- Encore – Paid current charges, they have queries regarding historic charges, a meeting has been scheduled to clarify this.

- RMG – Payment has been promised twice, Tandem advised them that action will be taken.
- Bellway/Pinnacle (c£99k in arrears)– Lack of response, Tandem has advised them that action will be taken. Arrears relating to the houses on Phase 1 have been chased 4 times.
- L&Q (c£120k in arrears)

John also said that health and safety risk assessments have been undertaken on Phase 1 and Phase 2. There are no 'high risk' items. Risk assessments are undertaken by ARK and the data is held on their QUOODA system. For reference, Tandem take the view that to be compliant, the documentation to evidence compliance has to be provided and saved in QUOODA.

On lighting, to date c30 lights have been replaced with a further 30 on order set to arrive in the coming weeks. The units are being converted to LED lighting which makes them more efficient and longer lasting. John said Tandem is instigating works to number each lamp post so that works/ repairs can be easily located and referenced.

On waste for phase 1, John told the CIC board that fly tipping continues to be a major issue, therefore residents have been sent a bulletin reminding them of the council services. Improved signage and CCTV camera at Drakes Close particularly will be installed this month as well. Darren Rodwell, who is a current director, said that there is the possibility of working with the council on their 'wall of shame' on fly tipping. For phase 2, blockages in the ENVAC system have been the key issue therefore a bulletin has been sent to all occupiers on the usage of the system.

John also mentioned that a number of works have been identified which have been presented to BRL for consideration which include repairs to pavements, curbs and decking areas.

4. AOB

The next residents meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 25 May but before that the association will hold a Fielders Quarter residents meeting on Wednesday 11 May.

Pete also mentioned that the June meeting would be the association's annual general meeting (AGM) in which if will be willing to stand if nominated, and that he would certainly be nominating the committee for re-election as they had done a really sterling job throughout the lockdown period since the last elections.

Meeting ended 9.00pm

Addendum

Addendum 1

To Bellway & Pinnacle,

As per the conversations discussed earlier today within concierge, myself, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] have collated a list of questions from the residents of both Hamilton Mansions and Skinner Apartments. This list was already in progress after the residents lost patience with having to continually chase for updates.

There seems to be a repeated failure in communication with residents which is causing a lot of frustration. Alex (Pinnacle) communicated that he would be on site to answer residents questions on Monday 25th April, however failed to turn up or inform residents that he would not be attending today. This is not the first occasion where residents have been promised something by Pinnacle which hasn't been delivered:

- Updates on the gym repeatedly delayed
- Updates with regards to residents meetings still not communicated
- Updates with regards to the App
- Updates with regards to the extension of hours for the concierge service

Pinnacle is currently using a local WhatsApp group (that not all residents are a part of) it feels as though this shouldn't be the main (often only) method of communication between a management company and residents. An app has been mentioned but there's been no further updates on this. The main form of communication should be more professional to provide updates, e.g. email/noticeboard. Rather than residents having to ask about updates/services via WhatsApp, there should be regular updates from Pinnacle about on going to matters.

Residents feel Bellway do not take accountability for the lack of aftercare provided to its residents. When you take into consideration that the sales office is being significantly expanded whilst amenities that were promised to current residents fail to materialise, this gives the impression that Bellway are prioritising sales.

- Outdoor kitchen/BBQ failed to materialise (sold by site management team during home tours)
- Several residents feel they are having to constantly chase in relation to their snags
- Communication from Bellway with regards to the gym has been abysmal and ill thought out e.g. SA residents have been told to put their bikes in HM bike store, when they do not have access to it (this instruction was refuted by site management team today).
- Works on expanding the sales office started months ago, which was supposed to be the site of the residents gym as per the original plans. From this point onwards it was clear that the gym was no longer going to be within that space, however, it's taken up until now for this to be communicated to residents (despite chasing for updates on numerous occasions).
- Access has been given to areas of the building where not appropriate e.g. Range Rover in car park and all residents having fob access to UG.

When residents have raised concerns there seems to be a constant game of pass the buck between Bellway and Pinnacle leaving residents in the dark or residents being given "excuses" for failures. Its taken 3 people who have their own jobs to sit down at 10pm on a Monday night to help resolve this mess created by Bellway and Pinnacle.

Furthermore please find attached the list of collated questions. Given the current tensions with residents we feel it would be appropriate if these questions are answered by Thursday 28th April at the very latest. We are not the sole representatives of HM and SA, we simply took initiative to help our fellow neighbours with their concern, queries and frustrations. On this occasion we are happy to share your response with our neighbours, however hereafter we would expect all communications to come directly from Bellway and Pinnacle via the forms mentioned above.

Residents of HM and SA

Addendum 2

Draft as revised following meeting

Dear Councillor Cameron Geddes,
Cc Matt Carpen (director, BRL)

1. Please can Bellway be instructed to provide the promised gym in the Fielders Quarter, as advertised, in the location of the sales office, forthwith? Bellway, after many months of delay, and under considerable pressure, have informed residents that the gym will be placed, for a period of years, in the underground car park, where the bike racks are currently located.

2. The gym was part of the contract of sale of the properties in the Fielders Quarter, added a considerable amount to the valuation and purchase price, and features in the lease. See attachments. Residents express considerable concern that Bellway have broken the terms of the lease, and indeed are liable to pay considerable compensation to residents in diminishing the value of the apartments. Legal advice will be sought, but in the first instance, a representation from yourselves to Bellway on this issue, and your advice beforehand, is requested.

3. Can you confirm that there is planning permission for a gym where the Fielders Quarter Bellway sales office currently is?

Residents have seen gym equipment in the concierge building next door, which we are now told the sales office will extend into. Yet they have even been told that the gym will be located in phase three. This would certainly cost Bellway hugely in terms of compensation, leave aside reputational damage.

4. Finally, although it is a secondary matter, is it not a health and safety hazard to locate a gym in an underground carpark, even if temporarily? Has planning permission even been sought? Residents will not accept this ramshackle attempt to push them out of their purchased facilities merely to expand the sales office.