

**Barking Reach Residents Association Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday 21 January 2026**  
**7.30pm via zoom**

<https://bit.ly/BRRAMeets2026>

Meeting ID: 881 4907 6288

Passcode: 731647

**Attendance:** 63

**Meeting started:** 7.30pm

**Guest speaker: Sarah Philips, head of estates at Barking Riverside Limited**

**Agenda:**

1. Service charges
2. Heating & water supply
3. Update from MP Nesil Caliskan
4. Fire safety/waking watch
5. Any other business

**Minutes and matters arising**

Pete Mason, the chair of the Barking Reach Residents Association (BRRA), opened the meeting. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

**1. Service charges**

Sarah Phillips, head of estate at Barking Riverside Limited (BRL), confirmed that BRL is leading a new service charge working group to improve transparency, consistency, and communication across all managing agents and landlords on the estate.

The group's first task is to align terminology and timing around estate service charges, moving budget setting earlier to start next month and conclude by May, to reduce reliance on estimates.

She stressed it has no formal power to set or refund block or plot service charges, but BRL wants to coordinate all parties to improve processes and value for residents. She said that managing agents broadly support the initiative except for Canonbury, which has refused to engage, limiting progress in some blocks.

Sarah said that BRL will benchmark charges against other London developments and explore external frameworks like the Mayor of London Service Charge Charter to promote fairness and transparency.

Residents expressed frustration over misadvertising by Bellway, which claims no estate service charge at point of sale, misleading buyers on affordability. Sarah said that the working group aims to address these issues but acknowledged the complexity due to multiple landlords, managing agents, and contractual constraints.

Residents also highlighted serious concerns about rapidly rising service charges, threatening affordability and causing financial hardship. Several reported charges nearly doubling within two to three years, with some block charges increasing from around £2,300 to £4,000 annually for a two-bedroom flat.

The lack of finalised accounts and ongoing back-charges due to reliance on estimates has created confusion and distrust among leaseholders and residents fear that inflated service charges are undermining property values, with one estimating paying £31k to £35k in charges over five years and up to £70k in 10 years. Residents stressed that mortgage affordability tests often fail to account for these unpredictable charges, putting homeowners at risk of losing their homes.

Sarah McCready, director of social infrastructure and communications at BRL, acknowledged the seriousness of the affordability issue and pledged to prioritise coordination, though it lacks direct enforcement power.

Pete said there is strong resident support for pursuing Right to Manage (RTM) on individual blocks to gain direct control over managing agents and reduce costs.

**ACTION:** BARRA plans to extend invitations to Bellway and L&Q to attend future meetings despite their limited engagement so far.

Residents called on BARRA to invite MP Nesil Caliskan to the next meeting to follow up on her previous attendance at the residents association meeting in October, which was attended by well over 200 residents. \*Nesil was invited but at the time of writing, had not agreed to attend a future meeting\*

Pete reported on a follow-up conversation with Nesil's admin, who said that all but one managing agent had met with Nesil over the issue and that she had threatened to raise the issue in parliament if the issue of unaffordability was not resolved.

## **2. Heating & water supply**

Pete told the meeting of the ongoing critical problems with heating and hot water, especially due to the district heating system operated by L&Q Energy, causing extended outages and poor customer service.

Residents reported outages lasting up to 17 hours, including over Christmas, with no adequate compensation beyond a £1.50 refund, which is widely considered insufficient. Delays and obstacles in repair services were described, including difficulties in getting L&Q or contractors to respond promptly, forcing some residents to file formal complaints.

Additionally, residents noted that there are inconsistent standing charges across residents, ranging from 54p to £1.50 per day, with no clear route to apply for social tariffs or support for vulnerable customers.

Pete reported that MP Nesil Caliskan has been actively engaged, holding meetings with managing agents and landlords to address these issues in John Miller and Leslie Hitchcock houses, and pushing for metering and fair billing practices.

BRL and residents recognise this as a systemic problem linked to poor build quality and legacy issues, with ongoing efforts to resolve them, including involving the MP and regulatory bodies.

A meeting in early January had been held by Nesil (see more detailed notes in the appendix) with residents of these blocks together with a national head and local manager of the managing agent in charge of heating, RMG. They apologised and pledged to resolve issues. Nesil again emphasised that the “historic debt” being chased should be dropped, given the outrageous circumstances of unmetered heating for more than a decade.

Further notes on this are appended in the appendix.

## **3. Update from MP Nesil Caliskan**

Partly addressed in previous item. In respect of a follow-up, the residents' association is still waiting on a response from the MP's office on the matter of service charges and her meetings with Bellway and L&Q.

## **4. Fire safety/waking watch**

A resident of Collett Mansions and member of the association's committee said that a significant fire safety failure in Collect Mansions led to a prolonged waking watch, potentially creating major additional costs for residents.

The waking watch was put in place after four leaks disabled the building's automatic opening vent (AOV), a crucial fire safety system, leading to 24/7 patrols costing residents. Pinnacle's poor response to leaks and failure to repair the AOV over several months triggered the issue. Pinnacle is the block's manager.

The resident said that the building suffered cold conditions due to the open vent during the winter, with Pinnacle failing to respond adequately. Pinnacle plans to claim the cost on building insurance, which will likely increase premiums and pass costs back to residents via service charges.

Residents are contesting these charges and seeking clarity and accountability, highlighting the potential for similar issues in other buildings.

## **5. Any other business**

The next residents' meeting is taking place on Wednesday 25 February at 7.30 to 9pm.

### **Meeting ended 9.08pm**

*All meeting minutes and audio recordings can be found on the [association's website](#), under [meetings info](#).*

## **Appendix**

More on the update from MP Nesil Caliskan:

Pete gave an update from the latest meeting with Nesil and block manager RMG on 8 January at The Wilds.

The following points from the meeting included:

- Residents to request RMG that Homeground write off £115,000 of historical gas charges
- RMG are going to run comparisons of historic gas charges and gas charges since data energy took over (residents anticipate this will justify the request for write off of £115k historical gas charges)
- Nesil to request that JB Leitch threats are stopped
- Nesil to request that RMG takes people's accounts off hold with Homeground so that they can pay current RMG bills (separate from historical debt)
- Communication from Nesil to Homeground about individual heat pumps for the Minter Road houses
- Query to Homeground from Nesil via RMG: Can electricity of plant and lighting of the blocks be separated?