

Barking Reach Residents Association Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 21st March 2018

7:30pm, Rivergate Centre

Committee: Pete Mason (chair), Nuno Amorim (Secretary), Venilia Amorim (Treasurer)
Attendance: 24 residents present. Apologies from PC Steve Merrett and PC Gary Jones and Sophie Merriman of Creative Barking and Dagenham

Meeting started at 7.40pm

Agenda

Agenda agreed as amended: Matt Scott to address meeting on the Thames Ward Community Project and the Barking Riverside Community Interest Company in place of Creative Barking and Dagenham.

Minutes and Matters arising

Addition to specify the February meeting was a Special General meeting. Minutes as amended were agreed. No matters arising not on the full agenda.

Security

Apologies from Police officers due to an arrest taking them to Romford. Venilia proposed we ask them to attend a special residents meeting on security. Agreed. Resident raised about theft of moped from Samuel Garside car park last year: Police had not successfully followed up and CCTV footage, if it exists, was not revealed to the resident for confidentiality reasons. He asked: Why does Link Parking have access to the underground car park?

Thames Ward Community Project and the Barking Riverside Community Interest Company

Matt Scott, TWCP coordinator, spoke. The TWCP focuses on community gardens (allotments), Community Cohesion, Youth projects and finds that Barking is a “cold spot” for community engagement. A Young Citizens Action Group has been set up through the good offices of Riverside School. A Resident Planning Forum is envisaged involving all three residents associations in the ward to build towards getting community premises. A larger community event is planned and volunteers are welcome to help.

The **Barking Riverside Community Interest Company** was set up some time ago. It did have the participation of a delegate from the residents association but essentially as a passive observer, run by Barking Riverside Ltd (BRL) and the council, with attendance by council leader Darren Rodwell, Councillor Cameron Geddes, Director of BRL Matt Carpen, and another director from London & Quadrant (L&Q). It aimed to add the CIC as a brand to the actions of BRL. However, it fell into abeyance but there is now a desire to refresh its governance. Its aim is to manage the housing for the development for phases 1, 2, 3, and 4. “These are my impressions and I hope to meet Matt Carpen to get further understanding of this. This refreshment to be done by about August, so resident input is urgent. The stated aim of the Barking Riverside development has always been set up as ‘Inclusive’ and to have the active participation of residents,” Matt Scott told residents.

On the BRL website (www.barkingriverside.co.uk/community) it states: “The Barking Riverside Community Interest Company (C.I.C) was set up in 2009 following the start of preparation for development. The intention is for this company to inherit the common parts of

the Barking Riverside estate and to own the asset for the benefit of the community. This will include maintaining the estate, promoting and organising community events and generating estate income.” (Accessed 23/3/18).

Surely this means that residents should have the ability to make decisions. And this means they surely need to be in a majority. Matt cited other developments, private and public, that were resident led. Matt stressed that BRL should put a number of options to residents rather than a single model of four residents on a CIC board of perhaps 12.

The chair stated that the rest of the borough had the opportunity to elect councillors who were in charge of the entire borough, and that this was true throughout the entire country. It was not a radical idea that, on this major development, residents should be able to elect their governance. He proposed that:

**“The residents should have a clear majority on the board of the CIC”
Passed by 15 votes to none with none abstaining.**

A resident suggested that BRL does a consultation of models of governance of the CIC in the same way as they did with the parking in January.

Service Charge

Treasurer Venilia Amorim explained her five-page template letter to Pinnacle complaining about the problems of the service charge. The letter, which is aimed at residents of 3/4 bedroom houses, has already been used by several residents and sent to Pinnacle. Residents wishing to use the letter should replace the red writing with their own. The letter touches on very specific areas, questioning Pinnacle on evidence of expenditure and on specific queries such as inconsistency of terminology used in Pinnacle correspondence with residents, right down to how management fees are calculated by unit apportionment.

For those residents wishing to take things further, they can apply to the First Tier Tribunal under the Property Chambers (www.gov.uk/housing-tribunals) and they can also get legal advice from the University of Law (www.law.ac.uk/about/legal-advice-for-the-public/) providing full detail of each residents’ case and bearing in mind the term dates as cases are looked at by students within the university. All information is on the association’s website (www.brra.org.uk) and it has also been circulated through the regular newsletter.

Heating

The chair stated that despite raising with BRL that the association has written to HomeGround, managing agents of landlords Adriatic, regarding the issues raised at the last meeting, no reply was forthcoming and a draft letter was prepared to follow up. The chair wanted to first consult with residents and asked the meeting: Should we demand that the costs of the temporary heating are not put on the service charge?

In the discussion that followed the following points were made by multiple residents from John Miller House, Samuel Garside House and Ernest Websdale House. Since the temporary heating was installed hot water was a good temperature for the first time, meaning that there are structural problems, as the residents association had raised. This had been denied by Pinnacle. The residents agreed that they should not be charged for a system that was faulty when they moved in.

The following was agreed:

“That the costs of the temporary heating should not be put on the service charge.”

The chair will write to HomeGround raising this point alongside the demand for compensation and other issues raised in the meeting.

Parking and Road Usage

Barking Riverside Limited has submitted its application for planning permission.

Motion - Link Parking to cease ticketing residents parked in their own bays

“We call on BRL to instruct Link Parking to cancel all tickets issued to residents who were parked in their own bays and to cancel all court cases pending on this issue, since residents’ leases and tenancy agreements do not make provision for permits.” Moved by Nuno Amorim, seconded by Pete Mason

Passed unanimously.

Residents reported on their successful court battles against Link Parking and how to defeat them. A resident has won four cases so far and has five to go, on behalf of his family and neighbours. The following amended resolution was passed:

Motion - Galleons Drive Green Tarmac/Cycle Path

This association believes:

1. That cyclists should not be encouraged to ride on the pavement where the green tarmac is placed on Galleons Drive. The green tarmac on Galleons Drive is not safe.
2. The green tarmac, in any case, is too frequently intersected by roads, e.g. Gatward Place, Middleton Grove, McAllister Grove, Sedge Gardens to be serviceable to cyclists travelling through the estate. Vehicles park on the roads adjacent to the green tarmac and this creates a danger to cyclists using the green tarmac as a cycle path due to visibility issues. Also, vehicles turning in to the intersecting roads have visibility issues with seeing cyclists coming down the cycle path.
3. The green tarmac is too close to the houses, from which residents cross to their cars, and where children play, to be safe to cycle on, compared with the road.
4. It is broken up by the significant ditch or gully (perhaps a twenty-foot drop) overlooked by Lawes Way east, which would be very dangerous if a cyclist was traveling from the west fast in poor light.
5. It is very infrequently used, most likely for all the above reasons.
6. Bollards to stop vehicles parking on the green tarmac would be seen by the residents as an unnecessary expenditure on their service charge for the above reasons.
7. Bollards will obstruct emergency vehicles access.
8. Bollards are easily a cause of damage to cars.
9. There is already a highly visible parking enforcement operation to penalise vehicles parking on the green tarmac or pavement by Link Parking.
10. This residents’ association therefore believes that the green tarmac should not be used as a cycle lane.

Moved by Pete Mason, seconded by Habib Qazi. The mover removed a sentence that stated: “The cycle lane should be on the road, not on the pavement where it is a danger” as it was a generic statement and not pertinent to the intention of the resolution, which objects to the siting of a cycle lane on the pavement by the houses because residents feel it is dangerous and was not intended to address where it might be relocated.

Passed as amended by 10 votes to 6.

Fly-tipping

Note: No report was given during the meeting due to time over-run, however, the association had been in communication with the local authority and rubbish had been removed from Animal Way twice. A formal complaint was issued by the association to the council regarding the failure to clear fly-tipping in Crossness Road. This was cleared following the meeting.

AOB

Residents from Samuel Garside raised that there are no bins in the flats marked for recycling. A resident said he had contacted the council, which had claimed that they sort through the big red bins and extract any recyclable waste. There was discussion about the feasibility of this claim.

Meeting closed 9:02pm