

Barking Riverside Residents meeting
(Sub Committee of the Barking Reach Residents Association)
19th July 2017 Rivergate Centre, 7.30pm

Attendance: Pete Mason (chair), Shazia Sherkhan (vice chair), Nuno Amorim (secretary), Venilia Amorim (treasurer). 35 signed attendance register.

Apologies received from Councillors Cameron Geddes, Bill Turner and Josie Channer due to full council meeting

Minutes of previous meeting were approved as a true record.

Matters arising

Health and safety – cyclist knocked down by bus 18/7/17 about 4pm at the junction of Marine Drive and Mallards road where the bus stops. Agreed to raise the issue of the placement of the bus stop with John Hunter Team Leader, Transport Development Management on the council, who had previously attended our meeting, and who had agreed to a meeting with the officers. There is the matter of the adopted parts of Galleons Drive and the undertaking of the May

BRL consultation to review the placement of traffic calming measures there instead of double yellow lines.

Sandy House residents raised security. Agreed to discuss under item of Pinnacle Update.

Parking

Chair reported on latest situation: that Councillor Channer reported to the chair that a meeting had taken place between the councillors and BRL in which there was no mention of the urgent parking issue. She raised it and gained an assurance it would be forthcoming. She intimidated that the issue had been dropped and would seek herself though Councillor Bill Turner to re-start the negotiations. She supported the residents in their fight against parking restrictions. The committee had subsequently written a 3,000 word email to BRL, cc'd to councillors, MP, journalists and others, on 10 July saying that it believed BRL was in breach of the terms of the consultation. Correspondence posted on Facebook and sent in newsletter.

He read out part of the email. See Addendum 1

The email had declared that “This Barking Riverside Residents Association committee will therefore, at its forthcoming meeting on the 19 th July, discuss the commencement of a large scale, estate-wide campaign of publicity, legal action against BRL and if necessary an election campaign in pursuance of the demands below.”

The chair, on behalf of the committee, proposed two consultative motions to take the campaign forward along these lines: firstly, to “pursue a large-scale estate-wide campaign of publicity and legal action against BRL”. Secondly to “raise the necessary funds” for such a campaign. Both motions passed overwhelmingly. These motions will be circulated through newsletters and Facebook and fourteen days before the next meeting to give residents time to consider them.

See addendum 2 for full motions.

Pinnacle update

The residents of Sandy House discussed security. Two bikes stolen. The door is not secure. Residents invited to participate as delegates from Sandy House on the committee and to discuss in detail the issues. Residents association will follow up with Pinnacle. If no response, residents will need to organise residents, perhaps through a petition, and draw them together for a campaign to improve security. Chair reported that the same problem has been raised with other blocks where motor bikes have been stolen since the flats were first occupied.

Shutters also always breaking.

The chair raised the question of whether equipment like doors and shutters on the estate, which the residents rely on for their security, is too cheaply sourced and not robust enough for the job. That repairs in this case are not enough, but rather replacement with better equipment.

Committee was pursuing the recognition of our committee. Letter sent to Jim Wilson (see addendum 3) and his reply read out. Treasurer Venilia had volunteered to reply to him. Association to be set up as a Community Interest Company.

Service charge: All documentation now on website. Includes template letter which residents who don't wish to stop paying the service charge – until such times as they are legally enforceable – so as to pay a small amount instead.

Pinnacle still not managed to finalize account: reports “meeting with BRL unfortunately postponed” No new date yet set.

Resident raised that residents not paying should put the money aside should the bills actually become due. Chair re-enforced that point, saying that if BRL ever does finish its accounts, and the bills then become enforceable, and they cannot be disputed, residents will have to pay them. However, the secretary pointed out that after 18 months Pinnacle cannot by law change the amounts on old service charge bills, whatever the accounts may show.

Fire safety

Chair reported that the Riverside and wider Reach estate is generally made of wooden frame buildings. On the Riverside there is extensive wood cladding. Chair read from a BBC Londonexpose (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-10645700> ‘Timber framed buildings “fire risk” despite safety test’) that showed that “A controversial safety report, coupled with lobbying by the timber industry, has led to the spread of a construction method not widely seen in the UK since the Great Fire of London. BBC London has discovered potentially dangerous timber framed buildings are proliferating... building with timber frames was banned in the years after Sir Christopher Wren’s 1667 Building Act. Until recently, that is, because in 1999 the fire safety testers, BRE, carried out a test on a six-storey timber framed building in the controlled conditions of an aircraft hangar..” the test building did not catch fire, and this was reported and led to the change in the law. What was not reported was that later in the night it re-caught fire and burnt to the ground despite the efforts of the fire brigade. But this information was suppressed and the report said the test was a success.

The Chair felt that in the light of the Grenfell Fire disaster it would be remiss not to draw residents’ attention to this report – one of many warning that an event like Grenfell was inevitable with the lowering of standards. Health and safety now relied on smoke alarms and

the swift response of the fire service – wood materials often have as little as half an hour fire resistance.

The committee has invited the London Fire Brigade to look at the estate and the London Fire Brigades union to send a speaker to our next meeting. This to be confirmed.

Mosquitoes and standing water

It was reported that Pinnacle had just revealed that the long-awaited treatment for mosquitoes had still not been acted on. “No date provided yet”.

Noise Nuisance and VPA

Committee proposes to meet with the Victorious Pentacostal Assembly (VPA) to restore relations and persuade the VPA to recognise the noise nuisance it has caused. Complaint made to Council noise abatement office. Being followed up. To invite VPA minister to meet us.

Any Other Business

Residents were invited to attend the Barking Reach Residents Association annual general meeting by a committee member of that organisation, which is open to all on Riverside and the wider Reach, and is a fully constituted residents association and recognized by BRL, Pinnacle, L&Q, Southern Housing and the council.

Residents agreed to go to that meeting.

Addendum 1

Part of email sent to BRL after seven weeks without follow up on consultation:

The Barking Riverside Residents Association committee wishes to put on record its view that Barking Riverside Limited (BRL) have once again breached its agreement with the residents....

This Barking Riverside Residents Association committee will therefore, at its forthcoming meeting on the 19th July, discuss the commencement of a large scale, estate-wide campaign of publicity, legal action against BRL and if necessary an election campaign in pursuance of the demands below.

Our demands

Let us outline our basic position.

We declare that residents living on the Barking Riverside London estate have always parked responsibly and will continue to do so and do not need punitive measures to enforce parking.

And we demand:

1. That the double yellow lines on phase one must be removed forthwith, except on Chilworth Place, where residents have expressly told us they want them.
2. A declaration from BRL that residents can park on the common areas of the estate that constitute the roads and pathways precisely as they did before the yellow lines were put down, either on the road, or where that causes an obstruction according to their own judgement, half on the pavement, free of charge.
3. That all fines paid, whether by residents of houses or flats, be refunded.
4. That all tickets issued be rescinded.

5. Full exclusive recognition of the Barking Riverside Residents Association to represent the residents of the Barking Riverside London development by BRL and L&Q.
6. That Pinnacle be instructed to similarly recognize us in all its operations without restriction. As for Southern Housing and other landlords, we will approach them in good time.
7. The installation of lockable posts on all bays where residents give their permission free of charge.
8. Free delivery of all and any future permits that may be required for allocated bays etc. to residents by post or hand by Pinnacle on receipt of required documents delivered by post or online.

Addendum 2

Motions passed overwhelmingly at the Barking Riverside Residents Association meeting 19 July 2017

Motion 1

This residents association agrees to pursue a large-scale estate-wide campaign of publicity and legal action against BRL to get the double yellow lines which were imposed on residents in 2015 removed from the estate where residents have indicated opposition to them.

Carried unanimously.

Motion 2

That this Residents Association agrees to raise the necessary funds through fundraising activities, selling no parking restrictions posters door to door and voluntary membership fees and other donations.

That all funds will be recorded accurately for inspection at all meetings.

That this Residents Association is a not for profit organisation and that no officer will take one penny of funds raised for personal gain on pain of expulsion from the association and possible legal action for fraud.

Carried overwhelmingly.

Addendum 3

From: Barking Riverside Residents Association

Wednesday, 28th June 2017

To: Jim Wilson

Director

Pinnacle Places

Dear Mr. Jim Wilson,

We are contacting you on behalf of the Barking Riverside residents with regards to your latest meeting held on 24th May 2017. This communication is addressing two main points that we, as an elected residents association would like to put forward to you as a director of Pinnacle Places:

1. Meeting Minutes
2. The use of bollards/lockable posts in allocated bays

1. Meeting Minutes

Firstly let me express our disappointment as residents of this estate, which Pinnacle manages on behalf of Barking Riverside Limited (BRL), at how the meeting minutes were compiled and distributed around the estate. There were hardly any posted through residents' letter boxes. We understand the meeting minutes were posted on the Pinnacle Portal, however, there were concerns raised by several residents at the meeting regarding access to the portal. Residents stated that it was not updated regularly, but most importantly, there are very few residents accessing the portal and it is still very hard to gain access to it via a code that needs to be requested by residents since it is not readily available from Pinnacle onsite staff.

So, as you can see, communication between Pinnacle and residents on the estate continues to be a challenge. Especially when said meeting minutes completely refuse to acknowledge that there is a residents-elected association in place: the Barking Riverside Residents Association.

There have been several residents that have shown this disappointment by writing/complaining to on-site management (namely Darren Logan, assistant manager) that these minutes are not a clear account of what was really discussed at that meeting. The minutes are in essence a news bulletin summarizing the points that Pinnacle wanted to raise, rather than giving an accurate summary of what was in fact discussed. For instance, the discussion had about how Pinnacle did not bring any figures to provide to residents in terms of the company's accounts in which the service charge should have been explained has not been mentioned on the minutes at all. Especially when there was a finance representative (Mary Lydon, head of accounts) present at the meeting, and when residents have specifically asked the whole meeting panel for details, openness and transparency.

The topic of service charge is by far one of the most sensitive issues being discussed among residents and the minutes are clearly not reflecting residents' frustrations surrounding this issue.

A particular resident has had a response from Darren Logan, which stated that the chairs of the residents association were issued with a draft of the minutes and approved them.

Again, let me reiterate that the meeting minutes do not acknowledge the fact that Barking Riverside Residents Association has been formed, with our chairman Pete Mason present. The minutes merely refer to Pete as an observer, but there is reference to Yvonne Thomas, observer, Barking Reach Residents Association.

As you may be aware, residents have lost complete confidence in the Barking Reach Residents Association, hence the reason for forming the Barking Riverside Residents Association. As Darren Logan stated that meeting minutes have been approved by Yvonne Thomas, this only strengthens our point, as part of the newly formed Barking Riverside Residents Association that approval of such meeting minutes was made without full consultation of at least all residents present at said meeting and it truly does not represent what the majority of residents attending the meeting witnessed.

Furthermore, if Yvonne Thomas was merely attending the meeting as an observer, she should not be having a say at all at such meeting, let alone approve minutes. I must stress once more that the association was formed and voted by a large number of residents, and yet Pinnacle

failed to contact any member directly from the Barking Riverside Residents Association to approve minutes or discuss the outcome of the meeting.

This point of discussion brings us then to an issue that was raised during the meeting: to recognise the Barking Riverside Residents Association as a true and sole representative of the residents of this estate. For this we would seek your confirmation in writing of this to our secretary, Mr. Nuno Amorim, at the above address.

2. The use of bollards in allocated bays

With that in mind, we come to our next point of discussion. As you know, parking is another very heated subject that, since the implementation of yellow lines and allocated bays along with parking enforcement by Pinnacle via Link Parking, has affected residents' daily lives. It was suggested at your meeting by one of our committee members (Fran Mitchell) the use of bollards or lockable posts on allocated bays. This would significantly reduce the number of vehicles parked incorrectly around the estate and it would guarantee a parking space to the allocated resident of a specific bay.

The Barking Riverside Residents Association would like, therefore, to meet with you in the next few weeks to discuss this possibility, taking into account which areas of the estate would be suitable for such installations, and also discussing issues such as costs and suppliers. We are open to suggestions on dates and times.

Looking forward to your reply.
Yours sincerely,

Venilia Amorim, Treasurer
Fran Mitchell, Committee Member
Barking Riverside Residents Association