

**HouBarking Reach Residents Association Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday 22 February 2023**  
**7.30pm via zoom**

**Attendance:** 54

Guests:

David Harley, deputy development director from the council's spun off building department Be First  
Sarah McCready, head of placemaking and communications at Barking Riverside Limited (BRL), the estate developer

Councillor Cameron Geddes, a long-serving member of the planning committee and the council cabinet at London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (LBBD)

Alex Anthony, community organiser at Thames life

**Meeting started: 7.31pm**

**The agenda:** the agenda as amended was agreed.

**AGENDA**

1. Health hub
2. Service charges
3. Ripple Effect/Thames Life update
4. Traffic/parking
5. Dog attacks
6. Security and Neighbourhood Watch
7. Caspian Quarter remediation update
8. Any other business

**Minutes and matters arising**

Minutes of last meeting were agreed as a true record. Due to pressure of time, Pete Mason, chair of the residents association (RA) did not go through each item as is usual.

**1. Health hub**

Pete reported to the meeting that there is an agreement between the council, Be First and Barking Riverside Limited (BRL), under their [section 106](#) agreement, to provide healthcare facilities for the area of Barking Riverside estate, but that the estate had been under occupation now for about 10 years and there were no health facilities.

He said that 18 months had passed since the meeting convened as a result of the outcry of residents that they have practically no access to GP services. This outcry was given voice by the residents association and councillor Cameron Geddes consequently helped convene the meeting in July 2021. This meeting had been successful in bringing the council to fund the deficit that was preventing BRL from building the Health Hub. Pete condemned Bellway for profit taking at the expense of even the developer, with the result that residents health was being neglected on this estate, which is supposed to be a “healthy new town”.

Pete said that the RA had agreed that although residents want to push for the Health Hub to be built as currently conceived, while the building is under construction, local residents still need health care services in the area. The Barking Reach Residents Association (BRRA) is therefore proposing that a temporary walk-in centre is created to accommodate this lack of services. The RA’s committee and residents have agreed to campaign to achieve this.

Pete introduced David Harley of Be First, who presented an update of the Health & Wellbeing Hub with a slide show.

David said the hub will be built between the Riverside School and the rail train station. It will provide health and community facilities – a feasibility study was carried out to see whether the community leisure provision was viable as well, which will include a swimming pool and gym, among other things.

David said the project could not be delivered just on section 106 money so an agreement between BRL and the council was made so the council would part fund the project on the basis of rental income from the scheme repaying the borrowing.

A procurement exercise was carried out and building contractor McClaren has been selected to carry out the construction.

David said that there have been some challenges: increased and uncertain construction costs/inflation, interest rate increases, labour shortages and energy costs.

David said he wants to re-establish the Residents Co-Design group that has been involved from the beginning, inviting any local resident that wants to get involved with the project.

As for a timetable, David said that planning and building is never a straight forward process, but hopefully construction will start in August 2024 with a completion date of January 2026.

Regarding temporary provision of a Doctor's (GP) surgery BRL has offered floorspace at the Rivergate centre and Northgate Road, but the NHS has said there is a shortage of GPs, so they cannot provide a GP service at present.

The former Clinical Commissioning Group, now called Integrated Service Boards, took the view that if and when an extra doctor is available, the best place would be to fill the additional floorspace at the Thames View Health Centre.

Sarah McCready of BRL said that work prep started in 2018 to decide that leisure services were to be included in the building as it would deliver more value to local residents, but that plan had caused a cost disparity in delivering the project.

She also said that the new health hub will not be part of the BRL Community Interest Company (CIC) list of owned community spaces because of the council part-funding the project, but she did think that the health hub would be subject to some degree of community control via the CIC, which has a residents' majority.

David said North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT) needs to provide more doctors for the area, and that organisation is the one that needs to make a decision on that.

Venilia Amorim, the RA's secretary, asked for the council, BRL and Be First to help the RA to keep up momentum on this subject by contacting NELFT to push them to deliver healthcare services on Barking Riverside. NELFT claim that a new development needs to reach a certain threshold of residents before deploying services, and Sarah suspected that the estate had not yet reached that threshold, but healthcare provision is clearly a high priority for residents right now.

Pete said that not long prior to the meeting he had asked councillor Geddes to contact doctor John again via Rebecca Nunn, to see if he could attend the residents meeting, and that Cameron had reported that although it was too short notice, she would attempt to do so for a future meeting.

It was agreed that the RA would pursue this issue, invite doctor John and the Integrated Services Board members along to a future meeting.

Both Sarah and David agreed to attend an RA meeting along with the Integrated Services Board members if this invitation was successful.

## **2. Service charges**

Chris Salvage, resident of Pedley House and one of the resident directors of Verde's block management company (Barking 201 Management Company Ltd), gave a presentation regarding increased service charges.

Chris said that during 2019 and 2021 the directors fought to get clarity on the service charges, following a late delivery of budgets. There were no high costs/services in 2019 since not many residents had moved in yet – there was a surplus then. It was similar for 2020, but for 2021, the block was over budget.

Chris said that directors have asked to reduce the 2022-23 budget and also asked for the 2019-2021 CIC charge credit to be applied to residents' accounts. He said the directors are challenging 2022-23 budgeted costs labelled 'estate manager', but they still need to review the 2021-22 service charge account. He said that they had had some success getting agreement to reduce the current service charge.

Dean Meekoms, another resident director, added that director residents are volunteers, they are not reimbursed at all, and spend a great deal of time chasing around Pinnacle for invoices and accounts upkeep. Director residents will always try their best to get the best value for money services for all residents.

Mihaela, a resident director for Samuel Garside House, advised that it's also about the residents being mindful of where they live and what needs to be maintained. She said costs are very high.

Chris said that the financial year is August to July. He thinks the original budget was estimated based on knowledge at the time and it should have been revised before this year. Hopefully there can be more stable budgets in future now that there are historical costs to use to forecast and directors can challenge any increases.

Cleaners have been a high cost and that is being seriously challenged, Chris said. There is a fixed price annual contract which is lower than paid previously so the directors have secured a saving from February 2023.

He advised residents to pay something now, stating that it is "under protest" or at least make contact with Pinnacle to avoid late payment charges which will be contested anyway. The directors will enquire about Pinnacle's contract and will advise once there is a new budget agreed hopefully next week so bills are reduced.

Pedley House residents thanked the resident directors for all the hard work they had put in.

Pete said that the Verde estate management company gave 75% of the shares and hence the votes to the landlord in perpetuity so if Pinnacle and the landlord wished, they could overthrow the wishes of the resident directors. However, residents and the RA had been successful in removing Pinnacle from the management of a number of blocks and from the management of the estate, which had been taken over by Tandem.

Residents had replaced Pinnacle and other block managing agents appointed by Bellway/Adriatic using Right to Manage (RTM) legislation. Pete thought that the resident directors of the Verde estate could relatively easily take Pedley House into RTM if Pinnacle did not play ball and continued to be obstructive. So they could mention that to them as an incentive to get them to agree to their proposals.

### **3. Ripple Effect/Thames Life update**

Alex Anthony of Thames Life said there is a campaign to support the Warehouse on Thames Road since the Every One Every Day project with Participatory City is coming to an end. There are plans to completely close the warehouse and dispose, sell or relocate its contents. Thames Life is campaigning for the Warehouse to be kept open so that residents can continue to benefit from its facilities and services.

Kevin, a local resident, gave details of the latest on their campaign to reopen the Ripple Nature reserve (located in the corner of Thames Road and Renwick Road) which he said, had been recognised as of national importance now, with protected wildlife species discovered. So there is further incentive to get it reopened.

Kevin further spoke on the need to protect the shoreline from overdevelopment and the potential loss of walks along the shore of the Thames.

### **4. Traffic/parking**

Pete announced that there were no major updates since the last residents meeting. There has been an [email exchange](#) between the RA and BRL, Be First and councillor Geddes following a meeting with all parties last October concerning traffic and parking on the Barking Riverside estate.

A resident asked whether BRL could be asked to open up unused ground for parking. Pete said they will, and that the RA had asked for an area under the new train line to be used and was flatly refused. Now it is being offered to the Riverside school, which doesn't have the parking space it needs for teachers, but at £10,000 a space which it cannot afford.

**ACTION:** RA to respond to BRL's latest communication.

### **5. Dog attacks**

Venilia gave an update on the [email exchange](#) between the police, the council and Tandem about the most recent dog attacks on the estate. Venilia is still confident that the best way forward for the estate is to get a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) in place forcing dog owners to keep their dogs under control and keep them on leads at all times or suffer consequences.

She said the RA is making all efforts to make sure that estate manager Tandem contacts Southern Housing/L&Q regarding the resident that owns the dog since he is in breach of his lease. The dog should be removed from the area.

**ACTION:** RA to draft response to the Police and to Tandem for an update.

### **6. Security and Neighbourhood Watch**

Joanna said the RA has now secured funding from BRL for the Neighbourhood Watch Group. This will cover expenses (high visibility vests, torches, whistles, training, posters and leaflets, etc). The group is trying to gain further volunteers for patrolling the area and that will start once funds are received with leafleting and putting posters up in the area as well as an online campaign.

Venilia also reported that she and Joanna also attended a 'Coffee with a Copper' session late last month. Several issues were discussed, including the anti-social behaviour currently at the car park of The Wilds almost every night. The police officers are aware and have been trying to disperse people loitering in the area. Police officers tend to patrol the area in unmarked vehicles at least once a week.

Venilia said that during the session the police officers also mentioned that they would increase contact with the RA for future ward panel meetings, in which residents get to decide which areas the police should be paying more attention to.

### **7. Caspian Quarter remediation update**

Joanna said that Cornelius House would be the next block to have works carried out, so that means replacement materials have been received. She said that everything is more or less on schedule to continue with works on cladding remediations for Caspian Quarter buildings.

### **8. Any other business**

A resident asked for a discussion to be had at the next residents meeting on an explanation of Barking Riverside residents paying full council tax as well as an estate service charge.

The next residents meeting is on Wednesday 22 March 2023 at 7.30pm

**Meeting ended 9.10pm**