

Barking Reach Residents Association Meeting Minutes
Wednesday 25th April 2018
Rivergate Centre (7.30pm to 9pm)

Committee: Pete Mason (chair), Nuno Amorim (Secretary), Venilia Amorim (Treasurer)

Attendance: 23 residents present.

Guests: PC Gary Jones and PC David Scallan; Matt Scott, director, Thames Ward Community Project

Meeting started at 7.34pm

Agenda was agreed

Minutes and Matters arising

Minutes agreed. Matters arising to be taken under appropriate items on the agenda.

Security: Police on security and crime

PC Gary Jones reported on the crime in the local area, with maps of all incidents in the last four weeks. There were no burglaries or major assaults. Crime in the Barking Reach area was “extremely low compared to the surrounding areas.” Residents raised about a spate of people going through bins: where these bins are not on resident’s actual property, there is no law against people going through waste, usually to extract any metal objects, but residents were cautioned to shred documents with personal details on them. Where the bins are on residents’ property, Gary recommended calling 999 and filing a report. The chair emphasised: Do not confront these people, and that is the official advice of the police also.

Car “drifting” on Choats Road and the car park off Minter Road: there is a PSPO (public space protection order) and the council are issuing “tons of fines.” The police are pushing for some rumble strips but the location is on the industrial estates, well off the through routes used by residents. Gary will supply contact details to be circulated in our next newsletter.

Road works and Parking

The problems caused by the road works on Thames Road were discussed by residents. The Chair reported long delays on Bastable Avenue queuing for the River Road traffic lights on the morning of the residents’ association meeting. The residents association have been lobbying hard on this and attended an angry meeting of the Thames View residents association to express their solidarity with residents there who are facing a ‘rat run’ situation because traffic from the A13 has been allowed to turn into Bastable Avenue during the morning rush hour.

Louis Chau of Barking Riverside Limited (BRL), the developers and landlords, had reported to the residents association that Fielders Crescent (the new road running past the Riverside School) will not open until end of August. Residents have repeatedly asked for the cut through from Galleons Drive to Long Reach Road to be opened to car traffic travelling west to River Road. The Chair reported that Louis Chau emailed us to say he has discussed this with the council, as well as the concern about the ‘rat run’ and traffic congestion. BRL will observe traffic patterns and evaluate. Traffic signals: Louis Chau promised to get an update from the council on the traffic lights signals on the Marine Drive/Thames Road junction.

Matt Scott pointed out that Tom Hook of the council admitted that engagement and dialogue could have been done better. Matt Scott also communicated that the council gets section 106 money— funds paid to the council by developers as part of for the various works carried out in the

development of the estate, and that the residents association could lobby for some of that money to be used to improve the lives and health and safety of residents in the ward affected by the development. He gave the example of crossings being installed on Bastable Avenue now it is being used as a rat run.

Residents proposed:

1. that Transport for London be asked that the EL3 route be extended so that it goes to the school like the EL1 used to.
2. That road work traffic lights on the stretch of Thames Road between Marine Drive and Renwick Road could be installed to allow two-way traffic down that part of the road, meaning that the EL1 would not have to be diverted.
3. that both the residents' associations affected, with the assistance of Matt Scott, request the convening of a meeting with BRL and other players, such as Thames Water, the council, TfL, and so forth, to discuss the issue.
4. that we call on the council to allocate some section 106 money to alleviate the situation with Bastable Avenue residents by making pelican crossings and turning the speed bumps into table bumps.
5. that we write to the various parties to say that residents again request the opening of the cut through into Long Reach Road for cars travelling west.

These proposals were agreed by general consent.

On Parking, the planning permission application was going through the council and an update on the situation had been promised by Councillor Cameron Geddes from a meeting taking place this morning but nothing had come through yet. (Email arrived at 9pm).

Pinnacle: service charge, heating maintenance

Treasurer Venilia Amorim explained that although many residents had reported sending the model letter prepared by herself to Pinnacle, no replies were forthcoming.

On the heating, the chair reiterated that the following was agreed at the last meeting: "That the costs of the temporary heating should not be put on the service charge."

The Chair reported that we had subsequently written to HomeGround, advising of this and demanding compensation and a report on the current situation in each of the blocks. HomeGround are the managing agents for Adriatic, who are the landlords of the four blocks affected by the heating failure last winter and subsequent temporary heating, and who lease the blocks from BRL. The heating failure was life threatening. The association wrote to HomeGround on the 26th March raising this point alongside the demand for compensation and other issues raised in the meeting. No reply forthcoming.

The association had raised this with BRL directly and informed BRL that the association had written to HomeGround on the 26th January and again on the 26th March but had had no response. The association met BRL on 9th April. Matt Carpen reported that he is taking the heating situation very seriously and had written to HomeGround/Adriatic and had also had no response. He would contact them again. Four days later a letter was circulated to Ernest Websdale House residents from Pinnacle on behalf of HomeGround/Pinnacle Power saying work would begin Friday 13th to get the temporary heating removed. But it is not clear what the problems were and whether there has been any fix.

The chair put various options before the meeting to push things forward.

Proposals arising from the meeting:

1. That we invite Priya Rawal of Pinnacle Places to the next residents association meeting to give model examples of the preparation of the service charge of a house and a flat.
2. That we invite Pinnacle Power to the next meeting also to discuss their current energy contract with residents.
3. That we write to HomeGround telling them that if the association doesn't hear from them we will seek legal advice.

These proposals were agreed by general consent.

The Chair quoted the advice of the Association of Residential Managing Agents (ARMA) which states that "By law, landlords must 'recognise' and consult with residents associations. If a landlord is refusing the request, leaseholders have the legal right to ask a tribunal to grant them the status of a 'recognised tenants association' ... under the landlord and tenant act 1985, section 29." The Chair, quoted further that "If recognition is granted... [the secretary can] ...Inspect accounts and receipts in relation to service charges." This is a legal right.

There is no charge for applying to a tribunal. It was raised that the Ombudsman could also be used at least by residents. A resident expressed the desire to seek legal action in relation to the issues arising with respect to the heating and service charge for a small sum. Currently the residents association does not have funds to do this and welcomed any written legal advice residents could obtain, since such advice was extremely important in informing BRL of our rights on the parking issue.

The chair reported that in meeting with BRL on 9th April, the residents association had presented the resolution passed at the last meeting regarding the Community Interest Company (CIC) set up to supposedly grant resident participation in the running of the estate. "The residents should have a clear majority on the board of the CIC". In such a case, the residents would surely have oversight over the activities of Pinnacle Places in many if not all matters concerning residents. Matt Carpen did not agree to this proposal. Draft minutes of the meeting have been circulated to BRL and will be published in due course.

Finances & the Tenants & Residents Federation

The Treasurer announced that the association had now registered with the Tenants & Residents Federation and is in the process of applying for a £200 yearly grant. This grant will help the association with overhead costs such as printing of leaflets and other documents for residents. There are also other project-specific grants that the association can claim and one is being sought from City Airport, with the main idea of fighting mosquitoes in the area, which would involve the installation of water fountains in lakes/ponds within the estate to keep waters moving.

AOB

A residents has raised that there is raw sewage spilling out of Bluebird House into the new cut through from Crossness Road to Long Reach Road. The association will communicate with the relevant parties responsible.

Meeting closed 9:02pm