

Barking Reach Residents Association Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 20th March 2019

7:30pm, Rivergate Centre

Attendance: 20

Apologies: Local PCs Steve/Gary/Dave

Meeting started 7.40pm.

The agenda was agreed.

Minutes and matters arising: the minutes were agreed.

Matters arising:

On block sub-committees, Chair Pete Mason explained that it would be important to start forming block sub-committees with representatives from each block of flats that would meet with managing agents to discuss their budgets and to also be involved in other RA campaigns. He also noted that the RA had written to RMG stating that their deadlines for volunteers did not involve the RA. Michelle from RMG had replied that the deadlines were not fixed and this could be discussed further. Michelle had further suggested at the security summit meeting on Monday 18th March 2019 (see below) that she would hold a Samuel Garside House meeting to focus on this. A resident asked about the houses in the Adriatic areas. Which sub-committee would such residents fall under, since they only pay the estate charge, which is still being managed by Pinnacle, but their service charge bill is being issued by RMG?

Action: RA officers to ask RMG/Pinnacle how would that work.

1. Security

Pete reported on the recent summit the RA held with most stakeholders, namely the superior landlord Barking Riverside Limited (BRL), and managing agents Pinnacle Places and RMG. L&Q was also invited but did not attend the meeting on Monday 18th March 2019.

Pete outlined the issues leading to the RA requesting the meeting: the last BRRA meeting discussed thefts of cars, bikes, motorbikes, and now letters and parcels from inside the blocks of flats. Consequently, reported mugging of delivery driver(s), police being called repeatedly. RMG reported calling the police. Doors and shutters in blocks under both Pinnacle and RMG management found to be not secure on recent inspection.

The RA meeting therefore instructed the officers to request from management the costing of further CCTV investment and night wardens.

RMG reported on the case of youth following them around a block and unsettling the security doors immediately after they had reset them, leading to intimidation and RMG calling the police. This needs to be followed up. BRL planned to increase the number of local police from two to four, through a funding arrangement again at the cost of the landlord. This is to be matched by the Met Police as they have a 'buy one, get one free' programme. This means, however, that if PCs are required elsewhere (as part of the national police force), they will have to attend to those call outs, whereas local night wardens or security officers would be local to the estate only. Neither Pinnacle nor RMG had offered a costing for a night warden.

A caretaker has been employed to go from block to block in the RMG operated areas, for instance resetting security doors that have been unset, shutters whose sensors have been blocked, and keeping the blocks in good order. This should be a cost saving compared to continual call-outs to service engineers. Caretakers can also become familiar with residents and identify areas where residents may not be compliant with their tenancy or leases.

As for fire wardens, Venilia explained why they were set in place since a lot of residents were questioning their roles. When RMG took over they found that the majority of blocks of flats built during phase one needed to review their fire and safety plans and many did not meet the criteria required by law. L&Q (and

possibly Pinnacle) found the same. These fire wardens were then stationed in these buildings (Robert Lewis House, Samuel Garside House and Ernerst Websdale House) until all measures were rectified, such as new fire alarms, fire doors, exit signs, sprinklers, and so on. Fire wardens will soon be withdrawn from these blocks as all the remedial work required to meet fire safety standards has been completed.

There was a suggestion of taking a security guard on a trial basis, say for one year. Residents complained that there are not enough police and asked if there was the possibility of establishing a police station in Barking Riverside since the area is growing.

Action: RA to invite councillors to discuss the possibility of having a police station in the area.

2. Constitutional Amendment

Residents voted in favour to an amendment to the constitution that would allow the Annual General Meeting to be moved from September to June. 15 residents voted in favour.

3. Heating and Hot Water

Secretary Nuno Amorim announced that L&Q Energy has commissioned a survey, which should be completed at the end of this month, with the plan to operate and maintain all blocks on the estate, including the Adriatic-owned blocks. A letter to residents will be issued. Pete added that the RA maintains that no heating costs should be retrospectively charged until this is sorted out.

4. Parking and Enforcement

Pete announced that there is a tender out to three enforcement operators: Link Parking, PCM and Gemini Parking Solutions. Feedback from BRL should be expected by mid-April. They will be asked to report on compliance with code of conduct, frequency, parking charges, permit allocation and replacement, their zero cost option and alternative models. The quality of their reply will determine the appointment.

Residents are pressing for visitor parking in the Minter Road and Handley Page Road area. The removal of the bus lane would free up space for parking, plus switching double yellow lines into single. Pete noted said that according to our meeting with BRL, Transport for London insisted on a bus lane as part of the modal shift to the green plan to free up the buses from any traffic jams and thereby encourage people to use public transport travelling to the train station which will be built, leaving their cars behind. Venilia also noted that the bridge connecting Crossness Road to Handley Page Road will be completed by the end of the year and the RA can engage with TfL about this then.

The RA supports a campaign for extra visitor parking in the Minter Road and Handley Page Road area and will start a door-knocking exercise soon, asking residents' opinions on this.

Action: RA to write to council requesting that the teachers' car park be free for residents from 7pm to 7am.

5. Service Charge

Pete reported that the RA has had several communications with the solicitor to mainly identify the legality of S20b notices sent out by Pinnacle, which authorise the late request for balancing charges from Pinnacle. Requested invoices for the 2014/2015 financial year to Pinnacle had just been received that afternoon. The officers will analyse these in the next few days. Residents noted that lack of consistency in terminology needs to be taken into account and also the RA needs to question the superior landlord charge. Pinnacle's excuse for late accounts being filled always falls back on BRL's lack of speedy approval. As previously stated, Pete noted that if there are sub-committees formed, there is an opportunity to discuss with managing agents on how the next budget should be spent.

It was agreed to spend between £250 and £500 plus VAT (£300 - £600) on advice on legal action on the S20b.

Action: RA to set next meeting with Pinnacle to see 2015/2016 accounts and to go through invoices already provided.

6. Any Other Business

Matt Scott of Thames Ward Community Project introduced several students from UCL who are studying the area as part of their degrees.

Barking Riverside Community Interest Company

There is likely to be a meeting/drop in session on 11th April with BRL to discuss the Barking Riverside Community Interest Company (CIC).

The CIC was discussed, and the RA repeated the view of residents in support of the CIC being resident led. Pete pointed out that the existing CIC constitution gives a majority to residents on the board of directors by 4 to 3 in its articles of incorporation, once the estate is completed. This constitution is being formally revised by BRL and this drop-in session is the beginning of a consultation on this process. The RA wants a more formal discussion.

A resident proposed that the board of directors of the CIC should be comprised of members elected from the block committees since these residents would be engaging with the managing of the estate. This was endorsed by the meeting by a show of hands.

Date of next meeting has is 24th April 2019.

Meeting closed at 9.15pm.