

**Barking Reach Residents Association Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday 18 September 2019**  
**7.30pm, Rivergate Centre**

**Attendance:** 25

**Guest:** James King, Eastside Community Heritage

**Meeting started:** 7.40pm

**The agenda** was agreed.

**Minutes and matters arising:** the minutes from the previous two meetings were agreed.

**1. Residents Association (RA) independent enquiry into the fire at Samuel Garside House and the management of the estate**

James King, Eastside Community Heritage (ECH) introduced the topic and Venilia Amorim, treasurer, supplemented.

- The resident-led housing enquiry will collect data and testimonials from face to face resident interviews and collate photographs and videos capturing the experiences of residents since the fire in Samuel Garside House in June 2019. The information will be placed on a dedicated website.
- The aim of the enquiry is to bring to the attention of the various stakeholders the conclusions on what went wrong and to propose recommendations on how to put things right.
- Third party commissioners should be selected to validate the accuracy and integrity of the enquiry and its results and recommendations. Chair Pete Mason suggested to avoid religious leaders and it was agreed to avoid anyone associated with housing on the management side. The chair said they should be on the side of residents, not landlords, and proposed looking at trade union representatives. He proposed he contact Suzanne Muna, a Social Housing Action Campaign (SHAC) housing activist on the National Executive Committee of union Unite, that has donated to the RA's campaign to get advice.
- Due to many stakeholders' involvement, it was suggested that consideration be given to the question of who is accountable. The meeting felt that Barking Riverside London (BRL) should be held accountable because they are the superior landlord and they appear to have considerable influence over the other parties (Bellway, Homeground, Adriatic, Mace, RMG, Pinnacle and even the local council).
- The enquiry will specifically cover the fire and the broader issue of housing mismanagement

**Discussion:**

- In June Matthew Carpen, managing director of BRL, informed residents through its weekly newsletter that the report on the removal of flammable cladding from the houses on the estate, would be ready by mid-September but the RA has not heard anything back.
- Residents expressed the need to keep pressure on BRL to remove the flammable cladding from the whole estate.
- The chair proposed **that the RA holds a protest next Saturday (28.09.2019)** and to knock on peoples' doors next Tuesday and speak to them about the estate-wide cladding. **This was unanimously agreed.**
- Given the fires that have occurred in other places around England—Worcester Place two weeks ago and Clapton in Hackney one week ago—a resident proposed a protest outside parliament involving all the estates affected by flammable cladding. It was agreed the chair would approach Paul Kershaw regarding the conference he is working on, jointly with Emma Dent Code, the newly elected MP for Kensington, who is fully supportive of residents, with a view to putting this as an action to that conference. **This was agreed.**
- The council surveyor is dismissive of residents' concerns about the safety of the structure of the building when there are cracks in the building.
- The new balconies in Samuel Garside House are now supposed to be completed by January but residents felt they keep pushing this deadline back and residents are concerned about being pushed back into an unsafe building.

## **2. BRL Meeting Update**

The chair gave a report on a meeting of the RA officers with Pam Ross, estate director at BRL, and Julian Barnett, estate manager at Pinnacle Places, on 28th August regarding estate management.

- Pam and Julian will be available on some weekends.
- Minutes the RA drew up have now been agreed between the parties and will be published soon.
- BRL has decided to spend £100,000 a year for 24-hour security company, which will not be reflected in the service charge. It was reported that the security men have been seen sleeping in their vans and this was reported to Pinnacle and BRL. They asked for dates and times of when this was happening.
- The RA requested signs to be put up around areas and other open spaces because dogs off leashes were attacking children. Signs for children's parks closing times, and for parking indicating the school carpark out of hours visitor parking facility were also requested.
- Three areas have been proposed for barbecue areas. There will be a drop-in session organised by BRL.
- Parking enforcement: Link Parking has not tendered for the new contract and residents will choose from PCM or Gemini at a drop-in session organised by BRL.

## **3. Service Charge and Right to Manage (RTM)**

- The RA will be seeking legal advice to become a legally recognised residents association so that it can discuss service charge issues and push out Residential Management Group (RMG) and push for RTM.
- The RA will meet next week with BRL and Pinnacle to discuss estate service charges.
- A resident reported on the Samuel Garside House meeting with RMG regarding the next service charge budget. Questions were asked about high electricity fees and general management fees.
- Residents agreed to consider obtaining several service charge quotes and using this to compare the actual service charge before challenging a particular amount. The RA will request the supplier invoices—the record of actual expenditure—for Samuel Garside House for earlier years to compare the current budget with.
- Residents agreed that another meeting to discuss RTM for Samuel Garside House was needed after the balconies have been replaced and the building has been renovated and made safe.

## **4. Parking & Pests**

- There has been a rat infestation risk due to rubbish on floor of bin storages across the estate. Reports of pest problems have been reported to both managing agents and council.
- There have been continuous problems with parking on Minter Road. The chair will address the issue again at the BRL meeting.

## **5. Any Other Business**

- Residents stated that the lift in block D of Samuel Garside House is broken again and needs to be escalated to BRL to replace it.

Date of next meeting is 23 October 2019.

**Meeting closed at 9.06pm**