

Barking Reach Residents Association Special Meeting Minutes
Tuesday 10 December 2019
7.30pm, Rivergate Centre

Attendance: 40

Guest: Pam Ross, estate manager, Barking Riverside Limited (BRL)

Meeting started: 7.35pm

The agenda was agreed with the addition of ‘dogs and anti-social behaviour’ added under Any Other Business items.

Minutes and matters arising: the minutes from the previous meeting were agreed.

The chair, Pete Mason, introduced James King from Eastside Community Heritage (ECH), who is recording testimonies from residents about the fire at Samuel Garside House. This is for the residents’ association (RA) resident-led inquiry into the fire. Pete proposed that after the first item was completed, that residents volunteer to be interviewed during and/or after the meeting.

Right to Manage

Pete reported that several residents from phase 1 of the development are dissatisfied with the poor management services provided by RMG, namely John Miller House, Leslie Hitchcock House, Ernest Websdale House and Samuel Garside House. The RA doesn’t usually meet in December, but had to convene this special meeting at the request of several residents for this reason. Subsequently a number of other urgent issues have been added to the agenda.

A resident from John Miller House has been gathering photographic and video evidence (which has been sent to RMG’s Michelle Nolan via several emails) for several years, dating back to RGM’s predecessor, Pinnacle Places, in which it shows the lack of maintenance or poor quality of services provided by both managing agents. For this reason, many residents feel that the increasing service charge bills have been unfairly issued and are contesting payment on many services.

The resident proposed that the four particular blocks mentioned advance with proceedings for Right to Manage (RTM). Pete accepted the motion, put it to the meeting to discuss, and it was agreed unanimously.

Pam Ross from BRL said that residents should send her all queries being sent to the managing agents that are not dealt with to residents’ satisfaction. She stated, however, that in matter pertaining particularly to blocks in which Adriatic/Homeground are the landlords, she would have limited power.

Service Charge

Several residents mentioned the unbelievably ridiculous increase in electricity bills, with an almost 50% rise since the last year in most blocks. Residents from Samuel Garside House, who have been through the ordeal of the fire last June, said it would be unfair to be paying such high bills, especially since part of the building has been unoccupied and under construction. Some have also noted that they have been charged for services by RMG while residing elsewhere since the fire. Pam said she would need to see the electricity bills and would get in touch with RMG, which now has a new head of property management, Hayley Pitt.

Pam mentioned that all contracts for estate management, which include Pinnacle, are being reviewed in January.

Heating

Residents from Pedley House, which use L&Q Energy as heating provider, complained of the lack of heating/hot water, in addition to the absurd imposed daily charge of £1.05. Residents noted that it usually cost them around £3-£4 a day for heating and hot water. One resident mentioned that she hasn’t had heating since October. She has communicated with L&Q Energy without success.

Pam suggested the resident copies Pam into her email communications if things don't progress, but mentioned that she would speak with someone at L&Q Energy to resolve the issue. She also mentioned that residents should make use of the L&Q office on the estate, opposite the Rivergate Centre, in which Laura Cravitz usually is based.

Parking

Pam said Link Parking is still the parking enforcer in the area and the review of their contract has been put on hold because of the fire. She mentioned that once all construction work on SGH is completed, BRL will then resume the tender process with other companies and decide on which parking enforcer to go with.

The chair mentioned the Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) proposal for Thames Ward, on Bastable Avenue and surrounding roads imposed by the council. This will particularly affect Barking Riverside residents that use the medical centre, the schools and shop along Bastable Avenue. Parking will be limited to only a few 'pay by phone' bays, which will be enforced 7 days a week, all year round. Pete proposed the RA contacts the councillors, the schools and Thames View Tenants Association to show support and to convene a meeting to discuss possible action to stop the CPZ, which will start 3 February.

Any other Business

Venilia Amorim, the treasurer, mentioned that a particular resident from Lawes Way who has two dogs, has been seen repeatedly with one of his dogs off the lead in and around Lawes Way and Galleons Drive. The dog fouls the children's play park and has one occasion confronted a resident and her small child. The owner was nowhere to be seen. This is considered to be antisocial behaviour and has been reported several times to the council. The resident is a Southern Housing tenant. Pam was asked to contact Southern Housing with the remit of resolving the situation. Pam said she is aware of this particular tenant and has a scheduled meeting with Southern housing on Thursday. She will keep the RA up to date on this.

Pam also mentioned there will be a drop-in session at the Rivergate Centre regarding the Community Interest Company (CIC) and the independent chair for the learning forum. She invited all residents to come along.

Meeting closed at 9.15pm