

## **Barking Reach Residents Association Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> August 2019

7:30pm, Rivergate Centre

**Attendance:** 17

**Guests:** Alessandro Frolidi, British Red Cross

**Meeting started 7.40pm**

**The agenda** was agreed.

**Minutes and matters arising:** the minutes from the previous meeting were not ready as this meeting was additional to the usual schedule and because of summer holidays. The next meeting would have both sets of minutes.

### **1. Alessandro Frolidi, British Red Cross**

Alessandro started by explaining his project with British Red Cross, the Community & Voluntary Sector Resilience Project, which wants to build strong and sustainable links between the community groups, local authorities and emergency services to improve collaboration before, during and after emergencies, harnessing community skills, talents and assets.

Alessandro said that British Red Cross is particularly interested in building connections with groups and community leaders that can help us further understand the issues affecting their communities. He said that participating groups would be supported within the next 6 months with tailored training aimed at building leadership and strengthening links between communities, local authorities and emergency services.

Alessandro noted that British Red Cross is setting up a workshop on 29.08.2019 in which is seeking to connect with groups and community leaders interested in building stronger connections in their community and discuss how local groups could use their resources in the event of an emergency. The session includes identifying key risks and hazard affecting communities and build an understanding of risks and hazards from a community perspective.

He also mentioned that there is a local resilience forum, to which British Red Cross is invited to attend, that include the presence of police, NHS, the Environment Agency, civil protection teams from each of the three boroughs (Waltham Forest, Redbridge and Barking & Dagenham), since the service has been condensed into a tri-borough. Unfortunately, this forum is not open to residents or community groups and is by invitation only.

Alessandro also said that the project is planning to set up three meetings with local groups to explore priorities and perception of risk, map them out and rank them. There should be the need for training for several things like flooding, fire, first-aid, community-led emergency planning, and so on, to which local authorities can respond to.

### **2. Resident-led housing inquiry**

Venilia Amorim, the treasurer, updated residents on a meeting with James King, project officer at Eastside Community Heritage (ECH), which is a charity supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. They collect oral histories (mainly via video/audio interviews) to tell the story of a particular area, to celebrate that area's history.

For the purposes of the resident-led housing inquiry which the RA agreed to organise after the Samuel Garside House fire, James is keen on helping the RA by:

1. conducting (recording video and audio) interviews of any residents that would like to participate;
2. collate all testimonials that the RA already has (videos, photos, audio, social media posts);
3. create a website (linked to the RA's) in which all this info will be held.

The process for the inquiry will be to:

1. collect testimonials (focus on purpose of resident-led inquiry);
2. disclose the findings (which might be, for instance, poor or inadequate materials, lack of safety measures, etc);
3. propose recommendations (which might be, for instance, to remove flammable cladding, adopt safer fire safety measures, the need for greater involvement of residents in decision-making processes on the estate, etc).

The RA should also try to find 'independent' officials that can act as commissioners or show support for the inquiry – for example the Bishop of Barking, Lord Kerslake, Margaret Hodge.

Once the inquiry is established and complete (hopefully by the end of the year), the RA can adopt the same process for other issues around the estate: service charge, lack of basic services (heating and hot water) and so on. And the RA can certainly use these reports as supporting evidence that a CIC without majority residents will not fly.

James has been invited as a speaker for the next residents meeting, and he will also, along with another colleague, start interviewing those residents that will want to share their stories. He can also shed more light in to the website, as residents want it to be interactive, as in they would like to be able to post materials themselves.

### **3. What next for SGH residents**

Some residents expressed disappointment at the last protest on 27<sup>th</sup> August because it was out of the way, in the park, with minimum visibility. More preparation time is needed. But Pete Mason, the chair, pointed out that sometimes events forced the RA to act quickly and success of any specific event cannot be guaranteed, but that would not or should not stop residents.

Residents exiting dates had been pushed back again, this time for 2<sup>nd</sup> September. Residents agreed that a set of two protests would work better, during the week but also during the weekend, and both in front of the town hall and BRL/Bellway sales office.

The chair, suggested that all affected residents should instruct their solicitor to write a letter demanding that residents should only move back to their properties once the reports from the council assessments were completed and the building made safe. This could be anytime up to 28 days after completion of the assessments, which could be end of October at least.

**ACTION: Pete will also write to the solicitor requesting this on behalf of residents, but also to the council requesting that a type 4 risk assessment as well as a structural assessment is conducted.**

### **4. Cladding Estate-Wide**

Residents and the RA are still waiting on a response from BRL as the latest newsletter update stated that by mid-September estate-wide reports would be ready to share with residents. Some residents of Breacher/Beach, Sandy/Cornelius and Dalston/Farsby houses said that their fire/risk assessments had been booked for the w/c 26<sup>th</sup> September by Pinnacle.

### **5. Any Other Business**

None declared.

Date of next meeting is 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

**Meeting closed at 9.20pm.**