

Meeting between Barking Reach Residents Association (BRRA), Barking Riverside Limited (BRL) and Pinnacle Places

Wednesday, 29th January 2020 at L&Q Offices, Minter Road, Barking, 7:30pm

Present: Pam Ross, BRL; Ken Webster, Senior Operations Manager, estates dept. BRL; Julian Barnett, Pinnacle; Pete Mason, chair, BRRA, Nuno Amorim, secretary, BRRA, and Venilia Amorim, treasurer, BRRA

Estate Management team

Pam Ross from BRL formally introduced Ken Webster as the new BRL Senior Operations Manager in the Estates Management team. Ken will provide support to Pam and BRL on a day to day basis working closely with Pinnacle and other block managers on estate management services.

Cladding

Matt Carpen could not attend but is attending a meeting with a number of companies and hopes to reply to the residents' association (RA) email, requesting an update by the end of January, early next week.

Heating

The phase 2 situation

Pat Lee is on leave. Pam suggested the RA leave with her the email that the RA sent to him, informing him of the RA resolution and requesting action on it. She is escalating the question of the failure of the heating in phase two beyond him to higher levels in L&Q. BRL will take a lead on this and a number of meetings will be held both with L&Q and L&Q energy, to get the matter rectified. Tomorrow's drop in (30th January) was called by Pam following the RA's December meeting, which she attended. She is looking to set up a single point of contact, since the companies involved range from Bellway, L&Q, and subcontractors, Vital Energi and RG Taylor. The RA agreed and stated that residents feel that they are pushed from one to the other without resolution to their issues.

The RA raised:

- * A request to see engineers reports of the situation.
- * A moratorium on all charges since, residents were being charged for heat yet their flats were cold.
- * A mass meeting where L&Q energy face residents collectively.
- * That L&Q revisits all residents who have complained about their heating and ensure their issues are resolved satisfactorily.
- * That L&Q should issue a circular to all residents on phase 2 admitting the widespread issues faced by residents and promising the above point.
- * Additional communal boilers to boost the supply, as has been done at two blocks owned by Adriatic.
- * That L&Q fully accounts for all cost calculations.

The RA stated that it appears that residents may face a multiplicity of issues. The input temperature may be insufficient, the HIU is not detecting this correctly, or is not charging residents correctly according to the heat supplied, the radiators are too small, are not functioning correctly, the rooms are not properly insulated, and so forth.

The phase 1 heating situation

The RA noted that there has been no movement on this and that on the very date when the RA held its January residents meeting where the first item was the failures of the communal heating, Ernest Websdale House heating failed, as if to illustrate how poor it is.

Venilia described how the Ernest Websdale House heating failed over Christmas, including on Christmas day (heating returned to the flats very late in the evening on Christmas day then failed again subsequently) and Pete mentioned that he spent Christmas morning emailing Pam about it. She replied the same day and also contacted both Matt Carpen and RMG to alert them to it. Pam stated that it was being looked into.

The RA stated that legal action would be sought if the problem persists.

Barking Riverside Community Interest Company

An update had been received in the last hour about this, but there were no timescales. The RA requested timescales. Pam will try to get them after her meeting next week.

Fountain proposal

The RA reported it has asked the Barking Rail Extension/TfL to fund and establish fountains in the lakes where there needs to be one, in order to stop mosquitoes, aerate the water to stop fish dying, stop algae blooms and prevent foul smells. They agreed subject to Pinnacle's approval. Julian noted that it is a good idea but that Pinnacle wants to independently look at running costs before giving approval of this. Installation costs would be small. It was noted that there are costs involved in removing algae growth, smells, etc, that will be lessened if the lakes are well aerated by fountains, so it may even be cost neutral in the end. To report back by next meeting or sooner.

Recognition of the RA

The solicitor, Cassandra Zinelli, partner at PM Legal Services, who attended the September meeting, has sent a report to Pam, which she had yet to assess. Pete noted that a landlord within an area covered by a residents association, may not by law contest who the elected officers of that residents association are, based on where they reside, but that rather, if the association can prove 50% membership of leaseholders within the landlord's property, (together with the other issues as detailed in the 2018 statutory instrument) the landlord is obliged to recognise the association. Equally, he started, in response to Cassandra's previous assertion that the 1985 legislation (the landlord and tenant act) does not apply to Barking Riverside Ltd because the estate charge is not a service charge, he believed the estate charge is a service charge and complies as required by law with the provisions of the 1985 act.

He confessed to be uncertain that anything is to be gained by obtaining recognition from Adriatic, which would be approached first in any case, since Right to Manage, albeit possibly more difficult to obtain, provides the same results and more. The RA remains committed to obtaining Right to Manage for residents.

Estate charge

Julian reported that the estate charge is almost ready to be produced and will be ready next week. BRL and Pinnacle Group have negotiated a reduction in the estate management fee so that the charge is now almost the same as last year's charge.

The RA raised that late billing puts pressure on residents' finances and makes it difficult to pay the full amount within 30 days. Julian was asked if a resident declared that if they would pay in 12 monthly amounts, would Pinnacle object. Julian said that it depended on individual circumstances and he urged that if residents have difficulty paying they should contact Pinnacle immediately to discuss it.

Security

BRL is currently investigating the feasibility of establishing a CCTV network, using the blocks with the consent of Adriatic on the basis of sharing the camera feed. It was noted that the best way for residents to get to see relevant footage after a potential criminal event was through the police who have the right to obtain the footage. Privacy laws prevent Pinnacle and RMG from passing on footage without significant delays and expense.

School carpark

Pam had spoken to the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham council about residents using the car park outside of school hours. This will be discussed further over the next few weeks,

Parking control

PCM have been appointed as the parking enforcement company for phase 2, the Parklands/Verde part of the estate, so that those residents with cars can park in their allocated spaces without interference. It was noted

that residents had bought properties without parking facilities who however owned a car and that this would present problems once the enforcement was in place.

The contract with Link Parking on phase 1 would be reviewed in the coming months. The RA asked about follow ups on the consultation for parking which had occurred last year and the chair expressed the view that Link Parking were a rogue organisation that always rejected any appeal no matter how just and with the result that many residents had been taken to court, where they were able to prove the justice of their case if properly represented but at a great deal of stress and upset to themselves, and that Link Parking should go.

Bollards/BBQ/Signs

The RA noted that the bin lorries were using the cycle lane again and damaging the pavement on Galleons Drive, and urged the bollards/planters be placed as soon as possible. It was agreed that this would be considered.

The signage is: dog control, parking signs to direct to the carpark, limits on times to use the parks in the evenings, and, it was noted, extra ones for 'Please do not litter'. The signs have not successfully been designed yet as the artwork previously shown was too obtrusive. L&Q were being asked to produce them.

Animals

Another owner of a dog being walked without a lead and fouling in a park, against the park regulations, will be reminded of the obligations of leaseholders on the estate. A cat has been attending the Rivergate Centre. The cat is very well behaved but Pam has asked if the owner could ensure the cat does not wander in and out of commercial buildings. The owner will be asked to keep it from wandering.

AOB

Reflectors at the top of the steps running down from the shell path to the bridge over the lake on Minter Road were requested by the RA because the steps are impossible to distinguish when going down them (in the direction of Minter Road) in the dark and it was a trip hazard. In addition, the steps on the bridge and parts of the boardwalk are slippery. Julian suggested fluorescent strips might be better. Some footpath ground level lighting as per the foot bridge along the shell path was also proposed, as per a very long-standing concern from the RA about resident safety, and there was discussion on drawing power from solar or from the strip of lights on the bridge boardwalk.

Meeting ended 9.05pm