

Barking Reach Residents Association Meeting Minutes
Thursday 13 June 2019
7:30pm, Rivergate Centre, Minter Road, Barking

1. Minutes
2. Appendices
 - i. Resolutions 1,2 and 3 as amended (inserted into text of minutes as and when taken)
 - ii. Letter from Barking Riverside Ltd dated 13/6/19
3. Further resources: The meeting was captured on video and can be viewed here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=98ir-k69X0w>

Minutes

This **emergency meeting** was called by the residents association (RA) following a fire at **Samuel Garside House (SGH)** on DePass Gardens on Sunday 9 June 2019.

Attendance: 200+ members, with 150+ signed in

Pete Mason, chair of Barking Reach Residents Association (BRRRA)

Venilia Amorim, treasurer of Barking Reach Residents Association (BRRRA)

Panel Guests:

Camilla Sheldon, office of James Brokenshire, **Secretary of State for Housing**

Matt Carpen, managing director at **Barking Riverside Limited (BRL)**

Alex Selsey, regional manager for London at **Pinnacle Places**

Ian Gorst, London and South East regional chairman at **Bellway Homes**

Eyvind Andresen, head of legal and portfolio services at **Homeground**

Hugh McGeever, managing director at **Residential Management Group (RMG)**

Tony Hughes, regional director at **Southern Housing** was invited but was not present.

In Audience:

Nuno Amorim, secretary of Barking Reach Residents Association (BRRRA)

Councillor **Bill Turner**, London Borough of Barking & Dagenham (LBBD)

Councillor **Cameron Geddes**, London Borough of Barking & Dagenham (LBBD)

PC **Gary Jones**, Thames Neighbourhood Policing Team

Simon Garrett, managing director, residential at Mace Ltd

Case worker for Margaret Hodge MP

Arnold Tarling, FRICS Surveyor

Shaun Murphy, senior partner at Edwards Duthie and Shamas, solicitors, with other solicitors from his firm

Helen Pattison, Socialist Party London regional organiser

Pat Lee, London and Quadrant (L&Q) regional organiser

Serena Madhvani, assistant headteacher, Riverside School, and Samuel Garside House resident

Meeting started 7.30pm

Chair's opening remarks

The meeting opened with the chair of Barking Reach Residents Association (BRRRA), Pete Mason, outlining that the reason for the emergency meeting was the fire on Samuel Garside House (SGH) on DePass Gardens on Sunday 9 June 2019.

He reported that a resident had proposed a one-minute silence for victims of the Grenfell fire. He put this to the meeting, it was agreed and was then observed.

The chair then outlined three resolutions (appended as amended), the first of which was first formulated by residents of SGH at a SGH campaign meeting organised by the RA on Tuesday 11 June 2019, and adopted by the RA committee meeting on the Wednesday 12 June.

These concern:

1. Displaced SGH residents;
2. Making the Barking Riverside Estate fire safe;

3. Proposal for BRRA's own resident-led housing inquiry.

The chair introduced the guest panel and then began to read out a letter dated 13 June 2019, delivered that day to all residents of Barking Riverside, signed by Matt Carpen of Barking Riverside Limited (see appendix).

The letter states that neither **BRL** nor **LBBD** have legal responsibility for, nor control over the SGH.

The chair stated that he didn't necessarily accept this because the council has given planning permission for the building, and the same may apply to BRL's responsibility.

The chair highlighted that in the letter, the builders, **Bellway Homes**, the owners **Adriatic** (represented by **Homeground**) and the managing agent **Residential Management Group** (RMG) of SGH and Ernest Websdale House (EWH) – a building on the estate similar in structure to SGH – have said that they will:

1. Undertake works to safely rebuild the damaged homes as soon as possible;
2. Ensure that residents whose homes were significantly damaged by the fire have a place to stay at no expense to them;
3. Begin the removal of all external timber from SGH and Ernest Websdale House immediately.

It further stated:

“An independent fire engineer and an architect have been appointed to review the external timber on the remaining buildings. Working with residents, Bellway will also immediately start a programme of treating external timber with a fire retardant coating. BRL is urging Mace, who constructed some buildings to take the same action as soon as possible.”

Discussion of the letter from Matt Carpen from BRL

The chair made the following comments:

Even if flats will be rebuilt, nobody wants to go back. So that is not necessarily an acceptable solution.

It is important to find out what BRL means by “place to stay”.

He noted that the fire alarm was on silent during the fire. The previous ‘stay put’ policy in the case of a fire required silent alarms, but this policy had been changed to an ‘evacuate’ policy yet the alarms had not been changed according to the new policy.

Three additional problems which the letter does not address are also part of the resolution:

- 1) Negligence: the letter is silent on the failings accrued in the past. It is important to find out who is responsible for the accident.
- 2) There is no acknowledgment of the legal responsibilities of the parties involved.
- 3) Compensation: there is no offer of compensation either in relation to the loss of homes but also stress caused by this accident.

The chair then moved to discussions of the first resolution:

Concerns over safety of wooden constructed balconies despite previous concerns from residents led to a demand for relocation of exposed residents. It is not right to move them back to old apartments due to emotional stress. The right option will be offering residents ‘like for like’ exchanges of flats across the estate and a full compensation.

Also residents have a legal right to full compensation for the value of their property and for the distress caused.

Residents stressed the need for transparency.

As there is building works going on, there should be an option of moving to a new building that is being built but currently vacant or unsold.

- 1) There was concern at the possible imposition of direct and indirect costs that might be associated in future service charges.
- 2) People raised the issue that magnetic doors and alarms didn't work at all.
- 3) Residents didn't get an opportunity to say what exact help or support they needed or could be provided after the fire.

Resolution one: From the BRRA committee for the emergency meeting Thursday 13 June 2019, as amended and passed unanimously.

Displaced SGH Residents

The SGH fire was preventable! This meeting notes with shock and sadness that:

1. The fire in SGH destroyed 20 flats and damaged 10 more on Sunday 9 June 2019.
2. That due to the speed of the spread of the flames, if it had not been for the immediate urgent action of residents in the block and the surrounding area to sound the alarm to their neighbours, let alone if it had taken place at night, there would surely have been fatalities.
3. That this was entirely preventable.
4. That the BRRA contacted BRL and Bellway asking for a fire safety inspection just one month ago (May 6-8) after a BBC shocking revelation of Bellway building practices.
5. That the RA's chair phoned Bellway at that time due to the concerns about the amount of wood on the estate and discussed with John Enright, who assured him the estate was safe.
6. That residents have a legal right to full compensation for the value of their property and for the distress caused to them and their children.

The RA condemns:

1. Bellway's use of untreated wood in the balconies which spread the fire through the block – just like the cladding that caused the Grenfell disaster exactly two years ago tomorrow.
2. That Bellway refused the RA's request to send an inspection team.
3. That despite the abandonment of the 'stay put' policy roughly eight months previously, there was no audible fire alarm system in place and none sounded.
4. **That 12 months after the Grenfell fire, 120 families were still in temporary or emergency accommodation and this must not happen here!**

The RA believes:

That Bellway and the others involved in the construction, design and management of the estate were negligent because they failed to address their minds to the obvious risk from the wooden constructed balconies and cladding despite previous concerns raised by residents.

The RA demands:

Relocation of the displaced SGH residents in blocks C and D, and for those in A and B that also want it:

1. Satisfactory options offered to residents.
2. That a 'like for like' exchange of flats across the estate is offered.
3. That full compensation for the loss of value to homes, all personal losses and distress is facilitated and streamlined by all management bodies, including chasing insurance.
4. Transparency throughout from Bellway, Adriatic, RMG, Mace and BRL – openness and the involvement of the RA.
5. The use of the Verde development where homes are not sold or occupied due, for instance, to setting aside for social housing.

Service charge and Rent

1. That any service charge or rent paid in advance by residents will be refunded, any due is now credited back.
2. That any direct or indirect costs associated with resolving the issues are not passed on to tenants and residents of Barking Riverside via service charge or rent.

This resolution was moved by the chair and opened for discussion.

A resident proposed that in addition to not being charged direct costs, residents should demand that they are not charged indirect costs. This was agreed.

A resident moved to amend the resolution where it stated that if the fire had taken place at night there would have been fatalities, stating that there would have been fatalities if residents had not braved the flames and smoke and gone into the building and alerted residents.

This was agreed and the resolution was voted on as amended and passed unanimously.

The chair then introduced:

Matt Carpen – Managing director of BRL

He said that his team was supporting an incredible council mobilization on Sunday.

He stated that the role of BRL is to help communicate information to residents and pass information from landlords and other stakeholders to residents.

They will work with council and housing association to discuss problems of fire safety.

Questions were taken:

When will residents be moved to alternative houses? Need for a clear date.

Residents need assurance that BRL will do a survey to ensure that fire safety is in place.

Issue of trust due to the past failures to provide fire security.

Issue of adequate maintenance of houses with wooden cladding or complete removal of wooden cladding from those houses.

Answers to those questions from the panel:

In answer to the chair's proposal that alternative accommodation be found in the new builds on the Verde development of the Riverside estate, it was stated that most of the apartments on Verde were already sold and construction was not yet completed.

There has been some misinformation in terms of damages. The assessment of the building with the fire brigade and RMG found that a total of 47 apartments were damaged. A full construction team was on site within 24 hours and there were almost 56 people on site trying to bring those apartments back to standard. Of the 47, 27 of the apartments had no damage to the interior, 12 suffered minor smoke damages and eight needed to be completely refurbished.

“We have a program in place to put the building back into habitable occupation and we think 27 of those apartments will be ready within four weeks and 12 that suffered minor damages will be ready in eight weeks. The eight damaged apartments will be repaired within six months.”

Further Q&A to the answers provided above:

Where are people supposed to live during the reconstruction of those eight and 27 flats and what about people who have to live near the place of construction?

Question on returning to those apartments once works are completed: people are traumatized and don't want to come back.

The fire started outside and then travelled inside: the claims and papers signed said that apartments were fire resistant and were protected to take the heat and flames up to 30 minutes. So how come it took only three minutes to happen, so even the fire brigade had not arrived before fire entered the flats?

Bellway's representative stated that they used timber on balconies to make the building out of sustainable sources for decorative purposes. The wood used was not fire graded, but the actual building (structure and material) was fire resistant.

Residents complained about panel not answering the question why it happened within three minutes rather than 30 minutes.

Bellway's representative said that buildings are not designed to be a 100% fire proof. What they are designed to do is to withstand fire for sufficient period of time [consistent interruption, so question was not answered].

Arnold Tarling, a fire safety expert steps in to explain (see video at 49.20).

“So the problem that we have with the design of the building actually goes back to government. It goes back to civil servants and it goes back to the approved documents. The approved documents say that you can clad a building with timber up to 18 meters, otherwise it's going to be difficult to be clad. What is not addressed in the approved government documents for building regulations are balconies. Timber that is against a brick

wall was in contact with balconies' timber which allowed fire to spread quickly. This goes back to the design, because overriding the approved documents are the building regulations Schedule 1 Part B which states that you have to construct a building in a manner in which a fire won't spread to endanger life of people and property."

(50.43) Arnold continued: "They (Bellway) used timber over there (SGH) and they breached regulation schedule 1 part B, by doing so. Basically, back to the October 2014 during the fire safety conference the issue of timber balconies was raised, but it was completely ignored by Brian Martin from DCLG, Research Establishment and numerous people from fire brigade."

The second resolution was read out by the chair. [50:00:00]

Resolution two: From the BRRA committee for the emergency meeting Thursday 13 June 2019, as amended and passed unanimously.

Make the Barking Riverside Estate fire safe

1. Campaign

The RA agrees to set up a campaign to ensure that the estate is made safe, including the displaced SGH residents.

The RA agrees to conduct its own resident-led enquiry into all aspects of housing management including fire safety and the relocation and compensation of displaced residents (see resolution 3).

It agrees to support and initiate a campaign that seeks a change in government policy to increase the standards for fire safety by property developers.

2. Cladding

The RA calls on Bellway, Mace and all others involved in the construction, design and management of the estate to:

- Immediately remove the combustible cladding from the houses and flats at their own expense.
- Make good the appearance of the houses and flats to the same aesthetic and value.
- Replace the wood in the balconies with alternative non-flammable materials such as steel and glass, with proper drainage.

3. Systemic failure of all parties

The RA believes all landlords and management parties involved, government legislation, and the council in granting planning permission, failed to make sure the properties were safe and endangered lives.

- Landlords and managing agents had two years since Grenfell to inspect and make good the balconies and cladding throughout its part of the estate and did not.
- Adriatic and RMG, acting as their agents, failed to address the issue of cladding despite showing concerns about fire safety.
- The RA believes Adriatic has forfeited its right to ownership of this property. It should pass as commonhold to the remaining residents where leaseholders.

4. Barking Riverside Community Interest Company (CIC)

- The RA believes that if the residents were running the estate, they would have implemented the fire safety check directly and prevented the fire.
- The Barking Riverside Community Interest Company was set up to provide the residents with a majority on the board of directors.
- The RA reaffirms two previous decisions of the RA, that this voting majority be enacted and not be removed.

5. Donations

- The RA supports the setting up of the BRRA campaign fund to be used only in pursuit of the campaign of the RA on fire safety, according to the guidance of the residents at its meetings. Examples –banners publicising case, protest leaflets, legal advice.

6. Safety checks

- The RA calls on managing agents to reveal fire safety inspection reports, carry out a Level Four safety check on all flats, and conduct fire drills.

Discussion of resolution No 2:

The need to remove the cladding and replace the wood on the balcony with alternative non-flammable materials.

Call for Mace to come sit at the front (panel).

Comments from audience:

- We don't want wood but we want the building to maintain its original look.
- How is the cladding tested? Why did they (Bellway) chose the cheapest material for the cladding (D3) instead of A2 (limited combustability)? Why did they go for flammable material and why did they choose unsustainable cheap wood? Has testing been done to determine the pattern of fire spreading? Also, the other issue with emergency exits, as most corridors went on fire too quickly, trapping people in their apartments.
- Demand for Bellway to be quick and precise in answering the questions.
- NHBC approved the cladding in accordance to the regulations at the time. There is no requirement for NHBC to share recordings of the inspections with LBBD. This legal requirement to issue a certificate was cancelled.

Answers to those comments from Bellway:

The cladding wasn't cheap, it's Ludawood, which is a high-grade cladding product and approved by the local authority and the NHBC inspector. The wood was chosen because of design reasons and the brief of the site (sustainability). Bellway can't explain what the escape route must have been. There are series of canopies on the exits of buildings. Now Bellway is removing all the "unessential" timber (Bellway representative shows an architectural drawing, which the audience doesn't understand).

Interference by a resident saying that:

At this meeting the residents are not going to get the answers they want, because Bellway are not ready to tell the truth. The most important thing is to find new houses for the people, because they should not go back to their homes and pray for the best.

Answers to those comments continued:

Bellway are taking down the cladding of all the apartments. For the houses they are discussing about coating the timber.

Chair: Is there anyone who wants the cladding to remain? Resolution 2 calls for it to be removed. No support is shown for coating the timber.

- What about the MACE properties?

Mace representative: Mace is doing a full investigation and review of the design of the houses. If we can do it in a week, we'll do it in a week. If it takes two or three weeks ... but it will be thorough.

- Some Mace leaseholders are unhappy with Mace's contact and approach.

BRL representative: It's a complex situation, requiring coordination by BRL with Mace, Bellway and the landlords here. The role of BRL is to bring all of this together quickly. The main issue is obviously the cladding.

Comments from residents:

The foundation of government policy that has allowed cladding up to 18 metres, these regulations need to be made more stringent. Of course Bellway have to take responsibility for what has happened here, but we need to campaign for the government to change the regulations.

Chair: Part 3 of Resolution 2 is about systemic failures.

At this point, Camilla Sheldon, for the office of James Brokenshire, Secretary of State for Housing, thanked residents for meeting him earlier in the week, and that he asked her to attend the meeting and he wants to know what residents have to say. She confirmed that she would be reporting straight back to his office.

Chair: Part 4 of Resolution 2 discusses the Barking Riverside Community Interest Company, in which the residents should have a majority vote and that would be the company that will run the estate. If this was actually the case, the residents would have implemented safety checks. [1:20:00]

Resolution 2 was then put to a vote by the chair as amended and was passed unanimously.

Question from the audience:

What is the plan for the eight most damaged apartments and the residents? And what if we don't have insurance?

Bellway replies: The apartments will be ready by November.

Insurance

Contents insurance - If people are in alternative accommodation, they should have received an individual call this afternoon from the insurance team to ensure people know their rights and entitlements.

Question from audience: Some residents can't go to work and have their finances frozen, because of the fire and the traumatic experience they are going through. What is the insurance going to give them for the weeks they are not able to work? Not only psychological distress, but financial as well.

Bellway said there are two cabins with officers from Bellway, BRL, RMG, and potentially the insurance company outside the Rivergate centre. Residents could attend to get the correct advice.

There are two phases for accommodation. In the current short-term phase there is alternative accommodation available. The next phase is when residents get 'like for like' accommodation as their previous houses as long as it's needed while their homes are being put back together.

Question from the audience: If our private landlord doesn't want to go through the insurance process to find us alternative accommodation (which they are not required to do by law), where do we go?

Reply: That is something that has to be discussed with a law expert.

Serena Madhvani, the assistant head teacher at Riverside School, who has been displaced from SGH by the fire, then asked three questions:

She said she thought that it would best if the four representatives at the meeting would meet with people from the eight apartments totally burnt out and the loss adjuster individually, because it is very difficult to talk about their circumstances when there are a lot of people present.

Serena said that the wood used on the balconies, Cedar wood, was among the most flammable types of wood there was.

She asked a question of each panellist:

1. Question for Secretary of State for Housing : When he was at the Grenfell meeting, somebody asked him about the Barking Riverside fire and he said "It is deeply concerning". Had people died, those words would not be sufficient. She would like government to pay attention to the fire brigade, which are pushing for developers not to use combustible materials but they are ignored by government and that is a massive concern. Camilla Sheldon asked for clarification on the question and was told that Serena wanted government to ensure there would be no flammable materials used on any building, irrespective of their height. Sheldon said she would take the question back to the Secretary of State.

2. Pinnacle Places commissioned an evaluation report on SGH in 2018. It included a risk assessment for storm and flood but not for a fire risk inspection. Why was a fire risk inspection not instructed? Alex Selsey said he wasn't in charge of that process then, that he would check and get back to Serena the following day

but he thought that for some reason the fire inspection was split from the other inspections but was done later in November.

3. To HomeGround - After the fire, even though Serena complained to them multiple times, eventually she was told that the form they used for the insurance was indeed a template for a different building - why so careless? Eyvind Andresen replied that they commissioned a surveyor to do the inspection of various blocks. Unfortunately, the surveyors used the wrong template, which was a 'human error'. The landlord didn't spot it at first. The surveyor was sent back to the site and corrected the issues. The problem has been fixed. This surveyor won't be used for further evaluations.

Bellway: Cladding used was Thermowood, class D, who said it was possible to further treat the wood with fire protective treatments in order to achieve Class B, or UK Fire Rating Class 1. On Tuesday, Bellway said that they used Cedar wood to decorate the interior, which is highly flammable. Bellway said they were shocked at the way that fire took hold of the building. This shows the negligence. Some people got very upset at talk of treating wood rather than removing it.

Ian Gorst, Bellway welcomed the suggestion of meeting individually with people and would make contact to arrange that. The wood is not treated. It can receive treatment. We have been investigating since Sunday the ability for this material to receive treatment. We had the feeling up until this meeting that residents wanted the material treated.

[The audience reacts harshly, that they don't want the material treated, they want it removed.]

The chair invites a further round of questions as a lot of people are waiting to speak.

One of the residents said it was illegal for the developers to use this wood on the building and illegal for them not to treat it. That a lot of the stuff that was signed off, was not signed off properly. For that reason, people don't trust the managing companies anymore and want the cladding removed for peace of mind and safety. Secondly, a lot of people have to contact all the companies separately, so the panellists should set up a crisis fund with people who directly contact residents till the end of this process.

After Grenfell, Bellway should have known this wood was highly combustible and posed a fire risk. "Why haven't you notified the residents of this risk? Secondly, if treating the wood was a requirement, why wasn't it done for the past 10 years?"

Ian Gorst of Bellway said that this was a different situation from Grenfell, which had aluminium cladding and that they are taking steps following what happened on Sunday to ensure fire safety.

The chair asked if all the cladding is to come off from all the buildings immediately? Bellway answered that decisions have been made to remove all the cladding from the apartment blocks and there is a proposal to treat the houses.

[At this point there were expressions of distrust, worry, and concern that all cladding was not being immediately removed from all buildings, from some residents.]

Ian Gorst said he would take views back to Bellway, but there was a question about what would replace the cladding.

The chair introduced two experts in the room that he wanted to address the meeting. Shaun Murphy, a solicitor who had a member of staff who was affected by the fire. He was interested in helping her and attended the BRRA meeting the previous evening.

He said he thought that residents should be getting legal independent advice. "Politically you are also very strong as a group. You should consider your approach to issues carefully. A lot of you described shortcomings like negligence. If there is negligence and you suffer loss or damage, the law requires compensation. You can look at the FAQ sheets that have been produced. You can talk to the panel individually or collectively. Once you have listened to what they have to say, do not sign up to their proposals immediately. Go away and think about it. Share your experiences. Speak to a lawyer. There are four of us here. If anyone wants to speak to us at the end – this is not a sales pitch, I got involved to help my member of staff, but if we can co-ordinate through Peter (the chair) we will assist you in any way we can."

The chair proposed and meeting agreed to extend the meeting time.

Arnold Tarling (FRICS) a surveyor: “Before dealing with the issue of using a fire retardant.... The cladding is not the only problem in this building. It is the fitting of the fire doors, the fire stopping, which was recently done but there are gaps around it. And this is bigger than you think. I really will need a new in-depth, Article 11.4 inspection of your building which looks into the structure and the different areas where there were penetrations.” From an inspection to EWH the day before, “from a metal door frame, I could see straight through the concrete. There was no fastener in there.”

“We have ongoing problems with applying fire resistant paint, because it is not to be done only once, but multiple times in order to keep it up. Problems with painting the back of the boards affects fire resistance. The varnish on top is a flammable material. It relies the stuff behind it to block that. And you start building it up. You end up with nil fire resistance, similar to the fire at Lakanal House, paint actually melts if a corridor for example is heated up. I don’t recommend using paint in this situation.”

Chair: Our position, which has been voted on, is that all the wood should be removed from the buildings. It’s not in the letter, it has not been promised and we will campaign so it is done.

[1:49:00]

Venilia introduced Resolution 3 about holding a resident-led independent housing inquiry. The BRRA invited Arnold Tarling to do an inspection of EWH – a mirror image of the building that went down. Several faults and hazards, even before entering the building: gaps under fire doors, jammed fire doors, the thickness of the wood used around fire doors not thick enough, exposed electric wires, faulty access doors, poor exit signage, faulty fire control panels, damaged smoke vents... That’s why people don’t trust the panel. The resolution is about collecting testimonies from residents to try to find solutions and make recommendations to all you stakeholders.

Resolution three: From the BRRA committee for the emergency meeting Thursday 13 June 2019, as amended and passed unanimously.

Proposal for a Resident -Led Housing Inquiry

Following the recent fire on Barking Riverside and concerns raised before and after with regards to issues of safety and responsiveness from housing management, the BRRA believes that an independent resident-led inquiry should take place in order to ensure residents have dignity, power and that their voices are heard. The day after the fire on SGH, the RA had contact with an independent building surveyor and fire expert, who carried out a brief inspection of a mirror building to the one that burned down, EWH on Harlequin Close.

This independent fire expert immediately found numerous faults and hazards:

1. Gaps under fire doors
2. Jammed fire doors
3. Thickness of wood used around door frames were not thick enough
4. Exposed electric wires
5. Faulty access doors
6. Poor exit signage
7. Faulty fire control panel
8. Damaged smoke vents

The enquiry would speak to local residents to document their experiences and also call on wider technical and policy expertise. The RA would hold three public meetings:

1. Testimony – scope out issues;
2. Solutions – outline research findings as a response to testimonies and draw on expertise opinion;
3. Recommendations – to present a final report back.

Timeline

The inquiry would start immediately if there is support for this proposal in the first instance via the BRRA officers and a future resident meeting. It is envisaged that a report would be completed over a six-month period and that it is part of a resident charter.

The final report will include recommendations to the following involved parties:

- LBBD
- Developer and related housing management contractors
- Residents

Coordination

The RA will be supported by the TWCP, a local network, in sourcing examples, resident testimony and advice.

Debate on Resolution Three from the floor:

A case worker from the local MP's office Margaret Hodge, said she is not giving up on this issue, and is going to continue pushing government to enhance the regulation, that she will be approaching James Brokenshire's office to arrange a meeting. "We are on your side".

The issue of trust for the organisations on the panel is not helped by the lack of access. When we have tried to call you to report issues, such as damaged pipes, damaged kitchens or bathrooms, etc – we don't get answered. We should not have to wait a week for a response to a phone call or have to pay for an expensive phone number. We want free simple phone numbers and a response from you. The problem is delay. We pay a service charge and should get service. Deliver, without the shouting and screaming: action.

Everything that has happened up until this point has been led by this community. We will do everything in our power to get what we want.

An assistant head from the school raised the issue of children being distressed by the fire and said the school needs support to make sure children get the counselling required for them to continue with their lives. Some of these children would never recover from this.

We bought our flats as they were. What to do now? We as owners have the right to know what you are going to do, what you are proposing. It's amazing you taking the wood off, but what are you doing now? It will be a different property to what we bought.

The chair said the resolution said that homes should be restored to the same aesthetic value.

Bellway: The plans displayed are interim steps to immediately remove the timber, balconies and other parts. We have commissioned designs for new balconies that will be non-combustible. As soon as we have those proposals, we will come back and will consult on those proposals.

Residents: Before the fire, a notice of a future rise in ground rent was received. Is this still happening? Also, in relation to the service charges, we can't get any service or direct contact with Michelle Ivemy or Claire (RMG). Today, one resident waited 20 minutes on the phone (which cost her money). She is constantly told that someone will get back with the answer to her questions about insurance, service charges, etc., but no one ever gets back to her.

Homeground: The landlord will be waiving its ground rent for 2019 for all the leaseholders in SGH as a gesture of goodwill in the light of what has happened.

Hugh McGeever of RMG said that staff have been on site all week and that may be why they were not available on the office phone. Michelle worked till 10pm some nights. A dedicated line was set up on Tuesday. There is now a dedicated email and a team of 10 people working in the office centrally on all these issues. They know it's a terribly traumatic time but we are working to improve the situation as best they can. Your service charge has already been paid. Services are being provided. RMG has been managing the building since November and has been led to believe that it has been an improvement.

[Several people laugh]

A residents committee is being set up to work on the building.

Reply from residents:

There is a residents' association, but Michelle Ivemy (RMG) only wanted to talk to the block representatives. People are treated like they are dirt.

Another resident started talking about fire regulations and 'staying put' rules. He said that one Tory housing minister sat on a report for four years and would not agree certain recommendations about preventing fire hazards and Brandon Lewis refused to require the fitting of sprinklers because, he said, it would discourage house builders. Also, Boris Johnson, when he was mayor of London, shut down 10 fire stations and reduced the number of fire engines by 27 and cut 552 firefighters jobs.

Under the Tory Government, fire safety inspections were reduced from six hours to 45 minutes. This same government voted down proposals to make homes fit for human habitation because 72 Tory MPs were landlords themselves. How is Mr James Brokenshire going to behave differently? Regulations need to change. It's Barking today. It could be Bradford next week.

Camilla Sheldon said she would pass such questions on to the Home Office which is responsible for the fire service. She also said she could pass comments on Boris Johnson to GLA.

At this point Resolution 3 was passed unanimously.

Combustible Materials and Plastic Cladding was then discussed.

Question from the audience: Other similar blocks and a new building on the estate have plastic cladding. Are these combustible materials?

A resident proposed an amendment to resolution two. Instead of asking for removal of wooden cladding, it should just demand the removal of all flammable cladding. The chair puts this to a vote and it is agreed.

Panel: We are currently inspecting this issue and if it will be removed if it's not fire safe.

Question from the audience: Until cladding is removed, are we safe to stay in a building? No one should be allowed to stay there until cladding is removed.

[Strong support given to this question.]

The chair introduces Helen Pattison, a London organiser for the Socialist Party – on the need for the community to stick together to put the pressure on the landlords. Proposes protests: protest outside Bellway. [Huge cheers from audience].

[2:38:00] Shaun Murphy on independent legal advice said that whichever lawyer residents choose to speak to, they should be able to get expert legal advice on a 'no win no fee' basis." You need to have lawyers working out the solution for you."

LDDDB Councillor Bill Turner asked questions to the panel:

1. Will you undertake to publish previous, current and future fire risk assessments and share those with elected Councillors and with the RA?
2. There's been talk about when the block is ready to be re-occupied. That's a technical risk assessment as to whether someone thinks it's safe to be re-occupied. That's very different from someone who has had to run out of their home when it has gone up in flames and doesn't feel ready to move back into that property. What we are not yet clear on is what your offer to these people is?
3. A further question, for Mr Brokenshire's office: In the event that the organisations here don't publish the reports, will the government legislate to make sure that happens?

Answer from Homeground: The London Fire Brigade is looking into what happened on Sunday. They are an entirely independent body, driven to find the truth and will find the cause, whatever the factors were in what happened on Sunday. They have carried out factual, scientific and forensic investigation and that report - I don't know when it will be published, but it will be published and you will hear the results of that report. We also want to understand precisely what happened and are as anxious as you to see the result. Acknowledged the different emotional position of people who actually experienced and were directly affected by the fire from the panel organisations, but stressed the organisation's desire to get things right.

We have already given all of those documents to the London Fire Brigade. We have already co-operated with both the London Fire Brigade and the Building Research Establishment who have attended been on site who also carried out investigations of the fire. The risk assessments that have been requested – we have already analysed the detail of those assessments and we will be providing detail for all those who have requested them.

In response to a question from the chair, Homeground confirmed that it would provide them to the RA.

Secretary Nuno Amorim asks RMG: Did the fire safety checks not highlight that this stuff was flammable and if they did what did you do about it because it seems to me, you didn't do anything?

He also asks LBB&D Councillors: You approved the planning for all of this estate. Did you not do due diligence on health and safety checks and on the materials being used and should that not have been highlighted?

RMG: We appointed an assessor to undertake a type 1 fire risk assessment, looked at all the components and it also looked at the building in relation to the building regulations and there was no factor identified as a risk on the balconies, other than the fact that they should be kept clear of anything that could cause a fire. In terms of management, people should be told not to store flammable materials. In fact, the lease requires that nothing be stored on the balconies. We will tell all residents to make them aware that for safety reasons, they shouldn't be storing any belongings on the balcony. Other than that, there was nothing inherently wrong with the balconies or the cladding.

LBB&D Councillor, Cameron Geddes on planning permission: "We had to give the planning permission. We were told it met the regulations. Building Control will look into it. We know full well that if any council turns down a planning application that is entirely compliant, as we were told this one was, any appeal is likely to be 100% successful.... This is why we want the building regulations reviewed as quickly as possible. We relied on the regulations and that is government responsibility."

He added that Margaret Hodge MP has already raised it on Monday, but it is the government not the council that is responsible for the building regulations.

A few people called out comments from the floor asking what it would take to change the regulations.

Danielle, a consultant psychologist, described some symptoms that people might experience and said that people should not ignore them, that if they were experiencing them, they could still get treatment for their trauma. The legal case is ongoing. She has contacted the head of the local services and he has offered to come in. There is a gentleman on the estate who works for that service. If it does become relevant to anyone, she asked residents to contact her.

In reply to a question about children, she suggested that parents should make the school aware of what is happening, that needs could be included in claims.

She offered to run some drop-in advice sessions, which people were supportive of.

A resident asked BRL's Matt Carpen about the ongoing problems with the heating system. A tender to fit a completely new system for two buildings was issued, but that has not been acted on despite 18 months passing. What is happening and how is this going forward?

Matt: "I share your frustration. It is a situation we stepped into. As the team here know, I've spent the last 18 months trying to sort this. I funded a survey with Homeground to find a solution. The survey is now with the landlords."

Homeground: "That BRL survey is one of three that has been done on the heating system. We, RMG and Bellway have commissioned our own. The issue is that the original system set up was complicated. We're trying with Bellway, to find a solution and will give you a solution as soon as we possibly can, but it has to be the right one as this kit is obviously essential."

The chair asked residents when to meet next: it is agreed the next meeting to be the RA's AGM on the 26 June in two weeks' time, where the discussion would be continued.

Meeting closed at 10.15pm.