

Chelsea Bridge Wharf Resident's Association (CBWRA) Minutes – June 2021

Attendees

Chairperson: Stephen Thompson (ST)
Treasurer: Charlie Garton-Jones (CGJ)
Company Secretary: Catherine Thomé (CT)

Alexander Minakov	Building representative for Oswald
Jean Dornhofer	Community liaison
Jovdat Guliyev	Building representative for Oswald
Kirt Bains	Building rep for Horace
Louis Kendall	Building representative for Warwick
Mike O'Driscoll	Building representative for Warwick and research (part)
Patrick Savage	Building representative for Centurion
Susan de Laszlo	Building representative for Howard
Vasundhara Talwar	Building representative for Warwick
Qin Xie	Building representative Burnelli

Apologies

Natalia Nyudyurbegova	Technology
Toby Spoerer	Building representative for Lanson and technology
Dorota Szelagowska	Database
Rui Ramalho	Building Representative for Howard
Aarya Mishra	Building representative for Hawker
Hasher Marouf	Building representative for Oswald

Stephen thanked all present for their ongoing contributions over the last month. He agreed with the idea Jean had raised of setting up working groups on certain issues and then providing brief update ahead of the next meeting. In light of recent extensive email chains, he also requested that committee members try and keep email chains down to a minimum as possible as he (and others) had limited time to answer all emails. He handed over to Jean for an update on discussions with local community committees and neighbourhood issues.

Local community and neighbourhood

Jean first addressed the traffic issue which was at the raising awareness stage. She had met with councillors of Kensington and Chelsea borough which is trialling acoustic cameras and are so far finding that the noise is difficult to enforce against, particularly as the amount of the fines often outstrip the cost associated with the fine. They facilitated an introduction to Wandsworth councillors with whom she would engage and gauge their interest. Significantly, the MP for Battersea is also keen to engage with this issue, intends to do a site visit in the near future and she has offered to interface with TFL about it. Jean continues to work with the Wandsworth Community Safety Officer whose approach is to have a partnership between Kensington and Chelsea, Westminster and the TFL in order to raise interest and also see whether the TFL can be engaged in solving the problem.

Stephen and Jean agreed it was great to have the Battersea MP involved however Jean commented she was unsure about the possibility of a petition which the MP had raised as in her experience with a Prince of Wales Drive petition, one has to have 51% of residents sign a petition in order for the council to enforce it.

Jean then informed the committee about a Safer Neighbourhood Panel, during which incidents of robberies had been raised, involving masked, black clad youths, sometimes on bikes, in the park. She later requested that her written update be added to the minutes, please see Appendix 1.

Residents' event

Jean said she'd noticed that there seemed to be a lot of interest about a residents' event on the app. An event would be a good opportunity to introduce the RA to residents. Due to Covid restrictions, September would be the earliest time to hold an event, with preference for it to be on early in the week and early in the evening, such as a Monday 6pm. This was to be confirmed and funds would need to be looked into. Stephen suggested that the RA request R&R to resume residents meetings once a quarter to answer questions from the residents at the Pestana, the RA committee could be introduced and then engage in a social event. Jean agreed this would be a good plan.

Communications

Stephen has published a statement on the two Facebook groups used by residents to inform them that official communications would be by direct email and via the app, as discussed at the last meeting. Dorata has been working hard on the email database and it is in the final stages with mailchimp, an email outreach will go out shortly. Catherine reported that the app now had almost 600 registered users which was more than the Facebook group (415 members including Vista residents) and that the email database had over 1000 residents. Qin suggested the newsletter also be circulated through R&R.

RA Constitution

Mike enquired whether this was on the agenda. Stephen said it could be discussed at a future meeting once comments had been submitted. He said it was still in draft form and apologised for any miscommunication. Mike requested that his name be removed from appendix in the constitution document posted on the app until it was approved by the committee. Later in the meeting, it was agreed that committee members would send any comments to Stephen and Catherine directly.

Residents' survey

Stephen thanked Mike for the great work on the draft survey which had been circulated the day before the meeting. Mike invited all to give feedback online or by email by the following Wednesday. Charlie commented that the last survey had been done by R&R about three years previously but that results were never published because R&R alleged the survey had been compromised by people entering multiple times. Mike explained that the Monkey Survey he was preparing would send each person an individual link which was secure and linked to their email address, avoiding potential scammers.

Mike asked the committee whether we would only invite people on the database, since some may only be on the Facebook groups. Catherine suggested that the RA could communicate through the app about the survey and ask residents to email the Chair if they weren't on the list. Mike pointed out that some residents who perhaps only use Facebook would miss out.

Louis suggested that survey responses should be linked to an actual property and that it should be limited to one per property. Mike said this was unusual methodologically and that responses should be from all residents. Vasundhara agreed that there should be one survey per household and that a household could surely agree on one survey response. After some discussion, Mike said he would make suggestions about this point and Stephen asked that we make it clear to residents that there should only be one response per household.

Jean asked whether there was any incentive for residents to respond. Stephen agreed to Mike's proposal to offer £100 in vouchers as a prize draw. Catherine asked when Mike aimed to send out the survey to residents. He said it would be ready in two weeks or so and that the timing may depend on the database being ready or the [night patrol] refund to have been issued.

Catherine queried whether posters would be created to promote the survey and mentioned that Natalia had offered to help with this. Mike welcomed help and also offered to draft one based on the poster used for promoting the app. Stephen agreed to liaise with Toby and Natalia on this. Mike then proposed to also promote it via the app and possibly ask R&R to circulate it, however this raised the issue of any generic survey link potentially being used multiple times. Mike said he would come back to the committee with further thoughts.

Stephen then provided updates on some ongoing items:

R&R

Stephen said that Maarten, the new Estate manager and Brian, the new Facilities manager seemed like good recruits who would have a positive impact on CBW. He had appealed to Richard Daver, the MD for R&R to give them the support they need to do their jobs well. Later in the meeting, Stephen said he would continue to work with R&R to reduce the service charge.

Fountains

Fountains were finally all working the previous week. The underlying issue was that they were not fit for purpose and needed to be replaced. Stephen said his tactic at the moment was to just get them all working and then revisit, revamp the cosmetics and the operational aspects. It was still work in progress.

Scaffolding

A R&R update would be circulated after the meeting. Covid delays unfortunately meant that the scaffolding target removal date was around October to December time, depending on the building. Whilst this was not welcome news, at least thanks to the efforts of Charlie and John Blackmore, residents are not paying for it.

Intercoms

In Toby's absence, Catherine gave an update on the intercoms' progress which had been quite frustrating and slow. The plan was to have a consultants put together specifications for a wired system at Centurion, Centurion being the priority because it's had so many issues. It was temporary fix, starting with Centurion first and then moving to other buildings. Quotes would be gotten and costs covered by the R&R reserve fund. The work on Centurion would start in September at the earliest (according to R&R), because there were a number of process matters that needed to happen in the meantime.

Moving forward, R&R were asked to bring in project managers from actual intercom manufacturers from Fermax and Videx, to put together specifications and then separately tender to two suppliers each. The idea was to get four competitive quotes that the RA could then look at. The work on Centurion would start in September at the earliest (according to R&R), because there were a number of process matters that needed to happen in the meantime.

Patrick added that he and Toby had met with Cornerstone who have been managing the intercom system at Chelsea Bridge Wharf for a very long time and that their preferred product was the Fermax one. They had been good at convincing them that the current system was very out of date, needed replacing throughout, but could start with Centurion. Videx, the other product, came with a thirty-year warranty whereas Fermax's was only seven to ten years. Toby had spent a lot of time with Videx engineers and had been through everything about the cabling, the wiring and their product was compatible.

Louis pointed out that in the R&R document which had been circulated, Burnelli and Warwick had not been included in the investigation for the upgrade because they lacked the video call function. Louis suggested that if the rest of the development was upgraded, we should request to keep the parts which could then be used for the future replacement needs in case of a shortage of parts in the next few years. Jean suggested that the first group of residents could trial the new equipment and then report back to the vendor with any problems, which could get over the problem of having a consultant.

Ponds

In Toby's absence, Catherine gave an update on the ponds. Whilst R&R have appointed a specialist surveyor to put together specifications and a schedule of works, the RA is also funding its own site survey. She reminded all that R&R had so far proposed Triflex at a cost of £1.8 million which was not good value. Two suppliers, UKFF and Sika, had done a site visit, one was a specialist in pond waterproofing and the other one was an approved applicator of it. They would provide quotes to be compared with R&R's. According to R&R works would start in October.

Stephen added that he had exceptionally approved for the RA to spend £1500 on this independent survey because £1.8 million was such a large amount that needed to be challenged and that it showed R&R that the RA was willing to spend funds to protect its interests on occasion. As a rule and in future, such proposed expenses would come to the committee for approval.

Insurance

Stephen reminded all that of the nine building blocks, five were with Fairhold Artemis, three with Berkeley Homes and the remaining one with L&Q. L&Q as previously discussed in the last meeting is a block policy and a good deal. The Berkeley Homes three are all on the whole group's policy, charging their going rate rather than their discounted rate, but seem to be reasonable. The best chance we have got [for premium cost negotiation] is with Fairhold Artemis, unless they also have a block policy. Charlie confirmed they had over 1000 properties, similarly to Berkeley Homes. Patrick said he was waiting to obtain the claims history in order to get another quotation.

In Any Other Business, the following topics were raised:

Window cleaning

Stephen referred to a notice from R&R to residents who have scaffolding saying they would be charged thousands of pounds for cleaning windows. Stephen told R&R it would make more sense to concentrate a comprehensive window clean once the scaffolding came down. R&R claim they have been inundated with requests for window cleaning but agreed to put the window cleaning plans on hold.

Accounts

Stephen mention RA finances, which a number of committee members discussed in an earlier email exchange. A summary of accounts is included in Appendix 2.

Scrutiny Committee

Stephen explained that this working group consisted of Patrick, Toby and himself. They had taken the lead on this because Toby had the background knowledge having scrutinised R&R service charges for years and Patrick had been involved in managing and owning properties for many years, had many contacts in many areas that were able to provide useful information, from building works, to insurance, to pond liners, to fountain builders. Anyone with relevant experience or expertise is welcome to join this group, the aim is to ensure our money is spent fairly.

Dog mess

Stephen said many residents had been complaining about this issue. Signage was about to be fitted over the next few weeks, video cameras would be repositioned so people are aware that they are being watched and he would ask R&R to actually do something about monitoring the videos. Jean enquired why R&R could not supply a few bins. Stephen explained that R&R answer was that Berkeley Homes thought it would lower the tone of the piazza, even though dog mess is surely worse than the sight of bins. Louis commented that Battersea Power Station had concrete bins made in a slightly more stylish way.

Solar panels

Stephen thanked Natalia for raising the possibility of potentially using the roof surface for solar panels, which would be used for power at CBW and could even become an income stream. He had some knowledge on this having just completed a Master's and said there were opportunities and mechanisms to make this happen. He commented that he had not seen any statements about environmental policies from R&R at CBW and was not clear whether there was any recycling regime as such. He said a new working group would come together to discuss environmental considerations.

Outcome of the accounting audit vote

Stephen reported that the majority had agreed on the forward looking approach whereby RA would exert more influence on saving costs going forward, rather than spending a lot of money to perhaps find things that shouldn't have been done, or shouldn't have been spent. But taking into account the overall costs of these things, the benefits certainly were unlikely to exceed the cost. He reiterated that the accountant that he and Patrick had spoken to look had strongly advised against an analysis of past costs and saying that the findings were highly unlikely to be worth the large expenditure of up to £30,000 to get any results.

Fibre optic

Jovdat said many residents were discussing and complaining about this on the app and that he himself had contacted British Telecom following R&R's communication, but that he had never heard back. Stephen said he was aware of the situation and had told R&R that their current response was inadequate and that they could not block residents from having high speed internet. R&R have said that in September there would be a new supplier able to install equipment on site, on an individual basis, with very high speed connection. He said he would raise this point again with R&R the following week.

Louis asked whether R&R or Berkeley Homes had said anything about residents who have already had the fibre installed and whose flats now did not meet the fire regulations. He wondered whether landlords would be expected either now, at the point of selling, or at a future point, to do the remedial work or to make the checks. Stephen said he'd raise this point with R&R but did not expect residents to have to cover such costs linked to the issue between BT who say they are compliant with the law and Berkeley Homes who want further protection.

In closing, Catherine said the **next meeting would take place on Sunday 18th July at 10am**. She invited everybody to communicate with Stephen and herself regarding agenda items at any time. She also suggested that members update her on any action points so that she may collate any updates or information to be sent out ahead of the next meeting in one email. Stephen added that everyone should feel free to interact and make suggestions at any time, as well as raise any concerns they may have on working groups or anything else.

Stephen raised a final point about racing on the bridge. There was some improvement with the new fixed poles that created a cycle lane and stopped the parking to a certain extent around by the burger van. However he sent pictures to Jean as he still witnessed some reckless driving the night before. Stephen also feels the burger van is a public nuisance and needs to be relocated, and may make a legal submission to Wandsworth council about this. Louis added that he had noticed many vehicles turning into the Pestana hotel just to turn around, and that it became quite congested on weekend evenings especially. Stephen noted that this was a security issue he would raise with R&R.

Action points:

1. Stephen to request that R&R host quarterly residents' meetings from September, to include the RA and a social after the meeting.
2. All: send Stephen and Catherine comments on the RA constitution
3. Mike to circulate a penultimate survey version (that takes 10 minutes only) and make suggestions to ensure only one survey per household before the end of the month.
4. Stephen to liaise with Toby and Natalia about creating a poster for the survey.
5. Catherine to circulate a scaffolding update to all after the meeting.
6. Stephen to raise the fibre optic issue with R&R.
7. Stephen to raise the security issue with vehicle congestion at the roundabout on weekend nights.

Appendix 1

Traffic Racing on Chelsea Bridge
21 June update from Jean

From meeting with RBKC Councillor:

- RBKC first worked with their councilman to procure a public safety protection order;
- They then were in a position to pilot acoustic cameras which were installed by private companies on borough controlled roads with the permission of the TFL and paid for by development levys.
- They continue to face two challenges:
 - noise is difficult to enforce against, especially as police resources are constrained;
 - the maximum fine is £100 which is less than the cost to enforce
- Majority of offenders were UK based.
- Facilitated introduction to Wandsworth councillors

From meeting with Battersea MP:

- She will raise the issue with borough commander (police) this month;
- She will raise the issue formally with TfL, as the road is owned by them. She'll ask what enforcement they have in place, and if they plan to put any in place if there is none;
- she's going to get her office to set up a petition which we can circulate to residents and she'll submit to the mayor of London on our behalf.
- she's going to visit the site to see the lay of the land.
- MP has been sent video and press clips

From Wandsworth Community Safety Officer:

I had a meeting this week with Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea (RBKC), the Safer Neighborhood Team (SNT) on both sides about this community concern.

Another meeting has been pencilled in to involve Westminster Council, RBKC, Prevent & Partnership Team, TFL and the SNT's from Wandsworth, RBKC and Westminster in 3 weeks' time.

Officer has been sent video and press clips

Future actions:

- 1) Site visit and follow up with MP; Petition?
- 2) Interface with Wandsworth councillors on possibility of acoustic camera
- 3) Determine Outcome of community officer's cross-borough meeting

Appendix 2

RA accounts summary

Current balance: £25,474

Expenditure:

CBW app : £7,128 per year

Professional Indemnity Insurance: £2,500

Misc: £3000 (mail chimp, transcription, bank charges etc)

Total £13,000

Current year income circa (based on £10 annual residents' RA fee)

£8,720 from £10 levy

£1,000 £10 levy collected by Garton Jones Real Estate

£ 504 Garton Jones Real Estate App advertising

Total: £10,224

Next year estimate if levy £20:

£15,000 from £20 levy taking into account potential opt outs

£2,000 from Garton Jones tenants

£ 504 Garton Jones App advertising

Total: £17,504

NB the residents' annual RA fee will remain at £10 until June 2022 and the raise will be discussed as part of the RA Constitution.