

# CBWRA 2024 Chair Elections

Vote Mike O'Driscoll for Chair of CBWRA , to deliver –

## Right to Manage AND a properly governed Right to Manage company

Deliver Right to Manage for ALL of CBW \*Create a democratic , transparent and well-governed RTM company and RA

\*Reduce service charges \*Prevent toxicity, online bullying, & arbitrary account closure on the CBW app

\*Put residents at the heart of decision-making \*Environmental/sustainability plan for CBW \*Bring back the ducks 😊

Feel free to ask questions: [residents@chelseabridgwharf.org.uk](mailto:residents@chelseabridgwharf.org.uk)

**About me:** I am an academic quantitative researcher in an NHS related role, with interests in photography, hiking and travel.

I am a co-founder and trustee of a charity relating to the international development sector. I have been a leaseholder at CBW since 2004 and led many successful campaigns benefitting residents, including getting traffic control on Sopwith Way and a campaign to raise awareness about lease extensions in Warwick which saved residents large sums and protected property values. I also organised a refund on management fees averaging around £700 per Warwick leaseholder. **In 2020 with other residents I worked to reactivate the residents' association which had been dormant for around 6 years under the 'leadership' of Charlie Garton-Jones. I was the first resident (in September 2020) to identify that BH were charging waking watch fees inappropriately** and worked with other residents to put pressure on BH, leading eventually to a full refund of around £400K. While on the CBWRA committee, I worked with Rendall and Rittner to improve the clarity of service charge billing **and I fought continuously (since 2020!) for Right to Manage, resident consultation and better governance in the CBWRA, including freedom of speech and ending online bullying/arbitrary account closure on the CBW app.** I have helped many residents in individual casework around service charges, arrears and general advice and I have built a network of several hundred residents from Rendall and Rittner managed developments across England which is a valuable source of knowledge exchange and support around Right to Manage and generally becoming more effective at challenging inappropriate charging and poor performance from managing agents. [My petition against Rendall and Rittner has nearly 5,000 signatures.](#) **My Priorities as Chair would be to:**

- 1. Ensure the smooth completion of the Right to Manage process** RTM notices were finally served on the freeholders in February 2023 which is very welcome (after 2 wasted years during which the current and former Chairs told us that RTM was impossible) and the top priority now must of course be completing the RTM process. This means working with the Urang and taking other advice as needed to address the objections of the freeholders. I do not believe those objections will be upheld. Following completion of the RTM process, notice will be served on Rendall and Rittner and a detailed plan developed for transition to take over by Urang. This plan will be shared with residents.
- 2. Ensure that all leaseholders get the benefits of the Right to Manage process.** RTM means that the RTM company formed by residents will take over most of the functions which are currently performed by the freeholder (including choice of managing agent). The RTM company will direct the chosen managing agent (Urang) in terms of priorities and where money should be spent or not spent. This means that the RTM company gains a lot of power – but if that power is only enjoyed by 4 or 5 unelected directors who are not accountable to residents then the average leaseholder may not be any better off or even notice the difference. **In order to ensure that we get the potential benefits offered by RTM I will:**
  - Ensure an ELECTED, accountable and transparent board of directors for the Chelsea Bridge Wharf RTM company . Directors are not currently elected and the current chairs have said they are against such elections. This means that Directors are appointed on a 'crony' basis and will not be accountable to residents for their performance**

or conduct. This is unacceptable and almost guarantees problems for the future (we already have a few in the present).

- **Set the new managing agent (Urang) a target to reduce the average service charge by 15%** compared to the 12 months prior to their takeover. There is a lot of fat to cut in terms of staffing costs, recruitment fees, buildings insurance, energy costs, Building Safety Act Costs (R and R budget these at 400K which is many multiples of what is being charged at other developments such as VISTA). **The current Chairs are not challenging BSA costs.**
- **Introduce hard data monitoring on key performance indicators** so that we have a rational basis to judge the performance of Urang - these would include:
  - the average service charge by block and for the whole development on a 6 monthly basis
  - average repair completion time
  - monitoring the extent to which major projects and services are staying within budget or not
  - annual resident satisfaction survey measuring satisfaction with Urang and with the RTM company
- **There will be Quarterly minuted hybrid (online and physical) meetings between Urang and all residents** ([I passed a resolution at the CBWRA SGM \(Sep. 2023\) which should guarantee that this happens](#)).

**3. THERE WILL BE A FAIR, GENUINE and BINDING CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF THE FOUNTAINS – a simple vote on whether to proceed with status quo or to fill in/gardenise the rectangular fountains. ALL major spending decisions will be consulted on and it will be clear whether consultation is BINDING or ADVISORY.**

**4. MAKE CBW A MORE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT –** Professional environmental audit of CBW to identify means of reducing energy and water consumption, support investment in renewables such as solar panels and improve recycling and see what can be done to encourage the return of ducks and other aquatic birds.

**5. Restore proper governance in the CBWRA**

- **Detoxify the CBW app.** Sadly the mismanagement of the CBW app continues to be a source of much conflict at CBW. The CBWRA Chairs, in trying to silence debate, criticism, scrutiny have had a 'chilling effect' **with residents scared to ask questions or say what they think. I will ensure clearer rules of use and introduce resident-led (rather than CBWRA-led) moderation of the CBW app**, so that it is a safe environment where all voices can be heard, without fear of arbitrary censorship, personal attacks, account closure, dogpiling etc. **Less drama, more meaningful conversations, more quality content.** [CBWRA have ignored my motion which was passed by residents at the September 2023 SGM for a written process to prevent the arbitrary closure of CBW app accounts](#),
- **There will also be a fair and transparent election process for CBWRA Chair & committee members which will be described in the constitution.** [The current and previous elections for Chair have in my view \(and as I have documented\) been characterised by abuses of the constitution, online and offline bullying of candidates and inappropriate interference by Garton-Jones estate agents and the 'banning' of a candidates from the CBW app without any meaningful justification](#) as well as game being played with the timing of manifestos being released and the lack of opportunities for residents to engage in meaningful debate with the candidates.

**IF YOU GOT THIS FAR – THANKS FOR READING.** I am happy to answer any questions: [residents@chelseabridgwharf.org.uk](mailto:residents@chelseabridgwharf.org.uk)

**PLEASE DO VOTE and USE YOUR VOTE WISELY. THIS IS NO LONGER JUST ABOUT A RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION - IT IS ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT THE RIGHT TO MANAGE COMPANY (WHICH WILL HAVE FULL CONTROL OVER A £5 MILLION SERVICE CHARGE BUDGET) WILL BE PROPERLY GOVERNED, DEMOCRATIC AND ACCOUNTABLE TO RESIDENTS.**