

**Bentley House Estate Tenants and Residents Association (TARA)
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
21st April 2016, 6.30-9.00pm, Birley Campus**

Co-Chairs: Lucy Carlin & Dave James; Treasurer: Jenny Barnard; Secretary: Issy Patience

The TARA Committee meets every first Thursday of the month from 6:30 to 7:30pm (committee members only) and from 7.30 to 8.30pm (meeting open for all estate residents).

If you wish to join the committee please first attend an open meeting.

TARA is a **tenant-led** initiative intended to enable better representation of tenants and residents across Bentley Housing Estate. It is a **100% voluntary** commitment on behalf of committee members, who receive no payment for their time spent on TARA activities.

TARA exists for the benefit of the whole of the Redbricks community, and is always open to new members, ideas and suggestions, so **Please Get Involved!!!**

Minutes

<p>Attendees: Lucy Carlin, Jenny Barnard, Eleanor Bullen, Adam, Emma, Mike, Gaz, Alan, Amina, River, Barry McAtarsney, Aisha, Bob, Alessandro, Teddy, Louise, Lucy Williams</p> <p>Apologies: Issy Patience, David James, Steve Durrant, Maggie Sansam</p>	
1. Minutes of last meeting agreed	
2. Matters arising: Covered in main AGM	
<p>3. Chair's Report from Lucy Carlin</p> <p>Lucy & Dave James took on the role of Co-chairing TARA in August 2015 following the absence of the elected chair from attending any committee meetings. We have been tag-teaming the role. TARA suffering from some key people leaving which has left us rather short-handed; we haven't found the capacity to try and tackle this despite attempts being made.</p> <p>New people co-opted onto the committee prior to the AGM include Lucy Williams, and a few others have dipped in and out during the year. We urgently need to involve more people and possibly start working in a less laborious, more productive manner: agenda item for later in meeting.</p> <p>What has been going on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 'Tale of Two Cities' wildflower scheme in the area • Our landlords City South Manchester merger with Eastlands to form One Manchester. • A Hulme-wide residents parking scheme came into force. 	

- (Brutal) clearance of Spider Park prior to the development of the site.

TARA's achievements:

- We helped in several cases of complaints between residents, and by giving support to vulnerable residents in dealing with various issues.
- Repainting of the Bentley Exchange cupboard following a fire.
- The crossing under the Mancunian Way was altered to a much safer single lane of traffic following input from residents
- Publicising of events and encouraging participation.
- Forcing an extension to the consultation and planning processes for Leaf Street / Spider Park.
- Representing the estate on the Birley Community Forum:
 - People should look out for the Hulme-wide traffic survey from MMU and contribute comments about all problems due to increased traffic in the area, and the new slightly haphazard speed control schemes, lack of traffic calming measures, and ongoing parking issues. TARA to encourage as much participation as possible.

We have managed to keep up the pressure on CSM throughout their transition, and changes of personnel. We kickstarted having meaningful meetings and estate walkabouts with them to follow up on the myriad issues on our "maintenance issues spreadsheet".

A main feature has been the participation of many residents in flagging up all sorts of quality control issues. The promised replacement of the inadequate and narrow block entrance doors did eventually happen; when the doors were finally upgraded to ones of adequate width, we chased them up about the half-done state much of the work was left in, which has mainly now been corrected.

They are definitely starting to take notice that we are on their cases and will not be letting them get away with their habit of agreeing to things when you talk to them in person and then nothing happening in reality. On the last walkabout we were actually able to tick some items off as dealt with.

TARA is now technically set up as a registered Tenants Panel with the Ombudsman. The flow of how this would work with any given complaint is: One Manchester have their complaints procedure, then if not resolved, take it to the Tenants Panel which has 4 weeks to resolve. If not we can go directly to the Housing Ombudsman for them to process through their procedures. Aidan will be sending on paperwork for this.

Some progress has been made in dealing with some abandoned properties and vehicles on the estate. Although of course several new problems were spotted and noted, including the seriously wobbly door handles on many of the new doors, and missing/illegible number plates on many blocks.

CSM seem interested in opening up other currently boarded up storage areas on the estate to bring them into use. They are happy with the use of the Leaf Street gardening storage room so so it's no longer under threat.

Change of Neighbourhood Officer is gladly noted. New Neighbourhood Officer is Jim Breen. The Gardening Group has been reinvigorated, and Leaf Street is looking well loved. We improved communication within Tara committee easier with group emails. We updated the website. However we must not lose sight of keeping everyone in the loop in all usual ways e.g. posting of minutes on notice boards etc which we don't always do. The office has had a bit of a sort out and there are now a suite of computers for people to be able to use at meetings etc.

We ran several events:

- Combining summer and winter gardening sessions with People's Kitchens proved popular
- Halloween kids' night
- St Wilfreds Solstice party

TARA's un-achievements:

- ⑩ Bedroom tax: is there any update on this situation?
- ⑩ Getting an information banner printed for the Bentley Exchange: this is now back in progress.
- ⑩ Producing an Estate Welcome Guide
- ⑩ Producing a Bugle Newsletter
- ⑩ Still no progress on the chaotic bins and binshed situation despite TARA and resident pressure, though is there is talk new doors for all binsheds. Thanks to Georgina for joining in on the latest walkabout with her appalling and frustrating binshed situation.
 - Alan is keeping up the pressure on our council reps Nigel Murphy et al by going to the regular drop-ins at Birley
 - Trying to get much better recycling capacity so that stuff doesn't just end up getting dumped in the big bins cos the rest are always too full

Management of Green Spaces: we are getting a written policy on the management of green spaces on the estate which feels all the more urgent as it seems to be one of the few green bits left in a flurry of development proposals and of the very few areas of commonly accessible ground that is outside of council control. Council are still trying to spray with chemicals. Clarifying who's in charge of what bits of land is crucial to getting a clear policy worked out on these sorts of issues.

Bike Storage shed/cage for Rockdove as a memorial for Spartacus. CSM has fundraised for this from Transport for Greater Manchester; however it's had a setback due to the location not yet being agreed.

<p>This needs some input and participation from Rockdove residents in order to not end up with a location that pisses too many people off at once, and in particular friends & family of Spar to get ideas for artwork to be incorporated. Management of the bike shed and cage keys is to be held with CSM staff, as at their other sites, not TARA or other individuals on the estate.</p> <p>What would really help us make more progress with lots of these matters and more, would be if more residents can volunteer their time to join in and help. It would be good to open the discussion up to see how people think that can be made easier or more possible.</p> <p>How do people feel about a Springtime event in Late May Bank Holiday? To be planned at the next TARA meeting First Thursday of the month.</p>	
<p>4. Discussion around Chair's report</p> <p>River: would like to see some numerical data about residents' cases dealt with so people know generally what's going on and that TARA are supporting people. Track the figures for the next AGM: noted.</p>	<p>AP: TARA committee</p>
<p>5. Birley Community Forum</p> <p>Jenny: this is for local groups to attend and feedback to MMU about issues and concerns and also to find out what the campus is doing for the community. Groups such as Zion Arts, Hulme Community Garden Centre and lots of others are part of this. There will be a traffic survey coming out in various formats soon, for resident feedback.</p>	
<p>6. ONE Manchester/CSM?</p> <p>We need clarification if we are under One Manchester or CSM for the complaints procedure.</p>	<p>AP: TARA</p>
<p>7. Bin sheds</p> <p>Light in River's block not working.</p>	<p>AP: TARA to bring up with CSM</p>
<p>8. Written records</p> <p>Suggested that TARA encourage residents to track own complaints, email and copying in TARA; maintain a written record of what happens. TARA will be getting everything in writing in terms of agreements with CSM, to back up verbal agreements.</p>	<p>AP: TARA to promote this to residents</p>
<p>9. Treasurer's report</p> <p>Jenny: see attached spreadsheets and report. Main issue is £3000 in TARA account to spend; some is ringfenced to spend on energy efficiency measures for residents. It would be great if people could come back to the next meeting</p>	

<p>with ideas for how we can effectively spend the money on the community. IMPORTANT: If you get funding you have to agree to see the project through and commit to compiling the final fundraising reports.</p> <p>Suggestions from the meeting for spending the money:</p> <p>Combined meeting with Eastland TARA; renting a minibus and going to see them. Counter-suggestion that this is for Bentley House, taking on the whole of Eastlands it is a bit lopsided. Maybe we should reach out to other nearer TARA, People First and Guinness Trust etc. Suggestion we can do both; make contacts at Eastlands and do community event building.</p> <p>Barry: It's the 70th anniversary of the estate next year. Event needed.</p> <p>Lucy W: Picnic benches on Leaf street. Need to consult immediate residents.</p>	<p>AP: Ask for TPU funding to arrange a trip to Eastlands TARA</p>
<p>10. Group Reports</p>	
<p>Redbricks Intranet Collective (RIC) is a group that has existed since 1998. It manages the community intranet that connects lots of the flats and provides wireless connection.</p> <p>This year we got the contractors for CSM to finish the rewire that they didn't complete before. That was a "joyfilled" process in which RIC worked as managers for the project for free! Some of the original rewire wasn't done properly; major problems are solved. They drilled holes for internet sockets for RIC reducing the need for RIC ladder work.</p> <p>So 20 more flats can be connected. Sockets still need to be put on but they didn't cut the old cables down. We got the computers donated for residents and Teddy has set them up in the TARA office.</p> <p>Financially, RIC is stable and the connection is stable, fast and cheap. The occasional outage is due to CSM power issues.</p> <p>Aims for next year: Get more people connected Faster connection Get more people involved in the collective. RIC also aspires to having people on the intranet participate with each other and run computer drop ins and other things. Aim is to encourage more people to interact with each other. Sort the problem with the power supply. Cost is between £5 and £9; speed is very fast. Privacy and security is very important to the collective.</p>	
<p>Bentley Bike Club runs at the same time as the Bentley Exchange (see below) and happens on the first Sunday of the first full weekend of every month in the Humberstone/Letsbe Avenue walk-through mid-afternoon onwards. You can get help servicing your bike but the idea is that you learn to fix it yourself with help and assistance. It has been dormant for the last few months. One of the</p>	

<p>main organisers, Aidan, has left the estate and there is a shortage of tools and broken tools so money is needed to buy some more. Our plan is to do some sorting in May and then start again in June.</p>	
<p>Bentley Exchange is a 'Bring and Take/Bric-a-Brac' style set up on the first full weekend of the month where residents can bring things they don't want (furniture, clothes, household items, books etc) and take things they want. It starts at 12pm on Saturday and packs up from 4pm on the Sunday and is on the walk-through between Humberstone and Letsbe Avenue. Only a small number of volunteers help out so more people are really welcome, particularly for the Sunday pack up when there is usually a lot to sort out, recycle and take to the tip for recycling. Email tara@redbricks.org to join the email reminder list.</p>	<p>AP: Call out for Exchange help</p>
<p>Bentley Bugle newsletter needs support and contributors. It used to come out 3 or 4 times a year and was a round up of local activities, community events and news of interest to the estate. TARA didn't manage to get one out last year due to lack of capacity. Lucy volunteered to do a regular gardening report.</p>	<p>AP: Several volunteers in the AGM [names not taken down]</p>
<p>Gardening: Leaf Street gets the most attention from residents who enjoy gardening. The plan is to get some seeds in this year. Lots of tree work has happened. Lucy C and Lucy W haad a meeting about funding with Hulme Garden Centre but nothing is set in stone. We had some previous sessions of expert advice from them. You don't have to be a gardener or be at a meeting to join in. It is a difficult thing to set dates as we are dependent on the weather. There is an email group people can join. Email tara@redbricks.org to join it. Feedback is welcome.</p> <p>Ideas for events: moth day/bug hunt, bat walk; making a bug hotel; walkabout on the estate to see what is edible and what is what. There is a map about the estate plants being made and they plan to get labels for the specimens.</p>	
<p>11. Discussion about office security as one of the Sewcialise sewing machines which has gone missing. It's possible that it might have happened after the lock was changed. There is a problem about not taking theft seriously. River: proposes that community property thefts should be reported to police. Despite political issues with the police it is important to take this seriously. Eleanor: Need to make sure people are not abused for involving the police. Teddy: Nothing is marked. We need to make things look like TARAs' property. How much of a deterrent will it be that we will call the police? Reduce the opportunity by improving our security. Community property is not communal. Vote taken: Decision made. This is now TARA policy.</p> <p>Noted that Barry saw no point to the police being involved as they wouldn't do anything.</p> <p>Need to make it known that we are going to report it to the police. It is part of</p>	<p>AP: TARA to inform residents that thefts of communal property will be reported to police now.</p> <p>AP: TARA will discuss security and better key policy at next meeting.</p>

<p>TARA policy now. We need to be transparent.</p> <p>Adam: re list of keyholders. Can this be discussed at the next meeting?</p> <p>Lucy C: We are now having a borrowing book. If something's not been written in the book it will be considered missing and then stolen.</p> <p>If we have a key policy over who has control of the keys we need to discuss this beforehand. Need solutions for a better process. Will discuss at next meeting.</p>	
<p>12. Elections</p> <p>Committee resigns.</p> <p>New committee is voted on:</p> <p>Chair: Lucy Carlin Voted and seconded by: Eleanor and Bob</p> <p>Treasurer: Jenny Barnard Voted and seconded by: Lucy and Barry</p> <p>Co-Secretary: Issy Patience Voted and seconded by: Jenny and Teddy</p> <p>Co-Secretary: Teddy Voted and seconded by: Lucy and River</p> <p><u>General Committee members</u></p> <p>Minnie Maggie Gaz Lucy Alan Barry Alessandro</p>	
<p>13. Discussion around improving how TARA works and involves people</p> <p>Barry: Having working meetings.</p> <p>Lucy C: Every other meeting is dealing with the minutes and official stuff then the next one is the 'doing' one. We are going to try and do that this year. Also proposed to call more General Meetings.</p> <p>Adam: more publicity about the working meeting</p> <p>Teddy: could we fundraise for someone to do some outreach and promotional work?</p> <p>Eleanor: problems around the admin for this.</p> <p>River: problem around volunteer hours and minimum wage.</p> <p>Several people: Pay someone on a self employed basis.</p>	<p>AP: arrange trip to Ordsall for TARA and residents.</p>

<p>Lucy W: can it be more than one person that gets paid? Could we give people vouchers and other things as incentives to get involved? Can we ask CSM to give us them? By doing community work you get vouchers to improve your flat or for window boxes or hanging baskets. So it is for them but has a wider benefit to the community. <i>New Barracks</i> in Ordsall are doing this. They are "well worth visiting."</p>	
<p>14. Courses</p> <p>Louise: Don't forget that Trafford Hall, the National Communities Resource Centre, runs community building courses and training courses on how to be a committee members and lots of useful stuff. They are courses that CSM will fund people to do.</p>	
<p>15. Date and location of next AGM</p> <p>Issue around using Birley Campus and whether we should use a more community-led place. Last year we were investigating Birley and it was free to use, plus no one complained so we thought we'd use it again this year. Residents have expressed that they wouldn't come because it was here so it has excluded people. If it's too far to travel, TARA can arrange taxis or offer lifts. These options will go onto next year's posters. There are three spaces that we can/will potentially use next year:</p> <p>Procters St Wilfreds Hulme Garden Centre Poly tunnel</p>	<p>TARA to ensure full info is on posters next year.</p>
<p>16. AOB</p> <p>Next quarterly TARA meeting with CSM is 24th May, 6pm Turing House.</p> <p>Jenny asked if people thought if it would be useful if at next year's AGM we showed a short film of things that had happened over the course of the year. A resident film-maker Brett has volunteered to do this for next year. He is an experienced film maker and will make sure that he asks for permissions etc.</p> <p>End of meeting</p>	