

# Residents' Engagement and Communication Strategy 2009/10

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## 1. Introduction and background information

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There are over 2000 flats situated in the Barbican Estate, the area surrounding the Barbican Centre. The Estate has two channels already in place which deal with issues on behalf of residents. These are:

- The Barbican Association: a committee which represent residents' views to the freeholder and manager of the Estate, the City of London. There are sub-committees covering specific areas such as planning, communications and security. The Association has 9 elected members and representatives from each block of flats, or 'house'
- The Residents Consultation Committee. Formed in 2004 its formal remit is to represent the residents in their dealings with their landlord. The RCC leads on any matters that affect residents in their relationship with their landlord.

Both committees have members in common, and their aim is to work together in the interests of residents.

The Barbican Centre has primarily communicated with representatives from House Groups, although the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Residents' Association are also invited to meetings and on email lists. Historically we have only heard from other residents when they have a complaint – with the most frequent complaints being around noise levels and a lack of information from the Centre.

In the past communication with the residents has been managed through the Managing Director's office in the same way that all customer comments are managed. In 2001 the current residents' initiative was started which included numerous levels of engagement; each designed to inform residents what was going on around the Centre and to try to involve them in the Centre's work. These included:

- **Podium Newsletter:** A bi-monthly newsletter from the MD's Office that is hand delivered to each resident
- **Quarterly House Group Reps Meetings:** Chaired by a Director or HoD, meetings are open to all House Group Reps and cover a variety of topics
- **Events:** Usually a private view of each exhibition in the main gallery, open to all residents with an invitation appearing in Podium Newsletter

In 2009 this was extended to include:

- **Residents' Webpage:** A page on the main Barbican Centre website designed to include information that the bi-monthly Podium newsletter might miss. Copies of Podium are also available to download from the webpage

- **Drinks Parties:** Residents who were known to the Centre either through arts collaborations or other activities were invited to a drinks party in Nick Kenyon's office to meet with and build relations with those that enjoyed attending events at the Centre

In addition the following, resident-led initiative was utilised:

- **BarbicanTalk:** An internet forum run by Barbican residents for Barbican residents which the Personal Assistant occasionally posts important information on, where appropriate

Residents are also entitled to discounted price membership. Owned by the Membership Executive this does not form part of the Engagement and Communication Strategy but will run alongside it.

Current communication with the residents – either through formal House Group channels or informal events – is patchy and needs to be improved if progress is to be made.

## 2. Vision

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The Barbican Centre vision is:

- To provide all the arts – music, theatre, dance, cinema, the visual arts, education and outreach – under one roof and one artistic vision, at the highest level of excellence to the widest possible range of diverse audiences
- To be recognised internationally for our adventurous programming and for our high-quality facilities which include superb spaces for events, conferences, graduation, banqueting and more
- To create the best possible experiences for our audiences and customers, our artists and performers, our partners and all others who work with us

To complement the Barbican Centre's vision, the vision for this strategy is

- To engage residents more in the work of the Centre through effective communication
- To encourage those that use the Centre to attend more often a wide variety of events
- To ensure that those that do not use the Centre are aware of our operation and business needs

### **3. Values: The purpose of engagement**

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Why does it matter to us that we effectively communicate and engage residents?

Residents who live on the Barbican Estate are our closest neighbours – and therefore our closest stakeholders. They are affected by almost everything we do – both artistically and commercially. Effective communication and engagement on a regular basis will help us when tricky or difficult situations arise, and will help us build relationships with our neighbours.

### **4. Purpose of the Strategy**

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The purpose of the strategy is to set our approach for communicating and engaging with residents and, as well as building on current approaches, to identify new key mechanisms by which this can be achieved. It is designed to ensure excellence in standards of communication and engagement and to determine the ways in which staff – including those at Management level – can contribute to change and improvement.

### **5. Objectives: The priorities of engagement**

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The key objectives of this strategy are to ensure:

- we actively encourage engagement as a drive for improvement
- we are proactive and responsive in meeting the needs of the residents
- residents receive clear, coherent and consistent messages from the Centre in a timely manner
- we develop partnerships with residents – both those that use and enjoy the Centre and those that do not
- we make the best use of people's time in seeking their views, engaging them in decisions and sharing information
- we are able to make use of information, feedback and market research gathered from contact with residents to secure change and improvement

## 6. Levels of engagement

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The Barbican Centre will engage with residents at the appropriate level, in appropriate ways and at appropriate times. The way we communicate with residents will depend on what we are trying to achieve, both for the Centre and the residents and we will operate on a number of different levels:

- **Information** – providing information about the Barbican Centre and its work
- **Consultation** – seeking opinions about some areas of the Barbican Centre's work, services it offers residents and work of the Centre that might directly and/or indirectly affect residents
- **Involvement** – engaging residents in becoming part of the Centre through various activities and events and also through listening to their views and supporting them to bring about improvement

In all our interaction with residents we will be clear about what we want to achieve and ensure that the delivery method is designed to achieve that objective. We will tailor our engagement activities and use appropriate methods, and will be mindful of the context from the residents' perspective.

## 7. Roles and Responsibilities

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### → Board Members

- To actively participate in communicating with the residents where appropriate

### → Management Team

- To buy in to the whole strategy from Management Team
- To give time where necessary to chair meetings, attend events and write pieces for Podium etc

### → Staff

- To be aware of how the important part the residents play in the life of the Centre
- To appreciate the possible impact of the Centre's activities on residents

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14 September 2009



## Introduction

### 2001

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### 2009

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### To complement the Barbican Centre's vision, the vision for this strategy is

- To engage residents more in the work of the Centre through effective communication
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- To ensure that those that do not use the Centre are aware of our operation and business needs



### Why does it matter to effectively communicate and engage you in our work?

- Our closest neighbours
- Affected by almost everything we do
- Build relationships



## Purpose of the Strategy

### What is the purpose of this strategy?

- The purpose of the strategy is to set our approach for communicating and engaging with you
- To build on current approaches and to identify new key mechanisms by which this can be achieved.
- To ensure excellence in standards of communication and engagement
- To determine the ways in which staff can contribute to change and improvement.



## Objectives: The priorities of engagement

- we actively encourage engagement as a drive for improvement
- we are proactive and responsive in meeting your needs
- you receive clear, coherent and consistent messages from the Centre in a timely manner
- we develop strategic partnerships with you – both those that use and enjoy the Centre and those that do not
- we make the best use of your time in seeking your views, engaging you in decisions and sharing information
- we are able to make use, at a strategic level, of information, feedback and market research gathered from contact with you to secure change and improvement



- **Information**
- **Consultation**
- **Involvement**

**Written Communications**

- **Podium:** Improve by including a regular comment feature on something the Barbican Centre receives lots of comments from residents about/ For example in the latest edition of Podium there is a comment on pigeons.
- **Residents Webpage, Email and Notices and BarbicanTalk:** Improve by ensuring all information sent via one method is included on all channels. I.e if a message is emailed to reps then ensure it is put on the webpage and the link to the webpage is posted on Barbican Talk

**Meetings**

- **Quarterly House Group Meetings:** Improve by introducing a meeting open to all residents on an annual basis

**Events**

- **Private Views:** Continue with at least two per year open to all residents.

