

**WATERWAYS MANAGEMENT COMPANY**  
**MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING NO 67**

**7.30 pm, Tuesday 14 March 2017**

**Present:** Adrian Olsen (Chair), Sally Duncan, Ann Hall, Nicholas Orme, Paula Reynolds, Louise Robertson, Brian Shine, Hilary Sorensen, Raquel Stremme, Mary Tovey

**In attendance:** Rebecca Burt, FirstPort Property Services

**Minute taker:** Imogen Olsen

<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies for absence</b>
1.1	Tao Tao Chou, Adrian Mourby, Rachel Dolacinski (FirstPort)
<b>2</b>	<b>Minutes</b> <b>Approval of the minutes from meeting 66, 17 January 2017</b>
2.1	The minutes were approved as an accurate record.
<b>3</b>	<b>Matters arising from the minutes</b>
3.1	(3.2) GreenSquare are shortly to install the fence at the back of Clearwater Place, as agreed.
3.2	(3.3) Nothing further has been heard regarding the personal injury claim from a cyclist who fell on the wildlife corridor bridge.
3.3	(3.4) Another estate's agent sign had appeared on an apartment block. The Chair had written to the agent concerned and the sign had immediately disappeared, but it seems Evergreen also remove the signs when seen. Nevertheless, the Chair will continue to write to agents who persist in erecting signs.
3.4	(5.1) We are still awaiting the new proposals for parking plans in Frenchay Road. These are not likely to be made public until the summer.
3.5	(6.1) The Welcome to the Waterways booklet is now with the printer. The print run is 750 and copies will be delivered around the estate by hand, to include the GreenSquare residents.
<b>4</b>	<b>HMOs in freehold houses and apartments</b>
4.1	Liz Wade has still not replied to the Chair's letter. Meanwhile the Council have informed FirstPort that they are unable to prevent the listing of HMOs simply because these are forbidden by formal estate regulations.

4.2	The case of a property in Complins Close is now with the FirstPort legal team. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the owner may be intending to sell in the summer.
<b>5</b>	<b>Railway line developments</b>
5.1	The Chair was complimented on his various letters to councillors and to the press, and was thanked for all his hard work on behalf of Waterways residents. The situation was still fluid: the West Area Planning Committee (WAPC) on February 21 <sup>st</sup> rejected Network Rail's applications to overturn the council's conditions to install Silent Track and to limit the number of trains that could run on the new line. However, these decisions have been called in for further re-examination at the Planning Review Committee on 15 March. Much lobbying has been done in the hope of persuading councillors not to reverse the earlier votes. This is even more important with confirmation that the line will be used for transporting construction materials for HS2, which will almost certainly mean heavy, long fast freight trains running throughout the night. [Subsequently on 15 March the Planning Review Committee overturned the WAPC's decisions and approved NR's applications.]
5.2	Nothing further has been heard from Network Rail regarding their promised help in ditch clearance and tree replanting behind Cox's Ground and Stone Meadow. [After the meeting the Chair heard that they intend to do this work but that so far the ditch has been too full of water to clear.]
5.3	The fences damaged by tree works have now all been mended. Evergreen will refurbish the lawn and shrub areas near the fences when work currently being done in Cox's Ground is finished.
<b>6</b>	<b>AGM preparation</b>
6.1	FirstPort reported that all preparations were in hand.  The Chair's and Treasurer's reports are due to be circulated by FirstPort on 12 April, so it was agreed that the various sub-committees would send their reports to the Chair by 1 April. These reports should include comments on last year's stated objectives.  It was decided that a Q&A session would be held after the formal conclusion of the AGM.
<b>7</b>	<b>Sub-Committee news round-up</b>
<b>7.1</b>	<b>Finance</b>
7.1.1	The Treasurer reported that the contract for auditing the WMC accounts is being tendered, as agreed by the last AGM. Four firms have been approached for quotes; two have so far responded and the others will do so by 17 March. One in particular seems promising so far and the Treasurer will circulate all details after the deadline for a final decision.

7.1.2	The budget for 2017-8 is being prepared and the Treasurer will meet FirstPort to discuss it at the start of April.
<b>7.2</b>	<b>Apartment Blocks Sub-Committee</b>
7.2.1	(a) The guarantee for the roof of 108-126 Frenchay Road has now been received. (b) Midland Roofing did not supply a quote, but FirstPort have now found six more contractors to approach.
7.2.2	Carpet replacements are ready to go, once redecorations are completed.
7.2.3	It is still too early to tell whether the trial treatment of stained rendering has been successful, although FirstPort are cautiously optimistic.
7.2.4	Redecorations are in hand. The first phase is now complete and the second phase will start soon.  A complaint had been received about the mailing of unnecessary letters to all members regarding apartment block redecoration. FirstPort apologised for what was obviously an error and promised to investigate to ensure it does not happen again.
7.2.5	Only four residents have objected to the installation of CCTV, so this will go ahead now. FirstPort are waiting to hear how long the order time is, and will then tie in the installations with the redecorations.
7.2.6	It was decided that electric car charging points are not a feasible option at the moment. They are expensive and difficult to install and also to run. If we want to accommodate multiple users rather than having a series of private charging posts, security and payment systems are complex, and there would be parking issues. Of course the whole process may become cheaper and simpler in the future, and we will keep the issue under review. Meanwhile people will have to use the charging points available in the city.
7.2.7	The new food caddy system for apartment blocks was reported to be working well.
7.2.8	Airbnb: FirstPort's legal department have written to the owner of an apartment in Elizabeth Jennings Way with no reply, so the case has been referred to their legal team. It was reported that the number of Airbnb properties being advertised seems to have diminished, possibly as a result of all the bad press on the subject. One property is now being advertised for stays of 28 days.
7.2.9	Some new local contractors have been nominated, including a handyman called Jerry.
7.2.10	FirstPort reported that the long-term Asset Management Plan for apartment blocks is now nearing completion.

7.3	<b>Gardening Sub-Committee</b>
7.3.1	<p>Watercourse Sub-Committee:</p> <p>(a) Seven types of wet-loving plants chosen by a resident have been delivered by Evergreen and a team of three will shortly be planting them in the wildlife corridor close to the stream. These will be good for wildlife and help to deter the reeds from spreading, which will keep the watercourse full of water and stop it drying out.</p> <p>(b) The raising of the level of the brick weir next to the Trap Grounds at the end of the wildlife corridor has raised the level of the water back to the balancing pond. This will be good for wildlife, help keep any silt under water and also slow down the flow so that more silt deposited in the balancing pond where it is easier to remove.</p> <p>(c) A director has written to Thames Water as a preliminary to arranging the multi-party meeting which had first been mooted in August 2015 and which we are now in a position to pursue.</p> <p>(d) It was decided to book Aquatic Solutions in for late autumn 2017 to clear the section from the T junction down to the Trap Grounds. Meanwhile Lanes for Drains will clear the balancing pond during the summer.</p>
7.3.2	Two wooden fences have now been installed by the lake as required by the H & S review and are generally considered to look very rustic and appropriate. Two sections of chain-link fencing have been installed discreetly among the trees to deter access to the lake for fishing.
7.3.3	Considerable pruning has been carried out on the lakeside trees but there are no further plans for further lakeside re-planting at the moment although we may revisit this during the autumn. The hole left by a resident who cut back some vegetation has filled out of its own accord.
7.3.4	Metrorod will wait until the summer to level the swale as at the moment it is too full of water. We can then turn the pump off in order to dry up the swale and make the job easier.
7.3.5	It was agreed that Evergreen's work on tree pruning, shrub replacement and bark mulching is all looking very good, though not quite finished yet.
7.3.6	The next bike cull may not be needed until the autumn, as there are not many abandoned bikes at the moment. There may be more by late summer, when the rentals change.
7.3.7	Once again the question of likely antisocial behaviour by the lake had been raised, with the warmer summer nights soon to start. It was agreed that a director would contact our Police Community Support Officer to arrange a meeting to ask for help and advice.
7.3.8	There had been an episode of fly-tipping on WMC land at the very southern end of Stone Meadow. FirstPort agreed to ask Evergreen to remove the furniture that had been dumped.
7.3.9	A director agreed to book up the Oxford Conservation Volunteers for work in the autumn, if possible.

7.3.10	<p>The Canal &amp; River Trust South Eastern Division had held a meeting in the Community Room on 13 March and two Directors, a WRA representative and one of the boaters had shown them the murals</p> <p>The Chair has submitted an entry featuring the canal-side murals for the Living Waterways Award run by the C&amp;RT. Meanwhile there is now enough money for us to proceed with the remaining murals on the Frenchay Road bridge side panels.</p>
<b>7.4</b>	<b>Scrutiny Sub-Committee</b>
7.4.1	No progress has been made on the new draft Management Agreement with FirstPort.
7.4.2	<p>At this point, Rebecca Burt of FirstPort was asked to leave the room so that directors could discuss the tendering of the Managing Agent contract in the next two items</p> <p>A motion to tender the managing agent contract had been put to the last AGM and this motion was defeated. However one member requested that the committee should look at the possibility of tendering the contract. In response to this, some work has been done by two directors over the past year to identify possible alternative managing agents.</p>
7.4.3	<p>It was agreed that the decision whether to tender the contract was properly within the remit of the committee and that a decision should be made whether to proceed with the tendering process.</p> <p>After some discussion it was unanimously agreed not to go to tender for the time being. However, it was agreed that the performance of FirstPort would be kept under review and that this matter could be re-considered if required.</p> <p>Rebecca Burt returned and was informed of this decision.</p>
<b>8</b>	<b>Feedback</b>
8.1	There had been no comments on the Feedback website for almost a year now. This could reflect a general satisfaction among residents expressed to many committee members as to how well The Waterways is run.
<b>9</b>	<b>WRACIC</b>
9.1	It was reported that the WRACIC accounts had been completed.
<b>10</b>	<b>Managing Agent</b>

10.1	<p>It was reported that all work on the lifts was now complete, as was work necessitated by the last Health and Safety review.</p> <p>FirstPort's new dedicated email address for Waterways residents is up and running and working well.</p>
<b>11</b>	<b>Any other business</b>
11.1	No new planning applications have been reported.
11.2	<p>There is a car-parking space in Complins Close which had formerly been used by Zip Cars but is now being used regularly by a non-resident. FirstPort will find out whose space it is and write to them.</p>
<b>12</b>	<b>Date, time and location of future meetings</b>
12.1	<p>Date of AGM: 27 April 2017 in Woodstock Road Baptist Church (booking confirmed). Committee members were asked to arrive by 7.15pm at the latest to help with the setting up. The Chair agreed to ask Richard Dorey whether the church has a PA system which we could use.</p> <p>Dates for Committee meetings post AGM: <b>the Chair is unable to attend on the previously agreed date of 9 May, so it was agreed to change this meeting to Thursday 18 May at 7.30pm.</b> The remaining dates are 11 July, 3 October, 28 November (2017), 16 January, 13 March (2018) – all Tuesdays at 7.30pm.</p> <p>The Chair will ask Claus Spoerel about booking the community room for those dates.</p>