

WATERWAYS MANAGEMENT COMPANY
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING NO 72

7.30 pm, Tuesday 16 January 2018

Present: Adrian Olsen (Chair), Tao Tao Chou, Sally Duncan, Ann Hall, Adrian Mourby, Nicholas Orme, Paula Reynolds, Louise Robertson, Hilary Sorensen, Raquel Stremme, Mary Tovey, Liz Wheeler, Cath Whitehead

In attendance: Rebecca Burt and Esther Kolawole, FirstPort Property Services

Minute taker: Imogen Olsen

1 Apologies for absence

1.1 Apologies were received from Brian Shine.

2 Minutes

Approval of the minutes from meeting 71, 28 November 2017

2.1 The minutes were approved as an accurate record, with one correction: 5.2.2 should read, 'Asset management plans for all the apartment blocks had been finalised and distributed to ABSC members.'

3 Matters arising from the minutes

3.1 The tree obscuring the streetlight in Frenchay Road has been cut back.

3.2 The alder tree causing problems in a Frenchay Road garden has been felled.

3.3 Nothing further has been heard from Cllr Howson regarding the key to the bollards. The Chair will follow this up.

3.4 A Director agreed to ask the Canal & River Trust to supply a design for an outdoor version of the Living Waterways Award plaque, so that FirstPort can then produce and install two plaques alongside the murals themselves at both bridges. A Director will also liaise with WRACIC over putting the original (indoor) plaque up on the wall of the Community Room, possibly with accompanying photographs of the four murals.

4 Railway line developments

4.1 The Chair reported that a meeting had been arranged for 19 January with Wolvercote representatives to set in motion a campaign to raise £6000 for our own noise monitoring, using an expert, Giles Parker of Sound Barrier Solutions.

5 Sub-Committees round-up

5.1 Finance

5.1.1 No query had been received on Feedback regarding the size of the Reserves amounts. The matter is therefore closed.

5.1.2 There had been no feedback regarding the distribution of the accounts.

5.1.3 FirstPort reported that work would start on the 2018-19 Budget in February/March 2018. The ABSC would look into the Asset Management Plans for individual apartment blocks.

5.2 Apartment Blocks Sub-Committee

5.2.1 FirstPort reported on progress with the roofing work. The deadline for tenders had now passed and two contractors had agreed to submit quotes for the most urgent work. Their prices would be provided after a surveyor visit.

5.2.2 After some discussion about the staining of render on several apartment blocks, it was generally agreed that cleaning was preferable to painting. Jet-washing can lead to patchiness, so it was decided to carry on with the anti-mould cleaning solutions subject to a further review by the ABSC in the spring.

5.2.3 Carpet replacement for 108-126 Frenchay Road is on schedule, at the second consultation stage following the receipt of quotes.

5.2.4 Progress had been made regarding the apartment in EJW which was being used as a short-term let. The owner informed FirstPort that she had terminated the lease with effect from 5 January 2018. However, new guests had been spotted by a resident after that date. It was agreed to wait a while before taking further action to see if this use continued. FirstPort agreed to write to the owner asking for written confirmation that the tenancy had been terminated and explaining that all keys should be returned to her by the former tenant.

The owner of the apartment in Clearwater Place advertised as a short –term let had confirmed that that tenancy will end on 26 February 2018 and that a new, long-term tenant is being sought.

5.2.5 There had been no further contact with the owner of 112 EJW where the chemical incident took place in November. The trial of the man arrested had been set for 3 April 2018.

5.2.6 There was some discussion about WMC consent to and charge for sub-letting. Until now, it has only been necessary on every new tenancy for owners to give notice to E&M with a payment. With the recent increase in sub-letting, it was decided to tighten up the whole process so that two separate notices will have to be given by owners, one to E&M and one to WMC (FirstPort), with a payment being due to both. This will ensure that in future we have contact details for all residents in case of emergency. It was agreed that this did not need to be put to the AGM for a vote as such notice is actually specified in the lease (FirstPort would look up the exact paragraph), but that the new procedure

would be explained in the Annual Report.

5.3 Gardening Sub-Committee

- 5.3.1 A director reported that no information had been received from Thames Water and Berkeley Homes on progress after their commitment to specific work at follow-up meeting on 4 October 2017. She has chased both. This was ascribed to the general slow-down over the Christmas period.
- 5.3.2 The vegetation and weeds along the swale has been cut back, and Evergreen is scheduled to spray any re-growing weeds in the spring. The Chair pointed out that some digging out of a few inches was required in some sections, particularly behind the play area, to level out the slope of the swale. It was agreed to ask Evergreen to quote for regular maintenance of the swale in future. If they are unable to take this work on, we would have to find someone else.
- 5.3.3 The damaged grass in Cox's Ground had grown back to some extent, and the remaining areas would be attended to in the spring. The fence had been repaired but was still missing one barge board. FirstPort would ask Evergreen to replace this.
- 5.3.4 A director raised the question of the water-filled pit on the car park corner opposite the nursery entrance, which used to be a flowerbed but is now an eyesore as it is constantly over-run by vehicles. It was unclear whether this was the responsibility of GreenSquare or WMC (subsequently established it is a WMC responsibility). It was suggested that the area could be filled with concrete with an embedded pebble surface.
- 5.3.5 After the recent snow and ice, there was some discussion about the gritting problem. It was agreed that this is by default our personal responsibility, as the council clearly does not have the resources to clear all minor roads, and that residents need to be made aware that they can use the salt in the grit bins to grit public roads only, not pavements, private roads or areas. A director agreed to talk to WRACIC about how best to communicate this to residents as it is an issue that affects GreenSquare tenants as well. Some residents were already aware of the bins and had been very helpful in gritting the roads and pavements during the recent icy spell. People should be encouraged to purchase and keep their own salt supply to treat small local areas where grit from bins cannot be used.
- 5.3.6 There had been no progress on the replacement of paving slabs and car-park surfaces as we were still waiting for specifications. A director agreed to arrange a meeting to establish priority areas.
- 5.3.7 Only one negative comment had been received following recent tree removal work. This was regarding a cherry tree in Clearwater Place. In fact the list of trees requiring attention is still not complete, as only the most urgent have been attended to. A director will arrange a meeting to look at any outstanding work and any further work needed.
- 5.3.8 FirstPort agreed to ask Sylva Trees to report on the poplar on the green, which is a listed tree. Consent will need to be obtained before it can be cut down.
- 5.3.9 Security around the lakeside area was discussed. There had been further complaints of

antisocial behaviour and drug-taking, and it was agreed that something would have to be done. CCTV was a possibility, with electricity taken from the pump and the camera on a high pole or on a wall to deter vandalism. FirstPort explained that some CCTV cameras do not require a light as they have night vision, and that even a dummy camera would act as a deterrent. A director argued that the whole area should be fenced off, and another director pointed out that the new houses in Fielders Row which overlook the problem area might deter miscreants once the owners have moved in. It was agreed to discuss the problem at the paving-slab meeting (5.3.6), with a view to thinning the hazels and willows in order to make the area more visible from the road above, and installing a dummy CCTV plus a warning sign as a trial.

- 5.3.10 There had been a request for a gate to be installed in the alleyway between 12 and 14 Lark Hill for security reasons. This alleyway and the two side paths at the bottom are WMC land. FirstPort had initiated a full consultation with all owners of the houses affected (nos 4 to 14): so far there had been only two responses, both strongly opposed to a gate; the deadline for replies was 19 January. It was agreed to defer a decision until after that. If a gate is refused we would need to keep a watching brief on the issue.

The requester had also claimed a lot of anti-social behaviour on the Lark Hill green, with drug taking, shouting, etc. The Chair has spoken to a number of people who live overlooking the green, including some members of the committee; one said there had been a couple of late-night occasions before Christmas when youths gathered for a while and these had not re-occurred but no-one else was aware of any problems at all. It was agreed to take no action for the present but to keep a watch on this area.

- 5.3.11 There had been a complaint from a Bainton Road resident about two “sycamore maples” with verticillium wilt at the back of Clearwater Place. It was agreed to look at these during the meeting about paving slabs and tree work (5.3.6, 5.3.7).
- 5.3.12 Nothing had yet been done about the request to mark car-parking spaces which had been made at the Q&A session in October. It was agreed to discuss this at the same meeting as above (5.3.6, 5.3.7).

5.4 Scrutiny Sub-Committee

- 5.4.1 The ABSC had completed the update of their monitoring reports.
- 5.4.2 A Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting would be arranged when the GSC monitoring report was completed.

6 Feedback

- 6.1 Nothing had appeared on the Feedback website.

7 WRACIC

- 7.1 The hog roast and recent newsletter had both been very successful. A director reported that it had been hard work and that more volunteers would be welcome next time. Meanwhile the next litter pick would be held on Saturday 3 March, and the Easter Egg Hunt on 1 April.

8 Managing agent

8.1 Nothing further to report.

9 Any other business

9.1 The renting out of parking bays by apartment/house occupiers was discussed. It was agreed that this was not a problem if such residents did not have a car of their own.

10 Dates of next meetings

10.1 Next WMC committee meeting: 13 March 2018, Tuesday at 7.30pm in the community room.

10.2 The date of the AGM was fixed for 26 April 2018. The secretary agreed to book the Methodist Church as before. [ADDENDUM: owing to the unavailability of the venue, after the Meeting the AGM date was changed to 25 April 2018]

10.3 Dates were agreed for the next year's committee meetings as follows: 15 May, 17 July, 25 September, 20 November (all 2018), 15 January 2019, 19 March 2019 (all Tuesdays at 7.30pm).