

WATERWAYS MANAGEMENT COMPANY
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING NO 73

7.30 pm, Tuesday 13 March 2018

Present: Adrian Olsen (Chair), Ann Hall, Adrian Mourby, Nicholas Orme, Paula Reynolds, Louise Robertson, Brian Shine, Raquel Stremme, Mary Tovey, Liz Wheeler

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

Minute taker: Imogen Olsen

1 Apologies for absence

1.1 Tao Tao Chou, Sally Duncan, Hilary Sorensen

2 Minutes

Approval of the minutes of meeting 72, 16 January 2018

2.1 The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

3 Matters arising from the minutes

3.1 (5.3.12) Evergreen have now been instructed to mark with a 'V' the two visitor parking spaces in Cox's Ground.

4 AGM Wednesday 25 April 2018

4.1 The Annual Report is in the process of being compiled.

4.2 Notifications of the AGM will be sent to members on 30 March, with remaining paperwork and draft agenda on 9 April. There are no vacancies for directors but nevertheless members need to be invited to stand.

4.3 The format of the AGM will be the same as last time, including a Q&A session. Members will be requested to submit questions in advance if possible.

5 Railway line developments

5.1 Crowd funding is being sought for the noise monitoring proposal, but so far not enough has been raised, even including £1000 still in the kitty and £1000 promised by two Councillors. Wolvercote councillors are likely to contribute also. We might have to cut back on the original proposal.

5.2 Layla Moran MP has called a meeting to discuss railway noise, to be held on 13 April 5pm at the Jericho Community Centre, 33a Canal Street. The Chair will attend. If anyone else wishes to attend, they must let her know.

5.3 Cllr Louise Upton had responded regarding the air pollution from diesel freight trains, and the news was slightly more encouraging, in that the city council is testing new

monitoring equipment which may be suitable for community use, although this means we may have to carry out monitoring ourselves.

6 Sub-Committee news round-up

6.1 Finance

6.1.2 FirstPort reported that next year's budget was ready in draft, waiting only for the apartment block roof prices.

6.2 Apartment Blocks Sub-Committee

6.2.1 Progress has been made with roofing contractors using the surveyor and three tenders are now in. The preferred company has quoted a total of £148,000 plus VAT for all blocks. The most expensive block is 115-141 Frenchay Road at £57,000, because of its extensive flat roof areas, and this is more than their reserves. FirstPort plan to use some of next year's reserves so the residents will repay in instalments, rather than ask for a one-off additional amount. The work is so expensive because scaffolding will be needed rather than cherry-pickers and the whole building will have to be covered, but it will at least carry a 20-year guarantee. FirstPort will reissue the Section 20 first notices again in order to cover all eventualities. A director asked if FirstPort had seen any reviews of the preferred contractor. FirstPort replied that their surveyor had recommended the company and would be signing off all the work before payment was authorised.

6.2.2 Asset Management plans were discussed. These will be integrated with the budget review and reserve funds, on a block by block basis.

6.2.3 Carpet replacement for 108-126 Frenchay Road is now moving ahead after queries from an owner had been sorted out. After some discussion, it was concluded that one corridor which lies behind a locked front door with a doorbell and flat number is not part of the communal areas.

6.2.4 All seemed to be quiet on the Airbnb front, but directors were asked to continue keeping their eyes and ears open.

6.2.5 Nothing further had been heard from Councillor Howson about the proposed Complins Close cupboard for the Frenchay Road bollard locks. It was agreed that the matter should now be pursued unless we hear of any developments.

6.3 Gardening Sub-Committee

6.3.1 In the absence of a Director, the Chair provided an update on the silt works. A full response was still awaited from Berkeley Homes to a request for technical assistance in devising a scheme of weirs to trap more silt in the canal side silt trap east of the Frenchay Road culvert. Thames Water have now cleared three of the five silt traps in the catchment area of the watercourse and are working on the remaining two. There had been a productive meeting that day with Lanes for Drains who had agreed to provide a quote for clearing the whole silt trap up to the Frenchay Road culvert. They also promised to come up with some ideas on a weir scheme in the silt trap.

6.3.2 It was accepted that Evergreen are not really able to carry out work to level the swale. However, Dick Mayon-White has done an excellent job in digging out the mud and the

water now seems to be flowing more freely. Some fine tuning is still needed and it is hoped that residents will be able to carry this out.

- 6.3.3 FirstPort reported that they had received no complaints about the tree works recently carried out by the lake and elsewhere. One resident had complained to Councillor Wade, and the Chair had replied to explain that the trees had been cut down in an attempt to reduce antisocial behaviour by the lake, to open up the views of the lake and eliminate the expensive annual maintenance of the trees there. The stumps will be left for the time being to see if they die. Eventually more manageable shrubs will be planted in their place where possible and parts will be grassed.

Evergreen are to install a dummy CCTV camera and RB has also arranged two dog-fouling notices for the lake area. A director reported spotting a member of the public failing to pick up after her dog and it was agreed that it would be easier to remonstrate with such people without the trees blocking the view. It was noted that dog-fouling had worsened over the past six weeks.

- 6.3.4 The graffiti on the retaining wall beneath the Fielders Row houses had been removed by the developer, an indication that they accepted ownership of that wall. The question of ownership of the wall underneath the main road was raised, and whether it could be assumed to be the responsibility of the County Council.

- 6.3.5 It had been decided that damaged paving slabs would be replaced before the worn car-park surfaces are attended to, because the slabs are more of a health and safety risk and are a constant drain on resources. FirstPort has used the surveyor to make specifications and recommendations, and he has said that the foundations for the slabs are more important than the slabs themselves. He advised that we should replace the foundations and keep as many of the old slabs as possible, as there is basically nothing wrong with them. If the slabs are laid properly, they should be able to withstand cherry-pickers. This would save a lot of money. The car parking areas will be considered when this work is done.

- 6.3.6 FirstPort had carried out the consultation regarding a proposed gate between 12 and 14 Lark Hill, which had resulted in only one person opposing the idea. However, they are very strongly against it and there are conflicting reports on whether the other houses want it or consider it necessary. It was decided not to proceed with the gate for the time being (a design for which has not yet been supplied by the requester) but to monitor the situation for six months and to ask residents to report any incidences of antisocial or criminal behaviour. FirstPort would write to all the houses affected.

- 6.3.7 FirstPort have submitted an application to fell the poplar on the green, which is diseased and dangerous. The Council say they will take 6-8 weeks to respond. The tree will have to come down as soon as permission is received, but a stump of two metres minimum will be left so that a sculpture can be created.

- 6.3.8 The CRT Living Waterways Awards plaque and mural photos will be mounted in the Community Room and next to the murals. The sign makers are waiting for a PDF which a director is to supply.

- 6.3.9 The bench by the canal at the rear of the Rackham Place apartment block has twice been moved to beneath the Elizabeth Jennings Way bridge. This was reported to

GreenSquare, who swiftly acted to return the bench to its proper place and they have now secured both benches there more firmly. A director reported that a resident had told him that the culprits were abusive children from outside the Waterways, and that the police had been called. The boating community have been very helpful over this problem.

- 6.3.10 There was some discussion of the recent snowfall and consequent need for gritting. Directors had gritted the two bridges with the help of Dick Mayon-White, and the grit bins had been swiftly replenished by the Council. It was agreed that both the AGM report and the next WRA newsletter should include a reminder that residents are responsible for gritting when the snow falls, to be written by a director.

6.4 Scrutiny Sub-Committee

- 6.4.1 A meeting had been arranged for the evening of Thursday 15 March. Monitoring reports from ABSC and GSC had been updated in readiness.

7 Feedback

- 7.1 Nothing had been received.

8 WRACIC

- 8.1 The litter pick on 10 March had been a success as usual, with twelve volunteers. A director pointed out that the garden for 19-35 EJW has become a dumping ground for rubbish and that the GreenSquare gardeners are not as thorough as Evergreen.
- 8.2 WRACIC had scheduled a meeting for Monday 19 March. A resident is doing an excellent job looking after the Community Room and its bookings. Another resident is Treasurer, a job which includes looking after the receipts for the railway noise monitoring crowdfunding appeal.

9 Managing Agent

- 9.1 Nothing additional to report.

10 Any other business

- 10.1 A director asked whether the bollard at the end of the Bainton Road cut-through, which was currently pulled out of its place, had ever been in this condition before. It was pointed out that this bollard is frequently to be found lying on the ground and that eventually the Council replace it, as it is their responsibility.

11 Date, time and location of future meetings

- 11.1 AGM on **Wednesday 25 April** at 7.30 pm in the Woodstock Road Baptist Church.
WMC committee meetings – 15 May, 17 July, 25 September, 20 November (2018), 15 January, 19 March (2019) – all Tuesdays at 7.30 pm in the Community Room.