

**Waterways Management Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
19<sup>th</sup> February 2007, 8pm, Anchor Pub**

**Attendees**

David Jones  
Nick Sampson (Treasurer)  
Diane Crocombe  
Richard Dorey  
Gunnar Niels  
Roger Mumby-Croft (Chairman)  
John Lapin  
Saima Butt (Secretary)  
Len Foreman  
Stephen Wilson  
Louise Robertson  
Manuela Vogel (Minute Taker)

**1. Apologies**

Adrian Steeples Wendy Scott Barbara Bailes

**1. Matters Arising**

**1. Opening Statement**

2.1.1 The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting and stated the following, (kindly note that this address has been written so that it is presented, in these minutes, as delivered, since a few Directors were not present at the time of delivery):

1. "There is an issue that I would like to address: one director was appointed by the Committee at the last meeting to be the sole point of contact for the WMC with the Managing Agents Peverel OM. Unfortunately this fact was missed from the minutes of the last meeting and might have caused some unnecessary confusion, for this I would like to apologise. This confusion might have been over the difference between our responsibilities as Directors and an individual's right to voice concern over issues that affect their quality of life. The designated director's role to cover the WMC contact with Peverel does not in anyway prevent individuals from raising issues with Peverel OM, but does cover the role of Directors' collective responsibility as it is important that we act as one in our relationship with Peverel. This misunderstanding has led to a flurry of emails, many of which could have been couched in a more friendly way. Therefore could I ask us all to communicate with each other in a friendly and constructive manner as we are all doing our best to improve the quality of life for everyone on Waterways."

**2. Minute Taker**

2.2.1 Manuela Vogel was officially introduced as the Minute Taker on a trial basis.

**3. Last AGM**

2.3.1 Blake Laphorn Linnell had been contacted and confirmation received that in fact no AGM had ever taken place. It was proposed a provisional date be set for the first AGM to be held mid to late September. This would allow approx. 6 months for the Accounts (as of 31/03/2007) to be issued and agreed. Nominations for Directors and Officers can be received, as these will be appointed at this next AGM.

**4. Badger Sett**

2.4.1 It was confirmed that Berkeley Homes own the land occupied by the badger sett and adjacent car park behind Woodstock Lodge. It was stated that BH had planning permission for a block of apartments in this area. Approval for more construction at this site would be determined by groups such as WWF etc who would have to confirm that the badgers had moved on and this could become a lengthy process.

## **5. Communication Strategy**

2.5.1. The WMC Communication Strategy, 19 February 2007 was discussed. The addition to be included in 1.1 and again in 2.1 was fiduciary duty. These sections will now read: "The Directors work and communicate in an ethically, financially and environmentally responsible manner at all times."

**Action: Secretary to amend Comms Strategy**

2.5.2 The Chair stated that the Communication Strategy was a working document to be reviewed on a regular basis and was adopted in principle by the meeting.

2.5.3 It was agreed that Peverel should provide a regular report on a monthly basis. This report would also provide a means to measure Peverel's effectiveness. It was also agreed that daily queries should be raised with and dealt directly by Peverel as Managing Agent. It was up to the WRA, Peverel and appropriate sub-committees to buffer issues, and decide which policy issues to bring to WMC for decision-making. It was re-iterated that paths of formal and informal communication channels need to be defined. The Secretary described the preparatory work that she had developed with one of the other directors, i.e. sub-committee roles and the need for cross representation between WRA/WMC and the most effective means and modes of communication.

## **6. Waterways World Piece**

2.6.1 It was felt important that Waterways World should include a contribution from WMC. The contribution should cover contact details for Peverel, and the roles and responsibilities of WMC so that residents clearly understood that POM was their first point of contact. It was agreed that WMC should deal with policy issues only, and Peverel should contact WMC only if there was no other possible resolution. Peverel must be given the opportunity to prove they are up to the task, and complaints are to be brought to WMC in instances of unsatisfactory resolution, in which case the Secretary should be the first point of contact. Any such grievances would be brought to WMC meetings with an appropriate audit trail in order for a decision to be made. The Chair offered to prepare a draft contribution for the Waterways World based from inputs from the Directors.

**Action: Chair to write a piece for Waterways World and distribute to Directors for their input before publication**

## **2. Approval of Minutes**

3.1 The minutes were approved with an amendment over the omission that the Secretary is to be the sole point of contact with Peverel OM (see 2.1 Opening Statement).

## **3. Report from Managing Agents**

**The Managing Agent from Peverel OM joined the meeting.**

### **1. Proposed Use of Community Room**

1. The Managing Agent advised that the proposal for the Community Room would need to go to Berkeley Homes for adoption. He advised that the proposal included the appointment of a caretaker. This caretaker would reside in part of the Community Room, carry out all cleaning of communal areas, and be the initial point of contact for the Estate and Peverel. This could potentially reduce the cleaning budget by about 20%. The existing cleaning contract with APC could be terminated with 30 days notice.

2. It would be Peverel's responsibility to manage the Caretaker unless WMC were to terminate their arrangements with Peverel, in which case, if the caretaker had held the post for 2 years or more then the employment responsibilities would have to be transferred to WMC.

3. The Directors will need to see the proposed lease so a decision can be made whether to proceed with adoption of this room. The Managing Agent advised that it would be very much in BH interest to sign the lease and work with WMC.

**Action: Matter to be discussed further at next meeting. The Managing Agent to get copy of lease from BH. Another director to circulate statement re. use of room to WMC**

## **2. Proposal for definition of what day-to-day jobs and set agreed budgets**

1. The Managing Agent advised that day-to-day tasks were set out in the management agreement. There were no set targets, but major works (>£1500) were negotiated with WMC and incur a 10% management fee. It was up to WMC to decide the limits (suggested £500 per job). All their contractors were vetted, and jobs were rarely put out to tender.

2. It was agreed that any work costing more than £500 would need approval from WMC.

3. A question was raised about the recent roof damage, and stated this should be an insurance claim. Further discussion ensued, and it was considered whether a sub-committee should be put in place to investigate further care of apartments and that budgets for minor repairs should be put in place and agreed at the next meeting.

**Actions: Long term care of apartments to be reviewed at next meeting. The Managing Agent to check insurance claim for gale damage to roof**

## **3. State of Lifts**

1. The Managing Agent advised the developer had admitted liability for disrepair. Whilst there was value for money from Kone Lift maintenance, he was not entirely happy with their service. It was a matter of keeping a diary of further problems over the next 2 months. One director wanted to make sure that the admittance of liability was in writing. The Managing Agent confirmed this was the case.

2. Emergency call systems need to be transferred, and The Managing Agent is looking at quotes from alternative contractors. The Chair concluded that this was a major issue and needed to be monitored.

## **4. Situation regarding domestic refuse storage/collection**

4.4.1 It was agreed that the situation needed monitoring. It was suspected that the dustmen caused most problems concerning broken bin shed doors. The Managing Agent suggested that the appointment of a Caretaker might help. It was said that WMC should work more closely with OCHA to resolve the issues of vandalism & one of the directors would like to see better communication with OCHA residents regarding the storage of their refuse. The Chair suggested a further discussion over how to deal with bins etc.

## **5. Standard Report from POM for future meetings**

1. The Managing Agent advised that it is not standard practice for Peverel to produce monthly reports as requested by WMC as the existing fees would not warrant this. He was happy to communicate on practical issues, and provide copies of inspection reports. He also said that Financial Reporting was not a problem.

2. The Secretary said that it would be useful to have a qualitative as well as quantitative review from Peverel

3. The Chair asked The Managing Agent to set out a 'State of Nation' report for WMC as a one off.

4. It was agreed the Treasurer should liaise with The Managing Agent re Financial Reporting.

**Actions: The Managing Agent to provide one off 'State of Nation' report**

## **6. Members' experiences re lift problems.**

1. One of the directors shared the experiences of her and her neighbours living in the apartments with the lifts out of order and the time taken to repair them.

2. The director advised that there was now a number available for residents to ring in case of problems and these were generally dealt with appropriately.

## **4. Health and Safety Issues**

5.1 The Chair advised that a Fire and Safety officer would be on the development on Saturday (24 Feb 07) to give advise on potential fire hazards etc. Nick asked if this would include Health and Safety in terms of parking. It was stated that fire engines came regularly to ensure that they could get through. One of the directors volunteered to walk around with the F&S officer, and confirmed

availability between 10.30 – 12.00 and 2.00 – 4.00. Any actions to be taken would be advised after the inspection.

**Actions: Chair to confirm exact time of visit by F&S officer**

### **Financial Issues**

1. Chair advised that the bank balance was in the black, at approx. £217,000 and the contingency fund as it should be. The Managing Agent had authority to make regular payments, but one-off payment requests needed to go to the Treasurer.

2. It was pointed out that Directors must know how funds were calculated, ring-fenced and properly invested. Treasurer suggested that there would be a Company Trust Fund. Another director said funds should be transferred for activities.

3. Treasurer agreed to contact Peverel to ensure financial reporting is in place. It was agreed that the Treasurer and one other director should carry out an audit, or employ external auditors to ensure due diligence. WMC will need to discuss whether to employ their own accountants for audit purposes & the Chair suggested that there might be a future requirement to establish a Finance Sub-Committee.

**Actions: Treasurer to contact POM & need to establish a financial sub-committee**

### **6. Report from Sub-Committee**

7.1 There were no reports presented.

### **8 Issues raised by Waterways Resident's Association**

1. A WRA meeting was scheduled this week. The location and use of the Notice Board, funding (raised by WMC via POM for WRA) and an option of opting out of the WRA and cross representation of WRA & WMC were discussed.

2. It was generally felt that WMC should have access to the Notice Board.

3. Director to report back from the meeting, and put forward a proposal for funding of website/events etc. The general view was that the WRA's role should be covering areas of social events etc. on the development, and WMC would deal with policy issues. The Secretary reiterated the need for formal communication between the WRA and WMC chairs.

**Actions: Director to report back on location, use and funding of notice board Chair to report back from his meeting with Chair of WRA**

### **2. Issues raised by OCHA (Oxford Citizens Housing Association)**

**Michelle O'Donohue (OCHA) and Lance Adam (Youth Worker) joined the meeting.**

#### **1. SHOUT Project**

1. The guests introduced themselves and gave a brief overview of their roles and responsibilities. The Youth Worker gave an update on his activities to date and he was in the process of building more volunteers to expand on activities, and include 5-12 year olds. Currently approx 8 children, mainly from the OCHA community use his facilities regularly. Everybody at the meeting was very supportive of the SHOUT project, and saw it very much as a means to integrate the whole Waterways community.

#### **2. Access to Keble College Grounds**

1. The Youth Worker stated that the access gate from Elizabeth Jennings Way into Keble College Sports Ground was so important to the success of the project.

2. The need for a gate was questioned, and a lengthy discussion ensued. There was general consensus that the access from EJW might not be necessary and the focus should be to use the main gate on Woodstock Road. OCHA is to approach Unipart, and it was agreed that OCHA should also explore possible access from St. Edwards/ Esporta. The Secretary asked to be copied in on any correspondence.

3. The Youth Worker was not keen to upset existing relations with the Bursar at Keble College.

4. The Chair suggested that the Bursar from Keble College should be invited to the next meeting.

### **3. Ransom strip**

1. OCHA is to approach Unipart, and it was agreed that OCHA should also explore possible access from St. Edwards/ Esporta, as suggested. The Secretary asked to be copied in on any correspondence.

**Actions: Topic to be reviewed at the next meeting**

### **2. Issues raised by Canalside Environment Group**

1. The Secretary suggested that the Chair of CEG be invited to our next meeting. This was agreed.

**Actions: Secretary to book**

### **11 Issues raised by Other Interested Groups**

None discussed

### **12. Development issues**

None discussed

### **13. Any other business**

#### **1. Community Room – North Oxford Association (NOA) meeting 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 07.**

13.1.1 Meeting was advised that WRA was well represented and that two directors were there on behalf of WMC. The local councillor's North Oxford co-ordinator was going to write to Berkeley Homes to invite them to a further meeting with WRA & WMC to discuss the lease of this potential community room. The co-coordinator has yet to contact us re further developments. It was agreed to wait until the next meeting before taking any further action.

#### **2. Redecoration of Internal Apartment Block – 1-25 Stone Meadow**

1. A brief outline of the situation was provided. In order for the redecoration to go ahead, it apparently required WMC approval. This was granted with the proviso that all residents were in agreement with the colour choice. Another director pointed out that their block had been repainted with a colour of their own choice without permission from anyone! The Treasurer stated that the Managing Agent should understand this was not a WMC issue, and that in future it might be useful to have a sub-committee to have decision-making powers for such matters. It was agreed that the Chair should write to the Managing Agent to clarify WMC's position.

**Actions: Chair to contact POM**

#### **3. Ransom Strip**

13.3.1 As discussed earlier, OCHA was going to write to Unipart re more clarification of the Ransom Strip.

Further AOB:

- One director wants the adoption of highways by the Council on the Agenda for the next meeting.
- One director is to submit any items from the WRA for the next meeting to the Chair

#### **2. Date of next meeting**

It was agreed to arrange a date for the next meeting via e-mail

The meeting closed at 10.45 p.m.

**Actions: Secretary to co-ordinate**