

**Waterways Management Committee
Meeting Minutes
21st May 2007, 8pm, Anchor Pub**

Attendees

David Jones	Nick Sampson (Treasurer)
Diane Crocombe	Adrian Steeples (made apologies and left half way through)
Roger Mumby-Croft (Chairman)	Wendy Scott
Saima Butt (Secretary)	Louise Robertson
Len Foreman	Steve Wilson
Manuela Vogel (Minute Taker)	

1 Apologies

Gunnar Niels, John Lapin, Richard Dorey (absent), Barbara Bailes (resigned 21st May)

1. Matters Arising

2.1 Opening Statement

The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting and Mrs Barbara Bailes' resignation over a proposed draft letter was discussed.

2.2 Minute Taker

It was agreed to appoint Manuela Vogel as the minute taker for the next four meetings of WMC with the exception of any emergency meetings in which case Directors would make their own arrangements.

1. Waterways World Piece

The Chair invited views on the WMC contribution in the Waterways World piece. All agreed there was good consensus in the community about the piece and it worked well.

Names for Publication

The Directors present discussed whether their full contact details should be made available. It was felt there was no obligation as such to do this, as the Directors should not be viewed as an extension to the customer service provided by Peverel OM. The communications strategy clearly outlines the mode of communication between the estate and Peverel. It was agreed that names (only) and roles should be published in future issues of Waterways World and the developing Waterways website. This should be done prior to the AGM in September.

Action: Chair to liaise with Director to get names published in the next Waterways World Piece.

2.5 Directors Insurance

One of the Directors was asked what was outstanding with regard to the Directors Insurance. They advised that the policy had been renewed, and as such the matter had been dealt with.

Action: Directors to follow up to see if any forms needed completion.

3 Approval of Minutes

With these above items discussed, the minutes were approved.

4 Report from Managing Agents

The Chair advised that WMC still did not have a clear view of all issues relating to Waterways, as Peverel had not provided a one off 'State of the nation' report. There was debate as to whether Peverel had in fact promised to provide such a report. Consensus was that an unambiguous statement was needed, and WMC should insist on it in order to have clear understanding of duties and liabilities. One Director advised that it was up to WMC to decide on contents of contracts, ascertain contract details (i.e. renewal of tenders to be submitted for approval). Another Director disagreed and further debate ensued.

Action: Chair to write to Peverel to ask for report (circulate letter prior to sending it out).

4.1/4.2 Proposed usage of Community Room/Commercial Building

WMC have yet to see the lease from BH, Peverel had been asked to source this. An officer from the City Council joined the meeting. The Chair met with the City Council and Berkeley Homes to discuss usage and imposed restrictions. Consensus was that WMC were not really keen to take on

responsibility for the room with the current restrictions, but did not want to give it up completely without understanding the financial implications. One of the Directors questioned if restrictions could be challenged. It was thought that Berkeley Homes would resist any changes because of noise etc. The City Council officer advised that WMC were under no obligation to take it on. It was agreed that WMC should take its time over deciding whether to take lease on or not. This was also the view of OCC. It was discussed whether the room could be offered to OCHA as an office for their SHOUT project (at approx £500 per year) and / or house the potential on-site caretaker.

Action: City Council to discuss possible interest from OCHA longer term.

Action: Chair to write two letters to Peverel and Berkeley Homes, asking for restrictions to be lifted.

Action: Matter to be referred to AGM.

1. State of Lifts on Site and Maintenance Issues relating to these

The lift situations were inherited, and the position of WMC was therefore unclear. One Director wants to see written assurances as outlined by Peverel at our last meeting. The Chair reiterated that the 'State of the nation' report should cover this. Another Director advised this needed to be backed up with financial statements to avoid a liability, which could become a large figure, possibly over £100k

Action: Chair to write to Peverel and get a clear statement from them, including the sighting of any documentation that exists.

2. Situation regarding domestic refuse storage/collection

Regarding wheelie bins being left out after collection, a Director reported the views expressed by Peverel at her last update meeting with them: Allow approx 6-12 months for a possible change of people/culture which may resolve this issue, since there is a high turnover of rental property tenants. A second Director advised that the bin stores continued to be a problem with littering/over filling, despite her phoning the council on a regular basis. Discussion ensued regarding possible solutions (e.g. signs at the doors of the bin stores etc.). It was agreed that communications from Peverel to OCHA needed to be better in order to improve the situation. Locks for all bins stores are to be arranged – see 5.1.

Action: Chair to write to Peverel once more, and bundle this with litter collection letter to OCC.

4.5 Parking

A Director outlined a particular resident's complaint re parking, as forwarded by POM. Chair advised that any parking violations cannot be enforced until the council adopted the roads. Hiring a private security patrol could only enforce rules. This had previously been looked at, and was too costly. It was suggested that the 'Good Neighbours Guide' could be used to reiterate rules, and remind repeated offenders.

Action: Chair to write to the resident and acknowledge concerns.

4.6 Planting Schedule and Budget for Autumn/Winter 2007/2008

A Director advised she had scheduled a meeting with the gardeners sometime in July. It was agreed that the position with regards to the schedule and budget needed to be clarified as part of the 'State of the nation' report from Peverel.

Action: Chair to take up as part of 'State of the nation' request, and also request a refund from BH for the dead planting.

4.7 Community Information Board

The City Council are going to provide a free notice board for the development. Clarification is needed regarding responsibility for maintenance, where it would actually be sighted and whether there is written agreement from the residents in its immediate vicinity that this position is acceptable.

Action: A Director to write to WRA to formally get acceptance from residents for installation and position of noticeboard.

4.8 Bark chip Budget

Refer 4.6

2. Health and Safety Issues

1. Fire Safety Office Debrief

Chair had toured the estate with a Fire Safety Officer. The Officer advised that the bin stores were fully compliant with building regulations, but all of them should be kept locked. It was agreed to ask

Peverel to install locks on bin stores that had no locks. Costs for these would need to be covered by the respective blocks.

Action: Director to instruct Peverel.

2. Financial Issues

1. Summary To Date

A Director advised that service charges were currently being collected. Two other directors (by proxy) and other Members had expressed their concern regarding the malfunction of the Peverel OM telephone payment system.

2. Service Charges

The Director apologised for the lack of consultation with the other Directors regarding the issuing of service charges, as per his email on this matter. A discussion ensued as to the exact degree of power for decision-making of elected officers. A second Director, accepting the first's apology, proposed that Directors should be able to make decisions at their discretion between meetings in their capacity as elected officers, and bring any unresolved matters that required wider consultation to the meeting; if the Directors' action resulted in gross negligence, or continued to make inappropriate decisions then the officer would need to stand for a vote of confidence. This second Director formally put forward a motion to empower elected officers to this effect, which was seconded. A fourth Director felt that emergency committee meetings should be called as a matter of course in these situations. However, the second Director further suggested that on small / everyday matters the elected officers should have autonomy to make any necessary decisions on the behalf of the Committee. A debate ensued around the types of decisions being made & time spent on certain agenda items during the WMC meetings.

The vote was taken to agree that small day-to-day issues be dealt with by the elected officers without the need for consultation through meetings & email of the whole Committee.

Vote: Yes, in favour – 9 / No - 1.

As the fourth Director was the only one not in favour of the motion, he put forward his resignation. The Chair stated that it was inappropriate that on any occasion where a minority position occurred that a Director should feel their position untenable and resign. The fourth Director was asked to reconsider his position. Despite some of the Directors trying to persuade him to stay, he left the meeting. Another Director formally expressed her regrets about the resignations of both him and Mrs Bailes and voiced that they had valuable skills and contributions to make to WMC and that there was now a disproportionately low number of Directors representing the apartments.

3. Reports from Sub-Committees

A Director reiterated that issues must be able to be dealt with by sub-committees, and only contentious issues (incl. financial ones) to be brought to WMC. Sub-committees in place should discuss their remit and bring this to the next meeting.

1. Sub-committee apartments – two director put themselves forward
2. Sub-committee surcharges – one director expressed an interest to join this.
3. Sub-committee gardening – three directors put themselves forward

Action: Sub-committees listed above to present remit at next meeting.

4. Issues raised by Waterways Residents' Association

Chair WRA, had been invited to join the meeting to share her issues/ideas of how WRA & WMC could work together, but sent her apologies that afternoon. It was agreed that Chair should write a letter to WRA to outline WMC's disappointment in the lack of representation from WRA yet again!

Action: Chair to write letter to WRA.

5. Issues raised by Oxford Citizen Housing Association (OCHA)

1. Shout Project

The Committee was pleased to hear about continued funding, for a further 2 years, for this project and continued to express their support.

6. Issues raised by Canalside Environment Group

The Chair of CEG joined the meeting and gave an outline of CEG's activities. She reiterated the need for gardeners to time their activities in such way as not to disturb any wildlife (e.g. pruning along the wildlife corridor). Littering on the estate was discussed. Although gardeners, residents, Peverel etc. picked up litter, the consensus was that it was unclear whose responsibility it actually was to do so. A Director advised she had contacted the City council on several occasions to complain about the rubbish the bin men left behind. It was acknowledged that there was a problem with the disposal of plastics on Waterways.

Action: Chair to write to OCC on behalf of WMC to raise this issue again.

Action: Chair to write to Peverel for suggestions, and costs for a cleaning service for the estate.

11 Issues raised by other interested groups

None.

12 Development Issues

12.1 Roads and Adoption of Roads

The Director to lead this item however was absent at this point.

There seemed to be some finishing work going on, there was still no clear indication as to when the council would adopt the roads. This was not expected until at least 12 months after completion of all works on the estate.

Action: Chair to write to Berkeley Holmes to obtain a formal timeframe for adoption of roads. Their reply is to be presented at AGM.

12.2 Large Scale Advertising Boards

There was general concern regarding the installation of large advertising signs without consultation. A Director reported that POMs view is that Berkeley Homes were within their rights, as there were no covenants in place. A second Director thought that WMC were given all freehold land. A third Director suggested writing to Berkeley Homes with WMC's concerns regarding these signs.

Action: Chair to write to Berkeley Homes and request removal of the signs.

12.3 AGM

It was agreed to have one more meeting prior to the AGM in September. A Director suggested to review the protocols around how to set up an AGM and proposed to set up a sub-committee, which would deal with these matters including setting a date. Three other directors offered their help.

Action: First Director to arrange a sub-committee, which would then make arrangements for the AGM, including setting a date.

12.4 Carbon Footprint

A Director raised the point of apartment lighting (internal and external) being on throughout the day and night and wanted to address this in the interest of reducing their carbon footprint. A second Director suggested she should take this up with Peverel OM, pointing out the environmental issues, and residents' desire to reduce their service charge.

Action: First Director to follow up with POM

12.5 Good Neighbours Guide

A Director presented, as emailed to all, a version of this guide. Although it was felt that this was a good idea, there was consensus that the content and wording of the Abingdon example was inappropriate and needed to be rewritten. A second Director suggested that this was a matter for WRA.

Action: Chair to discuss with Chair of WRA.

13 Any Other Business

13.1 Service Charge Problems

A former director who was absent from this meeting questioned the rise in service charges originally. Another Director advised that it was not a vast rise, and probably justifiable.

13.2 Consultation

A former director who was absent from this meeting questioned this matter originally. It was agreed that consultation and the decision making process generally occurs during WMC meetings. The

communications strategy set this out, and had been agreed and communicated. Item 6.2 above develops this point further.

Action: Chair to formally acknowledge the resignations of both Barbara Bailes and Len Foreman.

1. Contribution to Waterways website

A Director presented the request for WMC information from a rep for WRA, WRA co-ordinating a Waterways website. It was agreed that the website section relating to WMC should contain the Waterways World piece in full with a list of the Directors names only and roles. No other details of meetings and minutes from these meeting are to be distributed.

14 Date of next meeting

9th July 2007.

Action: The Anchor Pub confirmed for an 8pm start.