

**Waterways Management Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
10 September 2007, 8pm, Anchor Pub**

**Attendees**

David Jones	Nick Sampson (Treasurer)
Diane Crocombe	John Lapin
Roger Mumby-Croft (Chairman)	Wendy Scott
Saima Butt (Secretary)	Steve Wilson
Adrian Steeples	Richard Dorey
Manuela Vogel (Minute Taker)	

**1 Apologies**

Louise Robertson, Gunnar Niels

**1. Matters Arising**

**2.1 Opening Statement**

The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting, the final meeting before the AGM, A Director pointed out that this may not necessarily be the case. The Chairman proceeded to state that a lot had been achieved by the Committee since its establishment, and systems were in place for any newcomers.

**1. Letters arising from last WMC Meeting**

The Chairman went through the responses received based on letters that had been sent out by the Committee.

**1. Advertising Board for Nursery**

Berkeley Homes replied on 26 July 2007 that signs were erected on land owned by BH and therefore it was not within the remit of WMC to request their removal. All agreed that clarification should be sought to clearly establish what land was owned by BH. Despite this one of the signs was removed anyway. A Director also wanted to know whether planning permission was needed to erect any signs. A second Director pointed out that signs were needed to establish the Nursery business, which was in the interest of WMC.

**Action:** Chair to write to Berkeley Homes to ask for clarification of boundaries of land owned by them. Chair to write to Council to check if planning permission was needed to erect any signs.

**1. Refund for re-planting on Lark Hill**

Berkeley Homes replied on 1 August 2007 that payment of £1000 was made as a gesture of goodwill towards replacement of the trees, and on the understanding that this would be in full and final settlement of the matter. They could not be held responsible for mishandling by Peverel and its gardeners of the replacement plants/soil etc. It was agreed that there was no point in pursuing this matter any further.

**2. Adoption of roads**

Berkeley Homes replied on 7 August 2007 that the site was going to be put on to maintenance with the Local Authority for the statutory one-year period. Full adoption was to take place by the end of 2008/early 2009. A Director pointed out that marking (double yellow lines) were in need of replacement before then. Secretary clarified that the lines were previously painted by Berkeley Homes.

**Action:** Chair to write to Berkeley Homes to request repainting of lines prior to adoption of roads by Local Authority.

**3. Community Room**

Berkeley Homes still refused to lift any of the restrictive covenants. A decision regarding the Waterways Community Room is to be referred to the AGM. A number of Y/N options should be put to the AGM. The Chair asked Directors to put forward their opinions. Secretary suggested inviting other people's views. Chair replied that this should not be done prior to the AGM. This was agreed. A Director pointed out that no decision could be made until the restrictive covenants were lifted. A show of hands concurred that option was divided whether the room should be taken on by WMC or not. It was agreed to refer the matter to a local city councillor, and present options as they stand to AGM.

**Action:** Directors to submit options for adoption of Community Room to Chairman.

*Chair to contact city councillor re lifting of restrictive covenants.*

### **State of Nation**

Peveler's report was received and circulated. It was agreed that Peveler should update it prior to the AGM so it could be presented. The report needed to list headlines only.

**Action:** *Chair to ask Peveler to update report prior to AGM (headlines only).*

### **Letter to POM MD re Director's Survey**

A letter had been received – see 4.1

### **2.5 delay in re-dec.**

Secretary updated the meeting on further requests/complaints received by BB. Peveler confirmed with another Director that the apartment block was to be painted in September. Chair said the matter was not to be taken any further.

### **2.6 Dog Bins along the Oxford Canal**

Secretary had established that British Waterways owned the bins, but no reply was received in terms of the schedule for emptying the bins.

**Action:** *Secretary to follow-up*

### **3 Approval of Minutes**

The Minutes from the last meeting were approved.

### **4 Report from Managing Agents**

#### **1. POM Regional Estate Manager**

Secretary introduced Regional Estate Manager (REM). REM stated that Waterways was no different to any other estate up and down the country. He felt Peveler's site manager was reasonably effective for Peveler and carried out his duties to the best of his ability. He admitted the site manager could be aggressive and abrasive. Secretary added that REM also mentioned during a telephone conversation (Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> Sept) that the site manager was inconsistent, not good at communication, worked in order to cover his own back, confrontational and had poor listening and letter writing skills. Another Director asked whether the site manager had too much to do. REM said the site manager managed between 13 and 14 estates (averaging about 1500 houses). With approx 400 units on Waterways that required him to spend a third of his time to Waterways. REM suggested that the tasks allocated to the site manager are not too onerous. A second Director pointed out that if his company/manager felt the same way about him as REM does about the site manager he would be on double, triple warnings, and that this was clearly a reflection of Peveler's inability to carry out its duties. A third Director said whilst she was mortified her response to the questionnaire was shared with the site manager and then sent to Secretary, she felt uncomfortable discussing the site manager at this meeting. The Chair stated that it was not so much the site manager, but Peveler as a whole that were being questioned. WMC were tired of not getting matters actioned. If WMC are indeed a valued customer, than Peveler's performance had to improve. He asked REM for suggestions of how to progress the matter. REM agreed to speak with the site manager, and reallocate his time and resources. The Chair reiterated that the process was clearly not working. Things were not getting done which is proving to be a major irritation to WMC and Waterways residents. WMC want to see an improvement in performance. The second Director made it clear that WMC did not want this to be a witch-hunt of the site manager, but WMC want REM to take some action. REM asked how many tasks were outstanding. A third Director replied there were about 50% completed. A fourth Secretary also pointed out that they wanted to live as an integrated community, and a lot of PR needed to be done now to unravel the damage that the site manager had caused through his reply regarding 'OCHA people running around'. A fifth Director said that the site manager needed a plan of action and mentoring in how to deal with difficult residents. REM said there were standard letters in place. The Chair concluded the discussion by asking the REM to send a response on 12 top issues and identify ways to improve the client service.

**Action:** *WMC to send list of top 12 issues to REM for response.*

#### **2. Health and Safety Issues**

Letter to police not yet written.

**Action:** Chair to write to the police, outlining some of the concerns, and seek recommendations for action.

### **3. Financial Issues**

#### **1. Summary To Date**

A Director is still waiting on a date from Peverel on when accounts will be produced. He had received unsatisfactory responses from Peverel, but was told that draft accounts will be available at the end of the month. He had initiated a re-tender for the audit business. He will now put this to REM as one of the top 12 issues. A refund was confirmed with Peverel regarding the delay in painting of 1-25 Stone Meadow.

**Action:** Minute taker to send in her up to date invoice

### **7 Reports from Sub-Committees**

#### **7.1 Summary of sub-committee issued to website**

Secretary advised that the website was delayed. She still would like to receive a contribution from the subcommittees.

**Action:** Secretary to pass on SC summaries to WRA.

#### **7.2 AGM Sub-Committee**

Still awaiting a date for completion of accounts before a date for the AGM can be set. Director suggested to set the ball rolling by sending out a letter to residents shortly, explaining the situation and starting the process re nominations etc. A second Director had reviewed the letter. It was envisaged that the date for the AGM would be sometime in November. It was agreed to have one more meeting prior to the AGM with the sole purpose of discussing the AGM.

#### **7.3 Apartment Sub-committee**

A Director reported in the convenor's absence on the apartment sub-committee activities. A meeting was going to be held this week to discuss outstanding issues with Peverel. She felt that there was still no agreed process for sign-off on any financial expenditure. It was agreed that any essential expenditure could be approved by the sub-committee (e.g. electrical testing).

##### **1. Replacement of down-pipe warped by fire**

A Director pointed out that in replacing the shed damaged by fire, other damages had not been rectified and claimed through the insurance by Peverel (e.g. warped down pipe). Director agreed to raise this and other issues at the sub-committee's meeting with Peverel this week.

##### **2. Gardening Sub-committee**

A meeting with Evergreen was scheduled for October. A Director noted that there was a lot to be done. Another Director had walked around the estate in the pouring rain with Peverel & Evergreen, and WMC expressed its thanks to her for doing this. Secretary said she would send Peverel's letter re the chopping of trees in Cox's Ground to the first Director. Discussion ensued regarding the ownership of trees etc. It was agreed that boundaries needed to be clarified before any work could be approved, otherwise work may be pushed through which was not WMC responsibility. Clear answers and evidence was required. Peverel should do a land search to establish ownership. A third Director stated this was an issue for WMC to decide, and should be referred up. Consequences could be serious if WMC get it wrong. A decision regarding the work is to be made at the next meeting when full information is available.

**Action:** Chair to write to Peverel asking for clarification of ownership of trees as a matter of urgency and all boundary lines around Waterways. Secretary to send Director email relating to tree care.

##### **1. Litter picking – Evergreen**

A Director questioned again whether it was within Evergreen's remit to pick litter. It was agreed it should be made an explicit duty. Although this had been queried with Peverel, no reply had been received.

**Action:** Director agreed to take this up with Evergreen at their meeting in October.

## **2. Issues raised by Waterways Residents' Association**

### **8.1 Boating Community**

No answers as of yet with regard to whose remit the boating community falls under. A Director mentioned that their licence to moor along the Canal at the back of Lark Hill / Stone Meadow was on the agreement that they had no cars.

### **8.2 WRA Funding to be decided**

WRA requested £275/year funding from WMC. Although this was not a huge sum, a Director pointed out that the Articles of Association did not explicitly permit WMC to give money for this purpose. It was agreed that the decision should be made at the AGM.

**Action:** Another Director to inform WRA chair.

### **9 Issues raised by Oxford Citizen Housing Association (OCHA)**

It was agreed to organise a 3-way meeting with OCHA before the AGM to remedy damage made by Peverel's response. Any interested directors would be welcome to attend.

**Action:** Secretary to organise meeting.

### **10 Issues raised by Canalside Environment Group**

Secretary asked whether WMC would be willing to write joint letter with CEG & WRA regarding the placing of 'wheelie' bins at the front of properties. A Director pointed out that there was a restrictive covenant stating bins were to be put at the back of houses. Maybe this didn't apply to OCHA houses? It was agreed that the matter should be raised at the next meeting with OCHA.

**Action:** Secretary to clarify

### **11 Issues raised by other interested groups**

A Director pointed out that the path by the Nature Reserve (wildlife corridor) was rotting (Southern part only). It was agreed that Peverel should be asked to look at this. It was also mentioned that OCHA were not permitted to use the bin stores, but that they were not given a bin store themselves.

**Action:** Secretary to follow-up

### **12 Development Issues**

12.1 Road markings – covered in 2.2.3.

12.2 Removal of signs notifying road works – removal of signs had been requested and had not been removed.

**Action:** chair to ring Berkeley Homes to ask for removal of signs.

1. Painting of railings along Frenchay Road – This was within Peverel's remit, and should automatically be incorporated into the maintenance schedule. A Director pointed out that Frenchay Road boundaries had always been very unclear. It was agreed that this should be pursued with Peverel so residents could be informed.

**Action:** Secretary to follow-up

### **13 Any Other Business**

Nothing had been heard regarding the WRA opening party for the playground or unveiling of sculpture at Clearwater Place (installation to be completed by 25 September 2007). Ownership of pets in apartments – A Director raised the matter of restrictive covenants regarding ownership of pets. Apartment residents were not permitted to have pets (although some had cats). There appeared to be an increasing number of dogs in the apartments, in particular OCHA. Flood risk – A Director also wanted to know whether WMC should write to EA seeking clarification of risk of flooding on the estate. Secretary asked whether WMC permission was required for putting up extensions (based on a complaint from a resident). Chair felt that if planning permission was granted, WMC should be informed of plans so residents could be made aware, but WMC should not be seen as being ultimate decision-maker.

Parking – A director asked if new residents could be informed of parking rules/allocation of spaces, as each year in September there seemed to be a problem. It was agreed that it would be useful to have a diagram on the notice board in apartment blocks, and for Peverel to send out diagrams to any new residents.

**Action:** Secretary to follow-up & POM to advice

**14 Date of next meeting**

Director was to set the date for the next meeting prior to the AGM.