

WATERWAYS MANAGEMENT COMPANY
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING NO.35
7.30 PM ON MONDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2011

MINUTES

Present: Miles Thompson (Chairman), Mireille Levy, Sally and Richard Doyle, Martin French, Nick Robinson, Derek Summers, Raquel Stremme, Paula Reynolds, Nicholas Orme.

In attendance: Rebecca Hill (Managing Agent), Richard Dorey (WRA)

Minute taker: Emma Thompson

1. Apologies

Louise Robertson.

2. Private Business

None.

3. Approval of minutes from meeting 34 (05/09/11)

The minutes of the meeting were approved as a correct record.

4. Matters arising

4.1 None. All included as substantive items on the agenda.

5. Health and Safety

5.1 The Managing Agent reported that all the risk assessment recommendations had been implemented arising from the audit conducted in September with the exception of replacement signage, which was on order.

5.2 A mobility scooter parked within the communal part of 2-32 Elizabeth Jennings Way was deemed by the assessor to be a potential hazard in the event of an emergency evacuation and should therefore be removed. Further enquiries had been made of the assessor to arrive at a mutually convenient solution and the local fire officer had also been contacted. OM had been in touch with the owner and was working to investigate an alternative solution to removing the scooter from the premises.

6. Update from Managing Agent

6.1 Replanting around the play area was being obstructed by the placement of a bin from the nearby communal store to cover a gap in the hedging. The bin is restricting light and would thereby inhibit any the growth of any new planting to fill the gap and it was

causing long term damage to the grass. It was recognised that the bin was being used to provide a privacy screen and the Gardening Sub-Committee was invited to investigate whether there might be alternative solutions (such as a screen that would provide privacy but still allow light through, with minimal damage to the ground from its placement) which would allow new planting to become established.

RESOLVED

The Gardening Sub-Committee to contact Evergeen to establish whether an alternative, temporary, screen could be erected.

[Nick Robinson and Raquel Stremme joined the meeting.]

- 6.2 The WMC was advised that the new owner of the house by the lake had asked to purchase some additional land to enhance the size of their garden. It was not known if Berkeley Homes had transferred the freehold of the land to the WMC.

RESOLVED

OM to confirm the legal position regarding the ownership of the land to establish whether WMC could legitimately negotiate the disposal of a strip.

- 6.3 It was reported that planning permission had been granted for an additional property to be built adjacent to 26 Stone Meadow. Upon completion and transfer, the owner of the plot would become a shareholder of the Management Company and would contribute to the maintenance of the estate. However, it was thought that part of the planning permission required the removal of three trees and their replacement with trees more suitable to being located within close proximity of residential dwellings.

It was agreed that affected neighbours should be consulted. It was inferred that the authority would remove consent for the build if the Management Committee did not approve the removal of the trees. This seemed an unusual stipulation and, if correct, would mean that the strip of land was a valuable asset.

RESOLVED

OM to forward documentation to Chair, who will investigate the conditions upon which the permission had been granted.

- 6.4 A request had been received from the owner of 49 Stone Meadow for the WMC to consider the proposal for a single story extension to the rear of the property. Having reviewed the plans, the gap between the extension and the neighbour's plot was deemed to be reasonable. It was noted that the WMC was being asked for their opinion prior to the submission of the planning permission.

RESOLVED

To provide consent for permission, subject to approval by the Council in respect of the planning requirements, and that a condition is included that neighbours should be advised of the proposal.

7 Items from WRA

- 7.1 It was noted that the WRA AGM was scheduled to take place in the community room at 7.30 pm on 29th November 2011.
- 7.2 The Residents' Association was also organising a Christmas Hog Roast which would be held at the beginning of December.

8 Subcommittee round-up

8.1 Treasurer

- 8.1.1 It was reported that the accounts had been submitted on time.

8.2 Apartment Block Subcommittee

- 8.2.1 A request had been made to allow the provision of secure, covered bike storage for residents and owners of apartments on Frenchay Road, following the theft of a number of bikes. Having reviewed the space within the refuse area it had been decided that there was insufficient room. An alternative solution had been found which was likened to a temporary shelter or shed. It would probably require planning permission as it would be a permanent structure, it would involve additional maintenance costs and it was not considered particularly pleasing on the eye. Furthermore, it was thought it would prove difficult to ensure it was used for its intended use. The option being presented was not considered to be acceptable but the potential for an alternative acceptable design was recognised and therefore the decision on the current proposal does not rule future consideration of alternatives.

RESOLVED

To reject the presented means of secure, covered bike storage.

8.3 Garden Subcommittee

- 8.3.1 Resurfacing of parking and manoeuvring areas on west side of Cox's Ground

Residents had complained about the lack of communication concerning this issue. Berkeley Homes had refused to take responsibility for undertaking any remedial work. Unfortunately the most appropriate solution was not cheap and there were more pressing issues to resolve. Contingency funds should be held in reserve if work needed to be completed on the culvert. It had yet to be established whether the waterway had been transferred to Oxford City Council. If the asset remained the responsibility of the WMC then the funds would be required to solve what could become a health and safety issue.

RESOLVED

OM to forward to the complaints co-ordinator copies of correspondence issued to owners in Cox's Ground who had been kept informed of the position.

OM to draft a suitable response for Cox's Ground residents and forward to the Chairman for approval, before issue.

Director with responsibility for the complaints portfolio to contact the residents once the response had been drafted.

8.3.2 Annual abandoned bike removal programme

It was noted that Evergreen had been asked to quote for the annual abandoned bike removal programme. The Chairman enquired why this company had been invited to quote. It was reported that the specialists Back on Trax had been expensive and an alternative quote had been sought to establish whether the sum concerned was unreasonable. Both quotations had been broadly similar.

RESOLVED

To include the bike stores in the annual bicycle cull.

To check whether abandoned bicycles had any identification stamps to establish whether those bicycles on the estate included stolen property.

8.4 **Parking and Traffic Subcommittee**

8.4.1 Nothing to report.

8.5 **Feedback**

8.5.1 Nothing to report. Covered under Gardening Subcommittee.

8.6 **Community Meeting Room**

8.6.1 The WMC received a report from the working party which had been established to assess the advantages and disadvantages of taking on the community meeting room. The landlord had now been obliged to remove some of the restrictions imposed on the room's use and it was believed that the terms contained within the proposed lease had been improved. The room could be financed for the next two years but somebody from a legally constituted body was required to sign the lease. The WRA was not a company but could establish a CIC (community interest company) to do this but was initially asking the WMC if it would be willing in principle to sign the lease for a trial period, of perhaps two years, so that take-up could be tested.

A number of concerns were raised

- (a) the WMC no longer had a mandate from private residents to enter into an agreement regarding the community meeting room. This meant that any proposal would have to be discussed at either an AGM or a special meeting.
- (b) what would be the liability which the WMC would take on in terms of criminal damage and health and safety?
- (c) payments for room use would have to be made in accordance with the auditing requirements of WMC. This might require the establishment of a separate schedule to allow any shortfall to be clawed back through the service charge. A

grant could also be given to a CIC if this route was adopted. Other mechanisms included the booking and payment of the use of the room online.

- (d) the running costs were challenged and a full itemised schedule would be required. It was envisaged that the legal costs required to formalise the lease would be between £3,000 and £5,000 alone.

In summary, it was agreed that everyone was in favour of the community room being made available to residents, an initial estimate of legal costs should be sought and a more detailed feasibility study presented at the next meeting covering the aspects raised. This would then enable the WMC to decide whether to make a proposal at the AGM for owners to vote upon.

The author of the report was thanked for their hard work and perseverance in this matter.

RESOLVED

WMC Director to approach a commercial lawyer to get a quotation for the review and negotiation of a lease for the community room.

Paper to be revised for consideration at the next meeting.

8.7 AGM Subcommittee

- 8.7.1 It was confirmed that the next AGM would take place at St Margaret's Institute on 6th March at 7.30 pm. The Subcommittee was reminded that it would need to review the timetable to ensure the relevant notices could be given in a timely fashion.

9 AOB

- 9.1 It was noted that whilst the Managing Agent would remain the main contact at OM for the estate, a new Regional Manager had been put in post.

10 Date of next meeting

- 10.1 Monday, 23 January, Anchor, 7.30 pm