

WATERWAYS MANAGEMENT COMPANY
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING NO 46
7.30 pm, Monday 9 September 2013

Present: Nicholas Orme (Chair), Tao Tao Chou, Sally Duncan, Anne Hall, Adrian Olsen, Imogen Olsen, Paula Reynolds, Mary Tovey and Lynda Williams.

In attendance: Rebecca Hill

Minute taker: Emma Thompson

1. Apologies

1.2 Apologies were received from Louise Robertson, Raquel Stremme and Miles Thompson.

2. Private Business

2.1 None.

3. Minutes

3.1 Approval of the minutes from meeting 45 (08/07/13)

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

4. Matters arising from the minutes from meeting 45

4.1 Subject to an amendment to the designated Vice Chair to deputise in the absence of the Chair at a meeting, the revised Committee member responsibilities were approved.

4.2 The previous Chair had yet to circulate information on Google docs and the item remained open.

4.3 The item was deferred until the next meeting to allow clarification on the action.

RESOLVED

4.6 That those items that had been completed should be closed.

5. Health and Safety

5.1 It was reported that the risk assessment of the development had been completed and there were no high priority recommendations. A number of priority two items including reminding properties within apartment blocks to make sure they had active smoke alarms and the removal of obstructions in communal areas and in riser cupboards were noted.

RESOLVED

OM to ensure the highlighted recommendations were undertaken within the next few weeks for compliance.

6. Updates from Managing Agent

- 6.1 It was reported that a contractor for Network Rail required access to the back of Cox's Ground in order to position plant and equipment to undertake line-side works. Those properties affected had been notified and the gardeners had been asked to take photographic evidence of the area to ensure that the Company could secure compensation should any damage arise as a result of the equipment working across the development's land.
- 6.2 The WMC was reminded that insurance valuations on apartment blocks should be undertaken every five years in order to make sure the correct level of buildings insurance was retained. The next valuation was due at the beginning of 2014. As a result of negotiating a group framework (across all OM's properties) surveyor's fees would be significantly reduced from over £3,000 in previous years to £725. The reports would subsequently be submitted to freeholders to allow them to make any necessary adjustment to cover.
- 6.3 Concern was raised at the potential for premiums to be increased without recourse to apartment owners and that owners should be aware of the insurance cover which was being provided by freeholders. Directors reported that they had been unable to obtain copies of the policies by asking the freeholders directly.

RESOLVED

That OM commission the surveyor to undertake the insurance valuations and that copies of the insurance documentation should be issued to any owners, upon request.

7. Items from WRACIC

- 7.1 It was noted that the community room had now been furnished with curtains and included a hearing loop, courtesy of Green Square. Bookings for the community room remained low.

RESOLVED

OM to promote room using its alert facility.

- 7.2 A written statement had been sent to the Chairman and Treasurer for review in order to receive the annual payment for the production of the newsletter and other activities undertaken by the WRA as per the AGM. The Treasurer was unable to recall receipt of the statement.

RESOLVED

Statement to be re-issued for approval by the Treasurer.

- 7.3 It was noted that Waterways World had recently been distributed and the new division of duties between the editor who remained responsible for layout using Microsoft Publisher and a director, who provided the content, was working well.
- 7.4 Clarification was sought on the amount mentioned in the last edition of the newsletter pertaining to the annual fee payable for the provision of a trade waste collection if residents did not recycle. It was confirmed that the annual payment of £3,500 was per apartment block, compared to a one-off cost of £7,000 apportioned across all apartments for the provision of the new recycling containers. It was reported that the current wheelie bin containers would be recycled.
- 7.5 Concern was expressed by directors at the change in policy by the Council particularly given the number of tenanted properties and the high rate of churn which could lead to fines remaining unpaid for incorrect disposal of waste and how the whole process would be policed. It was understood that where residents failed to abide by the recycling requirements within an apartment block and no particular individual was highlighted as the offender the entire block would be allocated the fine through Council Tax payments which was perceived to be unfair. There was likely to be a period of grace for up to 12 months before any fines would be issued by the Council.

RESOLVED

OM to issue letter to owners, residents and letting agents to make them aware of the new Council arrangements.

8. Report on the objectives for the year

To produce a plan of action to resolve maintenance issues relating to the Frenchay Road culvert and the wildlife corridor watercourse

- 8.1 Having agreed that it would be prudent to lower the water level within the lake, no contractor had been prepared to quote for completing the task which meant the lake would remain dangerously full before the onset of the Autumn.
- 8.2 The mapping exercise of issues relating to the watercourses within the development had been circulated to directors.
- 8.3 The remedial work within the swale had also not progressed as quickly as had been anticipated. The sub-contractor, Total Drainage, had increased its liability insurance and improved its risk assessment to the satisfaction of the managing agents but had yet to confirm a start date for works.
- 8.4 Directors expressed concern that such work would have been better undertaken during dry conditions and that until the swale had been cleared further discussions with Thames Water over their legal obligations and Berkeley Homes regarding compensation could not be pursued. As a result of this delay, the Gardening Sub-Committee had taken the decision to keep the channel open to drain any water into the canal rather than risk the swale over-topping and, therefore, continue making licence payments. It was noted that even during dry periods ground water appeared to seep into the swale.

RESOLVED

OM to enquire of Metro-Rod, the original contractor which had recommended the services of Total Drainage, whether they could encourage the sub-contractor to start the works, sooner rather than later.

9. To secure the transfer of the freehold land of the Waterways development from Berkeley Homes to the WMC

- 9.1 It was reported that as a result of the WMC contacting Berkeley Homes to comment on why the Management Company had not been consulted on the proposed transfer of land to the owner of the house adjacent to the lake and objecting to the proceedings, the developer had confirmed that the WMC should take responsibility for the on-going negotiations.
- 9.3 Directors were advised that the applicant had since decided to withdraw the request for additional land.

Sub Committee news round up

10. Finance Sub-Committee

- 10.1 The Treasurer reported that the accounts were currently being audited and would be available for review by directors by the end of the week. Clarification had been sought on items relating to the watercourse expenditure (licence for disposal of water into the canal) and additional electricity costs which were principally due to the long term 24/7 use of the pump to control the water level within the lake during adverse weather conditions.
- 10.2 The Treasurer took the opportunity to thank all those who had participated in the recent conservation exercise on the watercourse. Directors requested that OCV should be invited back to clear out either the swale or the next section of the wildlife corridor.

RESOLVED

Treasurer to invite OCV to co-ordinate another event.

11. Apartment Block Sub-Committee

- 11.1 It was noted that the managing agent was in the process of consulting on the redecoration of a number of blocks on Elizabeth Jennings Way and Stone Meadow.

12. Gardening Sub-Committee

- 12.1 It was reported that the GSC was due to meet in early October to discuss the Autumn pruning schedule after which a letter would be issued to residents about the intention to trim the Hazels surrounding the lake.

13. Feedback

- 13.1 It was noted that a letter had been issued in July to a resident concerning the disproportionate, and excessive, number of complaints being received from them. A temporary improvement had been reported but a total of 26 comments had still been received during the last month. Directors agreed that this remained unacceptably high and that a second letter should be issued by the managing agent to the effect that a response would be made to no more than one communication on one topic per month, unless an emergency.

RESOLVED

That a director should draft a letter for issue by OM.

14. Scrutiny Sub-Committee

- 14.1 The next meeting would take place in November. Nothing material to report.

15. Any other business

- 15.1 An article had been included in the latest edition of Waterways World encouraging residents to report bike theft and anti-social behaviour – the matter was now closed.
- 15.2 Notices had been included within bike stores stating that anyone using the storage facilities do so at their own risk. It was reported that the notice in Complins Close already needed replacing.

RESOLVED

OM to ensure another notice was placed within the Complins Close bike store.

- 15.3 It was noted that the two designated spaces for use by those using the community room were not marked as such.

RESOLVED

Due to the dual ownership of the area, OM would review whether it was within its gift to ensure appropriate signage and outlining of these spaces.

- 15.4 Access by the emergency services in Lark Hill remained an issue. It was known that the fire brigade could undertake an exercise to see if they could gain access and, if not, they would distribute a leaflet to residents which might ease the problem. It was additionally proposed that a standard message could be drafted for inclusion on an offender's windscreen.

RESOLVED

Director to draft a suitable note for use in Lark Hill and to invite the fire brigade to visit the site to undertake an inspection and leafleting exercise.

- 15.5 It was reported that an update on the 'Welcome to Waterways' booklet required proofing.

RESOLVED

A director agreed to edit the content.

- 15.6 Continued concern was expressed at the size of removal vehicles entering the development and the potential damage that might be caused. It was reported that a removal vehicle had caused damage to a wall in Frenchay Road. Fortunately the number plate had been obtained for the vehicle involved and the firm would be invoiced for the repair costs.

- 15.7 As autumn/winter would soon be upon us, a director enquired on the progress of securing another salt box for the roundabout by the lake which had been particularly treacherous the previous year.

RESOLVED

OM to follow up on securing another green salt box.

- 15.8 A resident had enquired why a response had not been received from the WMC on their continued objection to the closure of the gate to block off a non-thoroughfare. As far as the directors were concerned there was no outstanding issue as a reply had been issued to letters received on the matter.

RESOLVED

OM to establish whether another letter had been received and, if not, a response to this effect should be issued to the resident concerned.

16 Date of next meetings

The meetings for the year ahead were noted as follows:

4th November 2013, 13th January 2014 and 10th March 2014.