

WATERWAYS MANAGEMENT COMPANY
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING NO 54

7.30 pm, Tuesday 13th January 2015

Present: Louise Robertson (Chair), Adrian Olsen, Imogen Olsen, Mary Tovey, Paula Reynolds, Nicholas Orme, Ann Hall, Tao Tao Chou, Raquel Stremme.

In attendance: Jeetindar Gill, OM and Richard Dorey, WRACIC

Guests: Lyn Bibbings and Greg Barnes for the railway line development item

Minute taker: Emma Thompson

1. Apologies

1.1 Sally Duncan, Hilary Sorensen, Adrian Mourby.

2. Welcome and introductions

2.1 Lynn and Greg were welcomed to the meeting and those present introduced themselves and thanked the two guests for researching in depth the situation regarding the railway developments and the implications for the development.

3. Minutes

Approval of the minutes from meeting 53 (11/11/14)

3.1 The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

Railway Development

4.1 It was reported that the East-West Rail project Phases 2a and 2b (previously known as Evergreen3) would result in a second route to Marylebone from Oxford via Oxford Parkway station which was being built at the Water Eaton Park and Ride. It would eventually continue to Bedford and Cambridge, although funding had only been made available at present as far as Bedford.

4.2 Contrary to what had originally been proposed, another line was no longer going to be constructed alongside the Waterways development. As a result, National Rail was no longer pursuing noise, vibration and mitigation studies for the area despite Condition 19 of the planning conditions which stated that development should not commence within each individual section of the proposed scheme until the predicted vibration effects of the railway had been submitted in writing and approved by the local planning authority.

4.3 The revisions to the line would result in the movement of up to 28 trains per night, with freight trains increasing in length and speed. A new freight train passing loop at Wolvercote would allow passenger trains to overtake freight trains before the main Oxford station. Several benefits would arise from the development – namely the removal of the requirement for train drivers to sound the horn prior to the allotments

due to the closure of the crossing and the removal of the need for the freight trains to halt adjacent to housing in the Waterways development. However, these would not outweigh concerns around the apparent significant increase in volume of traffic and the failure of National Rail to uphold Condition 19 of the planning conditions.

- 4.4 The Secretary of State for Transport, the Chair of the Transport Select Committee, the Chief Executive of the Office of Rail Regulation, the MD of Chiltern Railways and the CEO of Network Rail together with councillors for Oxford City and County Councils and several newspapers had been appraised of this oversight together with the impact of the railway development on the local communities which had been verified by an independent study undertaken by Arup.
- 4.5 A consultation pertaining to a second project for a western route had recently closed which included reference to a potential flyover located at the Oxford North Junction or at Didcot. Worryingly even the professionals were uncertain as to the exact position of the Oxford North Junction which cast doubt on the management of the project and the decisions which were being made and even the local planning department seemed unaware of the existence of the Waterways development to which there had been no apparent site visit.
- 4.6 The primary objectives for those concerned about these developments included:
- (a) Arranging a meeting between the Secretary of State for Transport, Nicola Blackwood MP, Network Rail and representatives from the local residents to discuss the noise and vibration levels and mitigation measures which could be proposed
 - (b) Securing a site visit by the Planning Officers/Committee so that they can appreciate the impact of the proposals relating to these two projects.
- 4.7 Independent of these developments, Network Rail had been removing vegetation. As Berkeley Homes remained the land owner, the developer had been given a copy of Network Rail's understanding of the boundary to avoid the removal of trees from land under the management of the Waterways Management Company.
- 4.8 It was agreed that:
- (a) Owners should be notified of the proposals once further information was made available. This would also help form the content of an article in Waterways World. It was considered prudent that more channels of communication to raise the issue would be useful.
 - (b) A meeting between officials and affected residents should be held
 - (c) A member should forward the name of the Head Planner for Network Rail.

Matters arising

- 4.9 It was noted that no further communication had been received regarding the provision of white parking bay markings in the Crescent on Elizabeth Jennings Way. The matter would remain open but no further action at present was deemed necessary.
- 4.10 OM reported that they had raised an order with contractors to remove the property number painted on a parking space in Stone Meadow as the individual concerned had been given 10 days to remove the markings and they had not complied.
- 4.11 It was reported that several residents had received surface water drainage refunds but other residents had been refused. A map of the drainage across the development

was tabled at the meeting. It was agreed that an article in the Waterways World outlining the potential to receive a refund may be confusing if there was a lack of clarity around who may, or may not, be eligible. As a result, those who had received a refund should notify the Chairman so that an indication of those residents/owners who might be entitled could be established.

- 4.12 It was noted that suppliers had been engaged to remove the pigeon droppings which had been accumulating on the porch of 2-32 Elizabeth Jennings Way.
- 4.13 It was reported that whilst the rat infestation in Complins Close appeared to have gone, the entry point remained, meaning that the situation remained unresolved.

5. Possibility of a Waterways 'character study' for the local plan

- 5.1 It was noted that the local councillor, Liz Wade, had indicated that she could be available on either Saturday 24th January or an evening to discuss the preparation of the character study document. The Chairman would contact the councillor to identify a mutually agreeable date and inform interested directors accordingly.

6. Proposed new management agreement with OM/First Port

- 6.1 OM informed those present that it had become apparent that there was no up to date agreement in place between the WMC and OM. The last version was dated 2000 and several amendments had been made to the document.
- 6.2 Directors expressed concern that whoever had issued the paperwork did not appear to be familiar with the membership of the WMC which should be resolved. In the meantime, it was agreed that the Scrutiny Committee would review the paperwork and report back its findings to the main Committee.

7. Health and Safety

- 7.1 It was noted that a payment had now been made to the resident to compensate them for materials used to put additional safety measures on the swale. It was agreed that OM should arrange for the area of mesh to be extended for added security. The loss adjusters had now inspected the correct part of the site but had yet to submit their report.
- 7.2 Councillor Howson and David Tole had visited the development to discuss the potential to extend existing yellow lines. Whilst in attendance they had agreed that noise mitigation was required on the existing rumble strips and that extra road markings should be introduced by the first roundabout on Elizabeth Jennings Way for safety. The Highways Department had confirmed that any changes would be done as if the development may one day become a controlled parking zone, with parking bays being clearly marked on the roads and the dropped curb at the end of the walkway between the development and Bainton Road would be moved to its correct position. Funding, however, remained an issue and a consultation would be undertaken prior to any action. In the meantime, no objections would be raised if additional lines were introduced by the WMC on unadopted roads. It was also identified that Frenchay

Road was still signposted as a cul-de-sac and yellow lines would be included on one side of the road to remove the potential for obstruction.

8. Sub-Committee round up

8.1 Finance Sub-Committee

8.1.1 The Treasurer confirmed that they would arrange a meeting between OM and Scrutiny Committee to discuss the reserve fund and how it should be apportioned across the respective schedules for the development.

8.2 Apartment Sub-Block Committee

8.2.1 A complaint had been received regarding the quality of the finish of internal painting within the apartment block on Stone Meadow. It was agreed that the ASBC should attend to view the standard of the finish.

8.2.2 An update was provided on Section 20 consultations which comprised of roof repairs to an apartment block in Frenchay Road.

8.3 Gardening Sub-Committee

8.3.1 The WMC was notified of the current expenditure incurred in removing the silt from the balancing pond. Further work was still required to remove silt which was reducing the flow of water through the siphon. In addition to Lanes for Drains, AES had been asked to quote for the disposal of the remaining material. A separate analysis of the silt would be conducted at a cost of circa £240 to determine whether it was contaminated to reduce disposal costs which remained uncertain.

8.3.2 It was noted that whilst there were sufficient reserve funds to cover the additional costs required for the silt removal it was discussed whether it would be prudent to use all the available funds on one particular issue on the development. A number of options were considered including delaying work on the wildlife corridor and levying an additional service charge for the water channel clearance on each property.

8.3.3 It was proposed that quotations should be obtained from Lanes for Drains and AES for the remaining clearance work and confirmation should be received whether this could be undertaken before the end of March. Depending upon which company was the cheapest, clarification should be sought from the Council that they would have no objections to a change in potential supplier in terms of paying their contribution to the silt removal. Once all this information was known, the WMC should determine whether an additional charge should be raised at year-end.

8.3.4 Volunteers were sought for the Waterways graffiti-busting team. A number of those present expressed a desire to become involved. The Canal and Riverside Trust would be contacted to arrange a suitable date and time for those concerned to receive training.

8.3.5 It was noted that 77 bikes remained tagged and would be removed on 20th January. They had been photographed and indexed to allow anyone to claim their bicycle in the event that it was removed in error despite the numerous communications about the exercise.

- 8.3.6 The owner of 26 Cox's Ground had been approached to reinstate the mature planting which had been removed by tenants. The owner remained reticent to make good the area on the basis that there was no guarantee that the plants would not be removed again.
- 8.3.7 A satellite dish had appeared on the side of a ground floor apartment block on Frenchay Road which was contrary to the transfer deeds and unnecessary given there was a communal satellite dish for the apartment block. It was agreed that this should be investigated and the owner asked to remove the dish.
- 8.3.8 OM reported that it had yet to issue the letters to the residents concerned in Lark Hill and Elizabeth Jennings Way reminding them of the clauses relating to the storage of bins but that a contractor had been appointed to provide a ramp in order to allow residents to move their bins easily to their back gardens. It was noted that residents had also complained in Complins Close at the number of bins being left at the front of properties.
- 8.3.9 It was noted that Liz Wade had contacted the Royal Mail to undertake repairs on our historic post box.

8.4 Scrutiny Sub-Committee

- 8.4.1 It was reported that the Committee had issued the assessment criteria to ABSC and GSC with which to monitor OM's performance.
- 8.4.2 Following negative press reports concerning OM, the WMC had sought confirmation that none of the suppliers being used or recommended by OM were part of the Peverel Group of Companies. It had been noted that Kingsborough was responsible for tendering for the insurance for one apartment block. OM had reviewed the premiums being levied by this company and could confirm that they were lower than other suppliers.
- 8.4.3 The WMC brought to OM's attention the dissatisfaction felt with the care and attention given to the development by Huntingdon's, a supplier responsible for working at height. The WMC requested that they should be asked to put boards down prior to using cherry pickers or other contracting equipment to avoid any further damage to paving slabs and parking areas.

9 Feedback

- 9.1 It was noted that apartment residents continued to block communal areas with bicycles and pushchairs and store items in electrical cupboards. It was recommended that apartment block residents should be reminded about fire safety and be asked to remove items from hallways.

10 WRACIC

- 10.1 Whilst the Christmas event had been extremely successful, no volunteers had been forthcoming to keep the WRA viable. A further recruitment drive would be held at the forthcoming AGM. In the meantime, it was proposed that St Margaret's Institute should be contacted again to establish whether it might be interested in administering the room bookings for the community room as the Institute had insufficient space for the bookings it was receiving.

11 Managing Agent

- 11.1 No items reported.

12 Any other business

- 12.1 It was reported that 16 Complins Close was due to resubmit a planning application which had taken into account some of the previous concerns raised by neighbours.
- 12.2 It was agreed that planning for the April AGM should commence.

13 Date, time and location of future meetings

- 13.1 It was noted that future meetings would be held at 7.30 pm in the Community Meeting Room as follows:

10th March 2015
12th May 2015
14th July 2015
15th September 2015
17th November 2015
12th January 2016
15th March 2016

Addendum:

Following a public meeting held on 5th March 2015 at the North Oxford Community Centre attended by the Junior Transport Minister and Nicola Blackwood, MP, it was confirmed that another line will be constructed alongside the Waterways development and Oxford City Council are in discussion with National Rail regarding the provision of noise and vibration mitigation measures.