

WATERWAYS MANAGEMENT COMPANY
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING NO 55

7.30 pm, Tuesday 10th March 2015

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

In attendance: Jeetindar Gill, OM

Minute taker: Emma Thompson

1. Apologies

1.1 None.

2. Minutes

Approval of the minutes from meeting 54 (13/01/15)

2.1 The minutes were approved as an accurate record, subject to an addendum which would clarify changes in the WMC's understanding relating to the railway development alongside the Waterways 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.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

3.1 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.

3.2 It was noted that the remedial work had been completed to remove the property number painted on a parking space in Stone Meadow and the individual responsible for the markings would be recharged.

3.3 It was identified that of those in attendance, six had successfully claimed a refund on surface water drainage charges. As a result, it was agreed that it would be appropriate for an article to feature in the next edition of the Waterways World outlining that residents may be entitled to a refund but that not everyone would be eligible.

3.4 It was reported that the spikes to deter pigeons which had been perching on the porch of 2-32 Elizabeth Jennings Way had yet to be installed due to the necessity for several weeks of dry weather to ensure the solution remained in situ.

4. Railway line developments

- 4.1 The Chair reported that the meeting held on 5th March at the North Oxford Community Centre had been well attended. The paperwork submitted by Network Rail had contained a variety of factual inaccuracies and the submission had excluded a map of zone I which included Waterside and Waterways. As a result, Network Rail had been asked to reinstate the requirement to consider vibration and noise mitigation studies and measures for the Waterways development. Oxford City Council's lawyers would be following this up with Network Rail, the outcome of which was eagerly awaited. The minutes from the public meeting had yet to be distributed and would be circulated to other members of the WMC as soon as they became available. It had also been confirmed at the meeting that freight trains would also eventually transfer to electric rolling stock.
- 4.2 It was noted that advice had been supplied by the Superintendent of the University Parks pertaining to the type of planting which could be used to support noise mitigation along the boundary of the development. Correspondence had been issued to those living alongside the railway line so that they could undertake planting now to ensure that the vegetation would be reasonably well established by the time the new line became operational. It was agreed that in the autumn, an event would take place to help those residents who were unable to complete planting themselves. The Network Rail Environmental Officer would be visiting the Waterways to assess the potential for replanting.

5. Waterways Character Assessment

- 5.1 A trial had been completed along Frenchay Road, Complins Close, Cox's Ground and Stone Meadow by two separate groups using a template produced by Oxford City Council. Having reviewed the outputs, it was likely that a hybrid of the approaches used would be adopted when completing the remainder of the development. The intention would be to present the final assessment to Oxford City Council as an aide in planning and development decisions.

6. Objectives for the year 2014-15

- 6.1 Directors were reminded of the three objectives which had been set for the year, these being:
- To produce a plan of action to resolve maintenance issues relating to the swale, the Frenchay Road culvert and the wildlife corridor watercourse (GSC)
 - To secure the transfer of the freehold land of the Waterways development from Berkeley Homes to the WMC.
 - Embed the managing agent assessment process within the work of the Committee and Sub-Committees of the WMC.

6.2 The Chair presented her proposed report for the forthcoming AGM. Directors suggested the removal of the final sentence in relation to the statement pertaining to the progress made on the culvert and minor amendments to the item on the freehold land which should include reference to the employment of a surveyor to check the accuracy of the boundaries as defined by Berkeley Homes in its development plan. Subject to these amendments, the directors approved its submission to the AGM.

6.3 It was proposed that the objectives for 2015-16 should be agreed at the next meeting.

7. Health and Safety

7.1 The loss adjustors had now inspected the swale and had submitted their report which would be retained on file. The meshing would be extended by Friday 13th March 2015.

7.2 Following Councillor Howson's visit to the development, the WMC had received the proposed bayed parking layout for Frenchay Road and the critical areas on Elizabeth Jennings Way where double yellow lines would be introduced, as phase 1 for dealing with parking issues. A consultation process would have to be undertaken before the future introduction of a controlled parking scheme across the estate. If no action appeared to be forthcoming within the next few weeks, the WMC would issue a reminder to Oxford County Council to expedite the process.

7.3 It was noted that subsequent to a failed daylight robbery along the wildlife corridor, a number of residents had again expressed a desire to light the pathway. Whilst the issue had been discussed on several occasions, the directors gave due consideration to whether solar lights should be installed at the bridges and/or other lighting along the wildlife corridor as a protective measure. It was pointed out that there is no electricity supply in this area. It was reported that the individual who had been attacked had themselves expressed a desire that the incident should not result in additional lighting being included along the wildlife corridor. Residents did have an alternative, well lit route by which to navigate the development. A vote was undertaken by the directors and it was agreed that no lighting should be installed, with two directors voting for the alternative motion of solar lighting on the bridges.

8. Sub-Committee round up

8.1 Finance Sub-Committee

8.1.1 Directors expressed their dissatisfaction with the procurement department at OM which had failed to pay Oxford Conservation Volunteers for the last two years. There are also similar difficulties in paying an environmental consultant recently engaged to test the silt removed from the balancing pond. As small companies, both OCV and the consultant had failed to meet the necessary criteria to be set up as a supplier by the procurement team. The alternative would be to set up a separate bank account for the company which received petty cash that could be operated by directors. This

solution would probably incur transaction fees and there could be potential insurance liabilities which would have to be carefully considered.

8.1.2 The situation relating to the non payment of fees was deemed unacceptable and directors asked that the matter be escalated to the Operations Manager, Jonathan Mantle, and the Head of Procurement, Julian Shepherd. A director would draft a letter proposing that the company introduce a policy whereby two directors of WMC could authorise the release of a cheque for such smaller suppliers up to a certain sum of money. It was agreed that it would be better to find a simple solution using OM if possible, before considering setting up a bank account.

8.1.3 It was reported that the scrutiny committee had met to discuss the apportionment of reserve funds and had identified four additional headings which should be added to Schedule 1, these being:

- Paving slab replacement
- Car park surfaces
- Tree costs
- Water course management

8.1.4 Whilst directors agreed to the inclusion of the new headings it was confirmed that a fifth heading entitled 'contingencies' should be excluded for the time being on the basis that it was too vague and would require justification through reference to a number of examples. It was agreed that "contingency" type expenditure would be monitored in the coming year to ascertain if such a heading might be justified.

8.1.5 An amendment to the Scrutiny Committee minutes was requested to clarify that roof maintenance would be added in 2016-17, rather than 'next year.'

8.1.6 Directors asked that the managing agent should produce a new budget for longer term maintenance by September 2015.

8.2 Apartment Sub-Block Committee

8.2.1 The ABSC had attended numbers 1 to 25 Stone Meadow to view the standard of the redecoration in the apartment block and reported that remedial work would be undertaken on 7th April to ensure the quality of the finish met the required standards for the development.

8.2.2 The remaining Section 20 consultation relating to roof repairs to an apartment block in Frenchay Road had been delayed due to the reluctance of suppliers to quote for the required work. It was thought this was due to the need for them to provide a 25 year guarantee. One supplier out of five had so far provided a quotation, which meant that OM was having to source alternative quotes.

8.2.3 The next meeting of the ABSC was imminent at which a number of items were due to be discussed, including Sky dual feed into the apartment block satellite dishes and lift repair/maintenance. At the request of a director, the managing agent was asked to remind residents to keep the bin store in Clearwater Place tidy.

8.3 Gardening Sub-Committee

- 8.3.1 It was noted that of the three contractors approached to quote for the removal of the remaining silt, Lanes for Drains and Aquatic Solutions (AS) had replied. Due to their competitive price and previous track record, directors had agreed that the contract should be let to Aquatic Solutions who would start the remaining work on 13th April.
- 8.3.2 Analysis of the silt had indicated a presence of metals, particularly lead impurities, but it was of sufficiently low levels that it did not require specialist disposal and could be re-used as mulch across the development. This meant the silt could be either left in the bags and planted with grass seed or spread across the development between Hook Meadow and the Trap Grounds. The test results would appear to indicate that the silt running through the development was most likely road surface run off (Woodstock Road).
- 8.3.3 If the removal of the additional silt failed to resolve the drainage problems, further investigation of the connection between the swale and the Thames Water pipe from the Woodstock Road would be required using a camera.
- 8.3.4 The Waterways graffiti-busting event in conjunction with the Canal and Riverside Trust had been arranged for the weekend of 13/14th June 2015. It would be advertised nearer the time.
- 8.3.5 In respect of the bicycle cull, it was noted that of the 77 bikes which had been tagged, 48 had been removed from site. It was proposed that another cull should take place with tagging in April and removal in early July.
- 8.3.6 It was reported that due to current nearby construction work it would be impractical to ask 26 Cox's Ground to complete re-planting. It was also noted that two of the children who had been receiving home tuition, were now attending school.
- 8.3.7 The managing agent had investigated the satellite dish which had appeared on the side of a ground floor apartment block on Frenchay Road. It was likely to belong to 95 Frenchay Road as records had indicated that the apartment owner had been contacted 12 months previously about the issue. A follow up letter would be issued to ask them to remove the dish.
- 8.3.8 It was proposed that a rapid reaction team should be established comprising directors to issue a reminder letter to those residents seen to be ignoring the clause relating to bins being kept at the front of properties. A director agreed to circulate a draft letter which had been used successfully elsewhere on the development for review by fellow directors. This letter could be issued on headed paper and printed on-demand when any resident failed to move their bin to the back of their property 24 hours following bin collection day. The letter would be issued every week to frequent offenders.
- 8.3.9 Directors enquired whether any additional action could be taken over a breach of covenant. A Section 146 notice could be issued after which the court would make a judgement and subsequently an injunction if further offences occurred.
- 8.3.10 It was noted that a quotation (£1,000+VAT) had been received to replace the steps behind the crescent on Elizabeth Jennings Way with two shallow ramps and a flat

section midway to allow easy access for the movement of bins. One contractor had declined to quote. OM had requested another comparable quote which would be reviewed before any decision was made on how to alter the steps.

8.3.11 It was recorded that the paving slab replacement programme had been completed.

8.4 Scrutiny Sub-Committee

8.4.1 The managing agent agreed to circulate a copy of the new management agreement.

9 Preparations for the AGM – 23rd April 2015

9.1 Directors were reminded that a strict timetable in respect of the despatch of paperwork had to be followed. The Chair agreed to contact the director who had previously co-ordinated the AGM to confirm the relevant deadlines for reports.

10 Feedback

9.1 One complaint had been received in respect of a roof leak. Repairs had taken place but internal redecoration would be delayed until after a period of bad weather to check that no further work would be required.

10 WRACIC

10.1 The AGM had been attended by 22 residents and, whilst several new members had been recruited, the future of the organisation remained uncertain.

11 Managing Agent

11.1 No items reported.

12 Any other business

12.1 A strange smell had been reported and a gas engineer had attended Complins Close. It was decided that the smell had probably emanated from the drains. However, whilst on the premises, the engineer conducted a check on all the gas meters within the apartment block. One meter was found to be leaking and it was noted that the meters were not earthed. It was unclear whether this was due to new legislation or whether the meters had been installed incorrectly.

12.2 Directors were reminded to view and comment upon two planning applications which had been received by the City Council for 45 Frenchay Road and 16 Complins Close.

12.3 It was reported that the current Chair would be stepping down. The directors thanked the Chair for her hard work and were pleased that she would be submitting an application to remain a director.

13 Date, time and location of future meetings

- 13.1 The next meeting would be the AGM on 23rd April 2015 at the Baptist Church.
- 13.2 It was noted that future meetings would be held at 7.30 pm in the Community Meeting Room as follows:
- 12th May 2015
 - 14th July 2015
 - 15th September 2015
 - 17th November 2015
 - 12th January 2016
 - 15th March 2016

Addendum

Subsequent to the meeting it was agreed within OM that the matter relating to supply chain/procurement and the Customer Care team should be escalated to the Chief Executive, Nigel Howell to ensure a speedy resolution, and subsequently a letter was written to him.