

WATERWAYS MANAGEMENT COMPANY
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING NO 58

7.30 pm, Tuesday 6th October 2015

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

In attendance: Jeetindar Gill, FirstPort Property Services

Minute taker: Emma Thompson

1. Apologies

1.1 Sowon Park, Adrian Mourby, Mary Tovey.

2. Minutes

Approval of the minutes from meeting 57 (14/07/15)

2.1 The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

3.1 It was noted that the AGM minutes had been issued to the WMC minute taker for review.

3.2 It was reported that the Government's Right to Buy Policy was currently being modified. It was agreed that even before the scheme was introduced it would be useful for the Chair to contact GreenSquare to identify how many of its residents had already bought their properties and whether Green Square had any plan to include a covenant in the future at point of sale which would oblige owners to contribute towards the upkeep of the Waterways estate.

3.3 The Waterways Character Assessments had been received by the Planning Department and the Chair had been advised that no further action was required.

3.4 It was reported that the police had provided a number of cones along Elizabeth Jennings Way to minimise parking obstructions which had been taking place by the Kids Unlimited nursery. Every time the police removed a vehicle it was automatically reported to the Council. Unfortunately the cones were being moved by individuals parking their vehicles on the road which meant they were not providing an adequate solution. Councillor Howson is having a further meeting with council staff but if this is not productive he has suggested petitioning the Council which he and Cllr Liz Wade would advise on and support. It was agreed that if necessary the Chair should contact Councillor Howson to enquire of the process which should be followed.

3.5 It was noted that FirstPort and members of the WMC Gardening Sub-Committee were due to conduct a walk around of the estate on Friday. During this exercise they would identify those areas on our land where we can legitimately install double yellow lines and locations where 'Residents' Only' parking signs should be erected. It was decided that any consultation relating to the numbering of apartment block parking

spaces should be deferred until the impact of the signage could be established. It was highlighted that it might not be appropriate, or indeed possible, for numbering to be included on every parking space due to the different materials used across the development for the car parking areas. It was agreed that new lines would be painted to demarcate the parking for 1-25 Stone Meadow.

4. Welcome to the Waterways booklet

- 4.1 A meeting would be held within the next few weeks to progress the content, style and tone of the document. Two directors will then write the text and a director will copy edit and proof read it.

5. Railway line developments

- 5.1 Network Rail had undertaken three consultation sessions in the community meeting room in the Waterways on the proposed developments along the railway line. Residents had not been given sufficient notice, with letters about the consultation arriving on the day of the second consultation date. As a result the last meeting was well attended but crowded.
- 5.2 It was reported that Network Rail was proposing a 2.5 metre high noise barrier behind Cox's Ground and Stone Meadow with mitigation measures for those houses directly facing the railway but it was not clear what those measures might entail other than double glazing. The properties already have double glazing so some alternative form of glazing might be suggested, but this is not clear.
- 5.3 Residents in Wolvercote and Waterways have stated a preference for mitigating noise at its source which would include the introduction of a new type of so-called silent track. Network Rail has now proposed installing silent track only in a part of the Wolvercote section when the track is laid so that they can compare the noise pollution with and without. In terms of vibration, Network Rail had stated that this was minimal according to research and no mitigation was proposed. Residents strongly contest this. It was reported that the residents in Wolvercote after establishing a fighting fund had sought legal advice into very specific issues relating to the conditions relating to the Council's discharge of the planning approval condition 19 for that section. It is not clear if this has made any significant difference to what Network Rail will be obliged to do and so, as a result, the WMC felt disinclined to seek its own legal advice at this stage until more specific issues might become clearer.
- 5.4 Residents generally consider Network Rail's current proposals for mitigation to be very unsatisfactory. The Council is expecting Network Rail's final proposals following the consultation in the next few weeks and the Council would be asked in December to discharge condition 19 of the planning conditions. However, it agreed that we might consider a petition the Council if Network Rail's final proposals for mitigation of noise and vibration are not favourable for residents.

6. Health and Safety

- 6.1 It was noted that the two-yearly health and safety/ fire risk assessment was due.

7. Sub-Committee round up

7.1 Finance Sub-Committee

7.1.1 It was noted that the preparation of the accounts was now behind schedule but Jeetindar Gill is following this up. A meeting would be initiated with directors to review the figures as soon as they were available. The deadline for issue of the accounts to residents is the end of October.

7.2 Apartment Block Sub-Committee

7.2.1 It was reported that the short term let at 8 Cox's Ground would finish on 18th October 2015. Penny and Sinclair were still advertising three apartments despite being notified that short term lets were contrary to the lease. Directors were also maintaining a watchful eye on Airbnb.

7.2.2 It was noted that tenders had now been received for the flat roof replacement works for Frenchay Road and that the second Section 20 notice had expired at the end of September which meant works would commence shortly.

7.2.3 No comments about the choice of replacement carpet for three apartment blocks had been received. The first notice was due to expire. The three blocks would trial the carpet to test how hard wearing the fabric was before any further roll out.

7.2.4 A lift in one of the apartment blocks in Complins Close had been frequently failing – five times since July – to the extent that Kone had sent out a technician to assess the situation. A part has been replaced and a report was now awaited.

7.2.5 An application for a loft conversion by 131 Frenchay Road within an apartment block needed approval from Estates & Management, the freeholder. The WMC had advised the freeholder of its previous reservations regarding a similar application made by 37 Complins Close. No comments had been received so far from Estates & Management.

7.3 Gardening Sub-Committee

7.3.1 The WMC was reminded that in June 2015, Thames Water had been advised of a number of pollution incidents which had occurred within the Waterways. The company had taken two months to locate the source which had been St Clare's on Banbury Road. Remedial work had now been undertaken to stop any future occurrence. It was clear from this incident that the catchment area for the drainage system which feeds into the balancing pond is much more extensive than previously thought and extends as far as some of the roads between the Woodstock and Banbury Roads.

7.3.2 Thames Water had also been asked to supply a map of the catchment drainage system but so far they had failed to do so. The WMC had suggested that Thames Water should contribute to the clean-up of the watercourse (de-silting of the balancing pond and clearing of the wildlife corridor, on the grounds that the polluter should pay. Thames Water pass the responsibility back to St Clare's but WMC is of the view that Thames Water would be able to secure reimbursement from St Clare's.

A follow up meeting was due to be held on 22nd October 2015 with Thames Water, after which it would be decided whether to pursue a contribution from St Clare's.

A director arrived.

- 7.3.4 In September, Aquatic Solutions had been due to attend the development to clear the wildlife corridor watercourse of silt from the balancing pond to the Trap Grounds but works had been deferred until November as an exemption had been necessary from the Environment Agency for the extraction and disposal of the silt along the banks.
- 7.3.5 As residents, and conservation volunteers and Evergreen had cleared a section of the watercourse of grass, reeds, etc., it was questioned whether Aquatic Solutions would now require the full five days to complete the works as originally quoted. FirstPort was asked to send photographs of the watercourse to Aquatic Solutions to circumvent the requirement for the company to attend site again in order to reissue its quote. FirstPort confirmed that Aquatic Solutions had originally submitted a fixed price which had been competitive and that it was unlikely that much of a reduction would be forthcoming.
- 7.3.6 It was noted that the water within the swale was pooling in hollows. This may have been a deliberate part of the design to slow down the flow of water. It was agreed that the WMC should review the landscape management plan to determine the intended slope.
- 7.3.7 It was reported that Dr Curt Lamberth had been due to submit a costed proposal on the Waterways drainage catchment area and silt sources and content in September which the WMC could use in future conversation with the Environment Agency, Berkeley Homes, Thames Water and the Canal and River Trust amongst others. It was agreed that he should be asked when the proposal could be expected.
- 7.3.8 A temporary grill had been put over the exit pipe from the swale to the siphon to stop foreign bodies, such as footballs, blocking the system. Contractors had been asked to quote to provide a permanent solution but had all proposed a wider grill as they believed using a small mesh grill could cause vegetation and other debris to accumulate and block the flow of water. FirstPort was asked to make sure the gardeners cleaned the grill every week.
- 7.3.9 Fly tipping had also been taking place nearby which would be monitored. If it continued, a letter would be sent to Richard Grant to ensure all residents across the development were asked to refrain from such activity.
- 7.3.10 Whilst a significant amount of graffiti had been removed, the word 'shake' still remained on the archway to Complins Close. Contractors would need to paint over the word if it was to be removed. A review of the remaining graffiti would be made on the next estate walk around.
- 7.3.11 The WMC decided to continue to monitor the amount of litter left by young adults by the lake. It had been difficult to determine whether local school children or residents had been responsible.

7.3.12 It was noted that the 'no fishing' sign had been reinstated by the steps leading down to the lake.

7.4 Scrutiny Sub-Committee

7.4.1 The proposed new management agreement had been comprehensively reviewed and a multi-page response had been sent to FirstPort. Prior to agreeing the amendments proposed by the WMC, FirstPort would be reviewing whether there would be any impact to its operational requirements before issuing the paperwork to its legal team to respond.

8. Feedback

8.1. One resident had enquired when tree pruning would be pursued on Frenchay Road. It was agreed that the individual should be advised that the necessary works would be undertaken following the autumn leaf fall, probably at the end of November/beginning of December.

WRACIC

9.1 The annual payment to the WRACIC was due. Directors agreed that this should be withheld until the WRACIC had documented how it proposed to spend the proceeds. A director will write to the WRA Chair asking for this information.

9.2 There had been difficulties using the software to produce the last edition of the Waterways World and one suggestion was the purchase of additional licenses for Microsoft Publisher to support the production of the Waterways World.

9.3 A hog roast was being planned for 5th December.

10 Managing Agent

10.1 It was noted that FirstPort would review the access ramp proposals behind the Crescent to determine what health and safety issues, if any, would need to be taken into account to establish the most appropriate solution for all. It was noted that the steepest ramp which was legally allowable was 1 in12 over a five metre slope.

10.4 Another request had been made for the installation of CCTV. Directors remained concerned that the introduction of CCTV would have to be made across the entire estate which would have implications for not only installation costs but maintenance and monitoring. It was agreed not to pursue the idea.

11 Any other business

11.1 No new planning applications had been issued.

11.2 Directors were reminded to report any issues to FirstPort rather than direct to contractors to avoid duplication and allow FirstPort to exercise central control.

- 11.3 It was unanimously agreed that the Chair should be compensated for any ink and paper used for WMC purposes as, over time, the costs would mount up. Receipts should be retained for submission to FirstPort.
- 11.4 It was reported that Metro Rod would be investigating the underground section of the swale to make sure the system was working properly and to clear any accumulated silt. It was agreed that the flow of water throughout the development had greatly improved and that payments should now cease to the Canal and River Trust as an overflow was no longer necessary into the canal. Monies could then be diverted to planting and other items.
- 11.5 Due to the note taker relocating away from the area, a request was made for a new note taker and for somebody to look after the development noticeboard within Complins Close. A director agreed to take on both roles.

12 Date, time and location of future meetings

- 12.1 It was noted that future meetings would be held at 7.30 pm in the Community Meeting Room as follows:
17th November 2015
12th January 2016
15th March 2016

Apologies for the next meeting were given by Louise Robertson.

The AGM was confirmed as 21st April at 7.30 pm in the Baptist Church. A director was asked to book the accommodation.