

WATERWAYS MANAGEMENT COMPANY

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING NO 59

7.30 pm, Tuesday 17th November 2015

Present: Adrian Olsen (Chair), Imogen Olsen, Nicholas Orme, Raquel Stremme, Hilary Sorensen, Paula Reynolds.

In attendance: Jeetindar Gill, FirstPort Property Services

Minute taker: Emma Thompson

1. Apologies

1.1 Louise Robertson, Tao Tao Chou, Sowon Park, Adrian Mourby, Sally Duncan, Greg Barnes, Mary Tovey and Ann Hall.

As the number present did not represent a quorum, those items requiring a decision were discussed and will be submitted to the meeting in January for ratification.

2. Minutes

Approval of the minutes from meeting 58 (06/1015)

2.1 No amendments to the minutes were noted. They will be submitted to the next meeting for approval as an accurate record.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

3.1 The Chairman reported that he had received a reply from GreenSquare regarding the Government's Right to Buy policy. The company had directed him to their website which included a response to the Government's proposals which had been submitted by the National Housing Federation. The director of GreenSquare had indicated that whilst those renting could purchase the property they would probably remain leaseholders with an obligation to continue to pay a maintenance charge.

3.2 It was noted that the County Council was required to progress through a three-stage process in respect of the provision of any proposed extra parking restrictions on the development:

- (a) An informal consultation – the current stage. The proposals would be promoted in the next edition of the Waterways World and the plans will be displayed on the community notice board and added to the WMC pages of the WRA website. The current suggestion was for extra double yellow lines on parts of Elizabeth Jennings Way, particularly by the nursery, and Frenchay Road which would also have parking bays marked out. Residents and committee members would be encouraged to respond by the deadline of 13th December 2015.
- (b) A formal consultation with stakeholders in January 2016.
- (c) Submission to the Cabinet Member for approval, with likely implementation in Spring 2016.

The committee re-stated that this should be only a first stage and that a full residents parking scheme was required.

3.3 Subsequent to the walk around by the Gardening Sub-Committee and FirstPort, it was reported that the double yellow lines would be marked on WMC land at the entrance to Clearwater Place as a trial and that parking bays would be remarked at 1-25 Stone Meadow.

4. Welcome to the Waterways booklet

4.1 A mutually agreeable date to progress the content of the booklet had yet to be arranged. Consequently it was still work-in-progress.

5. Railway line developments

5.1 A meeting had taken place with Nicola Blackwood who was supportive of residents (particularly as she actually lives on the estate). It had been recognised that pressure would need to be brought by central government regarding limitations on speed and other issues as the local authority did not have sufficient powers. She agreed to take up these issues with Claire Perry, Transport Minister.

A director arrived.

5.2 It was noted that the number of trains allowed overnight had been restricted for each rail operator. For instance, Chiltern Railways was limited to seven trains between the hours of 11.00 pm and 7.00 am. However, the newly published timetable for Oxford Parkway would appear to indicate that the number of trains due to run during that time period was scheduled to be nine. This issue needs to be taken up with the City Council.

5.3 Residents' preference for noise mitigation remained Tata's silent track which had been invented by the University of Southampton and was already in use in Blackfriars' Station, London and in Europe. Network Rail had confirmed that it would trial the track on the Wolvercote stretch before securing 'type approval' which was necessary before it could be used elsewhere. Southampton University claimed it would reduce noise by 5-7 decibels. It was felt that there was a strong case for its use, particularly as the noise levels mapped out for the stretch adjacent to Stone Meadow and Cox's Ground would peak at 82 decibels, even with mitigation. The recognised maximum desired level was 55 decibels before noise was deemed to have an impact on health. Clearly the development was outside the tolerance level.

5.4 It was noted that the discharge of planning condition 19 for section I/1 (Wolvercote to Phil & Jim's primary school) would be submitted to the West Area Planning Committee probably in either December 2015 or January 2016. This would be the last chance to influence the outcome. The Committee would monitor the website for any sign that the Network Rail application had been submitted. Any response to Planning Committee Councillors, Local Councillors and the Leader of the Council would have to be quick as the timeframe between notification and the meeting would be short.

6. Health and Safety

6.1 There was nothing to report other than the two yearly health and safety/ fire risk assessment would take place in 2016.

7. Sub-Committee round up

7.1 Finance Sub-Committee

- 7.1.1 It was reported that the accounts had been issued on 30th October 2015. In future the finance team would be preparing figures on a quarterly basis for internal administrative purposes to aid forecasting and year-end preparation but would continue to issue the accounts annually to owners.

7.2 Apartment Block Sub-Committee

- 7.2.1 It was reported that the short term let at 8 Cox's Ground had now terminated but it appeared as if an owner was renting out a room in their property on a short let basis on Airbnb which FirstPort would investigate. In the meantime, Penny & Sinclair continue to advertise short lets within the development. When approached by FirstPort they said they had no right to dictate to owners what they did. The links would be distributed to directors in an attempt to identify the addresses of the properties concerned.
- 7.2.2 The tender for the flat roof replacement Section 20 works for Frenchay Road had now been awarded. Materials would be guaranteed for 20 years and workmanship for 5 years.
- 7.2.3 A tender had been issued for the apartment block carpet replacement and surveys had been completed by potential suppliers. Quotations were awaited.
- 7.2.4 Following a review undertaken by a Kone technician on the Complins Close lift which had consistently failed over the summer, it had been identified that the positioning switches had deteriorated and they had been replaced. Since then a further call out had been necessary which had been due to a separate fault. Concern was expressed that owners may feel that nothing is being done to mitigate future failure. Directors were reassured that Kone complete quarterly visits which are supplemented by an annual inspection which is required for the insurance cover.
- At the next meeting directors would be asked to ratify a decision to secure a quotation for an additional survey on this particular lift.
- 7.2.5 No response had been received from Estates & Management regarding the application for a loft conversion by 131 Frenchay Road within an apartment block to which the WMC had expressed its reservations.

7.3 Gardening Sub-Committee

- 7.3.1 It was reported that a meeting with Thames Water had taken place on 22nd October 2015. Whilst the company had brought with them an A4 sized map showing the catchment for the siphon, the directors had been unable to secure a full copy as it was deemed proprietary. It was noted however that the public was entitled to view the detailed plans at Thames Waters' Reading HQ. The catchment for road and surface water run-off into the siphon is sizeable, stretching a considerable distance up and down the Woodstock Road and Banbury Roads, and most of the connecting

roads in between. The map has been passed on to Curt Lamberth to support the silt testing exercises.

- 7.3.2 Thames Water would not agree to assist in removing silt from the first section of the balancing pond but did agree to test the silt there to assess whether there was any residual pollution arising from the incident in the Woodstock Road and at St Clare's.
- 7.3.3 It was noted that Aquatic Solutions would be attending the development on 2nd December 2015 for up to three days to clear the watercourse of silt from the balancing pond down to the Trap Grounds.
- 7.3.4 Curt Lamberth had been installing his measuring equipment at strategic points across the development with the intention of reporting back his findings in January 2016.
- 7.3.5 A grid over the exit pipe from the swale to the siphon was now in situ.
- 7.3.6 No further fly tipping had been noticed in the vicinity of the Ryder Close.
- 7.3.7 Metrorod had attended site on 20th October to examine the underground section from the end of the swale to the siphon. They removed the silt but had been unable to undertake the camera survey of the siphon because Thames Water were working on it at the same time. The survey could only be undertaken during a dry spell. FirstPort will chase and monitor progress.
- 7.3.8 The Canal and River Trust had been approached to cease the licence to dispose of water into the canal. The Trust would only cancel the licence once the channel which had been created to remove the water from the development had been closed and inspected to its officers' satisfaction. FirstPort are pursuing this.
- 7.3.9 The level of graffiti across the development had reduced significantly and Liz Wade, Local Councillor, had been pursuing the option of creating murals underneath the two bridges where attempts at removing the graffiti had proven difficult. An artist would need to be agreed and a director was investigating potential contacts that could be approached. One of the boat owners on the canal nearby has expressed a desire to be involved in the process, and claimed that he and others could create a mural. It was noted that graffiti was the topic to be discussed using Appreciate Inquiry on 26th November at the Town Hall. Directors were encouraged to attend, if available.
- 7.3.10 It was reported that planned tree works by Evergreen would take place at the end of November/early December in Frenchay Road and elsewhere across the estate but concern was expressed at the potential delay which might ensue for the works scheduled to be done by MBS behind Stone Meadow. It was reported that the contractor had completed a questionnaire required by Network Rail to gain their permission before works could commence. The timing of the tree works had been deliberate so that it could take place before the new line closest to properties came back into use, possibly in Spring 2016. However, Network rail has failed to respond, despite being chased several times by MBS. FirstPort will monitor this and if there is still no response soon the Chair will write to Network Rail.

- 7.3.11 A draft letter had been prepared notifying residents of the next bike cull in late November/early December. It was proposed that a separate exercise should be undertaken to remove bicycles that were chained to railings owned by WMC as this impeded the work of the gardeners. The Chair has written to GreenSquare concerning bikes at the very end of Stone Meadow next to the Trap Grounds and also bikes fixed to the railings there, which are likely to belong to their tenants and which could be included in the cull, but he has not received a reply so far.
- 7.3.12 Despite an earlier request, it was noted that the gardeners had failed to remove grass cuttings from the wildlife corridor between Cox's Ground and Complins Close. The Chair will investigate and FirstPort would issue a reminder if required. The grass cuttings have been removed elsewhere in the watercourse.

7.4 Scrutiny Sub-Committee

- 7.4.1 FirstPort had yet to respond to the comments made by the WMC on the new management agreement. The Property Manager had yet to review whether there would be any impact to its operational requirements. Consequently its legal team had yet to receive the paperwork for comment.

8. Feedback

- 8.1. One resident had complained about parking in Frenchay Road and a reply had been issued.

WRACIC

- 9.1 A statement detailing how the payment from the WMC would be used by the WRACIC had been requested but not yet received.
- 9.2 The next edition of the Waterways World would be available for delivery on Friday 27th November in time to publicise the Christmas hog roast which would take place on 5th December 2015.

10 Managing Agent

- 10.1 It was noted that a date for the inspection of the access ramp proposals behind the Crescent had yet to be arranged.
- 10.2 Jeetindar informed those present that he would be leaving FirstPort at the end of the year. He would be replaced by two property managers, one of which would be Rebecca Hill, who had previously managed the estate. It was proposed that she would be the main point of contact for complaints and committees and that the second property manager would attend site to assess and manage the suppliers. Good communication between the two individuals would be crucial to make the proposal work. FirstPort would be very flexible about how the new arrangement would work and so the committee agreed to this proposal and would review the situation after 6 months.

- 10.3 The WMC thanked Jeetindar for his hard work and commitment to the development and wished him well for the future.

11 Any other business

- 11.1 A director declared an interest in relation to a planning application which had been submitted for a 2 metre single storey extension to a property on the estate. The committee raised no concerns.
- 11.2 A director had been absent from Committee meetings for a prolonged period of time due to personal reasons and, in accordance with the Memorandum and Articles, directors agreed that it would be reasonable to allow this to continue for another six month period. The decision would be ratified at the next meeting.

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:
12th January 2016
15th March 2016

It was noted that despite several attempts at booking the hall for the AGM on 21st April at 7.30 pm in the Baptist Church, the administrator concerned had yet to confirm availability. The Chairman agreed to see if he could find the relevant booking form as a follow up to the several calls which had already been made to try to book the venue.