

WATERWAYS MANAGEMENT COMPANY

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING NO 62 held at 30 Lark Hill

7.30 pm, Tuesday 10 May 2016

Present: Adrian Olsen (Chair), Greg Barnes, Tao Tao Chou, Sally Duncan, Ann Hall, Adrian Mourby, Nicholas Orme, Hilary Sorensen, Raquel Stremme, Mary Tovey

In attendance: Rebecca Burt, Rachel Dolacinski and Philip Johns, FirstPort Property Services

Minute taker: Imogen Olsen

1 Apologies for absence

1.1 Paula Reynolds, Louise Robertson

2 Minutes

Approval of the minutes from meeting 61, 15 March 2016

2.1 The minutes, with minor corrections, were approved as an accurate record.

3 Matters arising from the minutes

3.1 The problematic lift in Complins Close has now been inspected and the contractor's report is awaited.

4 Review of AGM

4.1 1. It was agreed that in future members should have the opportunity to raise questions throughout the AGM, rather than after the close of official business as has been the case in previous years. It was also agreed that, as the various reports will already have been circulated to members, summaries should be read out instead. This would leave more time for questions.

2. It was agreed that an extra Question and Answer session should be held halfway through the year, for half an hour before the committee meeting scheduled for 4 October 2016. FirstPort would publicise this and ask for questions to be submitted in advance.

5 Allocation of Directors' responsibilities

5.1 It was agreed that areas of responsibility would be as for the previous year, with MT resuming the position of Treasurer.

6 Objectives for the year

6.1 A list of seven objectives, which had previously been circulated, was agreed, with the addition of one further objective, and responsibility for each was allocated.

7 Welcome to The Waterways booklet

7.1 Work on the first draft is now due to be completed by the end of May 2016.

8 Railway line developments

8.1 A meeting had been held on 28 April in the community room involving Network Rail, their sub-contractors, and Waterways residents. There was a good turnout on both sides and it was judged a worthwhile exercise. Network Rail had as a result supplied further information to residents affected by the works. Details about the acoustic fence, and a timetable, will be sent to the Chair later on.

8.2 Network Rail have now reconsidered the outrageous charge of £100,000 previously demanded in order to enable the pruning of the poplars along the railway line. Negotiations are now in progress between MBS (the tree contractors) and Network Rail and it is hoped that the trees can be pruned this autumn before train testing on the new line starts towards the end of November.

8.3 A site meeting with Network Rail representatives had been arranged for 11 May, to be attended by the Chair, a Frenchay Road resident and three residents from Stone Meadow.

9 Sub-committee news round-up

9.1 Finance

9.1.1 FirstPort reported that the new budget had gone out. There had been an increase in insurance costs for some apartment blocks to take account of a re-evaluation and a tax increase. After questions from a director, FirstPort explained that the freeholder of these blocks (which organises the insurance) is Estates and Management, and that this company has no link with FirstPort or with Berkeley Homes.

9.2 Apartment Blocks Sub-Committee

9.2.1 There was a lengthy explanation and discussion of the problems surrounding 108—126 Frenchay Road, focused on their recent roof replacement and the Right to Manage legislation. WMC directors had decided to seek independent legal advice and had drawn up a shortlist of four law firms. A further meeting would be held shortly and a firm would be briefed. Meanwhile FirstPort are still awaiting documentation regarding the works carried out by Claydon Freehold Ltd, including the roof guarantee. This has been requested four times, to no avail.

A director pointed out that WMC should contact the other owners in that block direct, as they may be unaware of the repercussions of action already taken and of the Right to Manage legislation.

It was agreed that a compromise solution would be the preferable way forward.

There was also a general discussion about using more contractors local to Oxford in future. FirstPort explained that a local roofer has recently been added to their list of suppliers at the request of a director. It was agreed that FirstPort would look into adding local carpet suppliers and decorators to their list, with the assistance of the Apartment Blocks Sub-Committee.

FirstPort pointed out that they are keen to receive feedback on all contractors used, via their online system.

- 9.2.2 FirstPort reported on current Section 20 consultations. All carpet replacements are now going ahead, apart from 108—126 Frenchay Road. The recent roof survey has shown that three roofs need urgent replacement, and consultation is under way regarding those.

Other roofs are not so urgent and will be discussed by the Apartments Block Sub-Committee at their next meeting.

Redecoration consultations are also under way.

- 9.2.3 A walk-around will be organised by the Apartment Blocks Sub-Committee in order to decide what new signage is required.

9.3 Gardening Sub-Committee

- 9.3.1 A meeting is to be held on 16 May with Curt Lamberth in order to discuss his report on silt and water in the watercourse. It is hoped that he can also advise on future maintenance, including how often the Thames Water silt trap needs to be emptied, so that WMC can then take up the matter with Thames Water.

- 9.3.2 Metrorod's report on the uneven gradient of the swale behind Clearwater Place was not helpful. It was agreed that FirstPort would organise a site meeting with Metrorod.

- 9.3.3 There has been excellent progress on the project to paint murals under the two canal bridges, a joint venture between the Canal & River Trust, Oxford City and County Councils, the police, the WMC and the boating community. A project manager has been appointed and an artist co-ordinator chosen. A competition will be held for design ideas on themes already suggested, and it is hoped that painting will be carried out in the summer. A successful site meeting had been held that very morning, and the possibility discussed of extending the murals into the arches on the side of the Frenchay Road bridge.

- 9.3.4 The planting by the lakeside was discussed. It was decided that the next Health and Safety inspection should include an investigation into the possible dangers of gaps in the planting. The Gardening Sub-Committee would then consult with Evergreen as to a new planting plan to enable greater views of the lake from nearby properties.

- 9.3.5 Work has begun on painting bike stands and railings in accordance with a staged plan.

- 9.3.6 We are still waiting for Oxford County Council to paint the double yellow lines already agreed on their plan. Budget restrictions have caused the delay. Our own double yellow lines at the entrance to Clearwater Place have been finished, and it was agreed that they have resulted in some welcome improvement in the parking situation.

9.4 Scrutiny Sub-Committee

- 9.4.1 The WMC mark-up on the new draft management contract with FirstPort appeared to

have been lost during recent staff changes. Another copy had been supplied by the Chair and this is now with FirstPort's legal department.

9.4.2 It was agreed that the new system of having two property managers for The Waterways was working well so far.

9.4.3 It was agreed that the Scrutiny Sub-Committee would investigate the suggestion proposed at the AGM that the contract for management services to the WMC should be put out to tender at some time in the future.

10 Feedback

10.1 A resident in The Crescent had complained about teenagers causing a nuisance by the lake and had suggested that WMC write to the heads of St Edward's and Cherwell Schools. It had been explained to the resident that a director had done this some time ago, and had been advised that nothing could be done unless the individuals' names were known. It was agreed that residents in that area are best placed to monitor the situation and report any disturbance to the police, although, depending on what happens in the future, the Chair might consider writing to the heads of the two local schools in broad terms about any problems. It was pointed out that taking photographs of the culprits was an effective discouragement.

11 WRACIC

11.1 There was nothing to report. The liaison director mentioned that he no longer seemed to be receiving information about WRACIC meetings and it was agreed that this should be rectified.

12 Managing agent

12.1 A quotation for £1587 plus VAT had been received for building a ramp at the back of The Crescent, which seemed expensive. It was agreed that FirstPort would obtain an alternative quote, to include a handrail and a non-slip surface.

12.2 The general Health and Safety review would be carried out in the summer.

13 Any other business

13.1 GreenSquare had requested that an area behind Clearwater Place be fenced off so that it could be used privately by their residents. A director will investigate this and report back at the next meeting.

14 Date, time and location of future meetings

14.1 Dates of next meetings:
12 July, 4 October, 29 November (2016), 17 January, 14 March (2017) – all Tuesdays at 7.30 pm in the Community Room.

The meeting on 4 October will be preceded at 7 pm by a half-hour Question and Answer session for members.