

**WATERWAYS MANAGEMENT COMPANY**  
**MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING NO 85**

**3.00 pm, Tuesday 14 July 2020**

**Held outdoors in Cox's Ground to maintain social distancing**

**Present:** Adrian Olsen (Chair), Paula Reynolds, Louise Robertson, Hilary Sorensen

**In attendance:** Natalie Griffiths, FirstPort Property Services

**Minute taker:** Imogen Olsen

**1 Apologies for absence and conduct of future meetings**

- 1.1 There were no apologies as the meeting was restricted to a maximum of six people under current government Covid 19 regulations. It was therefore inquorate. FirstPort were requested to investigate the legal position regarding inquorate meetings and also the delay to the AGM. The possibility of holding future committee meetings on Zoom was discussed and FirstPort confirmed that they could arrange this. Draft minutes would be circulated to the entire Committee and any feedback taken into account before final decisions were made.
- 1.2 Kate Lack was welcomed as a prospective new Committee member and adopted as a co-opted director (subject to 1.1 above).

**2 Minutes of meeting 84**

- 2.1 The minutes of meeting 84 held on 14 January 2020 were approved (subject to 1.1 above). Meeting 85 due to be held on 17 March 2020 had been postponed because of Covid 19 restrictions.

**3 Matters arising from the minutes**

- 3.1 (6.2.6) Research had been carried out by a resident regarding a possible new secure bicycle store for 108-126 Frenchay Road, to be sited alongside and to the north of the bin store. FirstPort had consulted all residents but only two had responded, one in support and one querying the cost. An estimate had been obtained for an eight-bike store but a ten bike store is needed, notionally allowing one place for each apartment. The resident had produced revised quotes for a ten bike store, including bespoke solutions and an extended version of the original eight bike store. Preferably three quotes for the concrete base were also needed. FirstPort would obtain such quotes, using the dimensions recently supplied by one resident. A director pointed out that such a store would be quite large and made of metal (probably green).
- 3.2 (6.2.7) External and stairwell lighting at 44-60 Frenchay Road – matter resolved.
- 3.3 (6.3.4) The new Pyrus Chanticleer tree planted in Frenchay Road was deemed a big success. Another alder tree had developed an enormous surface root heading under the property nearby and a director agreed to contact the residents concerned.

3.4 (6.3.6) Dumped building material behind 23 Cox's Ground – matter resolved.

#### **4 Electric vehicle charging**

4.1 Because of the lockdown, nothing further had been done in researching this project. One company had been consulted so far and has provided advice and information, and they have already done work for FirstPort. It was agreed that there was no rush for installation, given that lift replacements and repairs had priority for expenditure. The letter about charging points should be fine-tuned based on updated information and sent again to all residents in due course.

#### **5 Negotiation with Berkeley Homes re transfer of the estate freehold to WMC**

5.1 Draft documentation for the transfer had finally been received from Berkeley Homes, along with a plan of the estate. A solicitor from Bower and Bailey has been appointed to act for WMC.

5.2 A surveyor would be required to establish boundaries with Network Rail behind Stone Meadow and with St Edward's School to the north of Cox's Ground. It was agreed that there was no urgency for this.

#### **6 Request for purchase of land to side of Cox's Ground and exclusive use licence granted by Berkeley Homes**

6.1 In 2011 Berkeley Homes granted a licence to the owner of a house (no 25) in Cox's Ground to use the common grass area next to the house for garden use. The licence can be terminated by either side with three months' notice. The Chair understood that the owner of this house had expressed a wish to purchase a part of this area but was not sure if this was being pursued. The WMC normally opposes the sale of communal land but until the transfer referred to in 5.1 above is complete any such request would be at the discretion of Berkeley Homes. A factor is that in the corner of this grass area there is access to a main sewage drain and this access needs to be permanently open.

#### **7 Sub-Committee news round-up**

##### **7.1 Finance**

7.1.1 It was not yet time to start work on the next budget.

##### **7.2 Apartment Blocks Sub-Committee**

7.2.1 A schedule of priorities was being drawn up for future repaving work. It was agreed that the path down to the green from the letter box on Frenchay Road should be top of the list.

7.2.2 Lift work at 44-60 Frenchay Road was now established as the priority in the next two years. The other lift modernisation and repair works will be scheduled in, and funds accumulated from the service charge, over the next few years according to the schedule of priorities already drawn up.

7.2.3 Progress on some roof works had been delayed as the scaffolding had had to be taken down because a worker had tested positive for coronavirus.

A director reported a new leak at 6 Complins Close. There was a leak at 1-17 Clearwater Place and a Section 20 consultation for the repair work was under way.

All flat roofs were to be cleaned as required by the roof works guarantee.

The leak at 56-90 EJW had been resolved.

A downpipe in Clearwater Place was leaking and contractors were due to attend.

- 7.2.4 The overflow leak at 115-141 Frenchay Road had been resolved.
- 7.2.5 There had been a complaint concerning noise from a wooden floor at 4 Clearwater Place, and this was still being investigated. The situation was complicated as GreenSquare were involved as the leaseholders.
- 7.2.6 The Berkeley Homes work on fire safety in apartment blocks was now complete.
- 7.2.7 The two bike stores for apartment blocks in Complins Close have been used by house residents who were not entitled to do so. FirstPort had written to the house residents in Complins Close asking them to remove their bikes before they were tagged and removed. Evergreen had produced new warning signage for the doors of the two stores which would shortly be installed.
- 7.2.8 Visitors' parking spaces in Complins Close had over time been adopted by residents for their own exclusive use. A map of the estate has confirmed that these were intended as visitors' spaces, and it was decided to mark all such spaces throughout Complins Close with a 'V'.
- 7.2.9 A crack in the wall at 44 Frenchay Road had been repaired externally. Internal repairs were in hand.
- 7.2.10 An overflow pipe at 92 EJW was leaking badly. FirstPort would investigate.
- 7.2.11 It was confirmed that pest control contractors were still attending regularly.

### **7.3 Gardening Sub-Committee (GSC)**

- 7.3.1 The lead director gave an account of a meeting held that morning to discuss the broken Thames Water inspection chamber on the towpath and subsequent drying-up of the watercourse. All interested parties had attended – WMC, Thames Water (TW), Canal and River Trust (CRT), Trap Grounds. All agreed that action was urgent because of the threat to water voles (a legally protected species) and other wildlife in the Trap Grounds and wildlife corridor. The following points were agreed:

1. Thames Water would research the possibility of installing a seal near the bottom of the chamber in order to stop the water leaking into the canal.

2. WMC would coordinate this year's annual silt clearance with TW so that TW could inspect the chamber and pipework with a camera while it was empty. Conveniently, both parties use Lanes for silt clearance and drainage problems.

3. TW would try to pump water into the watercourse from the first silt trap chamber as a temporary measure in order to ensure a flow into the Trap Grounds.

4. The possibility was raised that the silt trap itself had been badly designed but this was not agreed by the WMC people present, as it was specifically designed to trap and accumulate silt.

FirstPort agreed to contact Lanes to arrange an urgent site visit in order to agree works for the first section of the watercourse and obtain a quote. FirstPort would also inform TW of the name of WMC's contact at Lanes.

[Subsequent update: TW are temporarily filling a tanker with water from the first section of the silt trap by the canal and then driving to the other side of Frenchay Road and discharging it into the watercourse downstream of sand bags. The problem is the lack of rain and little water coming through the siphon, so TW with WMC are investigating the possibility of turning on the lake pump and so artificially producing flow through the siphon via the swale.]

- 7.3.2 Towpath resurfacing had been completed by CRT, and the planting of snowdrops and wildflowers along the towpath had been successful. WMC had agreed to adopt the strip next to the Green for maintenance.
- 7.3.3 A director reported that four firms had been approached to quote for desilting work in the Frenchay Road culvert, the west section of the silt trap and the wildlife corridor. Two firms had attended a site meeting and promised quotes but these have not yet been received.
- 7.3.4 The proposed stone weirs in the silt trap were on hold.
- 7.3.5 The lake pump had been malfunctioning recently and FirstPort had asked the contractor to carry out a full examination. As a separate issue, the swale seemed to be wetter than normal and flowing less freely. FirstPort would contact Metrorod and ask them to investigate a possible blockage.
- 7.3.6 There had been complaints of unauthorised activities on the lake during lockdown. It was agreed that WMC has done all it can do in the way of warning signs and strong barriers, and is therefore covered for insurance purposes in the event of accident. A director [PR] had apprehended a group of fishermen the previous weekend: it was agreed that a further sign was needed by the high wall where fishermen were gaining access to the lakeside and that Evergreen should be asked to pile up more felled trees along the other side of the fence at that end.
- 7.3.7 It was agreed that the next GSC walkabout should take place in October.
- 7.3.8 It was agreed that the missing shrubs by the lakeside should be replanted in the winter.
- 7.3.9 FirstPort had agreed to organise the next bike cull and this is in hand.
- 7.3.10 The Chair had discovered numerous patches of Himalayan Balsam, an extremely invasive and dominant annual plant, growing behind Cox's Ground in the south east of Hook Meadow, which is owned by St Edward's School. He had pulled out as much as possible before it flowered and set seed for next year but would continue to monitor for further

outbreaks. Meanwhile he has written to St Edward's to warn them but their reply was that they have been aware of the problem (and indeed other pernicious weeds) in Hook Meadow for some time but almost all of their staff are on coronavirus furlough and so they cannot deal with the issue at the moment. Therefore Catherine Robinson, Secretary of the Friends of the Trap Grounds, is organising a working party to deal with a large outbreak of Himalayan Balsam discovered north of this area next to the railway line.

- 7.3.11 A director reported that there was a dead tree at the end of Frenchay Road on the patch of grass bordering the Trap Grounds. There was also a dead bush.

## **8 Scrutiny Sub-Committee**

- 8.1 There was nothing to report.

## **9 Feedback**

- 9.1 Nothing had been received on the Feedback page.

## **10 WRACIC**

- 10.1 There was nothing to report. The coronavirus lockdown had prevented the annual Easter Egg hunt.

## **11 Managing agent**

- 11.1 Section 20 consultations were proceeding normally.

## **12 Any other business**

- 12.1 The directors wished to record their thanks to Evergreen for good work undertaken in maintaining the grounds during lockdown. Several residents had expressed their appreciation. Rachel Dolacinski was also thanked for her efforts in pursuing this matter with FirstPort and obtaining permission for Evergreen to continue working.

## **13 Dates of next meetings**

- 13.1 Dates for future meetings, possibly to be held on Zoom:

2020: 22 September (without a Q&A session), 24 November

2021: 19 January, 16 March

The AGM, postponed from 19 May, would be re-arranged as and when the government coronavirus regulations allowed such gatherings.