

WATERWAYS MANAGEMENT COMPANY
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING NO 87

7.30 pm, Tuesday 24 November 2020

Online meeting via Zoom

Present: Adrian Olsen (Chair), Ann Hall, Kate Lack, Adrian Mourby, Nicholas Orme, Paula Reynolds, Louise Robertson, Brian Shine, Raquel Stremme, Mary Tovey, Liz Wheeler

In attendance: Rachel Dolacinski, FirstPort Property Services

Minute taker: Imogen Olsen

1 Apologies for absence

1.1 Tao Tao Chou, Hilary Sorensen

2 Approval of the minutes of meeting 86 held on 22 September 2020

2.1 The minutes were approved.

3 Matters arising from the minutes of meeting 86

3.1 (3.1) An obstacle had arisen regarding the proposed new secure bicycle store for 108-126 Frenchay Road in that it might not be allowed under the terms of the agreement with Berkeley Homes currently being negotiated for the transfer of the freehold. A new solid fence had been suggested as an alternative to cut off the view of the bike stand from the canal towpath, and this was now on Evergreen's list of jobs.

3.2 (4.1) Because of the pandemic, there had been no further progress regarding electric vehicle charging. The City Council had also postponed action for 14 months.

3.3 (7.2.5) FirstPort were still chasing the GreenSquare housing association involved to sort out complaints about noise from wooden flooring at 4 Clearwater Place.

3.4 (7.2.8) The damaged front door at 31-39 Complins Close was still under discussion by ABSC. FirstPort would chase up the contractor involved and ascertain whether to simply repair or renew the surround rather than replace the door itself which was apparently not rotten after all.

3.5 (7.3.11) 700 Tete a Tete daffodil and scilla bulbs had been planted near the lake by 6 volunteers. The director who organised this explained that there is now a WhatsApp group to which some gardening volunteers belong, and agreed to pass on the link to all directors who were interested.

3.6 (7.3.13) A director had organised a group to clean the railings on the Frenchay Road bridge. Ten people had volunteered and the enterprise was considered a great success – although the cleaning had revealed damaged paintwork. The Chair agreed to contact the County

Council to ask if it could be repainted, and the director was thanked for organising the cleaning session.

4 Arrangements for AGM by Zoom on 17 December 2020

- 4.1 FirstPort confirmed that all paperwork had been sent out and should reach everyone by the 26 November notification deadline. The AGM would be conducted via Zoom and a director gave an account of another Zoomed AGM she had recently attended, which included 60 people. She explained that the Chair of that AGM had retained control of proceedings, with other attendees being muted and the Chat icon used to make a point. There would be no Q&A session. It was agreed to hold a practice session on 1 December at 6.30pm and an invitation would be sent by a director with a full Zoom account.

The next AGM would normally be held in April or May 2021, and it was agreed to try and keep to that date if possible.

5 Introduction of Controlled Parking Zone

- 5.1 This was expected to be introduced on 14 December 2020, although work on signage etc did not appear to have started yet. WMC had not been sent details of the detailed plans and it was hoped that account had been taken of our comments on the initial plans.
- 5.2 FirstPort had carried out a survey regarding any new Private – No Parking signage that might be required. Evergreen had already put one sign up and more would be ordered. FirstPort agreed to send directors a list of their suggestions so that wording and positioning could be agreed. It was pointed out that some double yellow lines in Complins Close were worn out and needed to be repainted.

6 Negotiation with Berkeley Homes re transfer of the estate freehold to WMC

- 6.1 The Chair provided an update on progress with our queries to Bower & Bailey, the solicitors. B&B had claimed that the clauses we queried were all standard and that developers never sign away complete control of an estate. However, some concern was expressed over the clause permitting two further storeys to be built by Berkeley Homes on top of apartment blocks, and the Chair agreed to seek further clarification from B&B.

7 Sub-Committee news round-up

7.1 Finance

- 7.1.1 The Chair had not received a copy of the accounts for 2019-2020. FirstPort confirmed that these had been signed off by the auditors and sent out on 19 October, but that hard copies had not been supplied this time. An explanatory letter had been sent to members stating that in future the accounts should be viewed at Your Property Online on the FirstPort website, unless members request a hard copy. The Chair asked that directors all be sent hard copy versions and FirstPort agreed to organise this.

The Treasurer asked that the 'General' section in the accounts should be expanded, as this contained a range of quite large expenditure and FirstPort agreed to do this.

7.2 Apartment Blocks Sub-Committee

- 7.2.1 All current redecorations were now complete and planning for the next round has started. It was agreed that a surveyor/project manager was unnecessary, as had been suggested by FirstPort, and that in order to save money touch-ups should be used where appropriate.
- 7.2.2 Reserve funds are being accumulated for the lift modernisations and FirstPort said that the most urgent works at 44-60 Frenchay Road would start next year.
- 7.2.3 Steam cleaning of exteriors had been postponed to 2021.

7.3 Gardening Sub-Committee

- 7.3.1 Repaving works have now been scheduled for three areas, the path around the car park next to the green, 108-126 and 95-113 Frenchay Road, to be carried out at the same time as this would be more efficient given their proximity to each other.

Evergreen will also look into the practicality of a trial re-surfacing using pea gravel on the Cox's Ground carpark.

- 7.3.2 The Chair updated the committee on progress over the silt clearance of the silt trap and wildlife corridor. Lanes had done a poor and incomplete job on the silt trap and it had been decided not to use them again. The lead director had a list of alternative contractors, including a name supplied by former Lanes employees. Aquatic Solutions on the other hand had done an excellent job clearing silt and reeds from the wildlife corridor, even though they had caused minor damage to the brickwork of a wildlife corridor culvert. A resident had been very helpful in investigating this and clearing silt from the culvert exit. There had also been minor damage to some tarmac, which Evergreen would repair. It had been decided to use a safe herbicide to help control the reeds in future.
- 7.3.3 There had been a recent incident of pollution in the silt trap, where the water became milky. Thames Water had attended promptly and Dave Stickland reported that it was probably a paint spillage. There had been a marked improvement in TW's response to such incidents.
- 7.3.4 Aquatic Solutions had been taken off FirstPort's list of contractors as they had not been used recently. This had resulted in their almost calling off the job as they had not received a purchase order. FirstPort were requested to ensure this did not happen again with other contractors who had not been used for a while.
- 7.3.5 Maintenance of the swale behind Clearwater Place was discussed. Evergreen would be asked to carry out regular clearing of weeds and debris twice a year and also to get rid of the bullrushes that had appeared in one area adjacent to the GreenSquare block.
- 7.3.6 While working on the inspection chamber on the towpath, Thames Water had damaged the adjacent railings around the silt trap 'dog leg'. There was deep water behind these railings so they would have to be repaired. Evergreen and the GSC would investigate.
- 7.3.7 The bike cull was underway, with FirstPort having tagged the bicycles ready for their next visit on 10 December to check on bikes still tagged.

7.3.8 The willows by the letterbox had been cut down, and the black poplar on the green was due to be felled as it is rotten and poses a danger. A letter of explanation had been sent by the Chair to all residents. Two new trees would be planted by the letterbox, possibly the honey locust (*Gleditsia Sunburst*), after the repaving of the path. A holm oak had already been planted a few years ago, to replace the decayed black poplar and the GSC will consider planting another tree on the other side of the poplar. It was agreed to retain a two-metre stump from the poplar in order to produce a piece of sculpture.

7.3.9 Evergreen had been asked to renew the car park markings in Complins Close and also to mark visitor spaces with a 'V'.

7.3.10 An ornamental pear tree was due to be planted in place of the alder in Frenchay Road which is due to be cut down because of a large surface root threatening the nearby house.

7.3.11 Any other items resulting from the walk-around of 4 November:

The dead tree at the end of Frenchay Road and another in Complins Close needs to be removed.

Leaves outside 19 Lark Hill need to be swept up.

The overhanging willows behind 14-15 Cox's Ground need to be trimmed.

There are loose pavements outside 1 Lark Hill.

All these items would be discussed with Evergreen at a meeting arranged for the next day.

8 Scrutiny Sub-Committee

8.1 Nothing to report.

9 Feedback

9.1 Nothing to report.

10 Managing Agent

10.1 Nothing to report.

11 WRACIC

11.1 There would be no official litter pick while Covid restrictions were in place. However, litter pickers were available from a director so that individuals could clear up particular areas.

11.2 A new edition of Waterways World was ready and about to be distributed. It included a recipe for mulled wine, as the annual hog roast would not be taking place this year.

12 Any other business

- 12.1 A director had been approached by neighbours in Cox's Ground regarding four notices which had been posted anonymously around the estate requesting 'Covid Marshalls [sic]' to report any gatherings of two more people, including children, to the police and claim a £50 reward. A director queried our policy on notices and suggested that people should be allowed to put up notices but also people should be allowed to take them down. But the Chair said that the WMC had no control over council-owned lamp posts and signs, but made it clear that we do not allow posters or notices to be put on WMC property such as railings, without permission, and that such permission would only be given in very exceptional circumstances. He also said that the committee could have no opinion on the content of notices, as long as they were legal. He thought that allowing people to put up and take down notices would cause arguments and bad feeling and that a free-for-all would also look very messy and untidy. A director wondered if this poster might be the first of a number of posters, given the very difficult current circumstances and strong feelings around on a number of issues. Some people thought that the posters might have been put up by someone very irritated by the recent bad behaviour by some children and young people in the area, and therefore might be a one-off. Following much discussion, it was agreed that the situation should be monitored over the coming months to see if this was just a one-off. It was not thought advisable to institute or advertise a system whereby permission should be sought for putting up notices on WMC property, as this had never happened in the past and it had never been a problem.
- 12.2 There was some discussion of a campaign being waged by a resident against the local boaters for allegedly burning old treated or painted wood that gave off noxious fumes. We understand that the boaters are not allowed to burn such items and the resident has been informed of this. However, this is a matter for the City Council and the Canal and River Trust, not WMC, and the relevant councillor had already been involved.

13 Dates of next meetings

- 13.1 AGM: 17th December 2020 at 7.30pm via Zoom**
- 13.2 Committee meetings 2021: 19 January, 16 March**