

**WATERWAYS MANAGEMENT COMPANY**  
**MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING NO 89**

**Tuesday 16 March 2021 at 7.30pm**

**Online meeting via Zoom**

**Present:** Adrian Olsen (Chair), Tao Tao Chou, Ann Hall, Kate Lack, Adrian Mourby, Nicholas Orme, Paula Reynolds, Louise Robertson, Hilary Sorensen, Raquel Stremme, Mary Tovey, Liz Wheeler

**In attendance:** Rachel Dolacinski and Natalie Griffiths, FirstPort Property Services

**Minute taker:** Imogen Olsen

**1 Apologies for absence**

1.1 Brian Shine

**2 Approval of the minutes of meeting 88 held on 19 January 2021**

2.1 Approval of the minutes was proposed by a director and seconded by another and agreed unanimously.

**3 Matters arising from the minutes**

3.1 (3.1) FirstPort were pursuing GreenSquare for a resolution to the problem of the noisy wooden floor in 4 Clearwater Place.

3.2 (3.3) A director had organised a working party to clean the EJW bridge. It was hoped that eventually the County Council would repaint both this bridge and the newly cleaned Frenchay Road bridge. However, Councillor Howson had warned that the job, which would involve sandblasting all the metalwork, might prove too expensive to be seen as a priority.

3.3 (3.4) The lead director provided an update on the transfer of the freehold from Berkeley Homes. Our solicitor was still waiting for a response from the Berkeley Group legal department, to whom our queries had been referred. The director had recently chased Berkeley Homes again.

3.4 (3.6) There had been renewed complaints from Complins Close residents concerning toxic pollution from boaters on the canal (correspondence had been previously circulated). It was agreed that this was not within the remit of WMC and should be left to the City Council and the Canal and River Trust to deal with.

**4 Moving the date of the AGM to autumn – report of the working group**

4.1 Four directors had formed a working group to research the possibility of moving the AGM from April/May to the autumn. Currently the audited service charge accounts are reviewed by the AGM over a year after the end of the financial year and this is thought to be too long an interval. A move from May to autumn this year would mean having to review two sets of accounts at the same meeting for this year only, but FirstPort had

confirmed that this was not a problem. It was pointed out that the company accounts, which are dormant, are different from the service charge accounts. FirstPort also confirmed that both they and the auditors, Wayne Townsend, would be able to turn round the next set of accounts in time. It was therefore proposed by a director and seconded by a director that the AGM be moved to the autumn for this year and thereafter. This was unanimously agreed, and after some discussion a target date of the first week of November was decided on.

## **5 Rear passageway in Lark Hill**

- 5.1 There had been renewed requests for a gate to be installed in a rear access passageway in Lark Hill and in the passage way behind the northern end of the Crescent, following break-ins to garden sheds. The FirstPort legal department had checked the terms of the house transfer document and advised that all such passageways and footpaths throughout the estate are in fact rights of way, and could not legally be blocked or obstructed in any way. The residents have been informed.

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

### **6.1 Finance**

- 6.1.1 The timing of the production of audited accounts had already been discussed at 4.1 above.
- 6.1.2 The budget for 2021-22 had been set in consultation with the Chair and Treasurer. There is little change from the current year except that we are continuing to build up the reserves for those apartment blocks that are due to have lift modernisation work in the coming years.

### **6.2 Apartment Blocks Sub-Committee**

- 6.2.1 A director explained that several residents of blocks in Complins Close wanted to keep expenditure down by eliminating non-essential redecoration works (including steam cleaning). FirstPort agreed to supply a list of proposed expenditure for this and other blocks due for redecorations so that items could be approved or otherwise by the ABSC at their next meeting.
- 6.2.2 The yellow lines in Complins Close have still not been renewed. FirstPort explained that this job was on Evergreen's list to be done when there are no cars parked there. There was much discussion as to whether Evergreen were being given too much work for them to cope with and whether perhaps they needed some assistance. However, Covid restrictions had made things difficult for them, and it was anticipated that an emergence from lockdown would improve the situation. It was unanimously agreed that Evergreen were doing an excellent job in difficult circumstances and that we would need to review the situation as time goes on.
- 6.2.3 There is a long-standing leak in the roof at 1-25 Stone Meadow. FirstPort explained that the surveyor had found a building fault in that the lead flashing did not extend high enough and so in driving rain water was able to penetrate underneath the tiles. The tiles will have to be removed and the flashing extended upwards. This work is in hand.

- 6.2.4 It was reported that the light in the Complins Close bin store was still not working. FirstPort explained that the handyman had confirmed that all was well, but they would ask him to have another look.
- 6.2.5 The lift at 44-60 Frenchay Road is the first priority for modernisation work, and a specification was currently being drawn up by the lift consultant. Once this is done, we can go out to tender and ascertain the real cost of the works which may be more or less than the estimate.
- 6.2.6 The surveyor had still not attended to investigate the issue of stacked automatic window openings at 30-47 Cox's Ground and the implications for other blocks but this is due.

### **6.3 Gardening Sub-Committee**

- 6.3.1 The re-paving works carried out by New Driveway were considered a great success. The next priority areas to new paths would be scheduled for 2-32 EJW and at the back of 30-47 Cox's Ground. Evergreen and New Driveway had looked at the car-parking area in Cox's Ground and we await a quote for remedial work.
- 6.3.2 The black poplar on the green is being felled in stages, but it had proved so rotten that plans for a sculpture made from the remaining trunk had had to be jettisoned. It had been suggested that a bench could be made from the stump instead. A sweet chestnut had been planted to the north of the stump, to balance the holm oak planted to the south several years ago. Two honey locusts (*Gleditsia Sunburst*) had been planted by the post-box and the new ornamental pear tree planted in Frenchay Road to replace the alder that had had to be felled because of root problems had proved very popular with residents.
- 6.3.3 Evergreen had carried out extensive tree/shrub removals, pruning and new planting throughout the estate. Further work was in hand. There had been some complaints about tree-felling and noise, partly because residents were working from home during lockdown and noticed it more.
- 6.3.4 The big poplar at the back of Fielders Row by the lakeside was due to be felled the next day, Wednesday 17 March. Some of the felled logs will be placed in the rectangular area close by to form a loggery for beetles, etc.
- 6.3.5 A director raised the issue of the swale behind Clearwater Place, which needed to be weeded. It was explained that the best time to carry out this operation was when the weeds were in full leaf, as that is when the systemic herbicide works best. The job was on Evergreen's list of work.
- 6.3.6 There had been some damage/wear to various areas caused by recent wet weather and heavy use during lockdown. Some remedial work may be required, but it was hoped that many areas such as the grass on the Green would regenerate themselves once life returned to normal. It was agreed that these issues would be looked at during the next GSC walkabout, including the smaller green at the bridge end of Frenchay Road to find a solution to the current worn 'path of desire'.
- 6.3.7 There was a great deal of further discussion about Evergreen's workload, already discussed at 6.2.1 above. FirstPort offered to ask Jerry our regular handyman to renew

the yellow lines in Complins Close to save Evergreen one job. It was agreed to monitor the situation and to discuss progress at the next GSC walkabout, in April.

- 6.3.8 The new No Parking signs had all now been installed by Evergreen. The No Through Road signs for the Stone Meadow cul-de-sacs were on order. It was agreed to keep an eye out generally to see if any further signs would be useful.
- 6.3.9 The lake pump now appeared to be working properly. FirstPort had asked Xylem to do a thorough overhaul on their next service visit.
- 6.3.10 The bike cull had been completed, with 52 bikes removed of which just one had been reclaimed so far. FirstPort were thanked for having taken over this job, previously carried out by residents.
- 6.3.11 It was agreed that the next GSC walkabout would be held in April. FirstPort would fix a date with Evergreen, avoiding Easter and the final week in April.

#### **6.4 Scrutiny Sub-Committee**

- 6.4.1 Nothing to report.

#### **7 Feedback**

- 7.1 Nothing to report.

#### **8 Managing Agent**

- 8.1 Nothing to report.

#### **9 WRACIC**

- 9.1 Nothing to report. Covid restrictions meant that no events could be held.

#### **10 Any other business**

- 10.1 A director raised an issue regarding the grassed area at the north western end of Cox's Ground. The owners of a house in Cox's Ground (no 25) currently hold a licence from Berkeley Homes for exclusive use of this area, which runs along the side of their house, as a garden. This licence can be terminated at any time by either side with 3 months' notice. However, as it is not fenced off and there are no warning signs, it looks no different from the estate's many communal grassed areas, and so it is not clear that use may be restricted. During negotiations by three directors with Berkeley Homes last year to transfer the freehold of the estate to WMC, BH asked if we wanted to include this licence with the general transfer and warned that if we wanted it to be terminated there would be a delay of some months. Therefore, to avoid any further delay we agreed that the licence would be replicated at the transfer. The owners had been informed of this by WMC.

However, the Committee expressed concern about any restrictions on community use in such an area resulting from the exclusive use granted by the licence. The licence was felt to be a strange anomaly and not in keeping with all the other open areas on the estate

which are freely available to all residents. No-one could explain why it had come into being, probably when the house was built. A director wondered if the original granting of the licence was in breach of the planning permission for the estate which may have required all open areas to be communal spaces. There was also the question of the area's maintenance, mainly grass cutting but in the past also damaged grass repair and replacement and fence mending, which is currently carried out by Evergreen. A number of Directors thought that while the Licence is in force WMC should not be responsible for maintenance. After a great deal of discussion, some Directors felt that this area should be for communal use and it was agreed that the issue of whether this area should be returned to communal use by WMC when it is the freeholder would be discussed and voted on by the Committee at a future date. There was a suggestion that a meeting could be set up with the owners to discuss the situation.

## **11 Dates of next meetings**

11.1 Dates were agreed for meetings in the new financial year 1 May 2021 – 30 April 2022, all Tuesdays at 7.30 pm:

2021: 11 May, 6 July, 14 September, 16 November

2022: 11 January, 15 March

The date/timing for the next AGM was discussed at 4.1 above.