



Minutes of the HLRA Meeting 12th February 2024

Present: Sarah Hands (SH) (Chair), Keith Bristow (KB), Annette Davies (AD), Sam Hollingsworth (SHW), Nicola Hughes (NH), Jon Kanareck (JK), Lyn Roberts (LR), Matthew Shaw (MS), James Sturgeon (JaS), Claire Wych (CW).

Apologies: Sarah Fisher (SF), June Heslop (JH), Ross Hollingshead (RH), Jordan Howard (JoH), Melanie Johnson (MJ), Angela Ogbe (AO), Claire-Louise Turnham (CT).

1. Welcome

2. Minutes of meeting held 8th January 2024- minutes agreed & are available on RMG LivingLondon. RMG are addressing the IT issues to ensure residents are informed when minutes are available on the portal.

7/24 Action: RMG to circulate minutes to residents via email. (RMG)

MJ

3. Berkeley Homes Report

No representative available. Updates provided upon request- recorded below in Item 6.

Sarah Fisher is moving on from her role with BH. The committee thanked her for efforts in working with them & look forward to working with her successor Ross Hollingshead.

4. RMG Report Organisation Updates – January 2024

There have been recent examples where residents are allowing or giving access to their children to enter the gym and using the facilities. Please note that children under the age of 16 may not enter the gym with no exceptions.

Drivers of vehicles leaving the estate at the front of house are advised that it is a traffic offence to turn right into the petrol station. Several near misses were reported to the Police who will be monitoring this area.

Estate manager ensured the door locks at Wallis Court were repaired.

Fly Tipping in the bin stores remains a problem. Residents are advised that if their waste cannot fit in the bin provided then it should be disposed of by taking it to the recycling centre. TMBC have subcontracted a company to enforce their fly tipping laws with fines.

Residents are encouraged to call the Police on the non-emergency number 101 should they witness anti-social behaviour.

We kindly request that visitor parking bays are only used for 24 hours and no return within 48hours. Please note that visitor bays are for all residents and visitors, residents who live closest to them do not have a priority for their usage.

The main water feature works were completed on Wednesday 03 January 2024.

There is an increase of residents who smoke & are disposing of their cigarette ends into communal areas from their properties. This is illegal and we ask these residents to stop this behaviour and to others we would encourage residents who witness this behaviour report the incident to Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council.

KGN Pillinger our water pump contractors carried out remedial works at Lakeview Court.

Estate manager has produced a monthly list of outstanding remedial works that require various contractors to quote for each of the tasks.

The estate team have distributed 10 tons of mulch around the estate.

5. SHG Report (SHG) – none available this month- no representative available.

6. Ongoing Actions

03/20 Jeffrey's Lane Pedestrian Crossing, 88/21 Parking Village Hall, 25/22 Road Adoption Plan (TRO with KCC.) BH advised that in relation to the Jeffreys Lane crossing, the raised table has replaced the zebra crossing due to KCC rejecting a crossing as the distances from the junctions are not over 5 meters as per the traffic sign regulations requirements. SH expressed her dissatisfaction at this situation & has written to KCC & TMBC raising concerns about the dangers posed to children crossing the road to get to/from Valley Invicta. She is awaiting replies.

Action: Liaise TMBC/KCC ref pedestrian crossing. (HLRA)

SH

Action: Update on progress of works required from BH.

RH

08/20a and 1/21 Review of Lake Level/Sluice Gate Operation

The committee viewed a video of the sluice gate being operated by two members of the estate team and raised concerns at the H&S risks posed by the process. The committee requested to see the risk assessment regarding the operation. RMG asked BH for a copy of the risk assessment for operating the sluice gate & hopefully this will be available soon. The committee expressed incredulity that a risk assessment had only been considered as a result of the HLRA requesting it.

Action: RMG to obtain Risk Assessment & provide further update.

JaS

16/21 Cracked Bonded Paving/17/21 Cobbles Booth/Alisander/Poynder

BH held a site meeting on 9th February with McCoda & they agreed a schedule of works. Work will be carried out roughly one area at a time over the course of several weeks between now and the end of April. Once the cobbles are attended to then the resin works will be carried out. These works are weather dependent and BH have built in a minor time contingency. BH will liaise with RMG to ensure that notices for the areas affected by works are issued in good time to affected residents. They will not be issued until it is confirmed the works will go ahead in order to prevent unnecessary disruption. NH asked what action was being taken in relation to the cobbled areas on adopted roads. JaS offered to re-contact KCC about these areas.

Action: Provide precise & timely information to affected residents. (RMG)

MJ

Action: Update on progress of works completion date & guarantee. (BH)

RH

Action: Update on cobbles on adopted roads. (RMG)

JaS

48/21 Tarmac Land – Overgrowing Plants Causing Damage to Fencing.

MJ has been in contact with Tarmac and they are open to resolving this issue. They have asked for a photo of the damage and overgrown plants. SHW will send photos of damage to RMG. RMG reported that sending a solicitor letter would cost in the region of £250. The fence line being damaged are private demised fences; RMG cannot instruct service charge funds to employ lawyers when there is no breach with Holborough Management Limited & therefore such a letter will not be sent.

Action: Send photos of damage to MJ (HLRA).

SHW

57/21 Estate Maintenance Outsourcing/ Concerns About Garden Maintenance

Melanie Johnson, John Shaw and Robert Butler (Head Gardener) produced a 'Holborough Lakes Grounds Maintenance Specification'. The committee all agreed that this was a well-constructed & informative document & thanked them for their efforts in producing such a professional document. The committee acknowledged that improvements had been seen in the garden maintenance around the estate & were impressed with the Robert's professional attitude to his role. JaS was confident that noticeable improvements would be seen around the development over the next 6 weeks. The committee expressed their wish that the Head Garden be permitted to manage the estate team as he feels appropriate. The purchase of a sit-on mower was discussed & the committee asked that a robust machine with a maintenance plan be purchased. JaS agreed to update the HLRA regarding the proposed purchase. NH raised concern about a resident's discarded cardboard rubbish in Booth Close & agreed to email JaS regarding this. RMG have not responded in relation to the request that senior manager Jas Sidhu attend a meeting. No sub-committee meeting has yet taken place. RMG have advised that the area around 157 Poynder area will be reseeded in the spring.

Action: SH, NH, JH & AD to arrange meeting, discuss & report back. (HLRA)

SH

Action: Jas Sidhu to be invited to HLRA meeting. (RMG)

MJ

85/21b Reducing the Impact of Fuel Charge Increases on Service Charges.

Two quotes to change 31 bollard light fittings to accommodate LED bulbs were presented to the committee. IEBB quoted £2,592, Asser Electrical quoted £2,828. The annual savings by carrying out these works was calculated at circa £1,300. The committee agreed that this work was a solid investment to reduce the service charge costs and support a reduction in electrical usage. It was suggested that a bulk order may reduce these costs. LR volunteered to ascertain the number of bollards involved & JaS agreed to discuss this with IEBB. RMG have asked the gym air con company to set the timer to operate during gym opening hours only. RMG said it was not worth putting the Village Hall heaters on timers as they are not used when the hall is closed. LR asked how it is ensured that they are turned off when the last user leaves? CW suggested that booster switches could be placed on the heaters which would turn them on for a limited time only. JaS agreed to look into these. The committee asked that the water features at the front of the estate be put on timers so that they do not operate during hours of darkness. JaS agreed to confirm this with BH.

Action: Discuss with IEBB reduction for bulk order. (RMG) JaS
Action: Research if booster switches can be placed on heaters Village Hall. (RMG) MJ
Action: Arrange for timers on water features. (RMG) JaS

28/22 Access to RMG Living for SHG Residents

No update available.

Action: Pass details of interested residents to RMG. (SHG) AO/JH

33/22 Faulty gate – Primrose Close-

RMG have produced a leaflet of instructions to operate the gate which includes taking a photo of the gate having been tied back with the provided cable ties. RMG require Primrose residents to sign this document in order to reduce the liability against RMG if injury/damage is caused as a result of a resident's negligence. SHW & MS both expressed their reticence to sign the waiver. JaS explained why this was considered a necessity by RMG. SHW explained that the gate was often forced open by persons who are non-residents and wondered what would be the consequences if injury/damage was caused in this instance. JaS explained that if residents wanted RMG agreement to operate the gate then they were required to sign the waiver. If the waiver was not signed, then RMG was not granting residents permission to operate the gate. JaS will send the letter to all Primrose residents.

Action: Letter to be sent to all Primrose residents. (RMG) JaS

37/22 Electricity Meters Map

JaS has reported the obsolete meters to the utility provider requesting they be disconnected, but they were not co-operating with this request & discussions are ongoing. Water's View meter has been repaired.

Action: Update on disconnection of obsolete meters. (RMG) JaS

26/23 LVC High Electricity Usage.

LR received a reply from JaS & LVC residents have been updated regarding this issue. Further discussions will take place outside of the HLRA meetings so this action was closed. **Action Closed**

12/23 Replacement Inspection Covers

RMG reported that these can be obtained from the water board. SHW requested that RMG provide precise specifications including sizing for replacement covers in order to ensure the correct size cover is purchased. Residents wish to know where just the covers can be purchased from, as most places sell the whole unit which is not required & is costly. SHW offered to discuss this issue direct with BH if they contacted her/visited her premises.

Action: Provide precise specifications (size HxWxD) of the replacement inspection covers & where metal covers (covers only not the whole unit) can be purchased from. (RMG) MJ

7/23 Wildflower Areas to Promote Bees

Signs placed.

Action Closed

20/23 Disposal of Grass Cuttings.

RMG reported that the cost of removing grass cuttings from the estate would cost in the region of £35k. SH expressed concern that the disposal sites on the estate were becoming full. NH clarified a point in the 'Garden Maintenance Specification' in that the disposal site is in Crossfields & not Booth Close. JaS felt that the disposal sites were still viable to use but offered to recheck the sites. CW suggested asking Tarmac if they had any land to sell to use for grass disposal.

Action: Recheck disposal sites. (RMG)

JaS

Action: Contact Tarmac to see if they have any land to be used for grass disposal. (RMG)

JaS

22/23 Gatehouse Maintenance and Repairs

The committee felt that the quote of £3,240 was too expensive for repairing the two posts and asked for another quote to be obtained. JK asked if there were standing orders as to obtaining more than one quote for works over a designated amount. JaS explained that this was not the case at RMG but anything over £1,000 was usually brought to the HLRA for consideration.

Action: Obtain second quote for gatehouse repairs. (RMG)

JaS

4/23 Park Repairs - MJ reported that bin repairs are complete, but the other works could not be completed due to frozen ground. A revisit date has not yet been arranged.

Action: Update on progress of repairs (RMG).

MJ

29/23 Insecurity at SHG Apartment Block.

No update available.

Action: Address insecurity SHG block. (SHG)

SHG

30/23 Holborough Road Resident Causing Damage to HL Land.

Invoice sent to Holborough Road resident for the damage caused.

Action Closed

1/24 Service charge- Household ratio's

JaS explained that as the estate has increased in size so each property's percentage ratio of the estate service charge has decreased slightly each year until the last phase was built in 2021. There was some discussion regarding this & JaS agreed to double check that this had taken place.

Action: Check that percentage ratio has decreased each year up to 2021. (RMG)

JaS

2/24 Service charge – Dive School Unit Building Insurance-

JaS confirmed that this charge was included in the Estate Service charge in error and would be refunded by BH for the years 2020, 2021 & 2022.

Action Closed

3/24 Poor Response From Estate Manager-

RMG have noted this & managers will try to respond more quickly.

Action Closed

5/24 Service Charge - Bus Route Fencing on Manley Boulevard- At a sub-meeting the committee agreed that this fence should no longer be repaired at residents' expense and should be removed as and when it is damaged. RMG have agreed to this and CW identified that a grant from Woodland Trust might be available to replace the fence with natural hedgerow plantings which JaS & MJ will investigate further

Action: Research grant available for planting hedgerow. (RMG)

MJ/JaS

6/24 Road Marking on Adopted Road-

RMG reported that this was done at the cost of BH/KCC not residents.

Action Closed

8. AOB

8.1 Service charge- JK expressed concern over the increase in the 2024 service charge. JaS expressed regret that there was a higher than usual percentage increase this year, but explained this was due to the need to pay for security guards & the increase in market costs of electricity. A number of the committee expressed disagreement that BH were not funding the security guards as they were

the owners of the land & had a legal responsibility to users of their land for their H&S. SH advised that she had written to all members of the ASB task force expressing disappointment with BH's attitude. JaS explained that BH had made the decision not to pay for the security guards, but it was felt that their services would be a necessity & so residents had to cover the costs. JK wished to record his disagreement with this decision & expressed his dissatisfaction with the service charge increase. He suggested that RMG consider how savings might be made with more effective management of the Estate Team's work operations. JK also expressed his dissatisfaction with BH's failure to discuss the security issues face to face with the HLRA. JaS explained that BH are RMG's client and they sign off the budget not the residents, but when the development is handed over resident directors will sign off the budget. JK stated that he did not feel JaS's response was an adequate one. JaS accepted that in hindsight he could have discussed the budget increase with the HLRA prior to its publication. SHW queried why the security guard cost was based upon the square footage of the property. JaS explained that this was how the service charge was calculated according to the agreed lease/contract & could not be changed for individual items.

8.2 Dogs Fouling in and around Poynder Drive/Linnit Road (SH) (9/24)

Residents have raised concern about the amount of dog poo discarded in this area by one particular dog. RMG will communicate with the identified owner instructing them to clear up after their dog. Other areas of the development blighted by abandoned dog poo were identified. JaS explained that the estate team will pick up dog poo left by inconsiderate dog owners. The committee thanked the team for doing this unsavoury task and expressed their disappointment with irresponsible dog owners.

9/24 Action: Communicate with dog owner Poynder Drive. (RMG) JaS

8.3 Finalising the fountain repairs. CW reported that there is still tarmac missing on one of the visitor parking spaces near Edwards Close flats by the water board sub-station.

10/24 Action: Update ref tarmac parking space near water board sub-station. (RMG) MJ

8.4 Village Hall.

LR circulated a document listing the expenses for the Village Hall identifying that it cost residents circa £4,000 a year over & above the income it generates. She expressed concern that with the karate club no longer using the hall this cost could substantially increase. She proposed that a sub-committee be formed to look at how to increase income. She also requested that the Estate Manager include in his monthly report how much income the hall had generated. SH, CW, AD & NH volunteered as sub-committee members.

11/24 Action: Estate Manager to include VH bookings in his monthly report. (RMG) JaS

8.5 Booth Close Storm Damage

NH asked what the situation was regarding this. JaS explained that the quote provided for repairs appeared too high & RMG were obtaining another one & pursuing an insurance claim.

Meeting Closed 9pm

Next Meeting 7pm Monday 11th March 2024