



Email: hello@holboroughlakes.uk

Website: <https://holboroughlakes.uk/>

Minutes of the HLRA meeting on the 17th July 2023

Present: Sarah Hands (chair), Nicola Hughes (NH), Melanie Johnson (MJ), Keith Bristow (KF), Annette Davies (AD), Sam Hollingsworth (SW), James Sturgeon (JaS), Claire Louise (CL), Sarah Fisher (SF), Angela Ogbe (AO), Claire Wych (CW)

Apologies: Matthew Shaw (MS), Jordan Howard (JH), John Kanerak (JK), June Heslop (JH)

Holborough Lakes Residents Association (SH)

Welcome and opening statement

Our focus for this last year has been to move our action list on and clear down some of the historic items that were naturally stalled by covid, this combined with the work behind the scenes to deal with the Anti-Social behaviour and try to bring to the fore some of the larger aspects of snagging that Berkeley Homes have been progressing.

We still have some way to go and we continue to move forward some of the larger issues that require longer target dates.

Achievements

- General improvements of cleaning in the gym and the village hall following a change of contractor
- Installation of combination locks on the bike stores following theft
- Delays with sellers' packs identified and addressed
- Overflowing lake was addressed by Berkeley Homes and a sluice gate was installed to help control the flow of water
- We have continued pressure for the installation of fibre broadband across the community
- CCTV has been installed to help secure the community with up to date technology
- Working on a tender document with a third party to allow for the gardening services to be tendered
- Highlighted the need for more energy efficient bollard lighting across the community – trials running
- Alternative contractor located for the maintenance of the rills along Manley Boulevard
- Request for additional dog bins have been listened to and will be installed shortly
- Safety mirror was purchased for the Alisander Pond residents following complaints of dangerous parking adjacent to the pond
- Concerns over the Buxus bushes were raised and all plants have been identified and removed, with suitable alternative plantings in their place

Accounts Inspection

In addition to the above, we would like to thank the small group of volunteers outside of the HLRA whom give up their time to review the invoices that make up the service charge accounts, they were able to successfully identified a number of cost savings in the 2021 accounts which have been reflected in the service charges

Anti-social behaviour

The HLRA have been successful in forming a multi-agency task force working with the police, TMBC, KCC, RMG, Berkeley Homes, our local MP Tracey Crouch, SHG, and Nemes by trying to put in to place resolutions to eliminate the anti-social behaviour that we have seen over the last two years, this work is ongoing and will shall continue to meet regularly until such time as we are satisfied that residents and Nemes can quietly enjoy our lake area. One of the biggest improvements in this area is the installation of the new CCTV which we hope will assist the police in identifying those individuals who present a danger to people or property.



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We maintain the overriding message is that if you see action befitting harm to person or property, please report this to the police at your earliest opportunity, every incident is followed up.

The Role of the HLRA

There has been some speculation of late regarding the role that the Holborough Lakes Residents Association holds and the power that we have, for the sake of clarity I would like to make the following statement:

The Residents Association is a group of volunteers whom each have a one vote share to sit on the committee, our purpose is to represent the views of the community as a whole, we in no way receive any form of compensation, financial gain, recompense or salary for doing so, there is no personal interest to be gained by sitting on the committee, we seek to be a bridge of communication between RMG, Berkeley Homes and Southern Housing Group to discuss the community we live in, review processes, discuss improvements and feed back ideas for growth and sustainability.

Berkeley Homes employ RMG to manage the site on their behalf this includes everything from block management, grounds maintenance, to parks and green spaces. As a courtesy RMG and Berkeley Homes afford us (the HLRA), the opportunity to discuss matters of concern or improvement within our community.

The full scope of our remit is contained within the constitution which is available on request. It is for Berkeley Homes to decide when Holborough Lakes is handed over to the residents and at that point a board of directors will be appointed to Holborough Management Company and only then will that board of directors be in a position to renew the contract with RMG or appoint a new managing agent, Holborough Management Company will have no paid directors on its board.

Re-election of members

Chair – Sarah Hands

Vice-Chair – Sam Hollingsworth

Secretary – Lynne Roberts

Committee members – Annette Davies, Nicola Hughes, Keith Bristow, Jordan Howard, Claire Wych, John Kanerak

Adrian Soper will now step down as a committee member – the committee would like to thank him for his valuable contribution.

Berkeley Homes (SF)

To continue to address ASB, the security provided onsite has been extended to 31st July. Additional planting has been ordered in more mature stages of growth so once planted they will be effective as a deterrent more quickly.

The cracking to the resin on the top trim trail as well as on Primrose Close and Twelves Acres Road – cracked resin, as well as some cobbled areas in phase 1 and 2, are to be brought up to standard. The work across the whole site will take approximately 8 weeks and a letter will be sent to residents regarding the likely impact on parking.

BH continue to progress the TRO and are waiting to hear back regarding parking.

Installation on fibre via Hyperoptic is continuing across the estate with a target of a mid-August launch. BT are also putting in cable although no further details are available on this at this time.

RMG Report (JaS)

JaS introduced the team present at the AGM – himself (Head of New Business for RMG), Mel Johnson (Senior Property Manager) and John Shaw (Estate Manager).



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RMG has overseen management of HL since 2006, with JaS overseeing management since 2013. The team are responsible for setting the annual budget, general maintenance, ensuring all H&S matters, maintaining grounds, and organising major redecoration.

John Shaw leads the on-site team assisted by head gardener Steven Johnson. The onsite team includes Martin, Roger, Tony, and Robert. Together they have recently carried out fence and post repairs and relayed paving which has saved money on contractors. JaS personally thanked them for their hard work come rain or shine.

JaS directed attendees to the RMG Living portal for regular updates on events and work across the estate.

Southern Housing Group Report (AO)

Since the last AGM in 2022, Southern Housing Group has ceased to exist due to a merger in December 2022. The new organisation is known as Southern Housing, with the merger, the combined property portfolio of Southern Housing is 77,000 making Southern Housing one of the largest housing providers in the UK with homes across London, the Southeast, the Isle of Wight, and the Midlands. Paul Hackett is the Chief Executive of the new organisation.

I (Angela Ogbe) remain Home Services Manager for the legacy Southern Housing Group residents in Medway, and Tonbridge & Malling, while June Heslop remains the Area Services Manager for Kent and Medway. Samuel Hutton is the Home Ownership Property Manager for Kent and Medway. Our in-house repairs team – Southern Maintenance Services – has been expanded too.

Southern Housing has continued to maintain various tenure types in HL made up of: Leasehold, Shared Ownership, Intermediate Market Rent, Affordable Rent and Social Rent. As always Holborough Lakes remains a very desirable place for our residents across the tenure. We continue to work with Tonbridge and Malling to fill any general needs void property.

The Group has continued to have very high rate of successful access into property to service gas and electric when due.

Optiplex: Our in-house team are working to ensure that fibre optic is available to our residents. The Team is currently liaising with various providers to ensure competitive rates.

ASB: I have continued to liaise with partners such as the Police, the HLRA and CSU etc to ensure that HL is a safe community.

Resident can contact the Group via the Service centre on 0300 303 1773, or webchat and/or via email at Service.Centre@shgroup.org.uk

Southern Housing Group will continue to provide the best services for its residents and act in the best interest of its residents as a responsible landlord.

Fire Risk: To prevent fire in the blocks, letters will be sent by the end of July 2023 requesting that residents not have barbecues on their balconies. There are also regular inspection to remove items from the communal hallway, under the stairs and electric cupboards.

Finally, from June and I, we want to say thank you to Sarah Hands, members of the Committee and RMG. There has been great collaborative work.

Questions from attendees

Appearance of the estate

The standard of maintenance of the estate appears to be better at the front than the back. KB asked RMG to explain why. LR noted that the dead sapling by the car park for Lakeview has been replaced several times and urged RMG not replace it again. AD noted that the planting that runs parallel to the lavender along the lake walk is being eaten and asked whether the head gardener can review it and

decide how to treat.

- JaS confirmed that all areas of the estate are treated the same however due to the hot weather and hosepipe ban, several areas of the estate don't look as good as they'd like.
- RMG have budgeted for replanting, particularly in phase 2 (Poynder Drive apartment blocks – bushes that were diseased), Phase 3 (behind Providence House) and phase 5 (Lakeview apartments – to replant Buxus attacked by moths). JaS also confirmed plants will be replaced on Primrose Close.
- The plant to replace the Buxus is the 'Red Robin'. This is a hardy plant that was advised to them by their weed contractor (JaS/MJ).
- The area between the Pavillion and Nemes Diving School has been left wild to help reduce ASB. Nemes are responsible for this section but RMG can cut it if requested.
- Planting will commence when the weather is more favourable (September/October), for now, weeding is the priority.

Noise of estate vehicles

A resident noted that the noise of the sit on mower passing along Crossfield Walk is very loud and very frequent (10+ times a day) and that trimmings are being left in the car park. It was previously agreed that compost won't be deposited before 11am – with a few limited exceptions.

- JaS/JS explained that, particularly in summer months, there is often several tonne bags of waste a day. At present the Crossfield Walk compost site is the only one that can be used while the waste behind the Poynder park composts down to a safe level.
- While taking the waste offsite is an option, on-site composting was being used to keep costs down for residents.
- There is an ongoing discussion about whether the gardening is being outsourced, if it is not, the team can look at investing in electric vehicles.

Action: RMG to cost having the waste taken offsite

Action: JS to discuss with onsite team regarding keeping the car park tidy and limiting deposits being made before 11am

Action: HLRA to research hot bins for low odour quick composting

Action: Berkeley Homes/RMG to discuss whether phase 14 can be used for composting

Fencing in of the lake to prevent ASB

Residents requested an update on fencing in the pontoon to reduce ASB.

SF confirmed that Berkeley Homes has an idea on cost and its technical team are reviewing options.

- A consultation will go out to properties imminently that have a view of the lake to understand the level of support and any concerns. Those residents will need to agree if and how the lake is fenced in. Fencing behind Lake View Court is also being considered.
- Residents will be asked to justify their view when they have said no to see if the design can overcome their objections. SF felt it would not be right to pursue a scheme if only 51% of residents have agreed – they want to understand the objections.

NH questioned what Berkeley Homes intend to do about the fence on the footpath between the two lakes as this is where most youths are accessing the lake now. LR added that this needs to be addressed otherwise money spent on fencing the front of the lake will be ineffective.

- SF was unable to provide an answer. SH noted that this is a concern that the HLRA have raised repeatedly since last summer and features in the design out crime report.
- The option of a concrete block fence was discussed (due to the existing metal fence being repeatedly cut with an angle grinder). There were concerns from RMG that this may be difficult to execute due to the location and getting materials to the area, SH advised that there is access via the council field which could accommodate the vehicular access.

AD raised that the lake is too easily accessible by children who won't understand the danger of how deep it is.

- SF responded that it passed the original ROSPA inspection which deemed it safe.

Action: SF to review design out crime report and respond regarding the fence on the footpath.

ASB

A resident raised that they felt that the community were no further on with stopping ASB except for the cameras. Clive Bob stated that he felt that the security not effective, and asked how confident Berkeley Homes are that the multiagency approach will work and what the strategy is after summer?

- SF responded that the prickly planting is on order and that they are working with the design out crime team of which the fencing and planting are all part of this plan.
- JaS added that he felt there has been lots of positive progress, although appreciate that action may not have been as quick as hoped. In terms of achievements the estate now has constant security, a Public Space Protection Order and new CCTV installed. BH are considering an injunction on the land, planting is on order, and fencing is being costed up. The estate will be in an even stronger position next summer.
- There was discussion regarding Nemes' role in tackling the ASB as their pontoon is often at the centre of it – although ASB occurred long before the pontoon was built as the kids used to jump from the banks instead.
 - SF responded that it is hoped that the measures already undertaken and outlined will be effective. Closing the dive school is not an attractive option for the community and is therefore "not on the table".
- Another resident expressed that they felt that the ASB was stopped much quicker this summer but that the cost of security is significant.
 - SH agreed that the security team have been great at diffusing situations. She noted that a plain clothes police officer came down to the lake to observe indicating that the Police are taking the issue more seriously this year. One evening they "ran out of handcuffs". The cost of the security for the summer period will be met by BH.
- SF concludes that they will continue with the taskforce until a calm and peaceful community has been achieved.

Invoicing and re-invoicing processes

NH asked why some of the work is being paid for directly by BH and then others being paid for by RMG and re-invoiced.

- SF responded that it is quicker for RMG to set up smaller suppliers such as the security team on their system and re-invoice it.
- NH noted that residents will want to be confident that these costs have been re-invoiced correctly within the accounts.
- NH requested that all costs be kept noted as they are paid so that these items and settlement for those costs can be easily identified when the invoices are inspected.

Repair of cobbled areas / roads / paths

Work to repair cobbled and tarmacked areas across the site is expected to begin on Monday with small areas of tarmacking. Anyone affected will be given a week's notice. The work will include areas around Southern Housing apartments.

- NH requested a map of the areas. Post meeting, this map has been received, but shows that the proposed work does not cover all effected areas across the estate – notably that adopted roads have been left out.
- KB noted that simply lifting the cobbles in affected areas will not be sufficient, foundations to the edge to the road of those sections should also be investigated.
- It was also noted that repairs done to the estate entrance have lasted well, and that learnings

should be taken from this if possible.

- SF confirmed that if McCoda (contractor) lift cobbles and see issues with the sub-base, they will remedy it.

There were concerns that if the issue is not resolved properly now, it will occur again in a few years once Berkeley Homes has left site.

- SF said that they are still visiting sites nine years after handover.

Action: SF to discuss a guarantee on the works with McCoda

Cost of electricity / Lake View Court

LR raised a concern that the electricity bill for Lake View is very high - £6,000 – and would like to know what RMG can do to reduce the cost as there are lots of lights and they are seemingly on all the time.

- MJ confirmed that they had investigated this before but turning them off would return a very negligible amount.
- JaS added that they have been seeing rates three times' as high as usual due to the electricity market. Contracts will be reviewed again in October.

Residents requested that the timer length be reduced.

Action: JaS to find another electrician for a second opinion.

Water pump in Lake View Court

AD/KB noted that the emergency light on the water pump in Lakeview is still on. It was meant to be dealt with at the beginning of the year.

- JaS responded that the advice from the manufacturer is that nothing needs to be done.

This remains an unresolved issue that will require continued dialogue.

Parking on Booth Close

Parking on Booth Close is dangerous and often blocks the waste collection vehicle meaning residents need to wheel all the bins to the entrance.

- SH advised that as it is an adopted road, inconsiderate parking should be reported to TMBC.

Use of alleyways

A resident asked whether bins can be stored in the alleyways behind the houses.

JaS confirm that bins are meant to be stored in the gardens. Alternative agreements can be made with neighbours.

Meeting closed: 8.30pm