



Minutes of the HLRA Meeting 8th January 2024

Present: Sarah Hands (SH) (Chair), Keith Bristow (KB), Annette Davies (AD), Sam Hollingsworth (SHW), Nicola Hughes (NH), Melanie Johnson (MJ), Jon Kanareck (JK), Angela Ogbe (AO), Lyn Roberts (LR), Claire Wych (CW).

Apologies: Sarah Fisher (SF), June Heslop (JH), Jordan Howard (JoH), Matthew Shaw (MS), James Sturgeon (JaS), Claire-Louise Turnham (CT).

1. Welcome

2. Minutes of meeting held 13th November 2023- agreed. Minutes have now been uploaded to RMG portal but not circulated via email to residents. LR stressed that the whole purpose of the HLRA is to represent the HL residents & that residents need to be made aware when minutes are published & available to view.

6/24 Action: RMG to circulate minutes to residents via email. (RMG)

MJ

3. Berkeley Homes Report

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

4. RMG Report (RMG) Organisation Updates – November/December 2023

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 48 hours. 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 rills and water features were serviced by our contractors on 11 December 2023.

The main water feature was closed down on 11 December due to the main structure not being serviced by the cascading water. Subsequent investigations by Fairwater found a surface pipe had cracked and required replacing. All 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.

Our electrical contractors were onsite on several occasions during the months of November and December replacing bulbs and sensors internally and externally. They also aided with the Christmas lights decor on the village green and front of house.

On 11th December, Thomson our environmental contractors de-chlorinated the pumps at Lakeview Court and 2 Walters Close.

Our Gym contractors have repaired several machines in the Gym.

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

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

Estate manager coordinated contractors to attend to all issues relating to a leak within Providence House. Contractors attended and have repaired the majority of the redecoration works. The internal lights and doors are subject to a final inspection.

Estate manager engaged with Northfleet services to clean the carpets at Lakeview Court.

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.

The estate team have distributed 20 tons of mulch around the estate.

5. SHG Report (SHG) – none available this month.

6. Ongoing Actions

03/20 **Jeffrey's Lane Pedestrian Crossing, 88/21 Parking Village Hall, 25/22 Road Adoption Plan (TRO with KCC.)** SH expressed concern that there is no planned pedestrian crossing for the area near the school. She will liaise with TMBC/KCC & Valley Invicta staff to address this. The meeting stressed the need for drivers to adhere to the 20mph speed limit on the estate.

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

SH

Action: Update on progress of works required from BH.

SF

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

The committee were frustrated that this issue had not been progressed & that RMG were accepting of the view that the Estate Manager was able to manage operating the sluice gate. It was identified that other people may need to operate the gate and that a manual handling risk assessment needed to be carried out to identify safe work practices for every potential operator.

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

JaS

Action: RMG to circulate video of gate operation. (*Circulated post meeting*)

MJ

16/21 **Cracked Bonded Paving**

BH plan to carry out resin bound works as follows:

1. Barrow Hill Close scheduled for 15/01/24 – approx. 1 week to take up existing surfacing.
2. Primrose Close scheduled for 22/01/24 – approx. 2 weeks to take up existing surfacing.
3. Note: Trim Trail, Barrow Hill and Primrose Close will have resin laid in one go, this is scheduled for 05/02/24.

SHW expressed concern that residents in these areas had not received any notification & stressed that residents require timely notifications to organise alternative plans for vehicle parking/charging if access/egress is prohibited. MJ advised that RMG were in the process of sending out emails/letters & that to her knowledge restrictions would only apply between the hours of 8am-5pm.

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

MJ

Action: Update on progress of works. (BH)

SF

17/21 **Cobbles Booth/Alisander/Poynder**

MJ has received a schedule of works from Berkeley. RMG are producing notices to advise residents affected by the works & these are being distributing accordingly. SH reported that BH could not source the same size blocks but had found similar sized blocks which enabled them to maintain the fit & pattern. NH reported that the blocks in Booth Close required urgent attention as they were extremely loose and present a trip hazard. Concern was expressed at the inadequate sanding process carried out by contractors. The committee wished to know when this work would be completed and what guarantee was provided- MJ agreed to check with SF. *Post-meeting update - McCoda are currently running behind due to the cold weather and snow.*

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

MJ/SF

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

RMG continues to chase Savills & C&A but no progress had been made. SH suggested that RMG arrange for a solicitor's letter to be sent out. This issue impacts 3 properties in Alisander Close.

Action: Update on completion of work & ongoing program. (RMG)

MJ

Action: Send solicitor's letter. (RMG)

MJ

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

SHW

57/21 **Estate Maintenance Outsourcing/ Concerns About Garden Maintenance**

JH circulated an email on 08/01/24 with comments for the Estate Maintenance sub-committee to consider. It was agreed that a meeting should be arranged imminently to discuss the issue of outsourcing this work. AO raised concerns about the lack of attention to the area around 157 Poynder Drive & this led to a discussion about what the estate team's winter plan was. JK expressed frustration with RMG consistently failing to meet repetitive requests for an acceptable written structure of the team's approach to estate maintenance. He asked MJ what the escalation process was for residents to express their dissatisfaction with the Estate Manager's performance and whether there should be quarterly client meetings with RMG senior management to facilitate a review of RMG's

performance. MJ explained that James Sturgeon's manager is Jas Sidhu & complaints can be escalated to him. SH suggested inviting Jas to a HLRA meeting.

Action: SH, NH, JH & AD to arrange meeting, discuss & report back. (HLRA) SH
Action: Jas Sidhu to be invited to HLRA meeting. (RMG) MJ
Action: Detailed winter work schedule for estate team to be circulated. (RMG) MJ
Action: Estate Team to attend to area around 157 Poynder Drive. (RMG) MJ

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

- MJ has now received two quotes to change bollard lights to LED fittings. Both were of a similar cost. (£2,592/ £2357 +VAT) She will forward these to the HLRA for discussion prior to the next meeting.
- SH asked if the heaters/air con in the gym & Village Hall could be put on timers to reduce costs & reduce temperature setting in gym. MJ agreed to look into this.
- NH proposed that the water features at the front of the estate & balancing pond be turned off or put on timers to reduce costs. MJ will check out if the fountain in the balancing pond is a functional or aesthetic feature. LR will research electric costs of these features & circulate for further discussion at the next meeting. It was agreed that residents would need to be consulted prior to any decision being made to turn off the features.
- CW raised the possibility of solar panelling being installed on apartment blocks & Village Hall, but this was felt to be dependent on BH as the Freeholder.

Action: Review quotes for replacement LED lights. (HLRA) HLRA
Action: Check if balancing pond fountain is functional feature. (RMG) MJ
Action: Research if timers can be placed on heaters/air con Gym/Village Hall. (RMG) MJ
Action: Prepare listing of electric costs for water features. (HLRA) LR
Action: Raise solar panelling possibilities with BH. (HLRA) CW

10/22 ASB (*Security Guard Costs in Service Charge*)

No further multi-agency meeting had taken place – next meeting is March. SH asked how the service charge figure of £25,000 for provision of security guards was arrived at. MJ said that this was a nominal sum based on last year's costs, but it may not all be required. It was stressed that residents were very unhappy with these costs. A lengthy discussion took place about the insufferable situation of ASB on this estate and nationally & the negative impact upon residents, but no other workable options were identified at this time. JK asked if Police/SHG took action against any tenants who were in breach of their tenancy due to ASB. SH advised that SHG were proactive in this respect. SHW suggested that the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner be invited to the next multi-agency meeting & SH agreed to follow this up. It was agreed that this issue would no longer be on the action list for every HLRA meetings as progress was limited, but SH would provide a summary following each multi-agency meeting.

Residents are advised to report all ASB incidents to Kent Police via 999 or 111

28/22 Access to RMG Living for SHG Residents

AO reported that there had been a disappointingly low uptake on this opportunity. MJ had not yet received the details of interested residents from SHG.

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

33/22 Faulty gate – Primrose Close- Leaflet has not yet been prepared.

Action: RMG prepare leaflet of instructions. MJ

37/22 Electricity Meters Map

RMG had prepared a list & map of the electric meters which had been circulated to members. LR had emailed JaS with some amendments to the list & stressed the urgency for RMG to establish if two of the meters could be disconnected to prevent unnecessary standing charges being incurred. MJ reported that JaS had contacted BH for assistance in this quest, but they had referred him to contact the power companies. Frustration was expressed at this. The contractor failed to attend as planned to repair the defective meter in Water's View- this has been rescheduled.

Action: Identify obsolete meters and arrange disconnection. (RMG) JaS
Action: Repair/replace defective electric meter Water's View. (RMG) JaS



26/23 LVC High Electricity Usage.

LR is awaiting a reply to an email from JaS before this can be progressed any further.

Review LVC electricity usage, (RMG & HLRA)

LR /JaS

12/23 Replacement Inspection Covers

MJ circulated a specification from BH. SWH stressed that what was needed was information on where suitable robust covers could be sourced from.

Action: RMG/BH to provide details of where robust inspection covers can be obtained. MJ

7/23 Wildflower Areas to Promote Bees

Signs will hopefully be in place next week.

Action: Wildflower verge signs to be displayed. (RMG) MJ

20/23 Disposal of Grass Cuttings.

SH advised the meeting that Hotbins are not an option due to logistical problems. No other system is viable. She suggested investigating the cost of offsite removal as continued disposal onsite was untenable. NH referred to the Estate Manager's calculations on grass waste (previously circulated) and asked that it be reviewed as it was believed that it was based on partially filled bags rather than full ones. It was felt that it was important to have reliable figures to calculate costs. *Post-meeting update – Estate Manager confirms his figures are accurate.*

Action: Investigate cost of offsite removal of grass cuttings. (RMG) MJ

22/23 Gatehouse Maintenance and Repairs

MJ reported that she had received a quote for £2,700 to repair & paint two pillars. SH requested a copy of this quote. The meeting stressed that they would like this work closely monitored by the Estate Manager to ensure that the preparation was carried out effectively to reduce the likelihood of further premature defects arising.

Action: Send copy of quote to SH. (RMG) MJ

4/23 Park Repairs - MJ reported that she has been advised of further delays with this work. *Post-meeting update – works due for completion this week (10/01/24).*

Action: Update on progress of repairs (RMG). MJ

29/23 Insecurity at SHG Apartment Block.

AO reported that SHG are obtaining quotes for repairs to the entrance doors & intercoms & then section 20 notices will be sent to residents. She was unable to provide a time frame for this.

Action: Address insecurity SHG block. (SHG) SHG

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

MJ explained that she had made a report to Kent Police & TMBC but had not received any response & was unaware of what, if any, action they had taken. She said that the Estate Manager had looked at the area & had reassured her that the damage was minimal and would be restored in the spring with grass seed. The meeting expressed dissatisfaction with this as there was a real potential of repeat behaviour. CW identified from her research that the company who owned the offending truck were registered at the related address in Holborough Road. RMG were asked to write to the residents and invoice them for the damage caused.

Action: RMG to send invoice to Holborough Road resident. (RMG) MJ

35/21 Update on Fibre Installation

Fibre has been rolled out by BT and installations are being actioned. It was confirmed that wiring had been carried out in the apartment blocks. **Action Closed**

05/22 Repairs To Water Feature At Front of The Community Entrance & 15/22 Rill Cleaning

Fairwaters completed further works to repair the water feature. Fairwaters last visit will be April.

Fountaineers instructed as contractors from then on.

Action Closed

08/23 Takeaway Services

SH has reviewed the proposed contract & agreed its contents. If vendors request permission to carry out business on the estate, then this contract will be offered to them. **Action Closed**



27/23 157 Ivy Poynder Drive- Ivy has been removed.

Action Closed

28/23 Damaged Fence Near LVC Car Park Fence appears to be repaired.

Action Closed

8. AOB

8.1 Service charge- Household ratio's – SH enquired if the apportionment ratios have been amended to reflect the final build as she believed there should have been a slight reduction. MJ was unable to answer this question but would refer it to JaS.

1/24 Action: Explain service charge apportionment ratios. (RMG)

JaS

8.2 Service charge – Dive School Unit Building Insurance- SH informed the meeting that Paula at Nemes wished to clarify that no charges for the dive school are covered by residents. LR/NH advised the meeting that their checks of the service charge accounts show residents have been charged the costs of the building insurance for the dive school unit since that building's completion. They have challenged this with JaS who has asked BH to explain & they are awaiting a response. It was requested that SH ask Paula to provide the evidence to show that she has also paid the building insurance costs so that this could be presented to RMG to ensure residents obtain refunds.

2/24 Action: Ask Nemes for evidence of payment for building insurance.

SH

8.3 Poor Response From Estate Manager- SH expressed frustration on behalf of a number of residents regarding the Estate Manager failing to reply to their email enquiries. MJ felt this was due to the change in his email address, but the committee did not accept this excuse and asked that he be advised to improve his response times. NH expressed her additional frustration at poor response times from JaS. The committee stressed that if RMG wished to retain the support of HL residents when BH leaves then their managers should be displaying their utmost professionalism during this transitional phase.

3/24 Action: RMG managers to respond more promptly to emails. (RMG)

MJ/JaS

8.6 Gym Fob IT System – LR highlighted that 43 residents are unable to access the gym as the Estate Manager is unable to issue gym fobs due to the IT system being defective. This has been ongoing since November. MJ informed the meeting that the system had hopefully been repaired that afternoon. SH asked that RMG inform residents when the system is operational. LR expressed her frustration that the situation had been allowed to continue for so long. *Post-meeting update – system now working.*

4/24- Update on gym fob IT system. (RMG)

MJ

4/24- Send out email to residents to advise when the gym fob system is working. (RMG)

MJ

8.7. Service Charge - Bus Route Fencing on Manley Boulevard- SH asked if we should we continue to repair this fence or remove it? Due to lack of time to discuss this fully it was deferred to an interim meeting. RMG were asked not to make any repairs in the meantime.

5/24 Action: Arrange meeting to discuss bus route fence. (HLRA)

(SH)

8.8 Road Marking on Adopted Road- NH asked who was paying for the recent line marking in Manley Boulevard as this is an adopted road & such work should not be charged to residents through their service charge. MJ said she will check this out.

6/24 Action: Check out who was responsible for line marking. (RMG)

MJ

8.9 JK asked if the increased service charge had been discussed at a previous HLRA meeting; it was explained that the budgets had not been released prior to our last meeting. Possible steps RMG could take to reduce the actual service charge spend had been covered under items 85/21b, 10/22, 37/22, 8.1, 8.2, 8.7 & 8.8. This specific item will be placed on the agenda for the February meeting for JK to speak to as there was no available time to explore his points at this meeting.