

Minutes of the HLRA Meeting 13th May 2024

Present: Sarah Hands (SH) (Chair), Keith Bristow (KB), Karen Brown (KaB), Annette Davies (AD), Melanie Johnson (MJ), Ashley Hasler (AH), June Heslop (JH), Ross Hollingshead (RH), Sam Hollingsworth (SHW), Nicola Hughes (NH), Lyn Roberts (LR), Claire Wych (CW).

Apologies: Angela Ogbe (AO), Matthew Shaw (MS), James Sturgeon (JaS), Claire-Louise Turnham (CT).

1. Welcome The Chair welcomed Ross Hollingsworth to his first HLRA meeting as the new BH representative. Prior to the meeting Jordan Howard resigned from the committee. The Chair thanked him for his contributions to the HLRA. Lyn Roberts stood down as Secretary following this meeting & a replacement was sought.

2. Minutes of meeting held 8th April 2024- minutes agreed & are available on HL notice boards but not yet on RMG Living London.

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

3. Berkeley Homes Report

RH met with SH on 09/05/24 & they had discussed ongoing actions. He provided updates on these issues to the committee as recorded within the minutes under **Section 6 Ongoing Actions**.

4. RMG Report

- 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.
- 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 are monitoring this area.
- 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.
- Complete weed control contractors visited to disperse the weeds on all hard surfaces throughout the development
- Contractors inspected and replaced two manhole covers at Edwards Close
- There have been recent examples where residents are allowing or giving access to their friends or family to enter the gym and using the facilities. This is not permitted.
- Fairwater, the water features contractor delivered their last service visit.
- Estate manager has produced a monthly list of outstanding remedial works that requires various contractors to quote for each of the tasks.
- 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.
- The estate team laid a further fifteen tons of mulch throughout the development for the purpose of weed suppressing.
- Safeplay contractors visited the Poynder playpark and repaired holes on the rubber flooring.

Village Hall income for April was £225. (Residents can hire hall. Cost of hire is £12.50 an hour and can be booked via the Estate Manager john.shaw@rmg.london)

5. SH Report

Bin Store Reinstatement & Fly Tipping

SH are experiencing a delay in the reinstatement of the bin store; they will provide an update on the programme of work and timeline once they have more information.

Southern Housing bin stores remain a problem. Southern Housing will continue to deal with this via written contact to residents to advise that if their waste cannot fit in the bin provided then it should be

disposed of by taking it to the recycling centre.

Walkabout

This month Rob the Senior Gardener joined Southern Housing staff (June, Angela, & a representative of Estate Care) on a walkabout. It gave the group an opportunity to look at repair issues, assess the gardening and provide feedback. There was a lot of improvement in the Southern Housing areas. SH would like to thank the gardening team.

157 Poynder Drive and 150-170 Poynder Drive - combustible items or waste materials.

There is an increase in residents who are using a barbeque in the garden areas/ outside the block near to the outer fabric of the building. Residents are also disposing of cigarettes, nappies, and rubbish in bins outside their block. This will be dealt with via visits/written contact with the residents to remind them that the communal area should be kept free from all combustible materials. A programme of regular checks has been put in place to ensure these areas are kept clear.

Assumption of rights of ownership of land. All residents (SH & private) are advised that it is unlawful to assume rights of ownership of managed land. This includes, but is not limited to, digging up turf and replacing it with tarmac. Any such incidents will result in action being taken by SH/RMG/BH. If there is any uncertainty about ownership of land, then contact should be made with SH/RMG/BH to establish the legal position.

6. Ongoing Actions

17/21 Cobbles Booth/Alisander/Poynder

RH advised that McCoda was progressing the work on the cobbled areas, but they had fallen behind schedule. He apologised for the lack of communication with residents about works in their area; this was down to McCoda failing to communicate with BH/RMG in a timely fashion. RH informed the committee that there would be no warrantee for the cobble works as these were considered as 'repairs' to previous works. KB stressed the need for second sanding to take place once the cobbles had settled and RH undertook to ensure this took place. He explained that an ongoing sanding maintenance program would be carried out by the estate team. MJ advised that the Estate Manager had recorded the defective cobbles on adopted roads as a 'fault' with KCC.

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

MJ/RH

Action: Update on progress of works (including any secondary sanding.) (BH)

RH

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

JaS

16/21 Cracked Bonded Paving

McCoda are behind schedule with this work. RMG will update residents when this work is due to take place. It is unlikely to be completed by the end of May.

RH reported that the area at the front of the estate should be complete by the end of June. SH expressed disappointment that this area was not devoted to parking. RH said he understood that option had been offered to residents but at a cost which had been deemed too expensive by the HLRA. He offered to check out his understanding of this historic situation. *(Excerpt from HLRA Minutes 17th January 2022- "2/20 Proposals for Parking Bays on Old Service Road. BH suggested that it will cost around £43 000 to build the parking area by the service entrance. They would be prepared to pay £20,000 toward this. HLRA members voted and felt it was unreasonable for residents to pay £23,000 via service charges. SF informed that the area will now be landscaped as initially designed.")*

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

MJ/RH

Action: Update on progress of works. (BH)

RH

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

RH advised that RMG's H&S consultant *Osterna* will carry out a risk assessment of the operation of the sluice gate. The cost of this risk assessment will be charged to residents through the Estate service charge. This cost was unsuccessfully challenged by the committee as RH deemed costs of any risk assessment relating to tasks carried out by the Estate Team fall under provision of management services and are thus estate service charge costs. Costs relating to any identified modifications required to the sluice gate will be covered by BH.

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

MJ

85/21b & 37/22 Reducing the Impact of Fuel Charge Increases on Service Charge

Replace Bulbs with LED Bulbs in Bollard Lights/Timers on Village Hall Heaters & Water Feature

IEBB are not willing to provide just the labour for this job & they refer back to their original quote. It was noted that there are several electricians living on the estate who may be interested in quoting for these jobs. Any interested contractor should contact MJ (melanie.johnson@rmg.london) seeking specifications for the works. MJ can then advise of the qualifying requirements they need to fulfil to carry out work for RMG/BH. (Note public liability cover must be up to £5 million)

Action: Obtain 2 further quotes from other electricians for replacing bollard bulbs. (RMG) MJ

Action: Obtain 2 further quotes for installing timers on VH heaters & fountain. (RMG) MJ

Obsolete Meters

BH (technical team) are attempting to locate the 'missing' meters and identify whether they are still required or if they can be disconnected. The committee expressed even further dissatisfaction with the time it was taking to resolve this situation.

Action: Expedite enquiries regarding obsolete meters. (BH/RMG) RH/JaS

12/23 Replacement Inspection Covers

MJ advised that a contractor reports that if a new metal lid is required then the whole unit has to be purchased. SHW expressed her frustration that plastic covers which broke under the weight of a vehicle had been installed by BH on driveways. RH offered to confirm that the plastic inspection covers on driveways were installed in compliance with the original planning scheme.

Action: Confirm plastic inspection covers on driveways were installed in compliance with the original planning scheme. (BH) RH

22/23 Gatehouse Maintenance and Repairs

MJ reported that the two tallest columns do not currently require repairs, but if they fall into disrepair in future it may be possible to remove them subject to BH agreement. The smaller posts cannot be removed as they are fixed to the gate, but RMG are researching if it was possible to reduce their height and cap them with a composite top.

Action: Investigate the possibility of shortening 2 smaller gatehouse posts or replacing them with composite posts (RMG) MJ

29/23 Insecurity at SH Apartment Block.

JH reported that a surveyor visited site to identify the problems and a report has been submitted for review. SH will provide an update when the work is agreed.

Action: Address insecurity SH block. (SH) AO

25/22 Road Adoption Plan

Amisse Drive will be reviewed by KCC pending adoption and KCC will deem any changes which need to be made. (*To avoid future confusion this action will from now on be referred to only as 25/22 Road Adoption Plan.*)

Action: Update on progress of road adoption. RH

15/24 Maintenance of LVC Water Pump

LR reported that the overflow pipe continues expelling water every day throughout the day. She expressed concern at the cost of this lost water. MJ advised that Pillinger report this water loss to be condensation and not a defect with the pump but agreed to compare the 2023 & 2024 water bill to see if this indicates a water loss. RMG are waiting for a quote from an alternative contractor who will also hopefully identify any fault with the pump. RH agreed to check out the original planning for the location of the overflow pipe.

Action: Compare water invoices 2023/2024 for landlord's supply at LVC. (RMG) MJ

Action: Obtain quote from an alternative contractor for work on LVC water pump. (RMG) MJ

Action: Check planning for siting of LVC water pump overflow pipe. (BH) RH

17/24 RMG Liaise with UKPC

RMG reported that this was not classed as a breach of tenancy. Residents are asked to act in a reasonably manner when using visitor bays.

Action Closed

1/24 Service charge- Household Ratio's & Distribution

JaS confirmed that the estate square footage is 54p per SqFt. That equates to the following per annum—

719 SqFt House - £385.17

932 SqFt House - £499.28

1,462 SqFt House - £783.21

1,749 SqFt House - £936.96

(NB This costing is just for the actual 'Estate' Service Charge; it does not include any phase charges nor gym or satellite charges therefore actual charges will appear higher than the figures indicate.)

Action Closed

4/23 Park Repairs

Repairs complete.

Action Closed

12/24 Dog Bins

Bins being emptied correctly.

Action Closed

13/24 Planting at Front of Estate.

Roses and spring bulbs planted.

Action Closed

14/24 Dogs in Apartment Blocks.

Letter sent.

Action Closed

10/24 Tarmac Parking Space Edwards Close Car Park (Near water board sub-station).

Repairs completed.

Action Closed

19/24 Action: Identify areas of responsibility for RMG personnel. (RMG)

- Any new maintenance issues report to – John Shaw at John.Shaw@rmg.london He will resolve directly or link in with Mel or James for assistance if required.
- Any service charge budget/invoice/payment queries should be sent to - London.CCC@rmg.london If they cannot resolve they will escalate over to James Sturgeon.
- More complex/historical matters should be emailed to Mel Johnson or James Sturgeon Melanie.Johnson@rmg.london or James.Sturgeon@rmg.londonMG JaS

Action Closed

18/24 Works Booth Close confirmed to be on part which is unadopted.

Action Closed

7. Social media and newsletter

SHW & SH continue to progress developing the website.

8. AOB

8.1 ASB (SH)

SH read out the following statement - Following the most recent meeting of the multi-agency taskforce, the police continue to use the resources available to them in order to tackle the ongoing Anti-Social behaviour from the youths at the lake.

It has been impressed upon Berkeley Homes that as landowners, they continue to have a duty of care to the community and therefore the police will continue to drive home their requirement to meet the obligation of delivering a safe environment in accordance with the Design Out Crime recommendations.

There were further outreach services identified that are to be approached with the potential for engagement with youths in an attempt to divert their attention to more meaningful activities.

A further meeting will be arranged in the coming weeks where the progress of these action points will be followed up.



8.2 Sky TV (SHW)

SHW expressed concern that the current Sky communal dish set up is no longer fit for purpose as she and other residents are encountering constant connectivity problems & Sky engineers state there is a low signal from the communal dish. MJ agreed to get the Estate Manager to review the situation with the operation of the communal aerial. SHW questioned whether the communal dish was getting to the end of its usefulness and suggested this be monitored.

20/24 Action: Check Sky communal aerial. (RMG)

MJ

8.2 McCulloch Homes Development Cemetery Lane (LR)

LR expressed concerns that the proposed development involving the reduction of Woodlands Lake may have an adverse impact on the water levels in the HL lake. She had made enquiries with the Environment Agency but not received any response. She asked if BH had any concerns in relation to this. RH advised the meeting that since SH had made him aware of this development, he had raised this planning application with BH legal team & was waiting a response from them.

21/24 Action: Update ref BH observations on Cemetery Lane development. (BH)

RH

8.3 FTTP LVC (LR)

LR reported that Hyperoptic had encountered practical obstacles in installing their FTTP wiring in LVC due to the restrictions of the wayleave agreement with BH. She enquired as to whether BH and Hyperoptic were in discussions. RH advised that as far as BH were concerned there would be no permission to drill through the supporting steel beams, nor was there permission to run cables in communal areas due to H&S concerns. BH are hopeful that Hyperoptic will identify alternative solutions to provide FTTP for LVC residents. *(Post-meeting update – Hyperoptics have overcome installation challenges & have installed FTTP in a number of LVC apartments.)*

8.4. 2023 Accounts (NH)

NH asked when the 2023 accounts would be released as ideally these should be available prior to the next HLRA AGM.

22/24 Action: Release 2023 accounts prior to HLRA AGM. (RMG)

JaS

8.5 Estate Maintenance (KaB & SHW)

KaB expressed her thanks to the Estate Team for their hard work & observed how well maintained the estate was looking; this sentiment was echoed by the committee. SHW expressed concern about the area near Primrose trim trail that appeared neglected. SH believed that the team would be addressing this imminently.

23/24 Action: Estate Team to attend to Primrose trim trail. (RMG)

MJ

8.6 Hedging Bus Lane (Closed Action 5/24)

MJ updated the meeting that unfortunately no funding would be available from the Wildlife Trust to plant hedging as the area did not meet their funding criteria. As the fence deteriorates it will be replaced by the estate team with red robin plants.

Meeting Closed 9.10pm

Next Meeting 7pm Monday 10th June 2024