

The Element, Newhaven, Owners Association Committee

Minutes of Meeting Tuesday 9th October, 2018
at 33/9 Western Harbour View

Preliminaries:

- a) **Present:** Rodney Matthews (RM—chairman), Ken Webb (KW—Secretary), Pamela Bowman (PB), Jo King (JK), Simon McIntyre (SMcl), David Gardner (DG),
- b) **In attendance—TEF and Baltic Solutions reps.** Marc Myburgh (MM), Simone Myburgh (SM), Christine Fourie (CF),
- c) **Apologies:** Evan Simpson, Jakub Swidzinski (Baltic Solutions)

1. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting on 22nd August 2018 as posted on the website were passed as being an accurate record.

2. Matters arising and for follow up

a) Co-ordinating policy matters affecting all developments in Western Harbour

RM reported that he had met with chairman of Western Harbour Owners Association (WHOA). He outlined some of the differences between their structure and ours due to differing title deeds. He said that they had had a fruitful discussion about many issues of mutual concern and had exchanged some useful ideas that could be adopted here and vice versa. A further meeting including the chairman of Platinum Point is being planned. **(Action RM)**

b) Noting outcome of meeting in Victoria Primary School (VPS) on 4th October

- SMcl reported that this was well attended and there was lots of energy. VPS should close in the Summer 2020 when, it is hoped, the construction of a new school will have been completed. It will be possible for a local group to take VPS over and run it as a community centre. It has the potential to generate jobs, and business opportunities etc. It has good facilities and could be used as a venue for our AGM.
- Questions were discussed: Could a community purchase be viable? Other places have done so. How could we pay for it? What grants might be available? What could we do with it? And what could we as individuals do? A range of ideas were proposed.
- The next step is setting up a steering group to plot the way forward. RM offered to be part of steering group to represent TENOA and SMcl has volunteered as an individual.

c) **Recycling:** KW reported that, despite the new notices, some people are still dumping general rubbish in the recycling bins. He suspects that those who cannot speak, let alone read English would not be able to make sense of the notices. He also said the format was too small and so not clear. DG said he could arrange for a translation into Chinese. KW will find out if the Council have notices in other languages. **(Action: KW & DG)**

d) **Parking:** JK pointed out the importance of preventing parking on corners into WHM. Some physical obstacle is needed. RM to discuss options with TEF. **(Action—RM & TEF)**

- e) **Neighbourhood Watch:** The next step is to decide how we want to run this. CF cited an example of a neighbourhood setting up a WhatsApp group used simply to let people know of anything that is going on of a suspicious nature. But that needs to be governed by a code of conduct. SMCl will ask our neighbouring blocks how they run. Need to set up some liaison with police. Police say how we run it is up to us. **(Action SMCl)**

3. TEF report

- a) **The Finance Report:** (previously circulated) This was examined, found to be clear and there were no questions raised. SM reported that as of the 1st October there was £10,046 in the Green Fund and £29,018 in the Red Fund. The amount of outstanding debt owed to Orona of around £17k is almost exactly equal to the amount of fees owed to TEF by owners, who are actively being pursued to pay what they owe.
- b) **Insurance claims:** Currently there is an excess of £1,000 charged for each claim. SM explained that when the cause of the damage is a problem occurring in someone's property TEF pass that excess charge on to the owner of that property. One owner has objected. Various options for this or a proportion of this being shared by the rest of us were brought up. It was pointed out that, since owners' own insurance should include third party liability, they could claim on that and only pay the excess due in their own policy. Hence the committee advised TEF to carry on charging the owner of the property that caused the damage.
- c) **Update on current NBHC related repairs:** Since there is a meeting with a representative of NHBC on Thursday TEF will update the committee after that meeting. NHBC are suggesting a cash settlement for all outstanding claims. But since TEF would then have to manage all the work at great cost, they are keen to resist that option.
- d) **Baltic Solutions update:** The committee were directed to the finance report where there was a page detailing all work done.
- e) **Other matters:**
- The committee pointed out that owners who forget to pick up their keys and fobs can be trapped in basement car park. The committee asked TEF to explore what options there might be to deal with such an incident. **(Action—RM & TEF)**
 - **CCTV:** MM reported that there have been incidents in WHV block 3. Since the installation of CCTV in other blocks has reduced these considerably, TEF are investigating the installation of CCTV in that block as well.
 - The G4S security checking contract has terminated. TEF are looking to start a new contract with Key Holding Response Uk Ltd. who offer a better service as they will enter the blocks without having to wait for the Fire Service.
 - The courtyard gates have been adjusted to make it impossible to open the lock from the outside other than with the key.
 - Fire service is updating the data they hold to include more information. TEF have spent time assisting fire marshals who have been visiting and examining the Element. They noted that people are still storing things in stairwells and passages that could be a hazard in the case of a fire. TEF are requesting information so they can put this into a document with guidelines about fire safety for owners of all properties.
 - Orona dealing with issues in lifts.

- The quotes for the repair of the canopy over the entrance to WHV block 9 are coming in at around £5,000.
- There is an ongoing problem with people smoking in entrances to the blocks. Various ideas of how to deal with this were floated, such as placing a stand for stubbing out cigarettes away from each entrance. But the committee decided that it would be best to start by sending out a polite notice out to all owners requesting that they themselves or their guests, refrain from smoking in the entrances. A notice outside each entrance could also be put up. **(Action TEF)**
- MM informed the committee that TEF's current emergency phone number may need to be changed if they change their contract. They will keep owners informed.

The committee wished to record their satisfaction with the way that TEF are operating.

4. Issues raised by residents since AGM

- Cannabis:** RM reported that there has been a complaint from someone detecting a smell of cannabis in lifts and communal areas and asked for advice on what to say to them. They were particularly concerned as they had young children. We were reminded that, whilst the possession of cannabis is illegal, it is looked on as being on the lower end of the scale of drug misuse. Further, if any member suspects that dealing in drugs is taking place the police should be informed but evidence would be required of times, dates, activities and names. The committee advised RM to tell anyone detecting a smell of cannabis in their block that they should first see if they can find out for themselves the source of the smell and to talk with the person responsible for it, explaining why it is a problem for them.
- Private areas in courtyard:** RM has advised one couple that one way owners can define the area they own is with planters. Should owners want to do more than this, it was pointed out, they need to check their title deeds to see what is permitted and is not permitted. Any fence, if permitted, should be removable, not permanent, and of standard specification. SM said that the issue could be addressed communally when TEF consult with owners as to what more we can do to improve the courtyard as a whole. We could, for example, explore the idea of all having a fence round all private areas.

c) Problems with holiday lets

RM reported that there have been some complaints from residents about being disturbed at night by people renting holiday accommodation in the Element who have not been able to gain access to the block in which they are staying.

- It was noted that being disturbed in the middle of the night by someone banging on the window of your flat in the middle of the night is unacceptable. The committee advised RM to inform complainants that, if this happens, they should call the police first.
- It was noted that holiday makers sometimes do not know how to use the fob on the set of keys to gain access. Owners, or their letting agents, are requested to make instructions about how to access the block in which their flat is situated explicit and clear to all guests.
- DG and JK are drawing up a model set of 'house rules' that owners and their agents can adapt and use to give to all who rent their property when they book. Besides giving details of how to access the block, deal with rubbish and recycling etc, these need to make it clear that they are renting a property in a

block that is home to many others, and that they should be mindful of that fact, keeping noise and disturbance at night to a minimum. When the committee has seen this and passed them they will be posted on the website.

- MM said that TEF are also drawing up guidelines for owners of properties let out on short lets to help them know what the proper procedure is for dealing with complaints about people who let their property. These will be posted on the TEF website and there will be a link from the TENOA website.

5. Membership update (Ken)

There are currently 249 members, 209 of whom have the right to vote at meetings.

6. AOCB: No other issues were raised

7. Date of next meeting. Monday 3rd December