



Howle Hall Village Owners Association **Wednesday 25th October**

Present. James Bowyer (Secretary), Gordon Chrumka, Jane Garrett (Minutes), Sabine Goldhausen, Franz Kooy, William Laing, Roddy Martine (Chair), John Riley, Richard Ross, Kathryn Tomlinson, Craig Williams.

Apologies received: Kevin Patch

In attendance: Sarah Wilson from Charles White Factors

Actions

Action Number	Action Description	Responsibility
1	Provide 6 Rigg Damaged Fence Council case number to Committee	Sarah – Charles White
2	Contact owner of 'Disco Van', as a commercial vehicle, and request removal	Sarah – Charles White
3	Provide Charles White the parking permits of the vehicles parked at the emergency turning area besides 6 The Rigg	Committee
4	Provide more information on the internal painting project: vendor, cost etc. at the AGM	Sarah – Charles White
5	Charles White to message all owners the result and closure of the Contingency Fund proposal	Sarah – Charles White
6	AGM Agenda to be sent to Charles White	Committee Secretary
7	Charles White to distribute AGM agenda and AGM communication to all owners	Sarah – Charles White
8	Insulation issues next step to be raised at AGM	Sarah – Charles White & Committee
9	Insurance claims history to be prepared for AGM	Sarah – Charles White

1. Welcome, introductions, Apologies, Approval of previous minutes.

Approval of previous minutes August 23rd 2023.
 These were approved and seconded.

2. Review of Charles White Actions by Sarah Wilson

Sarah reported that it has been a busy time:

Legionella Tests:

- Legionella checks in water tanks: some tanks need to be cleaned and disinfected.

Roof Tests:

- Testing of anchor bolts on roof. This is a result of new legislation. Access is required to top floor properties that have an attic. This is currently being organised.
- There have been 2 roof leaks and internal flat leaks following the recent spell of bad weather- two roof leaks have been fixed.

Bike removal project:

- Project to remove abandoned bikes from the currently overwhelmed bike stores.
- Residents were given prior notice that bikes would be tagged, and this required actions from owners otherwise they would be removed. Bike storage at 8 The Rigg was reported to be particularly bad, perhaps causing a danger as bikes were stored on top of each other. Some blocks were using the storage appropriately.
- Access to storage is an issue at 2,3 & 7 The Rigg. The Committee needs to discuss further the possibility of having a Bike Station on site and perhaps hanging racks.
- Bikes are to be collected by the charity Bike Station for the majority of blocks. Some owners have been in touch with Sarah with alternative charities for their respective block.
- Bikes expected to be collected on 01.11.2023.
- Other items found in the bike stores were children's scooters, paint, oil, and car tyres. Some of these items could present a fire risk and owners are asked not to use the bike stores for such purposes.

Signage:

- The faulty signage near the playground has been fixed.

Cherry Tree:

- The costs of removing the cherry tree and consequent path damage recently will be shared across the community.

6 Rigg Damaged Fence:

- The damaged fence to the rear of 6 The Rigg is the responsibility of the Council. Sarah has a case number and has emailed customer service more than once. Sarah suggested that it would be helpful if some residents also reported the problem. This can be done via the council website: "Report a fault".
- Charles White to provide the case number to the Committee.

Emergency Lighting Test:

- The 6-month test of Emergency Lighting across Powderhall has been completed.

Commercial Vehicles:

- John asked Sarah about the parking of commercial vehicles overnight at Powderhall. Sarah said this should not be happening and she had informed owners of such vehicles that this should not occur. Currently, no direct response has been received.

- The fire engine has gone and 2 other vehicles of concern from The Brae have gone.
- Concerns were expressed that if residents have a business onsite, they need to park their commercial vehicles elsewhere. Sarah will investigate the ownership of commercial vehicles parked on the development, notable a van advertising discos using a visitor's permit, and remind them of the Development's conditions.

Emergency Turning Space:

- Sarah has arranged for ground markings to be painted at the emergency turning space besides 6 The Rigg.
- Vendor selected however a dry day is required and all currently parked vehicles on the spot need to be moved.
- The Committee will obtain and provide the parking permit numbers to Sarah so she can contact the owners and request the vehicles be moved.

Painting and Decorating:

Front Door:

- Committee stated that external front doors, especially on the Rigg, are in dire need of painting.
- Sarah said the Bell Group were due to start painting at the end of December.
- The remaining front doors (e.g., Brae) will take place in the Spring.
- William requested a can of paint to be left so that residents could touch up any scrapes. Sarah will ask the painters to communicate with a named resident and leave a paint sample with them.
- Sabine asked if the colour of the external doors could be changed to grey or a darker brown. Sarah will ask the painters what colours are in their range.

Internal Painting:

- Sarah has had 3 indicative quotes: these are £160,000, £187,000, and £252,000. Residents of 2-6 The Rigg and The Brae need to decide whether they wish paper and paint as before or just paint (a cheaper option in the long term).
- Members of the committee asked further questions of the vendor selection process:
 - o the provenance of the firms
 - o size of firms
 - o VAT registered
- The quotes provided are first round quotes.
- Sarah will provide more details about internal decorating at the upcoming AGM.

3. Contingency Fund

- All owners were advised in writing about the Contingency Fund options.
- Sarah reported to the Committee that there were 56 voting YES; 73 voting NO and 186 NO RESPONSE.
- There is therefore not a majority in favour of setting up a contingency fund.
- The Committee requested the termination of the proposal and for all owners to be communicated the result.
- Given the feedback received from owners and members of the Committee any future proposal of the same nature will require more legal groundwork before any vote is proposed to owners.

4. AGM

- Craig has booked the large room at the Taxi Club on Beaverhall Road for the AGM on 28th November at 18:30 for the Committee & 19:00 for all owners.
- All Powderhall owners are invited.
- The AGM is an opportunity to meet for Charles White to report on completed and existing projects, vote on key issues, ask questions and join the Committee.
- Agenda to be written by Committee Secretary and sent to Charles White for distribution.
- Note to be made in the communication to owners about seat reservation for elderly and hard of hearing.
- Agenda & Communication of AGM to be sent early November.

5. Insulation

- There are reports from owners of flats that back onto bin stores that the adjoining wall is significantly colder than other walls indicating that the insulation between the bin stores and the said properties has deteriorated.
- These are technically “cold spots” and are unrelated to damp. Sarah stated that a heat loss survey could be carried out by LCP (cost £500 plus). This could amount to £40 per head at the blocks where the issue has been raised (Brae).
- The survey will test the affected areas and recommend next steps.
- Powderhall Road homes are not affected.
- Sarah requests the Committee to instruct her as to next steps on this issue.
- The Committee suggest that this should be brought up at the AGM.

6. Approval and communication of minutes

- There was a technical issue with the communication of the last minutes. This is unlikely to occur again and the minutes following Committee meetings will be circulated as soon as possible after the meetings.

7. AOB

Float:

- Sarah brought up an issue about the “Float” – the initial payment made by owners to provide sufficient cashflow in the Development between payment to vendors and collection of charges from owners.
- Recent audits on Powderhall accounts have indicated that floats should be higher. This is driven by the increase in costs generally, so the float needs to be commensurate with that.
- Initial estimates for the Brae and Rigg’s floats to increase by £125-£175, dependent on the block.
- Townhouses increase approximately £20.
- The Committee and Sarah agreed that a single charge, particular in the December 2023 bill, will not be in the best interest of owners.
- The Committee also raised that owners need as much information on the charge and as much time as is feasible to accommodate any increases.
- Sarah will examine options on spreading the increased float payment.
- Agreed that the issue can be explained in greater depth at the AGM.
- Letters will then be sent to individual blocks explaining their situation and why there is an increase.
- The Committee requests to see a draft letter of the communication before it is sent to owners.

Factor Management Fee:

- Sarah stated that the Charles White wanted to increase management fees by 11%.
- Due to the size of the Development, Sarah stated that 5% is more reasonable and will present the case internally.
- The last fee increase was in December 2022.
- Generally, the Committee felt that 5% was in line with other companies currently and is below the current inflation rate.
- The Committee nonetheless raised that increased costs put greater pressure on those owners with financial issues.

Cost Discussion:

- The Committee discussed the general increase in costs with insurance being a key contributor.
- Sarah highlighted the number of insurance claims made in Powderhall particularly in relation to water leaks and general maintenance.
- Insurance reinstatement valuation, which happens every 5 years to make sure everyone is adequately covered, is scheduled for May 2024.
- Charles White currently use Gallagher's as their insurance broker.
- Sarah to have claims history prepared for AGM.

Pre-AGM Meeting:

- Agreed that Sarah and the Committee to meet prior to the AGM.
- Dates for next meetings:
 - o 21.11.23: Committee meeting (Zoom) re AGM
 - o 28.11.23: AGM (Taxi Club, Beaverhall Road)