

**Maunsel (Fourth Co-Ownership) Housing Society Ltd. Committee Meeting
held on Monday 12th June 2023 at 7.30pm @ Bay 20**

Present: Robert Larkin (RL), Judith Blakeman (JB), Denise Hayward (DH), Rick Fisher (RF), Billie Dainton (BD), George Tormod-Little (GTL), Jennifer Jeffrey (JJ), Laurence Dorman (LD), Philippa Collie-Cousins (PCC), Dominique Van Roey (DVR).

Via Zoom: Denise Hayward (DH), David Barrable (DB), Cerys Matthews (CM), Simon Slater (SS), Sonia Watson (SW).

Guests: Marie Travers, JMW Barnard (MT), Olivia Cox - Minute Taker, John MacArthur (JMA), Chris Bushell (CB), Russell Mulchansingh (RM), Jean Arnaud Zurfluh (JAZ), Shahrar Razzaq (SR), Andy Woodford (AW), Sarah Collinson (SC), Hilary Arnold (HA), Sophie Bert (SB), Steve Abbott (SA).

1	Apologies - Ben Lamb (BL)	
2	Minutes of the last meeting, previously circulated	These minutes were approved.
3	New Treasurer	
4	Service charge increase and reserves/planning ahead	
5	Potential roof replacement	
6	AOB: Bridge Road	

3. Treasurer

MT confirmed that Bella (the previous Treasurer) has resigned and a new Treasurer will need to be appointed. RL confirmed that Tom ? who acts a Community Treasurer may be ideal. AW asked what is required and the scope of the role. MT confirmed the role was mainly planning ahead at the year-end for the next year's service charge budget and also when there are major works. JMA as a previous Treasurer also confirmed the role. AW confirmed he would consider the role. MT confirmed that AW would need to re-join the Committee.

4. Service charge increase and reserves/planning ahead

RL believes that communication between the Co-owners and the Committee was poor in respect of the service charge increase. It was countered that the initial service charge increase was not positioned as in-line with inflation. HA added that any changes of this nature needs to go to AGM.

RF said that the AGM should have been a forum to discuss the issue of increasing service charge, and that this didn't happen.

There is confusion as to whether the service charge increase will be an annual increase. It was explained that the aim was to raise funds sooner than later to avoid running into a scenario where all Co-owners are presented with a large bill for future costs, e.g. roof replacement, major works.

MT confirmed that Bella and Billie compiled a report, planning ahead as the reserves had been depleted due to the major exterior works project and fencing project. BD confirmed that there was different service charge increase options in the report and this was also based on the projected costs if the roof replacement project was to proceed in 7-8 years. There was also the option if the service charge was to stay the same.

MT confirmed at the May Committee meeting the Committee voted for the £100.00 increase which following the feedback from the Co-owner's was reduced to a £50.00 increase.

It was discussed if someone is really struggling, they can go to the Committee and ask for an exception. MT commented that there are many people who have not yet increased their standing order for the previous service charge increase.

5. Potential roof replacement:

RL asked if there is any point spending the money on surveys if there isn't necessarily a need for the roof repairs. MJ countered that there is a lot that cannot be seen without a proper report. MJ believes a thorough survey is imperative.

It was suggested that MT get quotes for a roof survey and gather information so as to have a better idea of how much money will be needed in the future for projected roof repairs/replacement. It was asked what the critical part of the roof that can't be reached without a full survey. MJ explained that historically there were cracked tiles on the roof or a high wind or certain weather conditions affects the roof tiles, there is a secondary layer to the roof that is essential. The secondary layer of roof ; felt is in very bad condition.

RM noted that on one of the reports there was a suggestion there may be sagging of the joints. Fortunately, the construction at WS is based on steel which will support much more than a regular roof. JAZ believes there should be a full report, since without this, any decisions are being based on feelings rather than facts. MT told the Committee that there are factual reports, which have been based on 2014 roof repairs, as well as the last external works in 2021-22. MT to forward these to everyone. These show the condition of the roof as seen then. LD asked whether people would have to move out of properties if roof repairs / renewal went ahead. MJ explained there would likely be temporary roofing and it would be difficult to keep all plasterboard etc intact and agreed that it would be very disruptive. Ultimately, there will need to be absolute proof that the works are necessary before works go ahead.

MJ has a report from Tony Richardson (the architect employed by WS in 2007), which said it was likely roofs would need replacing in 2017. RL noted that this is from an architect not a surveyor. MJ explained that Tony is highly qualified with a huge amount of experience.

RF disagrees with RL's belief that hurdles should be met when they arise, since this doesn't allow for forward-planning in terms of budget for all areas of spending. MJ noted that there might not need to be a total roof replacement as some blocks may be in better condition than others. RV suggested making a list of what facts are needed and splitting the responsibility between Committee members in order to free-up time at meetings. RL suggested making these decisions at the extraordinary general meeting in September. RL also suggested including a presentation from CS including a break-down of methodology and costs involved in potential roof repairs. RL is concerned whether the costs of people having to live elsewhere during roof repairs has been factored into CS' costs. MJ reported that all costs have been included by CS. A report would also include CS' recommendations in terms of a timeline for actions. A risk calculation needs to be made, particularly in relation to the flats. PCC believes there is an affordability issue that needs to be addressed, and that this needs to be handled responsibly. It was raised that there should be time spent looking at ways to reduce regular outgoing costs, in order to save money, since some people are experiencing high anxiety over the service charge increase.

AW raised why the resurfacing was included in the report. MT confirmed it was discussed in the January meeting if the Bartle Road area could be made more attractive in order to try and prevent further fly tipping - e.g. resurfacing. This was not actioned in the end so will not contribute to outgoing costs.

MT reported that in the last five years there have been a few one-off quite high buildings insurance claims. A while ago there was a suggestion to reduce window cleaning frequency, but currently the window cleaners give the Square a good deal. The other area that has been discussed for budget cuts is gardens. MT explained that about a year ago, WS went out to tender to find the best deal for gardeners. Other expenses discussed by MT included:-

- Gutter and downpipe repairs once per year, which is vital to keep leaks at bay.
- Annual drainage works - at the end of June / July, a drainage company comes to clean each manhole, which is also vital as the rear of Bartle Road is a flood risk.

MT told the meeting that at the moment there are the following funds for future works:

- Barclays £5,024.45
- Metro £85,000.00
- Cashback £10,600.00

MT explained that currently there is an outstanding invoice for fencing, which MT has chased CS for. The project is expected to be within budget.

MT confirmed that if service charges were not increased there would not be funds in the reserve for exterior works repair and decoration for seven years' time.

Last year was the first time MT used the ground rent funds (£100 per year), which was put towards external re-decs and fencing, as an alternative to dipping into service charge. At the end of this year, MT expects a surplus available to transfer to the reserve, which will allow it to start building up again.

MT suggested that the new Treasurer do a review of the reserve at the AGM, including clawback, in order to provide a projection of costs. PCC asked for an update on any solar / sustainable grants available. MT said it is not worth looking into this until nearer the time if the roof replacement works was to proceed in the future.

AW suggested making a decision with this larger group. It was reinforced that the AGM was to discuss why the service charge was increasing, as opposed to actually making the decision. The decision has already been made to increase the service charge by £50 by the Committee, on behalf of the entire Square.

Decision made that there will be an extraordinary September EGM. At this point the process will be discussed. The agenda will be decided nearer the time.

MT told the meeting that she has received multiple emails regarding the service charge increase. MT reiterated the need for everything to be absolutely transparent, and that having a Sub-committee wouldn't be right in this instance. There is a lot of anxiety and frustration around the Square. MT believes it is best if everyone works together, and reminded everyone that the Committee functions for the square on an unpaid basis.

It was suggested that the minutes of the meetings should be sent to all Co-owners. These are currently available on the website. It was also suggested by GTL that they could go on the Square's Whatsapp group. A pdf of agreed upon Committee meeting minutes could be distributed via this whatsapp group. Another suggestion was that there is a two week notice ahead of Committee meetings, allowing anyone to attend if they wish as a guest.

There is frustration that the initial information was that the roof needed replacing and there would be a £40,000 cost if the service charge was not increased, which was the apparent justification for the service charge increase from 1st July 2023. Since this is based on potential need and not based yet on fact, people are now questioning the service charge raise.

Action: roof survey. Service charge increase will begin 1st July 2023. EGM in September. Communication that all Committee meetings are open to everyone.

MT confirmed that she has compiled all invoices regarding the past roof works which occurred between the major works.

6. Bridge House: RL explained that the issue of Bridge House has been going on since March. RL has spoken to the planning officer, Gaby Wesley, who reported that the decision hasn't been

made yet and is likely to be made at the end of the month. The decision will be made by planning officers. The sense that RL got from Gaby is that they are going to reject the proposal rather than passing it on to the planning committee.

However, RL stated there are still opportunities for people to write their objections notably that BH has not consulted with neighbouring properties.

RL believes it might be valuable to produce a response from WS in general. RL further stated that the Council have not notified all of the residents that are affected by the development, which is a legal obligation. RL has filed a complaint regarding this. RL has sent around a link for others to object, but noted that the site is imperfect and often crashes / times out, so encouraged patience. RL further pointed out that the architects' impression on the website is very different to the picture presented on the developer's flyer, which is what has been publicly distributed. The developer maintains that they enabled a consultation, but RL disputes this as he emailed them twice. When he eventually spoke to someone on the phone, he was told that the planning application would happen imminently. RL further pointed out that WS didn't know about the development. Between the application being made there were 7 days to take part in the council consultation. Objections have been made through word of mouth, not because of notification. MT has emailed all co-owners and all tenants with the link. BM also approached everyone directly. It was suggested that RL draft a letter on behalf of WS. RL asked for people to note their particular objections - e.g. increase in traffic, parking requirements.

RL was thanked for chairing the meeting and MT for her assistance.