

Sinclair Proprietors Committee Meeting

7pm 21st February 2011 - Gorgie/Dalry Parish Church

Meeting: 008

Attending: Chris Chapman [CC], Barry Moore [BM], Alan Eccles [AE], Bob Buchanan [BB], Richard Simpson [RS]

Apologies: Rosina Weightman [RW], Chris Hutton [CH], John Fox, Stuart Hamilton [SH]

Minutes taken by: CC/BM

1. ChrisC to report on quarterly billing and general updates from factor

Initial inspections showed 6 charges needing questioned, 2 of which were relating to corrections from the previous invoice, the largest for £260 for stair well redecoration of Block 4 Sinclair Gardens which had been charged to 4 Sinclair Close instead. CC noted the number of errors was down on the previous quarter and was reasonably content with the accounts for the last two quarters of 2011. It is to be hoped that fewer mistakes will occur in subsequent quarterly accounts. The long standing incorrect apportionment of common electricity charges had been rectified in 2011 and now a more balanced allocation of charging is in place.

The charge of £956.90 for sending out the bulky pack alongside the AGM minutes was noted, and the value of many of the pages questioned. RS noted the proprietors had previously expressed a clear desire for more efficient means of communication (email / web-pages). CC passed on Aspect's explanation that those without access to computers also needed the information, but this argument was not accepted.

CC reported that Aspect had changed their stance on providing the spreadsheet of maintenance charges in light of the additional administrative burden it was incurring, and had intended to charge for an additional 8 hours (£200+VAT) of work involved in preparing for this quarter's invoice. CC visited Aspect to question this decision, as the intent was that the committee be provided with whatever documentation the factor had, not that they be generating new documentation just for the committee. This was reiterated at the meeting, CC has agreed with Aspect that future invoice inspections will use only Aspect's working paperwork (with no additional burden to Aspect), and in turn Aspect have agreed to waive the fee for the work incurred this quarter.

RS expressed surprise that Aspect's normal operation did not include such a list of requests-in-progress, and noted that the absence of the reporting spreadsheet meant that the committee would no longer be able to check on the timely progress of maintenance requests; after discussion it was generally agreed that this was not a serious loss. The impression from inspecting since September is that such requests are progressed satisfactorily, the only concern was whether the property manager's on-site visits were picking up on new issues satisfactorily. The suggestion that committee members might wish to accompany Nancy Lambert [NL] on an on-site visit, to highlight problems the committee was supported but thought to be difficult to

achieve during the working day.

Damage to bin store & bike shed walls during the rubbish collection was noted. Protective metal plates had been installed in Sinclair Gardens in the past but not elsewhere throughout the estate despite repeated requests. Not only were damaged walls unsightly, damaged walls would eventually allow water penetration and more major repairs would very likely be necessitated subsequently.

Discussion on outstanding debt: At the AGM this was reported to be £21,000 and efforts were being instigated by Aspect to gather in this sum. As noted at the AGM, the amount outstanding was substantially less than in previous years, and promises from Aspect on endeavours to reduce it still further were reiterated.

2. Discussion of gardening tenders

The Chairman repeated information previously circulated by email about the three competitive tenders for the gardening contract. The consensus of the committee was that the existing gardening firm, Roots 'n Shoots [Trevor Jordan] should be reappointed and to adopt their 'enhanced quotation', involving substantial improvements to the gardening service over the existing contract. This quotation at about £15,000 being divided across 306 owners would mean an annual charge of slightly over £49 per apartment [against the current £35 p.a.] With near weekly visits and a planting programme it is expected that improvements would be seen in the gardens by the spring and summer time.

A request to add improvements to the lawns (killing and then removing weeds and sowing grass seed) to the gardening spec was advocated and generally approved. The motion was put to a vote and passed without objection or abstention.

CC moved that a one-off fee of up to £500 be approved to be used for purchasing of new plants, as discussed with the factor and R'n'S in spring 2011 (but never actioned). Purchase of plants to be done at the gardener's discretion, but receipts for such purchases to be provided to Aspect. The motion was put to a vote, and again passed without objection or abstention.

Action 008-01: CC to communicate opinion on gardening tenders to Aspect and request them to instruct Roots n' Shoots accordingly

3. Bike shed locks and lighting.

The numerous options of the different types of locks available in the market were discussed at length. Following discussion BB agreed to visit one or two of the bike sheds with a blacksmith of his acquaintance to obtain an assessment of the best way to make the bike sheds secure. Locks with keys were thought preferable to combination locks as it was argued that combination lock numbers would easily become widely distributed and render the sheds just as insecure. Secure ASSA locks with keys that cannot be copied and which are registered, would be best, although these are more expensive (£8 per key).

Action 008-02: BB to investigate lock options and feed back quotes on ASSA type locks

The various lighting options were discussed. Eventually it was decided to experiment with the cheap solar panel / motion sensor shed light suggested by Mike Begley in one bike shed. It

was further emphasized that in the event of the experiment being unsatisfactory any holes drilled through the roof would have to be easily filled to avoid water penetration and that this requirement should be stated to the electrician prior to the time of installation.

Action 008-03: CC to request test bike shed light installation via Aspect / Doug Ferrier

It was noted again that registration and tagging of bicycles in the bike sheds would be required, and a plan to arrange removal of abandoned bicycles and other junk should be implemented when feasible

4. Plan for soliciting tenders for Factors

From a decision made at the AGM a process has to be started of seeking competitive tenders for Factors, with a view to providing proprietors with a well-informed choice at the AGM in 2013. In the interests of impartiality and to ensure that the committee's relationship with the factor should not be compromised, CC recused himself from the process of soliciting tenders. RS kindly agreed to take on this effort, starting with research and investigation, and requested committee members to pass any relevant contacts or suggestions to him in the first place. The importance of the process being transparent and un-biased was stressed. It was noted that a Property Factor is required as stipulated in the Deeds of Conditions it is also appreciated that to attempt to manage the estate without a Factor would be an impossible task. Against this as the performance of Aspect and its predecessor organisation McBride's has been subject to criticisms over the years. The various reasons why a switch away from Aspect was undesirable were reiterated (inability to transfer outstanding debt, experience with estate, value of existing working relationship, lack of first-hand knowledge of other potential factors).

Action 008-04: RS to investigate potential factors and develop plan for gathering tenders

5. Discussion of roof repairs / hip-ridge tile fixing

CC reported on meeting with loss adjuster, roof contractor and Aspect: that our requests that as many hip tiles be upgraded to a 'dry-fix' solution as possible had been heard. However the scaffolding erected to replace individual hip-ridge tiles was not sufficient to allow entire hips to be re-secured with a dry-fix. There were two hips replaced in their entirety (as part of the insurance claim) due to the extent of the storm damage, and the contractor will guarantee that these are now fixed securely to the building and not simply refitted by the same means by which they were originally installed.

The opinion of the contractor and loss adjuster was clear: the original tiles as installed by Teague were not well fitted; being both the wrong shape (apex tiles used where shallower hip tiles would have been better), and fixed only with mortar (wet-fix). CC understood from these discussions that the age and natural decay of the mortar effectively means that the tiles are not properly secured to the building, and further winds were likely to dislodge more of these tiles. RS and BB questioned the validity of this, noting the contractor's vested interest in further work. The contractor intends to carry out a survey of the roofs, by cherry-picker, by March 6th (expected completion of their works), they have been asked to examine closely the hip ridges to determine whether the remaining tiles are securely attached to the building. Further decisions on what work needs done should await that report. Committee members wishing to check for themselves the issue can ask to accompany the contractor on this inspection. All efforts have been made to get the roofs fixed as effectively as possible as part of the insurance work to

minimise costs. Further work to fix all hip ridges (and minimise the risk of future storm damage) should be done (if at all) in a planned way, securing multiple quotes, once the exact scope of the work is established. Delaying the work increases the risk of future storms causing further costly damage. Concern was raised as to the impact on insurance premiums / excesses for next year, it was noted that this is also an incentive to take action.

Summary of actions

Action	Description	On
008-01	CC to communicate opinion on gardening tenders to Aspect and request them to instruct Roots n' Shoots accordingly	CC
008-02	BB to investigate lock options and feed back quotes on ASSA type locks	BB
008-03	CC to request test bike shed light installation via Aspect / Doug Ferrier	CC
008-04	RS to investigate potential factors and develop plan for gathering tenders.	RS

Outstanding issues from previous meetings

Action	Description	On
001-02	Committee should prioritise writing up and agreeing the refurbishment / maintenance plan with Aspect	Committee & Aspect
001-04	Committee should work with Aspect to nail down a document detail exactly what they think their responsibilities are, and on how to collaborate on monitoring progress of development issues.	Committee & Aspect
001-07	Committee to work with Aspect to make clear the plan for the bike-sheds and settle on a timetable	Committee & Aspect
005-01	CH to chase up Aspect for insurance premium invoice.	CH

005-05	Aspect to communicate desire for placing a sign to Scottish Power	NL
005-06	AE to assemble concise documentation of all events relevant to the mono-block repair	AE
005-07	JF to prepare list of possible gardening tasks	JF
006-01	CH to ensure that any mistakes in the Sep/Oct invoice are corrected in the Nov/Dec/Jan invoice	CH
006-02	CC to chase Aspect for the final tenders and for quick completion of the gardening re-tendering process	CC
006-03	BB to assess refurbishment items and suggest frequencies	BB
006-04	CC to follow up on list with Aspect, and convert list into a proposed schedule of refurbishments	CC
006-05	CC to communicate requests for re-surveying for insurance valuation to Aspect	CC
006-06	CC and another committee member to meet with Aspect management to discuss 2012 fees, and to notify them of the intent regarding re-tendering in 2012	CC
006-07	CC to write up several different proposed motions on bike-shed actions, and circulate them amongst the committee for approval CC	CC
006-08	CC to make arrangements for the January AGM, and co-ordinate the preparation of the agenda for mailing to proprietors	CC
007-01	Committee to invite factors to submit tenders for development to consider	Committee

007-02	Committee to seek a representative for Sinclair Close	Committee
007-03	Committee to enact a plan for changing the bike shed locks	Committee
007-04	AH / Aspect to provide quotes for better securing the hip-ridge tiles AH/Aspect	Committee
007-05	Committee to consult on having the hip-ridge tiles better secured	Committee