

# Rivermead Resident's Association

Minutes of AGM held on 29th October 2012

## Welcome

Maria Cooke (Chairman) welcomed the attendees to the AGM, together with JK (Julian Keene) and SG (Scott Gorey) from Freshwater. MC gave a brief overview of issues that had been addressed/followed up/improved upon during the last year, including:-

- Contacting the Council and local MP regarding the removal of the central pedestrian crossing on Wilford Lane
- The demolition of the Becket School and the tidying up of the area and the pathway
- Addressing the proposed developments along Wilford Lane
- The cleanliness audits which were carried out regularly by Gill Catchpole and Marilyn Ash

## Elections

Nominations were welcomed for the committee positions, and seconded, which resulted in the following:-

Maria Cooke	- Chair
Gill Catchpole	- Vice Chair
Nicki Puckey	- Secretary
Peter Walsh	- Treasurer
Tim McCormick	- Vice Treasurer

## Presentation by Freshwater

JK and SC from Freshwater addressed some issues and problems that had arisen during 2012. There was a delay in commencing with the electrical lighting works due to some snagging works required after the asbestos removal project. Additional works were needed to ensure the fire protection between the different floors was up to standard. The old compartmentalisation has to be removed and re-installed to meet fire regulations, and this had now been completed. These snagging works and extra installations did not result in any extra charges to leaseholders but had delayed the rewiring project. This is now planned to commence at the end of 2012, but may be started early in 2013 after the Christmas period. There has been a delay in releasing the funds already collected from leaseholders to pay for this work, due to internal restrictions and protocol within the Freshwater Company. The funds have to be released by way of Mr Freshwater's signature, and this has not been achieved due to personal family problems. There is nobody else within the organisation who can authorise the release of these funds. This naturally did not meet with the approval of the residents present at the meeting. Questions were put to JK and SG regarding this, including:

Q If the emergency lighting is a health and safety requirement, who is responsible for any repercussions from these not being completed as yet?

A Freshwater would be responsible.

Q Residents had been approached by another agent to manage Rivermead, surely this should prompt the release of the funds and the completion of the works, as it does not hold Freshwater in any good light.

A JK and SG understood residents' concerns and comments, but could not push for the release of funds until the internal procedure within Freshwater was carried out.

MC asked JK to email her directly and put in writing the reasons why the funds which have already been paid by the residents could not be released. She will then respond to that email with resident's views and concerns.

JK stated that if funds were authorised to be released early in November at the next board meeting the works could be started before Christmas. If not, they will commence in early 2013, and be followed immediately by the internal decoration works.

The lights in the communal landing areas will be movement activated sensor lights, and will dim when no movement has been detected for a certain amount of time. The lights on the actual stairways will be continual lights and will be permanently on during dark hours. The proposed light fittings are on show in the far entry of Yale House for residents to view. There is a variety of light fittings and feedback is welcomed from residents and the committee as to the preferred option.

The subject of the non-release of funds and the non-commencement of the lighting works was a lively one, and MC called a halt to the subject and reinstated that she would deal with Freshwater directly and formally address the problem.

JK then went on to inform residents that there would be a reduction in the 2013/2014 service charge to reflect that no more major works were planned after the commencement and finalisation of the lighting/redcoration works (which have already been paid for). The annual service charges therefore for the flats would be between £650-900 for the year 2013/2014. This was welcome news for the residents present.

### **Garages**

SG explained the recent garage refurbishment project. This was needed because the car spaces were too small and needed to be realigned to make parking safer and easier. Garage spaces were now only rented to residents and rentees of the flats, and each entry key was monitored and controlled by SG. This has made the security of the garages much higher, and will hopefully prevent anyone parking in the garages without authorisation. The bicycles were now stored in their own parking facility in garage number 2.

This was done to create more space in garage number 1, and also to protect cars from being damaged by bicycles and to reduce the chance of any theft of bicycles in the garage, which had been a problem in the past.

Some residents expressed that they would like to move from their allocated spaces and SG said this would all be looked at again and addressed after Christmas when any spare spaces would become available. Some wishes/requirements have already been done, and any residents wishing additional entry keys or to move spaces within the garages should write to SG and he will address these requests. Only one key is initially allowable per parking space. This is to keep security as tight as possible, and also because of past abuse of parking within the garages by residents who do not actually rent any spaces.

### **Communal aerial**

A resident asked JK about the installation of the communal aerial which was proposed at the last AGM. SG responded by informing residents that this installation was all part of the rewiring works for the emergency lighting, and would be carried out at the same time and completed before the redecoration works. If residents wished to be connected to the aerial, which will receive Freeview etc, they had only to pay for the connection work, as happens with cable TV installations.

### **Misc**

A resident had a question regarding the budgeting and cost of major works projects and the management fee that Freshwater charged. This was confirmed by JK to be 11% of the total project costs and was for scheduling, budgeting and project managing all major works projects. Sometimes Freshwater had to outsource the project management, but preferred where necessary to keep project management in-house to reduce any further management fees.

At the conclusion of any further questions for Freshwater, both JK and SG were thanked for their attendance and time and left the meeting.

### **Walton and Allen**

MC continued with the AGM meeting and addressed various issues, including the Walton and Allen issue, which has previously been minuted. There appeared to have been no communication from W&A to residents since the return of the standard letter distributed by the committee, requesting details to be removed from W&A's database. The position will continue to be monitored.

### **Developments along Wilford Lane/Traffic Consultation**

A discussion was invited by MC regarding the proposed developments of Sainsbury's, the GP surgery and the tram works along Wilford Lane and the potential impact on traffic along Wilford Lane. The removal of the traffic island by the Council was done to improve traffic flow due to the difficulty for lorries passing parked cars at that position. However, with the developments planned further along Wilford Lane this 'improved' traffic flow will become

further congested and a bigger problem. One resident pointed out that Wilford Lane will not 'grow', ie. cannot be widened, but that the traffic flow will increase considerably – up to 50% increase. MC informed the meeting of recent traffic discussions which had been conducted with the local MP, the Council and a representative of the Highway Department. Although any campaign against this increase in potential traffic flow will no doubt take up to 3 years to make any difference, MC stated that this did not mean that the campaign should not be started, and this is what the Residents Association will do. It is very difficult to cross the road at the present time, without the further developments and traffic that will result from these. Disabled and elderly pedestrians find it virtually impossible to cross the road along the Rivermead development, and have to make their way to the traffic lights either at the top of Wilford Lane, or further down towards the schools. MC informed residents present at the meeting that updates on the progress of our concerns will be put up on the noticeboard for all to read.

CG informed the meeting that Sainsbury's had planning permission and could proceed with their development anytime within the next 3 years.

Other concerns/questions raised during the discussion were:-

- 1) what do the Council expect the increased traffic flow to be – 50% or more?
- 2) the Council are supposed to be monitoring the present traffic flow along Wilford Lane – how is this to be carried out, and when?
- 3) will there be any restrictions in the future on the size/weight of lorries travelling along this stretch of Wilford Lane?
- 4) the impact of the tram – it was stated that the tram, when completed and running, would halt traffic at the tram crossing every 7 minutes – this will cause a huge impact on the increased traffic flow, especially as it is so close to the major cross roads and schools and the proposed Sainsbury's store.
- 5) any further applications for residential development in the area are refused by the Council due to 'traffic problems' – so how come these developments are getting the go ahead?
- 6) at the present time, without any increase in traffic, it is mainly due to 'goodwill' that many residents manage to cross over Wilford Lane. It is a dangerous problem and will become worse.

### **Social activities**

Mark Madden did a quick presentation informing residents of the proposed social activities, which will be advertised on the noticeboards. He also had a selection of Fair Trade products for the meeting to look at, and proposed to set up an order/delivery scheme for anyone interested in the products.

### **Membership packages**

The Resident's Association membership package includes discounts at Embellish Beauty, Baa Wool Shop and the Beeches bar and restaurant. Cards were provided for this purpose in the package, and in order to obtain 15% discount at the Beeches a utility bill would suffice for the time being.

Newsletters would be produced twice yearly and will include any information concerning Rivermead and any works being carried out, local charity news, social activity news, resident's feedback and information of up and coming social events.

The meeting was concluded at 9.20pm. A date for the first meeting of the Residents Association will be confirmed shortly.