

Chelsea Bridge Wharf Resident's Association (CBWRA) Transcription – April 2022

Attendees

Chairperson: Stephen Thompson
Company Secretary: Catherine Thomé

Jean Dornhofer - Community liaison (zoom)
Kirt Bains - Building representative for Horace
Koray Ozdemir- Lanson building
Larisa Villar Hauser –Burnelli building
Louis Kendall - Building representative for Warwick
Natalia Nyudyurbegova – Technology
Patrick Savage - Building representative for Centurion (zoom)

Apologies

Treasurer: Toby Spoerer, Aaron Yamoah, Dorota Szelagowska, Jovdat Guliyev, Nathan Saiwarren, Qin Xie, Susan de Laszlo, Vasundhara Talwar

Resident observers on zoom

Amani El Kholi, Adrian Harte, Jane Kenneally (zoom), Tan Siew Kheng (zoom), Mike O'Driscoll (zoom), Philippe Gault (zoom)

Catherine

Apologies, I do always record the meeting for transcription purposes, so the recording has now started, so if you don't wish to be on video, you may turn it off.

Stephen

So we put the scaffolding on there in terms of ...

Kirt

No don't, I'm saying don't, to the extent that people will want to raise all of the issues and that's separate to the AGM and the running of the committee. So I think maybe at the outset and when we're posting it on the app for that agenda, we should make clear what the purpose of the meeting is, so some parameters.

Stephen

Understood.

Catherine

Yeah that's a good point.

Kirt

So that people don't have wrong expectations about what that meaning is.

Catherine

Okay I've made a note to clarify the purpose. The scaffolding is on today's agenda anyway, so we'll talk about that in a moment.

Larisa

Also it will be in the summary surely that maybe, I would imagine that Stephen gives at the beginning just to say these are the things that you know, this is the progress in terms of, then there's nothing really to add ongoing.

Catherine

Yep. Okay good. Well I guess we can move on from this item, if that's the case, over to you Stephen with the second item.

Stephen

So to the retender?

Catherine

Mm. So the second item is the retender of the management of the estate.

Stephen

So as everybody is aware, we are currently engaged in the process to retender the management of the estate, to the extent that we have agreement with Fairhold Artemis on the back of the RTM claim that was submitted in 2012 that enables us to do that. The objective is to facilitate a, effectively a self-managed model, whereby the estate management firm would really only be dealing with the back office functions that nobody on this call, or committee, or living at Chelsea Bridge Wharf, unless they have a big interest in health and safety and employment contracts wants to get involved with. Now we have responses from Mainstay and Rendell & Rittner at the moment. Mainstay have come in with a quote of £125.00 per unit, Rendell & Rittner have come in with a quote of £150.00 per unit. We are still waiting on the information from Inspire, RMG and Premiere. To the extent that we have an obstacle to overcome, that, those who will remember from previous discussions, is Berkeley's engagement. At the moment Berkeley are not participating, which makes it, well nigh on impossible, to successfully achieve the self-managed objective, on the basis that in order to manage an estate you need an estate that isn't split up into so many different compartments that it's just not practically working. We are having a discussion with Berkeley this week on the basis that the Mainstay number will maybe peak their interest, to the extent that they see there are alternatives out there. Something cropped up in a conversation with Rendell & Rittner this week, which I was quite surprised by, was that they don't pay their staff any sick pay or provide any health insurance that ?? which I thought was a little bit brutal mindful of the fact that the money is flowing in, notwithstanding I suspect it's going to the management and the entity that they use for hiring new staff, rather than actually creating a model whereby you look after your employees. So just a peripheral issue, but I've asked Roger to sort of factor in, in terms of our underlying considerations that there is a sort of environmental/social governance component that on the one hand if we want to build a team onsite that is good and stays, we need to ensure that the people that employ them, treat them properly. Now that's a very different thing from allowing the people that employ them to employ substandard individuals that don't do any work, which is historically what we've had to deal with. As we know that's been addressed by the estate manager, Brian Clue, who's just effectively re-hiring the vast majority of the team. So that's where we're at, it will be interesting to see if we can co-op Berkeley this week, because without their participation as I was saying we've got, we can replace Rendell & Rittner, but we don't get the self-managed component that we are actually angling for. So does that raise any questions. Natalia has a question?

Natalia

Yeah so basically like you've said changing the, one of those agents, what guarantee we have that we are going to be just in the same position where they again say that Berkeley Homes is their client and then we just end up in the same situation.

Stephen

There is no guarantee and you always will be in that situation if you're not self-managing. That is why we don't want to repeat the same focus. Anybody that is employed by Berkeley, will always refer to Berkeley as their client, which is just what everybody is frustrated with, because we all take the view for obvious reasons that the primary consideration should be the residents, not the client in the form of Berkeley, Fairhold Artemis or LMG. But we can only work within the construct that we have.

Natalia

So what is Roger saying currently, are we able to trigger that, like manage the paper we had?

Stephen

Only if we can get Berkeley to play ball.

Natalia

Right, otherwise there is no legal ways we can do it.

Stephen

No.

Natalia

Unless we wait until that time of the ...

Stephen

Unless we wait for the 'right to manage' legal change and that could be, Charlie and I think it's more likely two to three years, but others think it could be longer. I mean we don't know in short, I mean nobody can predict Parliament's ...

Natalia

Surely it's not possible this, making this sort of statement we'd be ? the money, but the Government is just like ... I don't think in the past year we had much progress in anything.

Stephen

I think there's been a lot of progress in the last ...

Natalia

Okay Brian and Jennifer finally left.

Stephen

But that's big progress, Jennifer was I think the main source of wasted money and we have people on the payroll that effectively weren't doing a job. So in terms of getting the right people, to the extent that we did transfer to another estate manager, then my preference would be that Brian and anybody he thinks is worth keeping, would come over. But I mean it's not quite as dark and pessimistic as your eyes seem to suggest, to the extent that ...

Natalia

Yeah but look even the door at the carpark being broken ...

Stephen

Yeah but Natalia look we can't get involved in granular issues about the, I hear you, I'm as frustrated as you are, but I can't make Berkeley do anything other than what they intend to do. What we can do is apply pressure, to the extent that Berkeley shouldn't really care who the estate manager is, or whether we run it, as long as the place is run properly. Their only concern is that they get the money that they're due from their contractual arrangements and that the place doesn't go to the dogs, so that there isn't the sort of issues in the press, Berkeley Development looks appalling.

Natalia

Yes this leaving a question ...

Kirt

We do have a lever on the first one, because we are the people who pay all of that money.

Stephen

We have got leverage.

Natalia

The other contractual arrangements, how many other contractual arrangements they owned, that's the question.

Kirt

The contractual arrangements are, Rendell & Rittner take all of the fees for managing the estate for us and that is the arrangement. So if we are no longer paying those fees, then they should be incentivised to do something to get those fees.

Catherine

Koray speaking, if you could please say your name.

Koray

What happens ... Maybe this is a daft question, but what have the other self-managed estates done differently, why do we have the parking problems that other people don't?

Stephen

The only answer would be in Berkeley I think we're also, our template is Grosvenor, just over the water and my understanding was that Berkeley were a landlord there, Rendell & Rittner were also an estate manager and for whatever reason Berkeley didn't object to the self-manage option being initiated at Grosvenor. Now what Berkeley said to me was and I don't doubt this, is that on the one hand they were waiting until the end of April when they, they have a contractual arrangement with Rendell & Rittner where every year Rendell & Rittner's performance is reviewed and to your point Natalia, the problem we have is that Berkeley's idea as to what constitutes good performance, primarily is, do Rendell & Rittner get our money in for us and obviously our definition of good performance is slightly different to that. So they wanted to complete that element and then there is also the issue at the back of their minds that they don't want to upset the status quo until the scaffolding has been removed. So there's two reasonably objective rationales that allow Berkeley to take the path that they are taking. Once those issues are addressed, Berkeley, a very bad look for Berkeley

is a PLC that promotes the fact that it works with residents and it's on side as far as reflecting residents wishes, that they effectively are the only stick in the mud preventing what is an initiative that everybody wants. So it's not as pessimistic as your eyes suggest. It's just we can't ...

Catherine

We are going to need to move on.

Stephen

We just can't move things quicker than the construct that we have to deal with allows us, that's the problem.

Natalia

I understand, I'm sorry ...

Stephen

But if you want to have a chat with me, we can catch up.

Catherine

Larisa.

Larisa

Larisa yeah, I'm forum and Louis can vouch for this. I know that when we were having massive problems with our previous consult all those years ago, there is a trigger point, or a sweet spot which Berkeley I do believe are happy to budge, which is when basically they realise that residents are really unhappy with how things are. They realise that the day to day functioning is at a point where you know something needs changing and then it becomes a question of putting forward a proposal that works for everyone potentially.

Koray

And maybe all these issues are actually interconnected.

Catherine

Koray, sorry please say your name.

Koray

I mean who is dealing with the Berkeley Group on behalf of the committee or anyone?

Stephen

Roger.

Koray

Rush through the agenda because we've got all these issues that we need to negotiate with them and it can't be just piecemeal.

Stephen

It's not.

Koray

We have to apply pressure on all fronts.

Stephen

Yeah we have a single at point team in the form of Roger Southam who is the consultant who is handling the retender, who is the conduit via which all these discussions are taking place. Underlying that I am lobbying Berkeley in the form of Simon Challon, to make all the points that we've just sort of touched on and said look if there's a direction of travel, if you've run out of optically acceptable excuses as to why you won't engage with the retender process, what, why do you care and ultimately one would hope the answer would be well look okay we don't care that much as long as our interests are addressed. If we are playing devils advocate, if it gets to a point where they're really digging their heels in then we've got a bit of a war on our hands, which I'm more than happy to embark upon, but I just don't think politically Berkeley Homes will want that level of difficulty.

Koray

I wouldn't call it a war, it's a question of negotiation and applying the right pressure from the right people in a unified way and we're just telling them piecemeal what we want, it's never going to work.

Stephen

Well there's only two sources of information that Berkeley are getting at the moment, which is us via the conversations that I'm having with Simon Challon and Roger Southam. So there aren't a load of patchwork discussions taking place. So it is targeted, it's just that we need the two, I won't call them excuses, because they are legitimate, but we need the review to have taken place that they've been talking about that is their internal meeting with Rendell & Rittner and we need the scaffolding to come down. So realistically I think the conversation with Berkeley will be well look let's say it's September, okay now you've dealt with the two issues that were supposedly holding you back, where are we now. And that's all we can do for the time being.

Catherine

Thanks Stephen, I think we should move on now, please.

Stephen

Okay.

Catherine

Did you want to mention this at all?

Stephen

Yeah I mean one of the things that will be voted on at the AGM is the actual retender itself. So when we've got the packs in and we have the information in a format that residents can actually digest, I mean the headline figure as we say will be price per unit, but obviously that's a bit simplistic, there's going to be other factors to take into account. Then it should be something I think that the residents that are interested have a vote on, because ultimately it's their money. So that's the primary vote that's going to be taking place at the AGM, and this is why we need to have a sort of proxy mechanism for those who may or may not be able to attend.

Catherine

Great, thank you. So moving on to Item 3, which Stephen you are going to give us a quick update on the accounting audit, which we have mandated.

Stephen

Yeah so we have instructed Shaw Wallace to take a retrospective dive to look at the expenditures that have been made historically. It's not a full blown forensic audit in the sense that you spend 60k and get somebody to go back six years and pull every item out. What it is intended to do is identify big line items that suggest that there are maybe underlying issues that would need to be explored further. That's the background, in short where we are at is that we're being blocked by Fairhold Artemis. It's not a legitimate block in the sense that ultimately they're saying that the RA isn't recognised. Now this is a sort of legal discussion to the extent that they actually, they are on the basis that the RTM Limited is the RA, Fairhold are dealing with RTM Limited, in the context of the retender, it's just that we have to jump through the hoops. The bottom line is Fairhold Artemis are the only actors in the arrangement who I think are trying to block the direction of channel. They don't want to give up Chelsea Bridge Wharf, to them historically it's been a cash cow and they're not as attuned I think to the bigger picture politically as to who the direction of travel with regards to ground rents becoming, not necessarily forbidden, but less prevalent in the ...

Kirt

It's the ? isn't it.

Stephen

Yeah it is.

Kirt

So they don't give a shit.

Stephen

They don't give a shit, no. They don't care about the optics and they're in it for the money, which is, we all do what we do for the money, but there is a time when it's going to be again difficult for them to keep maintaining their position they are maintaining. In short they are just making every step we take difficult.

Catherine

So what is the next step, can we actually do anything about this?

Stephen

So the next step is we have to speak to, well we have to find out from, Richard Daver told HAH (?) they won't release certain information for statutory reasons, i.e. we're not recognised. We need to go back to Richard and say who said this, what is their objection and then we have to deal with the objection. So it's a dance of death that will result in the information being released, but they are just being bloody minded and obstructive, but within the realms of corporate politeness and whatever, which is what they do.

Natalia

But I feel like in the beginning you already went through all of this with them and then eventually they kind of like agreed.

Stephen

No they didn't. We did, you are right, we basically said to them look we want to be recognised and they said well you are not for various reasons and it wasn't an issue then, we've had other things to think about. But it's sort of reared its head again now on the back of the accountancy information. So the irony is you go to them and say you are recognising me when I'm wearing this, my blue hat, the RTM Limited hat, but you are not recognising me when I'm coming at you wearing my red hat, which is the RM. So they haven't got a leg to stand on, but they are just make us have the discussion.

Natalia
Okay.

Catherine
Thank you. So moving onto the next step, which is a round robin of all the updates on the big items that we discuss every time. I might start actually with a very quick update on the ponds, which Toby who isn't here today, gave me. So next week the full lining of the ponds in the Centurion building are due to start and then that will be followed by Howard and Warwick buildings. Also piazza balcony decking is due to be replaced and pond plants will be added once they've been filled. So that's the state at the moment. Please don't ask me any questions.

Larisa
Timeframe?

Catherine
Timeframe, no, I don't have one I'm afraid. I'll take a next step for Toby to follow up and find out the timeframe on the ponds, Thank you.

Kirt
Can you just repeat the bit about the decking?

Catherine
So once the lining has been done, they will be filled the ponds. Once they've been filled, apparently there is a plan to replace the piazza balcony decking's.

Kirt
Okay just the piazza.

Catherine
Yep.

Natalia
The bridge is like ...

Catherine
Yep and to add plants.

Kirt
Great, thank you.

Catherine

So that was that on the ponds. Can I hand over to Louis please to give us a quick update on where we are with the Sopwith Way and the barrier that we've been aiming to instal at the beginning of the road to reduce access.

Louis

Good morning, it's Louis and the update on the barrier is that BPS have basically been delaying the answer, due to people being off sick etc... They have to remove at some point the existing barrier that goes under the railway bridge and that meets the standard of vehicle impact resistance. So they either have to spend again probably £70,000 roughly to replace it, or they can contribute towards our barrier, so it's with them in terms of an expectation that they are going to pay half. The cost of the barrier is around £67,000 including all the CCTV, the links back to the concierge and the maintenance as well within the year and that answer hopefully we'll have kind of within the next week or two from BPS. If not then Rendell & Rittner were suggesting to push forward with the barrier of a lower spec, meaning that it restricts access to Sopwith Way, but it is not impact resistant to, if a lorry was to drive through the barrier.

Stephen

It's Stephen speaking, just a question. So is it the case then that if you get BPS on board effectively they are, as we consider at the moment, open to the thing that we all walked past this morning, being moved further down to Sopwith Way?

Louis

No. They are removing that and then instead they are having like an arm barrier put in, because by moving the existing one would mean that all the cyclists and all the pedestrians still go down Sopwith Way, which and the bike couriers to the restaurants etc... So it's basically taking out what they've got at the moment. They will probably use it somewhere else in the Power Station, but instead we have a barrier put around the Burnelli end of Sopwith Way.

Stephen

Okay so we end up with ...

Louis

It's our barrier, I mean it's just that they've financed, yeah basically.

Stephen

And it stops the Sopwith Way problem of people that back onto Sopwith Way.

Louis

Yeah it will stop the taxi pick-up for the Power Station, deliveries and pedestrians and cyclists, but it will be controlled by the concierge and that will allow residents that have deliveries, removals, the hotel, the bins, so it will be for us to continue to use as residents as we do already at the moment, but it will just be access controlled, to make sure that it's for the benefit of the estate.

Stephen

I know this is difficult to say, have you got a feeling on time lines?

Louis

So they are pushing for an answer within the next two weeks, because the answer was delayed by two weeks. So hopefully next week, but just to give some kind of extra um within that, the supplier that was looking to basically put all the stuff together said that the order time is around five to six weeks. So once we get the go ahead and give them basically ...

Catherine

Thank you. Please say your name.

Natalia

It's Natalia, it's good to know that basically we are aiming to not only restrict the cars and lorries and taxis, but also kind of like even major truck and like cyclists right. So that expansive more option like should restrict all that right?

Louis

It's basically ours, our proposal originally actually does exactly the same job in terms of restricting people, traffic, the only difference is if a big lorry was trying to commit like a terrorist act or something, they could just plough straight through the barrier and then there's a through road into the Power Station. So the Power station's concern is that they want something that is impact resistance and that's where they would contribute and the difference of that.

Natalia

Okay.

Catherine

Kirt, sorry did you have a question?

Kirt

Yes what was the costing for the lower impact resistance?

Louis

It's, I'll send it out, because it was, basically the first bit of the barrier was around £16,000, but the complexity in the cost was more to do with they've lumped it in with the CCTV project, because there's a CCTV that is included, but it would have been included anyway, because the CCTV is was being upgraded on Sopwith Way and the rest of the estate. But I need to kind of yeah pull the numbers out.

Catherine

Thanks Louis and yes Larisa.

Larisa

Can I just really quickly try and see if it's possible once they're that far along to have some kind of signage just to say to ...

Louis

Signage is going to be done as well.

Larisa

'Just don't go down this way - you are wrong.!'

Louis

Yes signage is going to be looked at, at both ends, so yeah and we've worked already with DPS that on their updated marketing they are not putting the taxi rank sign basically outside the Chelsea Bridge Wharf Clinic.

Catherine

And just to remind everybody the original concerns were also about late night loitering in the area between the trains and our buildings and some loud noises and parties and drug dealing, so there was a lot of activity going on, which is one of the motivators for also getting this done. So next update please, Louis if you want to continue and give us a quick update on where we are with the lifts maintenance contract please.

Louis

So Rendell & Rittner have been involved, because the lift companies as we mentioned before, don't want to work directly with us while we are part of Rendell & Rittner, because they are at risk of losing the bigger contracts across the 700 plus other developments. Meaning that if Otis come and quote to us directly that they could basically lose the contract and the wider Rendell & Rittner contract is more important than the estate contract. So Rendell & Rittner have gone and asked for the retender. The one thing that we addressed with John this week, is that it's not just about retendering the companies that do the maintenance, but also on the lift consultants that basically drive the brief. And there was an assumed understanding that the lift consultants are in it with the lift operators and they're driving the costs up between the two of them. So we've asked basically for the retender to be put to that, to different lift consultants as well. Positive action just in terms of the lift maintenance is that across the estate we pay for a maintenance contract which is all inclusive and that is meant to lead to different service agreements in terms of coming out to the lifts and keeping them operating. And even though it's only a very small area, we've been aware that the lift in the concierge hasn't, the kind of disabled lift hasn't been working for I think more than a year and we've been paying for the contract to basically make it working. So through the pressure we've put on, we've managed to get a refund back from Otis on the period that basically they haven't been maintaining the lift. The number is still to be calculated as a final number, if you're concerned about that.

Stephen

If there needs to be any headline banner as to Otis's lack of suitability, to allow us to be without a disabled lift, for as long as it was, it says it all doesn't it.

Louis

Yes.

Catherine

Thank you.

Louis

It's on-going but yeah.

Catherine

Next was on an item regarding the scaffolding and Paddy I know you've done a bit of work on this, I don't know if I should hand over to you first, or say to Stephen, because you wanted to bring up the balcony decking and then there's been an item about the window cleaning and

when that would happen, which I think Louis you have an update on? No? Or I have it anyway. So can we maybe start with you please Paddy?

Paddy

Yeah sure. Paddy Savage here. Well immediately after the last meeting, the following week, I contacted the scaffolding company. It became very apparent immediately, they redirected me over to the, they said it's not for us, we want our scaffolding back, we would like it back, we have been trying to get it back for a year, we want the job finished. The problem is between Berkeley Homes and the cladding contractors. So I called Stephen, I put that on Stephen's plate on that one. We did try to get hold of the cladding people, we were unsuccessful, but immediately after that I think Stephen found that Berkeley Homes restarted the engines and started getting everything done. I don't know whether it was because of that, I doubt it was, but they seem to be a very long time to get the scaffolding back. They wanted it back and it was nothing to do with the scaffolding company at all like we thought. So I'll hand it over to you Stephen, because I know that you spoke to Berkeley Homes then immediately after that about the cladding companies. I think Toby might have spoken to some people as well, because there were some issues between the cladding people, Berkeley Homes and the cladding people and their subcontractors and the amount of people they could get working for them. But I don't know anything else after that, but it was ...

Stephen

Stephen speaking. I mean that's right Pat to the extent that Berkeley were playing the card that the issues related to the scaffolding being taken down were covid related, Brexit related, you name it, they threw out every sort of cliché in the box. The bottom line was I think there was some truth in the fact that they were struggling to allocate the contractors to us. The issue as we've said before is that there is a big demand for scaffolding and cladding related projects all over the UK, London in particular. The upshot was that thanks to sort of Paddy shaking them up a little bit, so we don't know definitely, but there was a definite increase in the speed of people actually being around doing stuff, which certainly I can vouch for the fact that from 8 in the morning now, until 4 in the afternoon, there's people actually working and Saturday morning as well actually, which does provide some comfort that the September/August deadline dates are at the forefront of Berkeley's mind.

Catherine

Am I right in thinking that they've pledged no further delays at this point?

Stephen

They've pledged no further delays, but you know they've said that three times. But again the optics started to look bloody awful, Berkeley don't want aggro, you know they'll keep pushing you and taking the mick to the very edge of aggro, but they really don't want to have things escalate to an extent that things are difficult for them. I was going to save this to 'any other business,' but I think it's probably a very good time maybe just to slip it in. It's, I don't know, I'll circulate the publication after the call, but the governmental pledge document that was published about 14 days ago, essentially sets out the parameters making developers liable for all remediation works pertaining to fire and safety hazards. Berkeley I know for a fact is a signatory and my reading of it is that they also have to now replace the wooden decking on all the balconies. Now it's been ...

Larisa

Like I've been saying.

Stephen

Like you've been saying yeah, but it's good that the direction of travel is actually the one we would like it to be. Now I'm going to speak to Berkeley on the back of that, amongst the various other agenda that we've got with Simon Challon this week, but the upshot will be, so you know you kind of ...

Natalia

Scaffolding on for longer?

Stephen

That's the potential issue. Now I've sort of asked people in the business and said well could you do it without the scaffolding and it's possible, but they said it would be a lot easier with the scaffolding. So obviously this is a bit of a mixed message, because I hate the scaffolding as much as anybody.

Larisa

It's coming down already anyway.

Stephen

But the issue is anyway, Berkeley look you are on the hook for this, how are you going to manage this now, nobody wants to take the scaffolding down and put it up again a week later, so I'm just putting it out there. But I urge everybody to take a look at that pledge letter, which ...

Catherine

So you'll circulate it and shall we put it on the app as well, yes?

Koray

I mean what is the reason though, I mean can you just, obviously it's been accelerated all of a sudden, everybody noticed it, what do you think prompted that and what can we do to push it forward and keep the momentum going, because obviously, it's a joke. It's been two years and if we need to maybe we should take other measures, to actually push this agenda further. You said that they don't want egg on their face, if necessary maybe we should try other methods as well, if we ever get to that point, such as maybe going to the press, or maybe talking about health and safety issues.

Stephen

I mean there are other, the problem with other methods, the press is always an option, you know soft pressure via media is always a keep in your back pocket mechanic that we could use. But you know you see people saying well let's do some legal, there ain't no legal mechanics that we can ...

Koray

Do we know that for a fact?

Stephen

I know that for a fact, yeah.

Koray

So living under scaffolding for two years under dust is no health and safety issue?

Stephen

It's true ...

Koray

Legally that can't be acceptable in any western country.

Stephen

It's unfortunate.

Natalia

We went to BBC, they filmed me and I was on the news and it didn't make any difference.

Stephen

It's bloody annoying, but there aren't any legal safeguards, other than Berkeley not wanting to be in the press with us standing on the balconies doing all this. But I honestly believe that based on the work I've seen with my own eyes being done that the August/September deadline is a real one. But it's incumbent on me to mention now this potential fly in the ointment of this, the wooden decking on the balconies. So I'm just putting it out there and use it as you will at the moment.

Catherine

So the final point on this was about window cleaning, I think there had been a question about whether residents were being, residents with scaffolding, whether they were being charged for window cleaning.

Stephen

No.

Catherine

And so the answer that I'm relaying I think Toby's answer, was no.

Stephen

Very briefly, the issue with that was the old management regime Jennifer and Co had put a line item for window cleaning for the last couple of years, for I think it was 50, a lot of money for the whole development and we, on behalf of the residents said look, no, there's no point for those of us who have scaffolding paying to have a clear view of a piece of steel tubing sticking outside your window. So we said can you please not spend any money on window cleaning for those with scaffolding, but as the scaffolding comes down, can you in tandem, literally almost, hopefully the day after, do the window cleaning. So that's the answer to that question.

Catherine

Thank you. So moving on in the interest of time to the next item on the agenda and this was something that I believe Jean and Natalia had asked, I'm sorry I'm not entirely clear what it's about exactly. Jean are you still with us?

Jean

Indeed I am, but it's Natalia's proposal, so do you want to lead Natalia/

Catherine

It's about voting on the big items.

Natalia

So that we all kind of vote in for like if we are pushing Brian or Rendell & Rittner to do something, let's say like even colouring the ponds, I mean I think we should circulate it in between all of us and then kind of like agree on it, rather than kind of like two or three people say okay I feel like it's, you know it's going to be a good idea and then just kind of run with it. I'd rather kind of like have us vote on a few things if we um ...

Catherine

Yes. Louis do you want to respond?

Louis

Yes just picking up on the CapEx thing, I think it was things that also residents had asked basically at least that we're involving people in terms of spending, but I think when we had spoken with Brian on this, there also needs to be kind of like a definition of what we agree and what we don't, because a CapEx item could be like £50.00 for something small, or it could be 50,000. So I think what we understood from Brian was his limitations and spend were that he can spend up to £5,000. John, who is like the senior like estate manager can spend £10,000 and if they need to spend more than that it goes up to the area manager, who can spend £20,000 and anything above that it goes to Richard Daver to basically be approved. Whether that's the right or the wrong thing, it's that there needs to be a balance of voting on the higher CapEx items, but also having, letting the estate team get on and do and be able to spend money to do small things, without having to wait for months on that.

Natalia

Yeah exactly, because I believe the problem with, Natalia speaking, is the carpark door, it's that first he said it's going to £2000 and then he said it's £5000 and then you've been kind of questioning Brian, what's changed now and why the prices went up. I believe this is the reason and like who is paying for this and why has it changed.

Louis

I think it was more the spec of the door, whether it's going to be metal or whether it's going to be wood.

Natalia

Yeah. So like for example the thing like this so he can present us like a picture, a drawing and then we can say yeah I agree with that, so then there is no misunderstanding between RA residents from that. We have been pushing to change them and then something has changed and then having the rest is not happy, at least we can say well RA, all of our RA are voting on it and then we are all like a single unit.

Stephen

Stephen speaking. I mean taking the dye in the ponds as an example, it was a temporary measure. I see what you are saying that going forward, something like that we discuss as a group. I suppose the only thing I would say is that I was sort of sold that idea look it's a temporary thing, if it doesn't work, we can wash it out in however many weeks it takes to

wash out. There are some things that you think well hang on, do you want Brian to get on with it and just try things, because he's got a slightly more dynamic attitude than them in the past, or say can you wait until we've got the next committee meeting, or until we've put ... I mean what we don't want to do and this is just my personal view, if I'm shouted down, I'm happy to take that, but you know some of the discussions, we can't possibly have a mass development debate on whether or not they jet wash the slabs, there's got to be some practicality in terms of getting the job done. I take your point, in terms of aesthetic things that affect us, maybe rather than just saying to Brian, okay give it a go, we'll hold back and let's put it out there.

Catherine

So can we just take a next step maybe to discuss with Brian then, you know any aesthetics to be run by the committee and any big item, big amounts, but we have to define what these amounts are, that we want to have a say in, yes?

Stephen

Yes and there's already a tacit agreement, but you are right we need something formal that says over x K it becomes a RA discussion.

Catherine

Yeah, great.

Adrian

Apologies, Adrian speaking, just a quick one on that point, what we need Catherine is a detailed tender package, price comparison, so if they are going to the market for any major works i.e. the doors to be replaced, we want to see where you've gone to three or four companies and they're getting the best value for the residents.

Stephen

Yes.

Adrian

I've seen this quote, not just saying oh we've had a quote for 8,000, we're doing it.

Catherine

So we are actually doing this with the lifts retendering, we are keeping an eye, this is what we're doing as a committee, keeping an eye on the big items. So thank you.

Stephen

Again I take your point.

Catherine

Now final last but not least on today's agenda, Jean wanted us to have an item on further community building. I'd just like in passing to say thank you to the team who's been managing the app, because we've tried to increase our communications with residents, so thank you to the team who has been doing that. And Jean over to you, you had some thoughts on community building.

Jean

Thank you. This idea derived directly from the app, a couple of the residents were asking whether we were going to have a big Jubilee lunch, which is a countrywide endeavour on Sunday June 5th that communities are coming together and having street parties. So I am currently investigating the possibility of funding sources, I'm focusing on funding sources for a big Jubilee lunch. The idea being that we certainly wouldn't provide everything for lunch, but we would perhaps fund drinks and/or a burger bar. I'm also trying to get a feel for attendance for this sort of thing and the level of interest. So I'll be turning to this committee after, via email, to ask, to get a feel for whether people are indeed interested in this idea. Finally I've got a couple of, not finally, but I've got a couple of ...

Catherine

Sorry Jean, on this I think Louis just wanted to come in briefly.

Jean

Can I just finish please, Louis? I'm sorry let me just, I've got a couple of emails out to a couple of potential funding sources and finally I'm meeting with the professional events manager, who happens to be a resident, on Tuesday, to get their ideas. Louis, I'm sorry I just wanted to finish those two points.

Louis

That's no problem. I was going to say I think it's probably worth, either through Brian, or through John, asking Rendell & Rittner as well, because I'm aware that they had last year a community budget fund and I think we'd asked if we could use that towards some of the Christmas decorations and then they didn't. But I was aware that there was roughly about £10,000 that Rendell & Rittner put aside for community projects.

Larisa

And Garden Jones.

Louis

And Garden Jones as well might. But I don't know I just think even if it's a no, it's worth asking the question, because 10,000 could be helpful.

Jean

Oh that ...

Stephen

We said we were going to approach Raj as well, shouldn't we ...

Jean

Yeah I'm waiting to hear back, I have approached him and I'm waiting to hear back from Raj at the Market Place Stores.

Stephen

I think speaking from the hip that those sources should want to contribute, to the extent that they do have funds available and obviously Raj and the estate agents have a commercial angle of promotion. I'm hopeful, fingers crossed Jean that we get a little bit ... resources.

Jean

I'm hoping, I think the whole idea is there's no use in doing it unless it's done well. So I'm hoping that people do pony up and that's something that over a course of a week, I will be, hopefully getting responses and circulating back and saying either yeah or nay. But on the interim basis if you could please respond to my email and indicate your potential interest in attending and also whether you would like to, if we do have it, like to help out, because there will be a little bit of work involved. Thank you.

Catherine

Thank you Jean, fantastic. And it's 11.02!

Stephen

Any other business?

Catherine

Of course, of course, I was just um trying to do the good timekeeping here. So yes, any other business, Kirt do you have something for any other business, go ahead.

Kirt

I do. I was wondering if anybody is aware of the situation with the intercoms. I was already deeply annoyed, with a number of other residents when Cornerstone replaced all of the systems that were working fine as far as our building was concerned and replaced them with less functional systems. That was only a couple of years before the pandemic, so what's going on with the intercom system, are we going to have a whole new system?

Natalia

And not only that, but them replacing those parts it actually leading to our old intercoms not working and then they say oh your intercom is old, you have to change it to the one which is £500.00 and I'm like I would rather contribute by having a completely new system. I haven't had my camera working for over six years.

Catherine

So I think we will give the next step, he's not here, it's not fair, but for Toby to look into this, because he has been in the past year working on the intercoms and there were consultants, there was some research done. From memory I think it was agreed not to completely replace the intercoms, but to replace parts temporarily, so it's all in the minutes of the meeting. But we will put it on the agenda for next time.

Kirt

But is that the same problem or is it, because this is not really the intercom system, it's like the key fob system to get into the buildings.

Louis

The problem and I think it's something that we need to be aware of, not just for intercoms, but for other projects, lifts etc., is that Cornerstone own the IP behind the technology that we have. So now that Cornerstone aren't there it was about, they didn't, it's the wrong way to say it, but it's like they've switched off their computer that allows us to basically reprogramme fobs and it basically meant that we are left with a dead system. So I think that was the problem with some of the buildings in the last week or so, but it's that, whenever we're asking for the lift company, or whoever it be that we make sure that we have, I don't know the correct word, but something that's interchangeable that you can just jump across.

Kirt
Open architecture.

Louis
Correct!

Stephen
Just to jump on the point, the issue was pretty much as Louis set out that Cornerstone basically threw their toys out of the pram and said well by virtue of the way the contract operated, we are taking our data, which is what allows the fob system to run. So essentially Brian has been left with the situation where the opportunity cost of getting rid of Cornerstone is to rebuild the database from scratch and to address the issue going forward it will now be owned by, well it will be owned by Rendell & Rittner which is a ...

(A few laughs.)

Natalia
Yeah we should check legally like their position.

Stephen
Yeah well to be perfectly, I've only just as we've had this conversation it's ...

Kirt
I remember when Rendell & Rittner took over Consort pulled all of their, took off all their systems.

Stephen
Yeah there needs to be a contractual agreement that that stays with the development, through thick or thin.

Natalia
It should belong to let's say RA.

Stephen
Yeah because it's our data, understood. Yeah understood, that's a good point. Thanks for having that chat to flush that one out.

Catherine
Any other business. Koray go ahead.

Koray
It's a small thing, but does anyone know why all the trash bins are left outside the buildings in the parking lot?

Louis
Because they are painting. They've redecorated the ...

Kirt
The actual, the proper ones?

Koray
It's like three ...

Catherine
Rubbish bags, or bins?

Koray
... entrances blocked and you can't like park easily because of that.

Louis
They have left them in a bad place but they started with Howard, they've done Warwick and they are working round, but they basically repainted all of them.

Natalia
That the bins are stored inside.

Louis
Yeah all the bin stores inside. So they've left them basically outside, they are going to do it I think for a week for each building.

Koray
But can they do it in a friendly way where you can park easily?

Natalia
Just message Brian and they will tell the guy and he will move everything.

Catherine
Great. Thank you. If there's nothing else, I think we will close the meeting. Lovely. Thank you very much to those of you who joined us online and until ... oh the date of the next meeting. Well I guess we've got the AGM on the 8th. We haven't actually set the next meeting date, so we might just take a moment to look at dates and we will circulate with the minutes.

Natalia
AGM it will be with the Rendell & Rittner and ?

Catherine
Yes on the 8th May at 10am, the room has been booked already and I think there has been an announcement on the app, so residents should be aware. But as we said at the beginning once we have an agenda, we'll share that as well with everybody. Yeah? Great. Thank you very much for joining today, enjoy your Sunday.

Kirt
I was going to complain about the carpark charges going up!

(Laughing.)

End of Meeting