

# CBW Residents Association AGM Meeting

Sunday 23 April 2023 10.30am – 11.30am

## Committee Members Presenting:

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|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Louis -Sebastian Kendall | Co-Chair             |
| Larisa Villar Hauser     | Co-Chair             |
| Catherine Tomé           | Secretary (outgoing) |
| Toby Spoerer             | Treasurer            |
| Stephen Thompson         | former Chair         |

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| Jen Snowdon    | Zoom facilitator |
| Emma Biskupski | Minute taker     |

## Housekeeping:

The Secretary outlined the health and safety briefing for the meeting, that the meeting was being recorded, and attendees were asked to be respectful of each other during the presentations and the Q&A section of the meeting. The meeting was recorded.

A QR code was provided to guests in order to view the key documents for the meeting, including the RA accounts. The documents remain the property of the RA and may not be distributed without permission.

## Agenda:

- Chairs' welcome
- RA achievements over the past year
- Treasurer's update
- RA priorities for 2023
- Voting (if quorate)
- Q&A
- Voting results (if available)

## Chairs' Welcome:

Larisa and Louis welcomed all to the meeting and thanked residents for attending (in person and online).

There are 1134 apartments across Chelsea Bridge Wharf (CBW) with 571 Resident Association (RA) members = 50.35% membership.

54 residents are participating by proxy for today's meeting. In order for the meeting today to be quorate, we need 89 people present in the room or online (Zoom).

### **Summary of RA key achievements in 2022**

Stephen Thompson (outgoing Chair) looked back over the last 12 months and highlighted that the RA is here to represent the views of residents and help to achieve on our behalf the key objectives.

Recognition of the RA: In order to achieve this, the RA needs to be legally recognised. This has been achieved as the RA now has full recognition from all the landlords across the estate. This is required in order for the RA to be able to access data/information regarding the service charge, or contribute to discussions regarding expenditure such as maintenance, retenders etc.

Right to Manage: Most would agree that CWB leaseholders want to aim for this, with a view to the RA being able to appoint the estate managers. The groundwork has been undertaken and the new co-chairs will take this work forward in 2023.

Safety & Security: Resident concerns here range from parcels going missing to residents feeling uncomfortable walking across the Piazza when lighting is out of order, items going missing from car parks etc. Key achievements include:

- new CCTV system being installed
- Amazon lockers to assist in reduction of parcels going missing. Feedback from residents always welcome on these new facilities.
- Planning for barrier on Sopwith Way: to assist with restricting access to traffic that can cause a nuisance and lead to anti-social behaviour. Hopefully by end of 2023 this will be operational.
- Development of number plate fine recognition system to deter vehicles from Sopwith way

Phase 1 of accounting audit initiated: backward look at money that the Estate Management company has spent over the last 6 years. This task costs money and needs backing of RA members to proceed with phase 2.

Liaising with Estate Management Company: RA has acted as the representative for residents with the Estate Management in relation to a range of issues, including fountains/ponds / scaffolding / window cleaning. Whilst RA is not responsible for these issues – they do put forward the views of residents in order to seek change.

Building links with useful contacts: RA has made links with local MP / Councillors to address local issues.

Installation of acoustic cameras on Queenstown Road: to help address issue of noisy vehicles speeding up and down Queenstown Road – RA has liaised with local partners in the Council to install acoustic cameras to provide the evidence of the problem of anti-social engine noise etc. It is hoped that this is a pre-cursor to the Council installing speed cameras. This is not a simple process.

Insurance costs: As a result of analytical work by committee members, the RA identified that residents who have Artemis as a landlord were paying over marker per

square foot for insurance. RA lobbied on behalf of residents and new quote is £100k less for the affected leaseholders.

### **Treasurer's update:**

Toby presented the 2022 RA expenditure:

The opening balance at the start of the year was just over £28000. Subscription fees received of just under £16000. Historically these were collected by Rendall & Rittner (R&R) – however they are no longer doing this and the RA is putting into place a scheme to collect membership fees. Residents will be contacted about this in a few weeks time.

### Outgoings:

- Right to Manage and retender consultations: £7,500
- CBWRA App: running costs just over £7,000. This has been renegotiated for 2023 and will drop to £5,000 inc VAT.
- Other re-tender works: £3,750
- Top line review of accounts: £6,000
- Insurance for RA: £2,688
- Meeting room hire: £1,380 now down to £400 by relocating to new venue
- Transcription service: £490 (now removed for 2023).

Rest of expenditure of smaller line items are available to view in the spreadsheet provided.

Draft budget for 2023 provided – this does not include any audit costs due to lack of funds and RA not yet being assured of income from membership fees now that they will be collected directly from RA and not R&R.

### **RA priorities 2023 – Joint Chairs**

Right to Manage (RTM): Main goal is achieving Right to Manage (RTM). A lot of progress has been made in the last month. Two companies in particular have been identified as potential replacements for R&R – proposals will be shared shortly. The potential new companies to be nominated will be asked to manage the process of seeking engagement from leaseholders in order to ensure that the process runs smoothly and effectively.

Value for money: meeting with freeholders and R&R to outline top areas of challenge from RA. Good progress being made but ongoing challenge.

- Electricity rates across the estate being challenged by RA.
- Staffing at CBW – there has been a restructure and RA has asked for a longer term review. RA wants to seek leaseholder views on what they want from concierge team, estate ops, in the short, medium and long term. RA want to challenge R&R around spend on agency staffing, want to develop more sustainable staffing structure.
- RA trying to understand discrepancy on costs of water bills across the estate.

Fountains and ponds: Significant costs incurred in past. Recent work undertaken and RA have been clear that leaseholders do not wish to incur further costs.

Volunteering for short term projects/research for RA:

RA seeking volunteers from CBW to assist in focus groups / project work to help on specific topics (eg fountains or other issues on the estate) – good opportunity to volunteer for RA if you cannot commit to joining the RA Committee. Please make contact if you would like to assist.

Safety & security & CCTV project: CCTV project has gone ahead. Other areas to consider are concierge hours overnight / recruiting overnight security. On the list of issues for RA to review but not top priority.

Service charge transparency: More information requested from R&R, Berkeley Homes acknowledge R&R can improve on their communications and are supporting all sides on this. RA seeking more views from leaseholders about proposed budgets and hope is we will be able to vote for key priority areas and come up with compromises on how we spend funds across the estate.

Maintenance tracker: this will now be updated monthly and hope to move to a live document that can be shared, alongside a forward plan for future works. R&R recognise communication to residents about maintenance can be improved, with more detail such as timescales.

Sustainability: RA need more resident engagement on this issue but areas to explore include use of solar power for communal electricity. Reducing impact of printing for RA / Estate as a whole.

RA subscription fees: now that R&R not collecting subscription fees, RA exploring option of direct debit collection (so leaseholders not tied in to full year subscription if buying/selling apartment). Proposal is to increase subscription fee to £4 per month – minimum 200 leaseholders in order to fund the CBW app, and RTM process. RA are mindful of processing fees that direct debit scheme providers would charge.

If there are additional audits or projects, proposal is to raid funds for those separately.

**Voting:**

The Committee members checked the attendees in person, online and by proxy (129 total) and found that we were 14 people short of the AGM meeting being quorate and voting could not proceed. The AGM will therefore be deferred.

The Co-chairs explained that the RA's task in reaching all leaseholders has been complicated since R&R ceased to manage and collect the membership fees for the RA and won't share the original database of leaseholders.

The Co-chairs urged all those in attendance today not to disengage from the process when the next AGM meeting is called. We need strong engagement from leaseholders (in person, online or by proxy), including those who are overseas and are absentee landlords (approximately 50% of apartments are currently rented out).

**Q&A:** one question per person.

- Natalia (Howard): queried if the RA subscription fee decreased. Louis replied that last year the fee was £20 per year and RA are now proposing £4 per month (£48 per year) which will cover costs for key RA priorities.
- Karen (zoom): Is there an option of paying a one off subscription for RA membership (better for RA to reduce admin burden of many small direct debits): Toby replied that this will be an option.
- Mike (Warwick): cited the ongoing cost of fountains and noted that at AGM last year, leaseholders were promised a vote on the future of the fountains. Why have residents not been offered a vote on alternative use of the fountains (eg planting), given the rising costs of maintenance, electricity. Larisa acknowledged that vote was suggested last year, but that lack of resources within the RA means that this hasn't yet been possible. RA is looking to develop and gather information for range of possible options regarding the fountains – so that leaseholders can make a fully informed decision about the future of the fountains.  
Louis also noted that ultimately, if a formal change of use is required, the RA can raise the views of leaseholders about the fountains with Berkeley Homes but ultimately it is their decision as managers of the estate. The RA assured the meeting that plans are in place to seek options to help inform this debate as we move forward.
- Susanne (Oswald): Some leaseholders purchased their properties specifically because of the water features – but she understands this is a complicated subject. Who is looking at the options for the future of the water features as leaseholders will need to be well informed in order to make key decisions? Larisa confirmed that the ponds are not in scope for the vote – that is only for the future of the fountains. Leaseholder views are split on this and therefore a range of options to present to leaseholders before a vote is being prepared and a resident is volunteering to assist with this project.
- Florence (zoom): The clause 9.1 regarding indemnity in the Constitution needs to be deleted, as it should not be for members to pay for the indemnity. Secondly, an audit of costs is crucial and we need a vote on this. Larisa responded that the RA will clarify the wording in the constitution regarding the indemnity. As today's meeting is not quorate – we cannot proceed with vote on audit.
- Paolo (Warwick): Does the fact that we are not quorate at today's AGM change the recognition of the RA from Berkeley Homes, R&R etc? The RA Committee responded that if this is not rectified by September, then the official recognition of the RA will be withdrawn.
- Patrick (zoom): Does intercom maintenance have any priority? Louis responded that a former contractor who was overseeing the system has been

removed and replaced with a new contractor (also used by US Embassy). The rationale is that the new call out times for the new contractor are shorter. RA has challenged R&R on rising costs as there is recognition that replacing/maintaining intercom system is likely to be a long term project. RA has requested a longer term capital expenditure plan with costings so that this can be better understood and what the implications are for different building across the estate (as level of reserves across the buildings are different).

- Lyn (Oswald): The fountains and ponds are a big part of the aesthetics of the estate and if better maintained it would be good for value of properties. Lyn queried the timeline for the completion of pond works? Louis responded that there was a discrepancy in costs to complete the works and move to a new contractor. R&R not willing to share the costs at the moment. Some leaseholders weren't allowing access to terraces for works to proceed. RA is liaising with Berkeley Homes to push this forward and it is hoped works will be complete this summer.
- Adrian (Warwick): Has the RA considered opening up the CWB app to other companies for advertising to raise additional revenue to offset costs of running App or other projects such as RTM? Louis noted that no revenue has been accounted for in previous years but this year we have tentatively put in a line item for advertising for £2.5k. RA looking for volunteers to help scope out how advertising could work on the App to raise revenue, but RA also need to balance this with need to keep resident/leaseholder engagement on the App high (this could be negatively impacted by much advertising).
- Scott (Zoom): Has a question regarding window / balcony cleaning at my flat. Should this be directed to R&R or here? Answer is please send operational questions to R&R but feel free to copy in RA in email correspondence.
- Constantin (Horace): Thanked the Committee for reaching out and asking to attend the meeting – it tipped the balance and encouraged him to attend. He noted 64% increase in Horace service charge over last 6 years. Is RA aware of any legal measures that can stop R&R from charging well over the rate of inflation? Louis highlighted the main costs such as insurance, staffing, electricity. There isn't a cap that R&R can charge, they must provide x3 quotes from providers and demonstrate costs are reasonable and fair, however it's not always the best quality or value for money. As we move to RTM, we hope that we will have greater influence but the RA is already trying to influence the biggest ticket items across the estate.
- Susan (Howard): wanted to suggest for RA to send to the tenants of absent landlords the reason for the RA and ask them to forward to landlord. Mutually beneficial to both tenants and absent landlords to be better engaged. Larisa answered this involves a lot of work but willing to explore.

- John Blackwell (zoom): Former director of RA. Previously had no problem with R&R collecting RA subscription fees in the past – why has this changed? Louis and Larisa noted that R&R are now aware that the RA is seeking RTM and a change in managing agent and are now being obstructive and have declined to continue to collect fees.
- ?: At the last AGM, the resident believed that R&R agreed that no smoking signs would be posted across the piazza, however this has not happened. Louis noted that R&R have not added any notices, but they have explained that they can't enforce no smoking across the public thoroughfare on the estate. If leaseholders wanted to see a change, there would be a legal fee incurred to change the headlease and every landlord would need to update the lease. It is not a current key priority for the RA.
- Maysam (Zoom): the new CCTV cameras being are very discreet. Can there be signage put up (eg CCTV in operation) to help deter crime rather than catching person after the crime? Louis noted CCTV not yet switched on as awaiting signage to say there is CCTV on the property as this is a legal requirement, even in a residential property.
- Ian (Warwick): re the fountains when the major refit was undertaken in the autumn, and current works fall under the guarantee of those original works. How long is that guarantee period for the major refit for? Louis noted RA understanding is that the guarantee for some of the works lasts for 2 years but biggest cost is around the new fountain lining which is now guaranteed for 20 years.
- Evadne (Eustace): How close are we to Right to Manage or have we agreed to this process already? Larisa answered that RA is making huge strides and will be sending out within the next month information to leaseholders. It may well be contested by some of the landlords and if so the RA will have to determine how to respond. It also needs over 50% of leaseholders to sign up to the process so your engagement is very important.
- John Blackwell (zoom): noted that in previous attempts to achieve RTM – buildings had to be fully owned by one freeholder. How will that work at CBW where some of the freeholds are partitioned? Louis noted that things have moved on since 2012 and RA is now confident we can proceed with RTM and further details will be circulated to leaseholders. Larisa noted that there may still be challenges.
- Eva (Howard): thanked Committee for their work. She asked what can we do collectively as leaseholders to help make a difference to ensure engagement is maintained? Larisa noted that the more people we have engaged the more

we can get done. The RA Committee is keen to develop volunteers to help with small projects / talking to and encouraging neighbours to participate.

- Florence (zoom): Will a vote re the audit (with costs shared by all) be arranged for the next AGM? Yes – all the votes will be moved to the next AGM.
- Anna (Oswald): When will be scaffolding compound (on the piazza) be taken down? Louis noted it was meant to have come down already but RA will follow this up.
- Observation from Warwick: Since moved in, Battersea Power Station (BPS) has now been developed, but signage from Chelsea Bridge is not great. Can signage to BPS be improved to deter BPS visitors getting lost on our estate? Louis noted RA has spoken to R&R about this. One option suggested was to add graphics to pavement to guide visitors, however this calls for liaison with Wandsworth Council. There is also future re-development of Queenstown Road to consider and therefore this is not a current priority for the Council.

Meeting brought to a close. Thank you all for coming / participating and please stay engaged.