

Committee Meeting

Hayley Conference Centre: Friday 28th May 2010.

Present:

(AL) Andy Lambert - Chairman, (JH) John Hewer – Vice Chair, (AE) Andrew Emanuel - Secretary, Rod Rowland, (CB) Cliff Barry, Connie Podger, Peter Morris, Derek Barber, Chris Williams, Esther Hargreaves, Ben Guyatt, Matt Hanger, Rob Anderson.

Guest Speaker: Phil Ball

Apologies: (VE) Vanessa Emanuel, Chris Clarke, Mike Clarke, Claire Clarke.

Purpose of the Meeting.

- To welcome and brief the new committee members and road reps.
- Update committee on meeting between AL, JH and Solitaire.

AL opened the meeting with a brief address and welcomed the new committee members and road reps.

Road Reps.

JH produced a brief for the Road Reps about APRA and what it does.

The Road Reps are to be 2-way conduit for information.

AL answered some questions from Road Reps that had been asked by residents.

AL reiterated that APRA not on a crusade for get Freehold from Solitaire, but want a “Fair service at an agreed level, provided at a fair and reasonable price”.

AL outlined what the membership fees currently covered.

Housing Associations.

Phil gave an overview of Housing Associations (HA) and their role and responsibilities to their customers, including the Tenant Services Authority.

Phil offered to be a link between APRA and Bromford (The HA at Alexandra Park).

ACTIONS from the Introduction and Housing Association Overview.

- Committee meetings will now be held every 2 months – Not compulsory for Road Reps to attend although they would be very welcome. There will be ad hoc meetings as and when required.
- Chair@alexandrapark.org.uk email address doesn't appear to be working for all. VE to investigate.
- AL to contact Bromford and start a dialogue and find out how they are dealing with Solitaire.
- Find out how many houses at Alexandra Park are Housing Association or Shared Ownership.

APRA Meeting with Solitaire.

AL and JH met with Solitaire (Dominic Gearon – Divisional Property Manager and Richard Dendy – Property Manager) to discuss many of the issues Residents have been having and find solutions.

Dominic outlined the internal issues that Solitaire had and what new structure and process is now in place to avoid this happening again.

Solitaire (Estates & Management) Covenants.

AL, JH and Solitaire discussed the covenants and possible ways they could be enforced. Solitaire has “no will” to legally enforce the covenants and their stance is that Residents “would be encouraged to comply”.

Landscaping.

Landscaping to re-commence on w/c 7th June by Greenscape.

Greenscape are currently on a short term contract while the contract is out for tender.

Bills.

Solitaire confirmed that resident’s accounts will reflect lack of grounds maintenance done between Oct – Apr. This will not show on Residents bills until Oct 2010. A percentage of the management fee will also be returned (credited).

APRA to view estimates for future work before bills sent.

Freehold Status.

David Wilson Homes have not yet transferred Freehold to Solitaire.

To the questions :

"What objection does Solitaire have to the Residents owning the Freehold to the Public Open Spaces?" and "What objection does Solitaire have to the Residents having the Right to Manage without owning the Freehold to the Public Open Spaces? Dominic replied "None".

He did explain that this was depending on the owner of the Freehold agreeing to transfer/sell the Freehold to the Public Open Spaces to the Residents.

CB outlined the process by which APRA could own the freehold and manage the public open space through a management agent. This management agent could still be Solitaire or another local firm. He made it clear that ALL management would be done by the agents. All APRA would do would be appoint them and agree a budget.

The committee generally favoured the option of “Right to Manage, without ownership of the Freehold” as it would provide for a level of accountability by the Management Company and a level of control for the residents.

Website.

All to encourage residents to use the website as primary source of information.

Possible Further Actions.

AL has a formal escalation process that he can use if required.

There was a discussion into what further actions APRA could take, including an injunction against DWH to prevent the Freehold being transferred to Solitaire until all the issues are resolved, if it was deemed necessary.

ACTIONS from the meeting with Solitaire.

- APRA feel they need to better understand the implications of holding the freehold so will form a group to discuss the issue. It was suggested we invite a local firm to provide expert knowledge and advice.
- AL to meet /contact with DWH (Paul Crispin) to discuss the transfer of freehold.
- Solitaire to investigate ways of managing/enforcing covenants and submit to APRA for review.
- Audited accounts to be supplied as soon as possible to APRA and for all future accounts.
- Solitaire to produce in conjunction with APRA a “Service Level Promise”, outlining levels of service and standards. The committee will then be responsible for measuring these levels.
- APRA to arrange an “All Residents Meeting” to which Solitaire will be invited. This will be towards the end of June.
- Solitaire to provide a transparent and agreed process for the Transfer of Ownership of homes.
- Solitaire to undertake a review of the Landscaping Plan, with input from APRA, using the current plan as the baseline.
- APRA to engage with Rob Buckland MP and use him as a resource.
- APRA to get local councillor more involved with our issues.
- Website to be updated with latest committee details and information.
- Richard Dendy will act as the Alexandra Park Property Manager (or successor as necessary) and will undertake the following tasks as part of his normal routine:
 - He will visit Alexandra Park bi-monthly - visits to be recorded in an agreed method (to be confirmed)
 - He will attend Alexandra Park Residents Association Meetings as and when necessary but at least Bi-Annually.
 - He will monitor delivery and standard of all services to Alexandra Park.
 - He will assist with the identification of and take action to reports of breaches in covenants.
 - He will liaise directly with the Alexandra Park Residents Association Committee Chairman and Vice Chairman on all matters affecting Alexandra Park as necessary