

The meeting was held at 8.00 pm at the St Bernard's Bar, Raeburn Place, Stockbridge.

Present

Katrina & Stephen Balmer

Lindsay Bojczuk                      Secretary

Doreen Boyle

Sandra Conner

Susan Currie                      Committee Member

Tim Daintree                      Treasurer

Graeme Dunbar                      Committee Member

Rik & Jenny Hart

Jan McNee

Denise & Gus McNulty

Peter Millar

Jane Norie                      Committee Member

Angie Rae

Bill & Carol Shaw

Jackie & Graham Sutherland

Debbie Waterson

Mark Westwood                      Chairman

Michael Young

18 flats were represented out of a total of 122

The Chairman Mark Westwood opened the meeting

Apologies – No apologies had been received

Minutes of last AGM – These had been circulated. There were no matters arising. The Minutes were accepted.

The Treasurer, Tim Daintree presented the Accounts and his report. He advised that audited accounts would be sent out with the Minutes when a statement from National Savings and Investments was received. An interim copy was circulated to the meeting. Only 5 payments were outstanding from the year 2011/12 with approximately 50 subscriptions already received for the current year. Tim advised that a further payment was due to the Landscapers for last year leaving a reasonable balance. The Committee considered that funds were now adequate to meet costs for the forthcoming year and no increase would be necessary. The Service charge would remain at £90.

Tim advised that he had recently accepted a job offer that would mean he would have to resign from his post in the New Year. People were asked to put themselves forward for the post as a matter of urgency.

The Secretary, Lindsay Bojczuk, presented her report –

Car Parking - Parking has continued to be difficult due to the closure of the Liddesdale car park to accommodate Lagan contractors. Visitors' spaces have had to be utilised for these 'displaced' residents. Despite this, abuse from local employees continues, although some of this abuse is from residents themselves who have more than one vehicle. Residents experiencing problems are advised to put their own notices on 'trespassing vehicles'.

The Secretary has had confirmation from Lagan that the Liddesdale area they have used will be left clean, with any damage repaired, and car parking spaces clearly marked. It is hoped that this will be completed by Christmas this year.

Landscaping - Greenscape have continued to keep the grassed areas, hedges and communal flower beds in good order despite the difficulties presented by the on-going flood defence works. They are always cheerful and helpful and Committee are very satisfied with their work.

Flood Defence Works - I regret to report that communication has all but broken down since Stuart Mackay's sudden and untimely departure from Lagan after the Colonies flooded last year. For several months the only contact was an administrator in Belfast. Another liaison officer, Sylvia Taylor, is now in post – but it would seem that anything that was promised by Stuart is no longer guaranteed, and I have not been successful in my attempts to address this situation.

Information I have been able to obtain is as follows:-

Trees – There are no further trees scheduled for removal on the development. Owners are reminded that the responsibility for any trees on the land allocated to their block (as on their DEEDS) is their responsibility. Committee do not have the funds to deal with these and our attempts at gaining agreement to a ‘joint plan of action’ – have had little or no support.

Flood Defences – new wall, access gate and reinstatement of landscaping –

Having expressed concern at the apparent low height of the new wall (in comparison to the old one) I have been advised by Sylvia Taylor that it is to be ‘between 1.2 and 1.5 metres’ in height. This would seem to present an invitation to people to ‘jump’ over the wall to gain access to the waterfront – but my concerns about this possible trespass elicited the response that ‘the council would not be responsible for any injury that occurs as a result of members of the public jumping over the wall’.

I have also queried the apparent absence of a ‘lockable gate’ – to give access to Residents – as was previously in place beside Block 5 Ettrickdale Place. I am awaiting a response. There does not appear to be such a gate on the plans that have previously been supplied.

Similarly, I am waiting confirmation that the promised reinstatement of landscaping on the waterfront garden and the areas inside the new wall, will take place next spring, 2013.

Repair to Adopted Path - I am pleased to report that repairs to the adopted path that runs from Glenogle Road, behind 2 and 3 Ettrickdale Place, to 4 and 5 Ettrickdale Place, have been completed – providing safe passage for pedestrians.

Resignation - After 3 years in post I am today tendering my resignation from the voluntary post of Secretary – and the Minutes of this meeting will be my last task! I am hoping to stay on the Committee and trust that the ‘broader church’ provided by the increased size of the Committee and Block Representatives will continue to inspire greater community interest and cooperation on the development. Thank you to everyone who has helped me along the way.

Katrina Balmer advised that she had plans showing an access gate to the garden.

Debbie Waterson asked about compensation for damage caused by the works and was advised to refer back to the Minutes of the last AGM. The Chairman, Mark Westwood, commented that he would be happy to represent residents in this regard – but that they would have to get together to decide exactly what their demands were.

Katrina Balmer said that she felt there was no point in raising anything further until the work was complete. At that point Council representatives could be invited to the development to discuss any outstanding issues. She felt that this might be the time to call a 'special' AGM.

Angie Rae asked if Councillors had been involved in these matters. Katrina responded that some had been involved over the last 12 years.

Mark Westwood advised that local Councillors had never been invited to the AGMs and Angie Rae felt that this would be something that should be done in the future, as they were in the best position to put pressure on Council officers who were not responding satisfactorily to queries.

Gus McNulty commented that whilst in the post of Secretary he had attended Community Council meetings, as had Roman Bojczuk.

Mark Westwood felt that Owners needed to be clear amongst themselves of the concerns they had and matters they wished to be raised before Committee could involve Councillors. Individuals wishing to voice their own concerns could speak to Councillors at the weekly surgeries held at Stockbridge Library.

Chairman's Report – Mark Westwood advised that volunteers were always needed to join the Committee and urged volunteers to come forward for the posts of Secretary and Treasurer.

Denise McNulty, a previous Secretary, offered to take up the post for 12 months only, to give time for others to come forward. Mark thanked her very much for this offer and her appointment was confirmed by the meeting.

Peter Millar asked whether Owners should be considering the appointment of outside Factors, as it was becoming increasingly difficult to fill vacancies on the voluntary Committee – and the same small group of people were taking this responsibility.

Mark advised that any such change would have to be approved by owners in order to change the Constitution – and that he, personally, would not be in favour of such a change. Previous enquiries indicated that it would mean a four-fold increase in the annual service charge. He volunteered to write a letter to all owners, to be circulated with the Minutes and Accounts, repeating the request for volunteers to the Committee, and also raising the issue of irresponsible parking – both by outsiders and residents themselves. His space was being repeatedly abused.

Lindsay confirmed that Committee had agreed that more notices should be put up – notifying that the development was private and that parking was for Residents and their visitors only – once the flood defence people had left the site and all the parking spaces were again available.

Rik Hart said he had been unable to identify which of the visitor's spaces had been assigned to him as the chalk markings had been washed away. Katrina Balmer thought she might be able to help with this as she believed those displaced had been provided with a plan at the outset.

In response to another enquiry, Mark advised that individual parking bollards could be installed but that this should first be checked with the planning office. Some flats already had these in place to protect their own space.

It was noted that parents were again using the development to pick up and drop off their children at the Edinburgh Academy since the Falshaw Bridge had reopened, causing considerable obstruction and possible danger to residents. Tim Daintree apologised for not getting around to contacting the Head at the Academy and said he would now do this as a matter of urgency.

Peter Millar thanked the outgoing secretary, Lindsay Bojczuk, for her work over the last 3 years. There was no other business.

Carol Shaw was thanked for again allowing us to use upstairs room at St Bernard's Bar for the meeting.

The meeting was closed.

Lindsay Bojczuk – Secretary of GCRA 27th November 2012