

Monday 1st March 2021 at 7.00pm

In Attendance

Kevin Farrow, Helen Stewart, Bridget Wood, David, Krissie, Debbie Searle, Claire Carter, Damian Woods, Victoria, Patricia Sherston, Barbara Draper, Leigh Crowden, Helen Mitchell, Gail Fordham, Delyse Reynolds, Robyn Redham, Sarah Tate, Richard Bugg, John Walker, Sheila Kington, Alex, Robert Wild, Sandra and Maria.

Introduction

Intention of the meeting is to look at what is needed to move forward regarding the future of the management company and discuss the initial steps needed to approach this. Currently 79 people have registered on the website (www.bgp2ra.uk), representing 74 properties, 70 of which are owned properties. Initial steps to communicate with Flagship Homes, who represent the shared ownership properties, has also been undertaken.

Involvement So Far

There have been difficulties with identifying responsibilities between Persimmon, Chamonix and South Norfolk Council. The aim is with a more collective voice, we will receive more definitive answers to concerns/queries. So far we have been in contact with; Emma Offei at Chamonix, Paul Tull (Senior Contracts Manager, Persimmon) now being passed on to Kian Saedi (Senior Planner, Persimmon) and Merrick Holloway (Senior Engineer, Persimmon), Penny Hubble as a Liberal Democrat Town Councilor particularly involving wildlife issues, professional bodies including Wild Frontier and Aspect Ecology and Anglia Water.

Formation of a Committee

We need to form an official committee comprising a Chairperson, Vice-chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, and general committee members. Whilst there is no limit of the number of committee members, it has been suggested that approximately 15 people would be a good number to aim for. We are aware some people will be happy to be part of the resident's association but may not want to be directly involved. The first action upon forming a committee will be to set up and document a constitution of the committee's aims and operation. Once this is in place, the aim would be to hold quarterly meetings with annual AGM (Annual General Meeting). If anyone would like to volunteer to undertake any of the for mentioned roles, please complete the registration form on the website (www.bgp2ra.uk/news).

The Becketts Grove Phase 2 (Wymondham) Residents Management Company Limited and Chamonix Estates

The Becketts Grove Phase 2 (Wymondham) Residents Management Company Limited is a company, currently run by Chamonix Estates. The annual payment they charge is based on an estimate they provide, which appears to be created on a company template structure. For example, the management admin fees currently stand at £50.00 + VAT per household and there 350 properties on the site which creates the total estimate. The actual amounts charged are only indicted on the final accounts, 2019 accounts are first and only full years accounts we currently have. The fess charged do not full match the 2019 estimates as Chamonix were only looking after approximately 60% of final estate at that time. Ground maintenance was 40% as Chamonix had only adopted this percentage of planned areas. Persimmon have estimated that they will be completing the full handover to Chamonix in approximately April, however, based on the current build stage of the final houses this is likely to be later in the year. No changes can be made until the estate is fully handed over to Chamonix. Once this takes place, all residents should be informed of this and residents should be offered the opportunity to become directors – this would be done by an extraordinary general meeting being called. However, it is unlikely that Chamonix will do this willingly and residents may need to push for this to take place. We feel it is important that committee members (residents) become directors on the board once Persimmon have left. This is to

ensure that we have direct involvement over the maintenance company and how the money is spent. (Please note, to be a director, you must be a property owner and the first person listed on the management file for your address). As residents, we would be unable to investigate the possibility of appointing a new management company until resident directors are in place and we have a clear understanding of all management company responsibilities and costs. We can then look at gathering tenders from other companies and other options such as self-management with contracted support. The likelihood of the council adopting the estate is unlikely. There also needs to be consideration taken in regard to Flagship tenants, Flagship pay the estate charges but these are integrated into their charges to the tenants.

Our aims & intentions

The overall intention is to ensure that the residents have some control over the estate management and that responsibilities are carried out, whilst getting the best value for the money for what we pay into it. We will only be able to act on behalf of Phase 2 and Phase 3, due to another limited company being set up for overseeing other phases. But we are happy to work with them/other developments for ideas on how best to move forward. We are looking to involve ourselves with issues effecting all residents or managed areas and it is not a platform to raise/get involved with neighbourly or individual disputes. We will also chase up responsible parties such as the council, management company etc. where required.

We are looking to inform Persimmon and Chamonix of the formation of the Residents Association, the committee we intend to get in place and the intentions of the committee. We are hoping by having a group voice to raise issues will allow our concerns to be heard. We are looking at setting up some template emails that we will ask all residents who have registered to the website to send to Persimmon and Chamonix which will state: your name and address, that you wish to be recognised as a member of the Becketts Grove Phase 2 Residents Association and will be supporting points raised by the association, providing them (Persimmon and Chamonix) with an opportunity to respond to the association as a group with email responses being shared to all members.

Current Issues – Icy Paths

We have identified affected areas and aware of accidents that have happened so far. Persimmon have not accepted responsibility and have directed us to contact highways/council. Council have informed us that they are unable to act until the roads have been adopted by the council (which cannot be considered until Persimmon have left site), however, residents feel salt grit bins should be installed and maintained. Chamonix will be contacted to see if they can implement these as a possible option. However, there is concern on the cost of these and the impact it may have on fees. This issue will be raised with the highways/council as soon as possible. A resident stated that by paying council tax and possibly an increase in management fees would mean we are in effect paying for them twice.

This is an ongoing discussion with the aim to have grit bins installed by council or the management company on the site by the end of 2021.

Current Issues – Dog Waste Bins & General Waste Bins

Currently no bins of any description on Phase 2 or 3. Wymondham Town Council (WTC) are responsible for reviewing the areas and confirming to South Norfolk District Council (SNDC) the amount of dog waste bins required. SNDC would then be contracted and charge annually for the emptying of bins. WTC will only access the area once Persimmon have completed, as at present, it is their responsibility. Chamonix are currently stating that they do not have a license to empty dog waste, but there is a question over whether they can arrange their installation. One small general waste bin in the small play area on Jeckyll Road has been removed by Chamonix as it was not being used correctly/overflowing with dog waste, despite signs being put in place stating it was for general waste only. As with salt grit bins, the discussion of effectively paying twice with both management fees and council tax was raised.

The issue of general waste and dog waste bins has been raised with Emma Offei at Chamonix and the discussion is ongoing. The dog waste bin issue will also be raised with WTC as soon as they will act on assessing the site.

Current Issues – Littering and Dumping

Concerns have been raised with Persimmon over contractor littering in certain areas. They have said processes have been put in place to stop it and that they believe most littering is occurring at night by visitors parking up. Please could residents be aware of significant littering issues and gather photographic evidence where possible to feedback to Persimmon if this is contractors.

Chamonix should clear litter from the site but do not implement routine site wide litter picks. We will need to raise specific litter issues with them when they are noticed to get them to undertake the litter pick. They are due to undertake a litter pick in the ditches, which they stated they would do once the water has subsided. They have since been informed the water is now clear and we are awaiting them to attend.

Current Issues – Lagoon Pathway, Path Construction and Path Flooding

The pathway that has been put through the lagoons that run alongside Barnes Close and Coldham Grove was supposed to be compacted sandstone like the public footpath that runs behind Reeve Way/Ollett Court, however, specification have since changed and loose gravel has been laid. Issue was raised with Persimmon as this current gravel is unsuitable for pushchairs, wheelchairs, walking aids etc. meaning it excludes use for some residents. Following this concern, Persimmon have investigated the possibility of using a binding material and have trialed this at one end of the path with success. However, they have confirmed that if this were to be carried out to the whole path, it would require some level of regular maintenance going forward, which would need to be undertaken by Chamonix. We propose to push Persimmon for a more suitable specification which can be used by all residents but that does not require maintenance. We want to raise this issue to Chamonix as a group, that we are not willing for them to adopt a pathway that is going to require regular maintenance and that we do not want them to adopt this area until this issue is resolved and we as residents have stated we are happy with it. The reason for this being that we do not want the management fees to rise to maintain a pathway that has changed specification, which is turn, now requires us as residents to pay for the additional upkeep. Resident raised the question as to who signed off the agreed changed to the path specification. Paul Tull (Senior Contracts Manager, Persimmon) was previously questioned but did not give definitive answer. Further contact with South Norfolk District Council may be needed if no further correspondence is received from Persimmon.

There are also some areas where the path is recessed below the surrounding ground and water has been pooling over the path in recent months. We feel this area of the path should be raised to avoid this as much as possible in the future. This has also been raised with Paul Tull.

Current Issues - Hibernaculum Construction

Hibernaculum's are the raised mounds specifically on the park areas and around the lagoons that run alongside Barnes Close and Coldham Grove. The idea is that they should encourage wildlife to use them hibernate in. There are many different types, but they are typically designed with structured open spaces inside the mound which provide tunnel type access points and which are then covered then with loose dirt and soil. Residents have raised concerned after seeing inappropriate items being used in the construction of the Hibernaculum's and that the construction used has not followed specifications of the ecology report, including absence of entry points rendering them useless to wildlife. We are in contact with Persimmon pursuing this further and will be pushing for them to ensure they are made fit for purpose. However, unfortunately, there is no set route for pursuing this issue as ecology reports are for guidance only and Persimmon not bound to them legally.

Current Issues - Chicken Wire on Fences

Several issues have been raised over several months in regards to the chicken wire needlessly installed on wooden fencing around Phase 1 and now being installed on Phase 2 and 3, specifically around the lagoons. The main concern being the wire restricts the free movement of wildlife on the site along with also making things look untidy once weeds start to grow around it. Persimmon representatives have provided conflicting responses about why it has been installed, initially stating that it was specified in ecology reports which has since been proven this isn't the case. We are continuing

to push those responsible for planning at Persimmon to ensure no further chicken wire is used. Paul Tull (Senior Contracts Manager, Persimmon) has led us to believe that the wire will be removed from the fences currently being installed once the fence is completed. If this not followed up, it has been suggested that this is raised with the council, as Persimmon are not guaranteed to be followed up to check they are meeting planning agreements approved by the council. Resident suggested that this is taken to media level, but it was felt that we would need more issues for this to be significant enough for the media to take notice.

This discussion also led to a resident asking about the lack of trees and those that have been planted, dying. It was raised than as part of an ecology report by Wild Frontier, Persimmon were to plant two trees for every tree cut down. Whilst we can't prove how many trees were cut down originally, it was suggested that this was followed up with the council to ensure that Persimmon were held responsible for not meeting these agreed terms. However, it was added that Chamonix are aware of the trees that have died and they are due to under take a survey of this in light of replacing them. The idea of them planting additional trees was touched upon but was suggested that this would probably be at residents costs via additional management fees.

Current Issues – Property Bird Boxes

Bird and bat boxes were a stipulation of Persimmon's planning application but were not put in place during building. This has been pursued and the installation of the boxes has now commenced. Some property owners who had bat/bird boxes in the original plans of their houses have now refused to have them installed. Other residents who were not due to have them installed have expressed interest. Persimmon have asked to be provided with a list of residents willing to have these installed and they will assess suitability. Resident raised that whilst their bird box has now been installed, it was not installed in the position of the original plan, due to the cladding on the house making this impossible. Therefore, it has been added to the side of the house, which isn't ideal. A map of the properties which includes the houses due to have a bat/bird box is [on the website](#) for residents to review. If residents would be happy to have one, but it was not on their original plans, please use the contact form on the website (www.bgp2ra.uk) or email us bgp2ra@gmail.com and a list will be documented to be passed to Persimmon to assess suitability.

Current Issues – Pumping Stations & Sewerage

Concerns raised about tankers visiting the pumping station on Jeckyll Road for three consecutive days and nights during February. Some properties drains and toilets were affected by the sewerage backing up when the pumps failed. Persimmon have been contacted and they have stated that the pumping station was built to Anglian Water specification and Anglian Water would be adopting it in due course, in which case, this would become their responsibility. They added that part of the pump issues was caused by residents flushing inappropriate items such as wipes, cotton buds, nappies etc. We contacted Anglian Water and they advised that Persimmon had actually followed a different specification route in regards to the pumping station, but they were aware there had been some issues. We were reassured by Anglian Water that they would be carrying out all the necessary checks before adopting the pumping stations and if there were any issues, Persimmon would need to rectify these to meet their specification before they take over responsibility. This is likely to take several months to be completed before handover is confirmed, but we will remain in contact with Anglian Water during the handover period. We are aware of another pumping station at the end of Reeve Way (just past the Jeckyll Road junction, at the back of the site) that is situated in the current building compound. We are not sure if this is in operation yet and if not, if this will make any difference to the issues that have occurred recently. We seek to get clarification on this as part of the ongoing discussion with Anglian Water.

Current Issues – Uneven Road Surface

Jeckyll Road has now been surfaced from the large play area to the junction with Coldham Grove. We understand Reeve Way towards the rugby club will likely not be carried out until construction work is complete. Due to the access to Elm Farm on the corner of Briggs Mead, we are uncertain of when the junction to Reeve Way/Albini Way will be completed. Persimmon have only stated this will be carried out when construction work is complete, but no estimated date has been received. We will request an indication of predicted dates for all road surface completion.

Current Issues – Estate Signage

Current road sign on junction of Albini Way states 'Carpenter Close - Leading to Arundell Avenue' but does not mention Reeve Way. As this junction has been adopted by the council, this will need to be raised with Highways. Also, estate signage from Reeve Way to Jeckyll Road and dead-end signage around back of estate has yet to be installed. This will be raised with Persimmon.

Resident raised the question of lighting on the main roads (Jeckyll Road, Reeve Way, etc.) and it was confirmed that an ecology report from Wild Frontier stated that no street lighting was to be installed due to bat conservation. This question was raised to ensure that this wasn't something else Persimmon had failed to undertake, but resident supported the reasoning. Another point raised in relation to this was that outdoor lighting on the front of houses was recommended to be lights with sensors only, again, in relation to bat/wildlife conservation. This raised the question from another resident about the lights in the rugby club car park being on constantly overnight. It was agreed that we would contact the rugby club to see if there was a reason these were on permanently or if a time/sensors could be introduced.

Any Other Business

We expect the Chamonix accounts to be available in July 2021 with a breakdown of 2020 costs. Would be a good idea to look into this as a committee, in particular the reserve funds, what they wish to for this to be, what these would be used for and how the amount they hold is decided.