

Beckets Grove Phase 2 Residents Association - Meeting Minutes

Date & Time - Tuesday 12th March 2024 at 7.30pm

Location - Wymondham Rugby Club upstairs meeting room (Bar Area if room in use)

1. Introduction, taking of attendance, apologies, and meeting notes being taken by.

Residents Attending

Kevin Farrow (Chairperson), Sarah Tate (Vice Chairperson), John Waller (Treasurer), Emma Peek (Joint Secretary), Darren Tate, Barbara Draper, Gail Fordham, Claire Small, Claire Carter, Heidi Briggs-Price

Other Representation, Carly Smith *Virtually* (FirstPort), James Mulhearn (Persimmon), Matthew House (Persimmon & Directors of Beckets Grove Phase 2 (Wymondham) Management Company Ltd)

Apologies

Cllr David Roberts (South Norfolk District Council), Delyse Reynolds, Esther Round, Andy Round, Tony Parrott, Eileen Parrott, Naomi Rankin, Ellie Morgan (Secretary)

Cllr David Roberts (South Norfolk District Council) was planning to attend but had to pass on his sincere apologies for not being able to attend due to a family issue.

2. Review of meeting minutes from December 2023, and any points, resolved or not being expanded upon in this meeting.
 - a. Brays Drive West bridge construction issue.
Addressed previously with conclusion. Issue closed.
 - b. AGM business, officers and constitution.
All AGM details have been put in place including an amendment to our Constitution which is accessible on the website News page.
 - c. Rugby Club Fireworks and other issues are adequately resolved as much as possible. Will follow up with the club ahead of November 2024 fireworks.
3. Outstanding issues awaiting Persimmon to rectify or answer.

JM – James Mulhearn updates

RA – Notes from meeting

Lagoon Area

- a. Removal of rubbish from pit/ditch at the end of Barnes Close.
JM – Update as of 7/3/24 - rubbish has been removed, fortnightly litter pick ongoing.
RA – Noted that there is rubbish still in the ditch from last year, namely a tent. Also identified that from a quick look there are several pieces of litter in there. The effectiveness of the 2 weekly litter pick was questioned but James Mulhearn advised that this would be addressed. We will monitor.
- b. Confirmed responsibility of ditch to West of site
JM – Update as of 7/3/24 - Talks ongoing, but the ditch will not become part of the Residents managed land whatever the outcome is.
RA – Accepted that we would not be responsible for this ditch. This will either be the current landowner's responsibility or potentially a developer's if the next piece of land to the west of the ditch gets put forward for development.

- c. Hibernacula Reconstruction, further issues
JM – Update as of 7/3/24 - removal works still planned for May. Updated contact for Wild Frontier - Alice Petherick has taken over from Josh Rose.
RA – There are still some pipes that need to be cut back as previously discussed on-site on the 30th of January. Additionally, the most northerly hibernacula needs some slight reconstruction and tidying following damages. Accepted that the mound that was an attempt at constructing a hibernacula at the entrance to Barnes Close will be removed in May.
- d. Path flooding, the raising of the path.
JM – Update as of 7/3/24 - path works have been carried out and I have checked the area after rainfall and the path is staying free from being flooded as before.
RA – The effectiveness of this path reconstruction work was questioned. The main points of which are included in an email that will be attached after these notes. James Mulhearn advised as far as Persimmon were concerned, they had rectified the main flooding issue and that the water that sits on the path is in line with what they would generally expect. We are specifically questioning issues to the path North of Coldham Grove. They haven't had any work done to them, but do generally hold more than a bit of surface water. We do not feel the condition or construction of the path is as good as it should be. James Mulhearn has said that he will review the areas mentioned following upcoming rain forecast.
- e. No access and warning signage.
JM – Update as of 7/3/24 - signage was installed on 18th Jan.
RA – Signs have been placed around the lagoon fencing and gates. Happy that this issue has been resolved.
- f. Grass cutting and general condition.
JM – Update as of 7/3/24 - grass cutting will start in March and continue until maintenance handover to FirstPort has been agreed. Some soil and seeding works to be done in the lagoon area and where the play equipment is near the pump station. This is still planned to take place as we move into spring.
RA – Maintenance of the lagoon area has been significantly lacking for the last 2 years. We will monitor when grass-cutting is being conducted. The grass area alongside Barnes Close was raised as an issue as no cutting has been undertaken and the ground condition has not been addressed when rectification of the main areas has been attempted. James Mulhearn has advised that all poor condition grassed areas will be rectified and tided prior to handover to FirstPort.
 A note was also made regarding the area directly in line with the entrance from Coldham Grove and running between two of the attenuation basins. We were not previously aware but this area is set to remain the original landowner's property. This also applies to the area leading from the road section at the end of Reeve Way. This is due to potential future development on the land to the West. It will likely mean that an agreement needs to be made for the landowner to contribute towards maintenance allowing FirstPort to maintain these areas along with the communal spaces.

Jeckyll Road play area

- g. Flooding under equipment
JM – Update as of 7/3/24 - as discussed in the onsite meet on 30/1/24, CPC were to start works on the 12th Feb, with matting works to be carried out in more favourable ground conditions during spring.
RA – Work to raise the ground under the equipment and near the path side gate is due to begin when the weather and ground conditions allow. Carly hopes before the end of March.

North West corner

- h. Play equipment installation.

JM – Update as of 7/3/24 - as discussed on site on the 30/1/24, bark has been put around the play equipment in the woodland, although it is not the finished product currently and will have more works carried out to improve what is on the ground. This work will be finished likely w/c 18th March.

RA – The additional works should include the raising of the ground under the installed equipment on the grassed areas. Also, the addition of barrier material underneath the bark under the woodland equipment and raising the ground edges around the area so that the bark material is retained.

Woodland Area

- i. Removal of building material

JM – Update as of 7/3/24 - the woodland area has been litter-picked and will continue to be on a fortnightly basis.

RA – Mainly completed, highlighted some old tree sapling protectors that are littering the area to be collected on the next litter pick. Also, the mound of surface material at the northeast corner of the woodlands needs tidying up as it contains plastic rubbish.

- j. Resident building materials on the east side of the woodland

JM – Update as of 7/3/24 - Site management have tried several times to speak with resident with no luck. A letter will be sent out to them to request that their builder removes waste associated with their extension.

RA – As noted above. Confirmed that the corner between the back of the garage and the side of the extension is within the boundary so the building materials and waste could be moved into it.

- k. Reoccurring issue with path surface/condition

JM – Update as of 7/3/24 - full length of woodland pathway has been tidied and topped up with bark mulch.

RA – New bark has been laid but as this was completed during a very wet week some areas have already deteriorated. Suggested keeping the pile of bark until the weather improves and these areas can be addressed. Some of the rails alongside the path also need repairing or replacing due to damage from the equipment installation.

- l. Access to the East section of woodland from Chamberlain Rise

JM – Update as of 7/3/24 - new access into woodland area has been created in Chamberlain Drive.

RA – Happy with the new entrance which allows greater use of the woodland to the East of Brays Drive. The fence rails may be reinstalled however we have reiterated our view that we will not be responsible for future maintenance of this fence. We consider it as the landowner's responsibility.

- m. Issue Resolved

General

- n. Site signage - requested, replacement, and missing signs.

JM – Update as of 7/3/24 - broken and missing signs have been ordered, these will be installed when they are delivered to us.

RA – Questioned the installation of Private Drive signage based on the signage plan supplied previously. James Mulhearn advised they were only typically installed where there were three or more houses. We advised the were several areas with more than three houses that do not have Private Drive signs. Also asked for those positioned poorly to be moved to make them more visible from the road.

- o. Tree replacement – timescales

JM – Update as of 7/3/24 - tree replacements will be planted Friday 8th March.

RA – New Trees have been planted and we are happy that new trees have now replaced the dead ones. See the FirstPort section as some tree replacement is also noted here. Point was raised about future maintenance following Highways adoption and that those trees positioned in verges may not be looked after and residents might have to care for them. Matthew House advised that Highways should maintain, or at least replace trees after adoption as there is a payment put in place for this by Persimmon. Note this for the future so it can be raised with SNDC if required.

Dead tree replacement for Lagoon area was also noted.

- p. Bird box numbers and rectification of those missed (Ecologist feedback).

JM – *Update as of 7/3/24 - Bird box numbers have been issued to Wild Frontier and we have exceeded the required number necessary. We are two bat boxes short, which have been ordered and will have an expected delivery date of 25/3/24. Once delivered Alice Petherick from Wild Frontier will meet on site to advise/agree two siting locations for these.*

RA – We are also in communication with Wild Frontiers and will await further feedback. We have stated that we would like a copy of the plan detailing where the Bird Boxes have been installed. We do want to check but we would also like to know so that if any are removed in the future, we can replace them. It was suggested that a convenance is in place to prevent residents from removing boxes.

A previous point from the 30th January on site meeting was raised regarding boxes with multiple nesting areas in a single box counting as a multiple towards the final numbers. This was being questioned by Wild Frontiers. James Mulhearn advised it was covered in the Ecology Management Plan and in communication with other parties at Wild Frontiers.

- q. Street lights on Briggs Mead

JM – *Update as of 7/3/24 - Streetlights have had an engineer visit and repair so they work as per correct timings, also two light shields have been fitted to the two nearest properties. There is some tidying works around the bases still to be done.*

RA – Happy that timing and shielding issue has been addressed. Will await base tidying to be completed.

- r. Timescale update on Highways and Anglia Water Adoption

JM – *Further remedial works to the sewer will take place January/February 2024. AW are looking at the pump stations currently and we await their advice on issue of the S102 offer.*

RA – Earliest handover for Anglia Water is likely to be towards the end of 2024 now as Elm Farm and Phase 2 pumping stations are being linked to reduce the problems being caused by failures. Work is also being done to rectify issues where groundwater is getting into the sewer system. This is causing the retention pits to fill 5 to 6 times quicker than they should when failures happen. The whole of Phase 2 is being checked and rectifications made. This issue has particularly been affecting the properties alongside the lagoons at the end of Reeve Way.

Pavement issues on the corner of Reeve Way and outside the old showhouse were raised where the paving needs to be finished correctly. Trip hazards were raised as a concern.

The grassed area on the corner of Reeve Way also needs attention as the muck and rubble has been compacted into the grass from the digging up of the pavement.

- s. Full handover timescale

JM – *It is our expressed intention to progress all matters as quickly as circumstance and Authorities allow. In regard to Management Company areas of POS, with the re-seeding works and mound removal necessary, and time to see establishment of seed, I now see the handover of all POS areas in June 24.*

As stated with maintenance periods required by Anglian Water and Norfolk County Council Highways, we are now looking at mid-2025 as an expected full handover of the whole development.

RA – Extremely disappointed that we still have more than a year until we can gain full control of our management company, especially as this is tied to the completion of a development phase that started after ours.

- t. Discussed in point r.

- u. Clearance of wind-spread building materials.
 RA – Field to the North East has wind spread building materials (plastic pallet wraps) in the bushes. Litter picking is also required around the area of the site entrance, particularly the ditches.
- v. Contribution towards residents' administration cost due to continued issues.
 RA – Matt House advised that Michelle Baker is not willing to allow Persimmon to contribute to the administration costs for FirstPort. No explanation was provided. We have requested a detailed explanation for this from Michelle Baker which can be delivered in writing, however in person would be welcomed. Michelle Baker is Managing Director of Persimmon Anglia as well as the longest serving Director of Becketts Grove Phase 2 (Wyndham) Management Company Ltd.

Our request and key points for reference...

- FirstPort (Chamonix Estates) started to charge us for estate management in October 2018 which was instigated by Persimmon but would have been agreed by Michelle Baker as Director of Becketts Grove Phase 2 (Wyndham) Management Company Ltd.
- The only additional areas handed over to FirstPort since October 2018 has been the ground (not the equipment) of Jeckyll Road Park and the triangle of grass on Reeve Way close to the entrance of Brays Drive.
- Persimmon has failed to complete any further communal areas since then. We have been raising issues and waiting for work to be adequately completed for two and a half years.
- Michelle Baker as Managing Director of Persimmon Anglia has been fully aware of these issues and directly addressed on them since the beginning of 2022, however this involvement doesn't appear to have had any significant impact in resolving issues.
- For 5 years, we as resident members have been trapped paying 100% of the administration element of the management fee to FirstPort for them to manage a small percentage of the communal spaces, because Persimmon hasn't finished them.
- We have rightly received credits but this is for the maintenance elements that FirstPort (Chamonix Estates) have not used are estimates for the areas they have not yet adopted. These credits have typically taken 2yrs from the point of payment for us to get back.
- Since October 2018 Phase 2 properties have each paid £903.37 for estate management.
- In total, we as a development have paid out £226,741.68 and that's allowing for the gradual completion of the site and includes 2024 payments. £178,476.68 paid to the end of 2023. We should get about £16k back for 2023 based on 2022 credit, and that will still be over 160k paid out to the end of 2023 in total.
- Based on 2023 figures including the credit at 2022 level we were charged just under £3k per month. We asked Persimmon (Michelle Baker) if they think that has represented good value for the 5 pieces of grass it has been taken to maintain.
- This year the account management fees for FirstPort management are £26,952, £77.00 per property, a little under half of the total bill and excludes insurances, accounting and any ground maintenance. We are tied to pay it in full even though FirstPort are not managing the entire site.
- As we are going to continue to be tied to this situation until at least June 2024 we proposed that Persimmon should contribute a quarter of this amount (£6,738 - under £20 per house on Phase2), for half of the year. If everything is not completed in communal spaces by the end of June as advised then the cost should continue to be shared until it is.
- Ultimately the root cause of this situation comes back to the decisions made by Persimmon Management and those Persimmon employees that are named as Directors of Becketts Grove Phase 2 (Wyndham) Management Company Ltd.
- This situation would have been avoided if either the communal areas were completed with greater priority, or charges not started until more areas were ready to be handed over to FirstPort (Chamonix Estates).

- Conveniently for Persimmon, our contracts do not state a date at which charges would start. However, it is alluded to that full adoption would take place when the final plot is sold. This was over a year ago and it's likely to be at least another year before full adoption does take place.
- If the management company was set up in such a way that we as residents were not bound into it by our properties and it was a limited company providing services to us, we would be taking action against it and its directors for failing to provide us the services we are charged for.
- We feel our request is a fair one. Considering everything that has happened there is an argument that we could have requested more.

We request for acknowledgment and reference to be made to the above points if Michelle Baker insists on continuing to deny us this request. Specifically, an explanation on how we have been getting good value for the money we have spent over the last 5 years.

As an additional note on this point, on two occasions within this meeting Matthew House spoke of the way that Persimmon has and is improving its customer service. Matthew stated the ratings have improved significantly and that the old ways of money first are not the ways Persimmon are working now which is something the Senior Persimmon management are insisting they improve. He also mentioned how Persimmon are no longer using FirstPort on new developments partly because of their costs and the way that they charge.

These FirstPort costs are the same that Persimmon have bound us to until they allow us to take control of the management company, once they eventually get everything done. As for the improved customer service, maybe we'd feel that change more if we bought a new house from them and were not just a development of customers they have already sold to.

- w. Responsibility for grassed area on the corner of Reeve Way
RA – Future responsibility for this grassed area needs to be confirmed.

4. South Norfolk District Council questions

- a. SNDC vehicle anti-social behaviour process.
This has been approved and put into operation. You can report any vehicle's anti-social behaviour directly to the police and this includes speeding and excessive noise. Supplying evidence/details would be recommended. There will be a red card warning basis and if it continues the council can issue fines.
- b. Any other council points.
 - i. Child antisocial behaviour – Report to the police. If it is criminal behaviour then it is legal to take images as the individual becomes a person of interest. Be sure that the actions can be classed as criminal and do not share the images with anyone other than directly with the Police.
 - ii. New PC Helen Bushfield has been doing neighbourhood walks and Cllr Roberts would be willing to organise a meet and greet with her to discuss issues if we wish.
 - iii. The issue of dangerous parking on the roads around the development was raised, particularly on some of the corner sections that then restrict views when driving. Unfortunately, we are limited on reporting this and getting potentially dangerous parking investigated by the council until Highways have adopted the roads.

5. FirstPort points to raise.

- a. 2022 Accounts and the credit.
Credits have been made for 2022 prior to 2024 bills being sent out.
- b. 2023 Accounts and the credit due.
Carly has chased for an update on the 2023 accounts

- c. Dead tree replacement in adopted areas.
Tree surgeon/arborist has visited and dead trees will be replaced in the adopted areas. Also noted the dead tree in the triangle of grass on Reeve Way near the entrance to Brays Drive.
- d. Residents' accounts balance after property sale
We have asked Carly to raise the question with the relevant Persimmon team of how accounts are administered when a resident moves out, specifically if credits are applied prior to close. An ex-resident contacted us and it appears that they had not received credit for 2022 or anything towards 2023. FirstPort initially advised that they needed to speak to their solicitor even though they were the original account holders. We would advise any residents moving to ensure they make their solicitor aware that they could be owed credit from FirstPort for amounts already paid.
- e. Lighting enquiry
We have requested some quotes for solar-powered PIR activated lighting to be mounted to fence posts. The consideration is for it to be installed along the cycle path on the South side of the development. Depending on cost, possible positions, and permissions we might be able to look to install some leading from Norwich Road too.
The suggestion was made by a resident who also suggested a crowd fund to instigate it because of a distrust of FirstPort. There is no harm in requesting quotes from FirstPort, we may also be able to put forward alternative cost options if we can find them. Kevin (Chairperson) made the point that we fund and pay FirstPort to do this type of work for us so we should use them where we can. This also means the development contributes to the cost and not just a select few, allowing for future maintenance too. This will be a factor to consider if we apply them.
- f. Tree, shrub, hedge, and large bush maintenance and removal
A large shrub was cut down by CPC as part of hedge trimming. They stated this was because it was self-seeded and not supposed to be there. We advised that the resident living close to it has not wished for it to be removed and there wasn't really any good reason to cut it down. To prevent this, we have recommended the following for future trees, shrubs and bushes:

Tree, shrubs, and large bushes are only fully cut back or removed in any of the following situations:
 - It is overgrown, unsightly, and cannot be successfully trimmed
 - It is diseased or dead
 - It presents a health and safety risk to people or animals
 - It is causing a problem for buildings or infrastructure
 - There have been complaints requesting its removal
 - For fence repair and staining
- g. Barbed wire alongside Downham Grove
Resident has reported some barbed wire at child head height along the edge of Phase 1 wooded area and Downham Grove bridal path. Have asked Carly to determine the responsibility for the boundary of this area.

6. Dog waste and speeding issue

- a. Dog waste bins
We have suggested that we proceed in placing dog waste bins in three areas before the summer months as Persimmon are not going to have these areas handed over in time. The intention is for them to be located at the end of Reeve Way at the North West corner of the development, and near to but not in Jeckyll Road play area. Once in place this will allow a general waste bin to be installed inside of the play area. The third is proposed on the corner of the field to the North East corner. This third bin will require landowner permission however he is currently away until the end of April. FirstPort and Persimmon have agreed to approach

the landowner regarding this, and have been asked to provide dog waste bin installation costs, including installation for all three all at once, or two and then a third later. Other locations were suggested for bins which can be considered if costs are reasonable, or they could be added at a later date if we deem more are required.

b. Speeding issue and signs

20ph signs have been placed around the development advising that speed will be monitored. Any vehicle speeding should be reported using the vehicle anti-social behaviour process in the council notes above. This point has been resolved as much as possible but we will continue to monitor.

7. Neighbourhood Watch

A resident has suggested forming a neighbourhood watch. This is an idea that in general we are not opposed to however some questioned the need for it. We would support it however it would need someone to take the lead on setting it up which the resident has said they would be willing to do. Kevin had suggested for them to attend the meeting however they were not present. Cllr Roberts has been consulted on any official process for setting up a Neighbourhood Watch and provided this website link www.ourwatch.org.uk. The Residents Association would be willing to support anyone willing to take the lead on this which no one at the meeting was able to do. Will review at next meeting.

8. Inviting residents to join BGP2RA

A leaflet layout has been put together by Kevin. A suggestion was made to include the date of the next meeting on it if people wish to attend and gain an idea of how the RA works. The date will be added and the revised layout sent out to the committee group for approval. Kevin will arrange printing and committee members have volunteered to drop them through letterboxes. All Phase 2 houses will receive them even if they are already members.

9. Questions and any other business

Kevin raised the previously mentioned point of setting up a bank account for funds for the resident's association. His preference as much as possible is to avoid holding any funds. Although this does prevent us from taking grants or contributions it would also prevent us from needing to account for and detail what is done with those funds. There are some minimal costs for the website and a bit of printing. To date Kevin has willingly absorbed these and is willing to continue to do so. He stated he was happy for anyone to put an opposing case forward, which no one did. The suggestion was made and agreed by all that that this could be a point to raise or consider again if we feel it is required.

10. Next meeting date

Tuesday 11th June 2024 at 7.30pm in Wymondham Rugby Club upstairs meeting room or bar area if room in use.

Beckets Grove <bgp2ra@gmail.com>

Mon, Mar 11, 2024 at 8:00 AM

To: "Mulhearn, James" <james.mulhearn@persimmonhomes.com>

Cc: "House, Matthew" <matthew.house@persimmonhomes.com>, "Baker, Michelle"

<michelle.baker@persimmonhomes.com>, Dave Roberts <Dave.Roberts@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk>, Carly Smith <Carly.Smith@firstport.co.uk>

Hello James

All good here thanks, hope the same for you too!

Thank you for the notes sent on Friday which I have reattached to this email as I have Bcc'd in committee members to this reply ahead of our meeting tomorrow.

There are other points and questions to raise following your update notes, but they can wait until the meeting. I intended to raise the following with you then too once I had clarified if as far as you were concerned work was complete on the path through the lagoons which you have stated on the attached....

Update as of 7/3/24, path works have been carried out and I have checked the area after rainfall and the path is staying free from being flooded as before.

Technically this is kind of true, it is not flooding as before... in that one area. But there are still significant flooding and water retention issues with this path. Following are photos taken on Saturday the 3rd of March 2024 after rainfall. We can discuss them, and the key issues noted tomorrow.

Photo 1 – Recently partially raised area retaining water primarily due to surface finish.



Photo 2 – Same issue on the path leading in from Coldham Grove.



Photo 3 – Nothing to rectify the issues on this part of the path to the North of Coldham Grove entrance.



Photo 4 – Further issues not addressed.



Photo 5 – A small area has had some attention but again this is already retaining water.



Photo 6 – Further issues not addressed.



The path along Barnes close is also retaining water in places.

Summary of all the key issues with the path through the lagoon area...

- Except for the path to the East of Phase 2 and excluding woodland paths. This is the worst condition path across all three developments.
- The path was never installed correctly from the start. It was, and in many places still is too low compared to the surrounding ground. It was also initially inaccessible by many due to the poor choice of material.
- The replacement material was better allowing people to actually use the path, but due to being a compacted material, not as hard-wearing as any other installed paths, and not contoured to encourage water runoff, it is susceptible to erosion from use especially where there is standing water. Suggestions made regarding altering the path height due to flooding issues at the time of material change were ignored.
- We have expected that the path would be raised as stated on previous occasions and meetings, this has not happened to the extent required.
- A main area has been focussed on with supposed drainage improvements and raising of the path but other previously highlighted areas have not been addressed. Particularly the area along the path to the North of Coldham Grove entrance, but also the surface along Barnes Close. Much of this is due to continued erosion due to water being retained on the path.
- We are fairly certain that the retrospective works have just compacted more material on top of 3 to 4 previous layers of compacted material, without first doing anything to ensure those layers to bond. We suspect that when this path freezes there is likely to be an impact and potentially further deterioration of the surface.
- The area that has been raised could have been made higher but more importantly could have been contoured to encourage water runoff. Instead, the top surface of partially raised areas is dipped and already retaining water in places. This retained water softens the surface and quickens the erosion of it, causing more water to be retained.
- We do not believe this path is where it needs to be for adoption. It needs maintenance now, let alone what it will be like in 6 to 12 months.
- Why should the management company and ultimately the residents take responsibility and costs for a surface that has not been installed correctly, has been inadequately finished since, and is susceptible to quicker deterioration due to its current state?