

BAKERS MILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting
held on
27th October 2016 at 7.00 pm
at the VEC RST

DRAFT MINUTES

Attendance:

Apologies Received:

Lee Prentice (Chairman) and Cheryl Prentice	BC	Sandra Orford (late arrival)	DHM
Peter Philpott	BC	Sally Wood	DHM
Jo De Boos	DHM		
Glen and Rebecca Mansbridge	DHM		
Phil Orford	DHM		
Anne Offord	BC		
George and Deanna Joannou	DHM		
Ronnie and Sandra Hall	DHM		
Barry and Chris Hyland	DHM		
Jules Willis	DHM		
Alistair and Joan Crawford	DHM		
Michael and Anne Mullord	DHM		
Mr. M.A. and Mrs. S.M. Hobbs	DHM		
Dennis and Pamela Lipton	DHM		
Sarah Huggins	DHM		
Mike Vickers	BC		
Richard Stirling	BC		
Mr. S.R. Poulard	BC		
John and Linda Bocking	BC		
Craig Trevain	BC		
John and Victoria Watson	BC		
Louisa Hutton and William Docherty	BC		
Robert and Christina Baker	Mill House		
Richard and Kirsten Robins	NRO		
Mr. R. Scully	NRO		

1. Apologies

Apologies were noted.

2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the AGM held on 2nd December 2015

The minutes of the AGM held on 2nd December 2015 were AGREED.

Proposed: **Mike Mullor** Seconded: **Ronnie Hall**

3. Overview from the Chair of the BMCA Committee (Lee Prentice)

The Chairman, Lee Prentice (LP), gave a summary of the year which had been largely successful but also challenging. The estate is a great place to live but the committee is still dealing with many historical and complex issues.

LP introduced the committee to the meeting and thanked them for their work during the previous year, in particular Phil Orford and Peter Philpott.

4. Reports from the Chairman of the three sub-committees:

(i) Leasehold Sub-Committee (Peter Philpott)

Peter Philpott (PP) updated the meeting on the work of the sub-committee:

Current year:

- **Estates & Management (E&M)** – a holding management company and part of the lease agreement for the development. Their main function is as part of the buying and selling process for which they take a fee from the buyer but they are integral to the development and to any decisions made. It was only through their agreement that the residents, through the committee, were able to change management company to Homes & Watson (H&W).
- **Meadow Court:**
 - Considering signage that would identify the properties in Meadow Court for visitors, delivery drivers, etc.
 - Parking enforcement had been put in place which was currently working well.
 - Bin Cupboards – quotes have been requested for new doors/locks to help prevent fly tipping.
- **Bakers Court:**
 - External decoration had been put on hold until the spring as the committee were not happy with the quotations and work programme previously received. Further quotes would be sought. (This also applies to other apartment blocks on the estate).
 - Some remedial work had been undertaken on the building during the year and a cherry picker would be in place the following week to repair guttering.
- **Barratt Homes (BH):**
 - BH has offered £30,000, split approximately 50/50 between outstanding void payments and towards future maintenance of the culvert. The agreement is to be signed by Barratt Homes, BMCA, HML (management company) and E&M; however, E&M's involvement is delaying proceedings. BH had originally asked for the money to be ring-fenced between the culvert and voids but our solicitors had advised against this as it would prove too inflexible and there was more than adequate insurance in place to cover the culvert.
 - Sale of the freehold – BH is keen for this to be progressed quickly having made a couple of false starts earlier in the year. It is understood that a sale may be imminent.

(ii) Grounds Sub-Committee (Phil Orford)

Phil Orford (PO) reported on the work of the Grounds Sub-Committee.

PO gave a summary for year:

It had been a difficult year weather-wise, which had impacted on the progress of the planned programme.

- There had been improvements in composting and removing and replacing dead plants, which will be repeated in the winter/spring.
- There had been much time and cost spent on trying to create a wildflower area but disappointingly this had not been successful. The wildflower bed in front of the hawthorn hedge had been overwhelmed by weed growth and the swans had made a meal of the Ox-eye daisies near Geoffrey's Meadow.
- There was successful planting of primroses, oxlips and cowslips under the trees along the riverside and dog roses and buddleias planted in the Mill Race.

- Thinning and pruning had taken place along the river bank to give a better sight line for residents and there will be more undertaken over the winter period.
- The idea of establishing a volunteer gardeners' group had been put on hold because of complications with health & safety, insurance, risk assessments, etc.
- The Mill Race had been infested with the azolla fern and large debris had accumulated from upstream. Currently in discussion with Green Blue Marine (GBM) for a five year management plan for the Mill Race. This will start in November with some clearance to widen the water channel and volunteers will be required on the day to help with removing the debris. PO will advise residents of the date once agreed with GBM.

The coming year:

The ethos is to continue to enhance and improve the estate and to balance the managed spaces with the natural and wildlife areas using the Management Plan produced by BH as a guide.

- Major repairs and replacements are required to the fences around the estate.
- Will consider trialling a new 'Meadowmat' which is a convenient and quick way to establish a wildflower area but mindful of not spending more money with no return. Will keep residents informed. Another 400 primulas and fritillaries will be planted along the riverbank.
- If residents are interested in learning more about the estate and the grounds PO would be happy to organise a guided walk in the spring.
- Footpath link – matters continue to progress between Babergh DC and the Sudbury and Long Melford District Angling Association and we are hopeful of a positive outcome.

In answer to a question regarding the positioning of a grill to protect the Mill Race from debris, PO advised that one of the responsibilities of the riparian owner is to maintain the flow of water and therefore it is not possible to put a grill in place

PO had not been advised that the Environment Agency had been spraying to remove invasive hogweed.

(iii) Finance and Management Sub-Committee (PO)

The sub-committee had been set up after the last AGM and had a remit to:

- Act as liaison between the residents/committee and the management company;
- Deal with repairs/replacements/problems, e.g. from redecoration to extra dog bins;
- Agree the annual budget for the estate and vet the annual accounts;
- Vet new contracts.

Financials:

- Draft accounts for the year to 30/06/16 are expected to show a surplus between £2,000 and just over £4,000 once any outstanding questions have been resolved.
- As mentioned above, BH has agreed to pay in full the outstanding void charges that go back to the commencement of the development and make a contribution towards any ongoing costs in respect of the culvert. The total amount of £30,000 is in full and final settlement of any claim against Barratt Homes. PO thanked PP for his commitment over the years in pursuing the claim from BH.
- Subject to the BH settlement, the balance sheet will show capital in excess of £65,000 – without the settlement it would have stood at £35,000. This is

despite write-offs of almost £10,000 over the last two years, in respect of Service Charge overcharging to the Commercial Units and unpaid resident service charges, where the previous managing agents had been unable to provide supporting information to prove the debts.

- At the end of the first quarter to 30/09 we are broadly in line with the cost budget set, which is projected to show a surplus of £10,000.

Issues:

The committee has spent a number of years dealing with historical issues, such as the Barratt Homes void charges mentioned above but will still have the legacy issues of:

- Culvert – regular maintenance inspections will be established.
- Gainsborough Trail – the footpath next to the river should have been adopted by Suffolk County Council but BH failed to ensure this was done and so there will be continued maintenance costs. It is anticipated there will be increased footfall with the opening of the Gainsborough Trail.
- Play Area – open to the wider community but costs are borne by the residents.
- On-going maintenance of a large number of mature trees. A diseased Cypress near the level crossing will need to be removed at a cost of over £2,000.

We will continue to ensure that our reserves are well-funded to take account of any exceptional costs that may occur.

Leasehold Blocks:

Leaseholders are currently charged extra for any additional maintenance, e.g. re-decoration, because of inadequate reserves. In future the aim is to ensure that the reserves for each block are built up to deal with exceptional costs.

Homes & Watson/HML Ashton Chater:

H&W were acquired in May by HML Ashton Chater, which is a large stock market-quoted company. Our contract cost is £9,000 pa and we are not expecting to see any more than an inflationary increase next year.

4. Report from the Treasurer and to approve the BMCA annual accounts for 2015/16 (Glen Mansbridge)

GM gave his report to the meeting.

The finance year for the accounts runs from October to September and as at 30th September 2016 there was £2,454.28 in the bank. £275 had been raised by Friends of Bakers Mill. Expenses included two social events; gardening equipment; contribution to providing the wild flower area.

GM reminded residents of the website and the new updated Welcome Pack that was available to download from www.bakersmill.co.uk

5. Constitution

The constitution had been updated and put into 'plain English'. The meeting agreed to adopt the Constitution by a show of hands – proposed by **Diana** and seconded by **Mike**.

6. Resolution to move the AGM from Autumn to Spring

The Chairman explained the reason for moving the AGM from late Autumn to late Spring in that he hoped the better weather might encourage more residents to attend and it would be an opportunity to combine the AGM with a social event. If agreed it would mean the current committee would sit for 18 months until Spring 2018.

The meeting agreed the resolution by a show of hands – proposed by **????**

and seconded by ????

6. Election of Members to the Committee.

The Chairman read out the from the nomination papers received from:

Jo De Boos – proposed by Sally Wood
Richard Robins – proposed by Peter Philpott
Anne Offord – proposed by Joan Crawford
Michael Fitzmaurice – proposed by Lee Prentice

By a show of hands the meeting agreed the election of the above nominations to the committee.

7. Any Other Business

Section 106 Monies: Anne Offord updated the meeting on the S106 monies that were attached to the development. In the original planning agreement this had been allocated toward providing a rail halt at the level crossing; however this was not agreed with rail company at the time. The money was ring-fenced for use on 'public transport' and the working party, led by Babergh DC, had negotiated the purchase of a mini bus that would run from the level crossing to the station and the Quay Theatre at night time – from 6.00pm to 11.00pm – so they would not clash with current bus services. Go Start will run the bus and there will be change in processes to ensure that the free pensioners' bus pass can be used. In answer to a question Anne advised that Go Start is hoping there will be sufficient revenue to maintain the service and purchase a new bus when necessary.

Social Sub-Committee: The Chairman thanked everyone on the social sub-committee for their work over the past year – Chris Hyland, Sandra Hall, Ronnie Hall, Barry Hyland, Pam Lipton, Rebecca Mansfield. The next quiz will take place on 2nd December 2016.

Car Parking: The issues of cars parked part on the pavement/road at the on the bend by the level crossing was raised. The Community Officers had been made aware of the problem and it was agreed to raise the matter in the newsletter. It was felt the road would become increasingly more dangerous as winter approached and the roads become icy if cars continued to park on that corner.

Friends of Bakers Mill: GM encouraged everyone to contribute to the FOB fund.

The meeting closed at 8.25pm. The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and for the continued support of the committee by the residents. Refreshments provided by members of the social sub-committee were now available.