

# **Powderhall Village Owners Association**

## **2005 Annual General Meeting**

**7.30pm on 11 January 2006**

**Broughton Primary School Hall**

**These minutes are available at**

**[www.powderhallvillage.org.uk](http://www.powderhallvillage.org.uk)**

**Introductions**     The meeting was chaired by Stephen Bolland with Ian Corbett as Secretary. Also present were Sarah Wilson from Charles White. Our local councillor Trevor Davies and Alex Paterson from the Council's Transport Planning Department also attended for Agenda Item 2.

**Agenda**

1.     Actions from 2004 AGM
2.     Road Adoption and Parking in Powderhall
3.     General Update - Painting and Cleaning
4.     Decisions – Annual Testing Emergency Systems  
          – Pest Control and Monitoring
5.     Committee for 2006

### **Actions from 2004 AGM**

#### Bryant Communal Snagging

- a)     Bryants now agree that they own the strip of land bordering Powderhall Road (B&Q side) from Logie Green Road. Our gardener is maintaining it, but Bryants are paying the cost of maintenance.
- b)     The grit bin in Powderhall Road has been re-sited.
- c)     Area of former marketing suite has now been landscaped, and is being maintained by our gardener and paid for by us.
- d)     Bryants own the grassed area between the low-rise flats and the town houses on Powderhall Road. Our gardener maintains this area, but Bryants pay the maintenance costs.

- e) The dead trees on the bank between Powderhall Brae and B&Q have been removed and replaced with hardy shrubs. A tree has been planted in the bed opposite the entrance to Beaverhall Road, and a wooden barrier erected to prevent people walking over this bed.
- f) A field drain has been installed in the grass near the left-hand footpath to St. Marks Bridge. This has cured the flooding problem there.
- g) The damaged lift doors in 5 and 7 Powderhall Brae have been replaced.
- h) After hassle, Peter Hosie did agree to replace missing plastic caps on screws on stair strips, but some are missing again. Best solution is to buy a bag of caps from B&Q and replace when necessary.
- i) The fence between the site and the river near the bridge was repaired.
- j) Flooding on some parking areas will be prevented and the Council will remove graffiti on bridge before adoption.
- k) The rumours that the bridge near the Refuse Centre was to be removed and that the 36-bus service would cease were both unfounded.
- l) It has been confirmed that Bryants are responsible for gritting the roads in Powderhall until the Council adopts them.

### Neighbourhood Watch

Of 200 questionnaires distributed, only 34 (30 of which were in support of a Neighbourhood Watch scheme) were returned. The Community Police unit will only implement a scheme if 40% of the residents agree. Sarah agreed, if the new committee decide to have another attempt to establish a scheme, to enclose questionnaires with a future bill, and receive return slips with payments. These slips will then be handed over to whoever is co-ordinating the scheme.

**Action for new committee: Set up a small Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinating committee and liaise with Sarah.**

### Roof Storm Damage

All the storm damage of January 2005 was repaired, but Charles White has been wrongly advised by Bruce Stevenson, the Insurance Broker, about how the £100 excess cost on any claim should be shared among the residents.

There are three separate buildings Insurance Policies for the Powderhall development – one each for the Road, Brae and Rigg. From now on, when a claim is made on one policy, only those residents in that particular area will be

share the £100 excess cost, and Sarah agreed to credit owners who had been wrongly charged. There was suggestion from the meeting that Charles White should deal directly with the insurer AXA, removing Bruce Stevenson from the loop, and Sarah agreed to ask if this would be possible.

**Action: Sarah to credit residents wrongly charged for a portion of a £100 excess charge, and to enquire internally why Bruce Stevenson provided wrong information, and whether Charles White could deal directly with AXA and remove the broker from the loop.**

### Charles White Quality of Service

Ian informed the meeting that since Sarah took over as Factor for Powderhall, there had been a huge improvement in the level of service we receive – six pages of outstanding action points have been reduced to a few ongoing ones – some of which could not be progressed until this AGM. There are still some areas such as billing where further improvements could be made, and continuing efforts will be made to improve the level of service still further.

### **Road Adoption and Parking at Powderhall**

Alex Paterson, Senior Professional Officer within the Council's Transport Planning Dept provided an update on this topic. He summarised discussions between the Council's Planning Dept. and members of the Association over the past year, chaired by Trevor Davies. At these meetings, it was explained that the roads and pavements in Powderhall had been built according to the specification detailed in a Road Construction Consent (RCC) application by Bryant that had been approved by the Council. What was not clear to Powderhall householders (who had been told by DTZ estate agents, selling the properties on behalf of Bryant, that 103% residential parking existed) was that the specification included the adoption by the Council of 168 parking spaces as well as roads and pavements.

The Planning Dept. accepted that householders had not been fully advised of this, and although it was not the responsibility of the Council to do so, as a gesture of goodwill, the Council would be prepared to "give back" 63 of these 168 parking spaces to the owners, provided Bryants could be persuaded to re-submit the RCC application, suitably amended. Unfortunately, Bryants' solicitor has advised against this because Bryants would have to write to the solicitors of every owner about the change in the Deeds and Conditions, at an estimated cost of £250 per dwelling (more than £80,000). That being the case, the Council are duty bound to adopt the areas specified in the original RCC.

There are only two options open to us:

1. If enough individual owners can show that information about the adoption by the Council of 168 parking spaces was not provided at the time of purchase, the Association could try to get Bryants to think again about submitting a revised RCC application.
2. Let the adoption of areas proceed as per the original RCC and, when Powderhall comes within the Controlled parking zone, rely on the goodwill of the Council to provide “mews” type parking zones, which would be for the use of Powderhall permit holders only.

Time is short, because Bryants have indicated that they will request adoption, and hence release of the Consent Bond, very soon.

**Action: As many individual owners as possible to write to the solicitor acting on their behalf at time of purchase to ascertain whether documents exist showing the loss of parking spaces on adoption.**

Alex also advised that a traffic regulation order regarding single and double yellow lines on the Powderhall Road entrance to the development will be implemented in 8 weeks time.

Trevor and Alex were thanked for making time to attend and address the meeting.

## **General Update – Painting and Cleaning**

### Painting

A comprehensive painting and redecoration specification for Powderhall has been obtained from Dulux/ICI. The owners of Powderhall Road properties have agreed what painting needs to be done, and one contractor’s quotation has been accepted. Sarah is in the process of writing to the owners asking for payment up front, and once 75% of money (per stair) has been received, the work will start. Best estimate of timing is May 2006.

### Cleaning of Gutters

The gutters in Powderhall Road were cleaned on 21 November 2005 and those in Powderhall Brae are scheduled to be cleaned on 24 January 2006. The meeting agreed that while only gutters would be cleaned this time, when the exercise is repeated in three years time, both gutters and facia /soffit boards should be cleaned at the same time. The cycle of cleaning gutters every three years and both gutters and facia/soffit boards every six years should be repeated.

### Cleaning of Bins

All communal bins are now being power-cleaned every four months on a rota basis. Let Sarah know if this is not happening.

## Decisions

### Testing of Emergency Lighting

The meeting decided that the Emergency Lighting at Powderhall should be professionally checked, but that one annual full duration (3 hour) check (and issue of certificate) would be sufficient. For information, the best of three quotes for the whole site, based on a 6-monthly part-duration test and an annual full-duration check was £3600 inc. VAT (approx. £11 per dwelling)

**Action: Sarah to get quote from Sequel Fire and Security for a single annual full-duration check of emergency lighting, and get agreement of committee to place contract.**

Attention was drawn to the fact that two lights (one stair and one emergency) in 12 Powderhall Road have never had a mains supply. The cost of connecting them is approx. £80 + VAT. Bryants refuse to do this work because they claim it was not reported within the 2-year snagging period, and if the NHBC do the work, an excess of £250 applies.

**Action: Sarah to write to owners at 12 Powderhall Road seeking their agreement to pay for the work to be done. If any owner has proof that this problem was reported to Bryants within the snagging period, copy to Sarah who will try to recover the cost from Bryants.**

### Testing of Communal Smoke Detectors

The meeting decided that the communal smoke alarms should also be fully tested once per year. A full test to include testing all the smoke detectors, check and test all the auto-opening windows, check and test operation of the roof vent, check roof vent power supply and back-up batteries, check fire doors and issue a certificate. For information, the better of two quotes, based on two visits per annum, was £1800 inc. VAT (about £5.50 per dwelling).

**Action: Sarah to get quote from Sequel Fire and Security for a single annual full test of communal smoke detectors and alarm system, and get agreement of committee to place contract.**

It was mentioned that some auto-opening windows cannot operate properly

because of furniture placed in front of them. This is obviously a safety hazard so any instances should be reported to Sarah.

### Pest Control at Powderhall

Because of our proximity to the Water of Leith, rats and mice are a potential problem, and several dwellings have been affected by mice to date. It was agreed that Sarah should obtain a quote from Menco Environmental Services for the installation of external bait boxes (child-proof and pet-proof) over the whole site, with regular monitoring throughout the year. This should drastically cut down the numbers of rodents external to the buildings.

Where mice are already present in buildings, it is an individual responsibility to get rid of them, either by employing the Council's Pest Control service, by using poison or traps, or by installing electronic deterrent devices.

**Action Sarah to get quote from Menco for installation of bait boxes for whole site, and regular monitoring of their effectiveness.**

### **Committee for 2006**

Stephen explained that both he and Ian had served their year in office and were standing down. He also expressed the view that the present system where the committee consists of a chairperson, secretary and stair reps. doesn't work well as too many actions have to be taken up by the two office bearers, and the committee meetings will become too cumbersome if, as could happen, representatives of the Miller flats join the committee also.

Stephen asked for a list of volunteers to participate in a meeting in about a week's time, with the task of determining the best format for the Powderhall Owners Association 2006 committee, and to elect officers if desired. Ian offered to book a room for this meeting, and advise everyone of the place, date and time, and Stephen and Ian will attend to ease the handover of information.

**Action Ian to book Tesco Staff Training Room in the week beginning Monday 23 January for meeting, and advise all current stair reps. and those who volunteered on the night of the details.**

Stephen and Ian were thanked for all their hard work during the year, and the meeting closed at 10.00pm.

