



**Powderhall Village Owners Association
MINUTES from Committee meeting
Wednesday 23rd August 2023**

Present. James Bowyer (Secretary), Gordon Chrumka, Jane Garrett (Minutes), Sabine Goldhausen, William Laing, Roddy Martine (Chair), John Riley, Richard Ross, Kathryn Tomlinson, Craig Williams.

Apologies received: Marie Giatsi Clarsen, Ruth Evans,
Paschalis Kapsomenakis, Stuart McAlister, Franz Kooy, Kevin Patch, Karen Shewan

In attendance: Sarah Wilson from Charles White Factors

1. **Introduction of new secretary James Bowyer.** James was welcomed to the committee.
2. **Approval of previous minutes March 15th, 2023.**
These were approved and seconded (by Gordon and Craig)
3. **Review of Actions by Sarah Wilson**
 - a. **Lifts:**
 - i. There remain several issues relating to the lifts and their upkeep. Facts re costs of repairing/upgrading the 20+-year-old lifts were reported in the March 23 minutes. In summary, the lifts are now around 20 years old and will require partial upgrades in the next few years. The costs could be around £40,000 for 4 -level blocks and £50-£60,000 for 6 level blocks.
 - ii. One resident has raised the issue of those who live on the ground floor having to pay for the cost of the lifts. This requirement is written into the Powderhall deeds and applies to all owners in Powderhall. The developers wrote the deeds and to get these changed would require 100% agreement from owners. Legal fees would be incurred as part of the process. This process would also apply to those living on Powderhall Road even though they do not have lifts in their blocks. If there is a change to a title, all must be included.
 - iii. Members of the committee expressed the views that the lifts were an amenity for all to use and as such are of value to everyone in Powderhall.
 - iv. **Actions:** *Notices via Facebook and the Powderhall Newsletter will inform residents and owners of further issues with the lifts.*
 - b. Replacement trees on Hatters Lane/ Powderhall boundary. The Springfield development, who cut down mature trees and shrubs on Powderhall land, in error, has paid £7,500 to the Powderhall fund. This will be managed by Charles White who will order a tree planting programme in November 2023.
 - c. Sadly, a mature Cherry tree has had to be removed near 7 The Rigg as it was judged to be causing damage to the pavement.
 - d. The invasive giant Hogweed is being removed as part of a 3-year programme in the Powderhall area behind the townhouses.
 - e. Sarah has approached Hunters re: costs of planting additional hedging near the children's play park to deter dogs. This would apparently take years to grow and would not deter dogs in the meantime. The committee discussed other possible alternatives including lavender which dogs do not like. It may be feasible to plant a lavender border. Sarah reminded the committee that some people are struggling with the costs of living and costs must be kept as low as possible. Richard asked if the costs could be met from the community fund. William reminded the committee of the possible health and safety risks to children if we do not take some sort of action re: dog fouling.

Action: Sarah will investigate the idea and costs of planting a lavender boundary.

- f. Additional yellow lines will have to be painted on a turning point for emergency vehicles near The Rigg, and cross hatching will have to be added on the slope near the Rigg- again for access by emergency vehicles.
- g. The committee discussed the presence of a party bus, parked on a turning point, near The Rigg, which is owned by a resident but should not be used for commercial purposes on the development.

4. Costs, Insurance, Redecorating etc.

- Internal Redecorating costs for Powderhall: Seven contractors were asked for a quote re paintwork / redecorating at Powderhall. Four have declined. Bell company quoted £239,000. Two other quotes were withdrawn due to reduced workforce. We therefore need two new quotes before we can proceed.

Action: CWL to obtain quotes and bring to next meeting.

- **Lifts:** the emergency number for Schindler that is posted in the lifts is for entrapment only. For all other lift issues, residents are asked to call Charles White. There is a 24/7 on-call service. There have been 2 calls using the emergency number made from The Rigg recently- these cost £250 each and will be charged to Rigg residents as no faults were found and the lifts were running on the Engineers arrival.

Action: Sarah will have the Development Inspector for Powderhall revise the notices in the lifts and on noticeboards re: lift issues reporting.

5. **Springfield Development Parking:** There have been approaches from owners on adjacent developments asking if they can buy parking spaces on Powderhall. Due to the pressure on parking in the area, additional double yellow lines may be painted. Fortunately, Powderhall owns the land the car park is on so parking is exclusive to Powderhall residents.
6. **Gardens:** The committee will continue to oversee the management and improvement of the green areas in Powderhall. As mentioned above this will include a replacement tree programme behind the townhouses.
7. **Dogs:** The committee supports the view that the central grassy area should be child- friendly. It is the only designated play area for young children on the development. The rules for management of dogs on Powderhall are clearly stated: they should be on leads and should not soil the grounds. It seems that much of the dog soiling is done by dogs living outside of the development and who are accessing St Mark's Park. The signage re dog fouling has been replaced. There is one spelling error that will be remedied. The committee continues to look at ways of deterring dog fouling.
8. **Meeting with city planners regarding access to Powderhall/Dunedin Street**
Frans, Gordon, Kevin, Roddy and Sarah met previously with representatives from the proposed development on the old waste management site on Broughton Road re access onto Dunedin Street. Issues were raised regarding the proposed construction of an access ramp and the possible effects on Powderhall. Sarah now feels that the issue will not be pursued further by the developers.
9. **AOB:**
 - a. **Contingency Funds:**
 - i. The possibility of setting up a Powderhall contingency fund was discussed at the last AGM but could not be voted on as the group was not quorate. Sarah has written to all owners about the necessity of setting up a contingency fund to deal with the inevitable costs of replacing/ repairing large items such as the lifts, the roof, carpets etc all of which will require major work in the next few years. Proposed costs to set up a Contingency fund would be £30 per quarter for owners in Powderhall Road and £50 per quarter for those in the blocks. Each block would have its own contingency fund with the Powderhall committee agreeing on spending when the need arises.

Contingency funds are non- refundable but are open to all to use during their time of residence/ ownership at Powderhall.

- ii. The committee again discussed this issue in detail. In particular, it seems that it is the non- refundable element of the contingency fund that is a controversial issue. Some residents say they would rather pay for work needed as it happens. A contingency fund works by building up funds over a period of time so that large repairs can be paid for when required. There must be an overall majority that agree with setting up a contingency fund before it can be implemented.
- iii. It was proposed that it would be compulsory for future owners to buy into the contingency fund.
- iv. Contingency funding would be ring- fenced, held in a separate account and would not be used by Charles White for any other purposes.

Action: Sarah Wilson to wait for responses from all owners about the proposed Contingency Fund.

b. Insurance claims:

- i. Gordon asked how this year's insurance claims were doing as there had been an excess of water damage claims last year. Sarah reported that there has been some improvement with not as many claims. The Brae and 7-11 The Rigg however have made most claims, possibly because of the type of plumbing installed by Taylor Wimpey.

c. Insulation matters:

- i. the committee discussed an issue for ground floor flats that are adjacent to bin stores where the insulation seems inadequate and causes rooms to be cold. It is possible that the insulation next to bin stores is not as it should be and that it needs to be improved. The committee will look at this further. Sarah mentioned that condensation can be an issue in some areas and that residents need to open window vents to combat this.

Action: Sarah will circulate the costs of improving insulation and the issue will come back to the committee for discussion.

d. Welcome Pack:

- i. Sabine is still working on the welcome pack for new arrivals to Powderhall. This will include a welcome letter on Facebook.

e. Bike Storage:

- i. Sarah explained that there would be a bike amnesty the following week where all bikes in bike stores will be red-labelled and unless claimed by owners within 1 month, will be disposed of. There is a surplus of unused bikes in the stores and we need to make more storage space for bikes in use. Bikes should not be stored in stair wells as they are a safety hazard.
- ii. The committee discussed the possibility of providing other bike storage on Powderhall including lockable domed storage systems. Rachel shared information about a bike storage system that the Council endorses where units of 6 bikes can be sited and fitted by a specialist company for a reasonable annual fee. This facility would be for residents only. There is likely to be a high demand for the facility. More information will be posted on Facebook and on Noticeboards. Residents are requested to express their interest and the committee will consider responses.

f. Fencing:

- i. there are several areas where the perimeter fence is damaged. Quotes for repairs are being obtained.

g. Stair representatives:

- i. James asked for an updated list of "stair reps" who will post notices on block noticeboards and provide information on any issues for their block. Residents should let Sarah/James know if they are interested in being a stair rep.

h. New developments in the local area:

- i. Gordon reported that demolition work would likely begin on Beaverhall Road in 2024.
- ii. Developments on the former Waste Management site have not yet started although the new Nursery and Senior Citizens areas should have begun by now.
- iii. **PVOA update:**
 1. Gordon said that the Directors & Officers Insurance for PVOA Ltd will be renewed.

Date of next meeting: By ZOOM on October 25th at 7.00 pm