



## **Powderhall Village Owners Association**

### **Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 27 January 2010**

**Present:** Roddy Martine (Chair), Gordon Chrumka, Bill Scott (Treasurer), Ian Corbett (Sec.), Kathryn Tomlinson and Jane Chisholm

**Apologies:** Joanna Bytheway, William Mackie and Peyman Taheri

#### **Agenda:**

- Approval of Previous Minutes
- Actions from Previous Minutes
- Matters arising from AGM
- Gardening Club
- Any Other Business
- Date, Place and Minutes of next meeting

**Approval of previous Minutes.** The Minutes of 2 December 2009 were approved.

#### **Actions from Previous Minutes**

**Quarterly lift maintenance charges** Sarah has forwarded statistics from Schindlers for all 16 lifts at Powderhall, and these were distributed to committee members in advance of this meeting, together with a spreadsheet summarising the number of callouts, and estimating whether there would have been a saving if we were on the Silver maintenance contract rather than the Gold maintenance contract. Unfortunately, the statistics supplied did not give the number of callouts that were outside the core hours of 8am to 5pm Monday to Friday and the average duration of each call out, so the summary spreadsheet was based on a number of speculative assumptions. However, with this proviso, it was estimated that 11 of the blocks with lifts would have been better off on the Silver contract and the remaining 5 blocks would have been worse off. In particular, the lifts at 2, 7 and 8 the Rigg had respectively 11, 10 and 9 callouts during the past year, significantly higher than other lifts on the development, and the committee agreed to ask Sarah to discuss the reasons for this with Schindlers. Until more solid data is available, the committee felt that it was premature to ask owners whether they were in favour of changing from the Gold to Silver maintenance contracts.

**Actions 27/1/10** Ian to ask Sarah to show summary spreadsheet to Schindlers to comment on whether the assumptions made are valid, and if not, to revise the assumptions accordingly.

Sarah to try to negotiate a reduction in cost of the Gold maintenance contracts we currently have with Schindlers.

**Sarah to ask Schindlers to investigate why there have been a high number of annual callouts for the lifts in 2, 7 and 8 the Rigg.**

Fire Windows **Action 02/12//09** Gordon is still working on the production and fixing of suitable notices to the fire windows to discourage residents from opening them. **Ongoing**

Vent on roof of 5 Brae **Action 02/12/09** This vent has now been replaced. **Completed**

List of Preferred Contractors **Action 02/12/09** Gordon to add list of preferred suppliers received from Sarah to website. This is close to completion. **Ongoing**

Water seepage into Underground Car Park **Action 02/12/09** Sarah had details of NHBC Warranty Certificate and has submitted a claim to NHBC who have written to the developer (Millers). They are required to respond within a specified timescale (thought to be 6 to 8 weeks) **Ongoing**

Downpipe at rear 7 Brae. **Action 31/12/09** This pipe has now been joined to an adjacent downpipe that is connected to a proper soak-away. **Completed**

Staining on gable end, 8 the Brae **Action 02/12/09** The recent cold weather had caused this work to be delayed, but it is expected to be done soon. **Ongoing**

Lights in Bin Stores **Action 02/12/09** Gordon has drawn attention to the lights in the bin stores and suggests that when they become redundant, they be replaced with extant heavy duty switches. If and when such action is required, Sarah should check that the light switch is in the optimum position. **Ongoing**

## **Matters arising from AGM**

Powderhall Waste Processing Depot At the AGM, Councillors Lang and Blacklock had differing views about when the processing plant would be demolished. Louise Lang followed this up with Council officials and forwarded a briefing note (attached to these Minutes) clarifying the situation. It looks as if the plant will still be in existence well after 2014.

Rubbish collection at Powderhall It became clear at the AGM that emptying of the large general rubbish bins at Powderhall had been reduced from twice a week to once a week, supposedly because of a reduction in the amount of general rubbish after the recycling bins were provided. Sarah is trying to organise an on-site meeting with Andy Anderson or David Bain from the Council to verify that the provision of bins and the frequency of emptying is adequate for the number of flats in each particular block.

**Action 27/1/10 Sarah to meet with Council officials, confirm that bin provision is adequate for each block, and to ascertain the frequency and the specific days for emptying each type of bin.**

Trees at B & Q Louise had been asked by William Mackie to try to resolve the problem of tall trees on the neighbouring B&Q site blocking natural light for flats in 1 and 2 Brae. She has had a disappointingly negative response from B&Q management who claim that there is no legal or health and safety issue involved, and that there is no obligation to reduce the height of the trees concerned. Louise will liaise with Council experts before deciding what to do next.

## **Ongoing**

Mice infestation As actioned at the AGM, Sarah has sent a letter to all owners giving practical advice on how to check for evidence of mice and giving details of a company that will inspect individual flats free of charge. If follow-up action is required, the best guarantee of eradicating the problem is if at least 50% of the flats in a block get treatment at the same time. The committee's view is that if evidence of infestation is discovered in any block, it is up to the owners in that block to get together and decide whether to proceed with co-ordinated treatment.

Buildings Insurance Claim Form Gordon Chrumka had requested an electronic copy of this form from Sarah to be added to the website. Gordon now has an e-copy of the form and it will be added to the website soon. **Ongoing**

Blocking off bin chute doors It had been suggested at the AGM that this should be done to avoid the problem and expense of clearing blocked bin chutes, but the committee agreed with the majority of comments received that the bin chutes should remain in use, and yet again, try to encourage people to put only small, properly-sealed bags of general rubbish down a bin chute. Ian was asked to draft a notice that stair reps., if they agreed, could cellotape to the chute door on each floor of their block.

**Action 27/1/10 Ian to draft a notice to be sent to stair reps. to decide whether they should be attached to the bin chute entry doors in their block.**

Fabric Funds and Insurance Excess Sarah had asked the AGM to decide whether these two proposals should be accepted (see AGM Minutes for details) but there were too few attendees to constitute a quorum, and it was decided to ballot all owners by asking Sarah to insert a ballot paper in the next quarterly bill. The committee approved the draft ballot paper with the inclusion of a line for signature and date.

**Action 27/1/10 Ian to amend ballot paper and forward to Sarah for inclusion in the next quarterly bill.**

Volunteers to organise social event. Three of those present, Susan Corbett, Susan Jack and Christine Triay, said they would be willing to help with such an event if someone was prepared to organise it. Jane Chisholm also volunteered to join this group.

**Action 27/1/10 Roddy to invite all four volunteers to meet him to decide on a practical way forward.**

## **Gardening Club**

The Gardening Club currently comprises a group of five individuals interested in gardening and how to make the site more attractive. Anyone willing to join the Club would be made very welcome. The Powderhall gardening contract comes up for renewal on 1 April, and Sarah has already issued invitations to tender for this work, based on a maintenance specification

produced by the gardening Club, and the next meeting of the Club will be before the end of February to decide which quote should be accepted.

**Action 27/1/10 Sarah to get tender quotes for gardening contract to Roddy before mid-February.**

**Action 27/1/10 Roddy to organise a meeting of the Gardening Club before the end of February**

### **Any Other Business**

- . Grit bins There are five grit bins located throughout the Powderhall site and the committee would like to thank those individuals who took it upon themselves to use this grit to clear the pavements outside their block. We need to ensure that the Council live up to their promise to refill these bins.

**Action 27/1/10 Sarah to use her Council contacts to ensure that the grit bins at Powderhall are refilled.**

Dog fouling One resident raised the problem of dog fouling on the grass areas of the development. The committee did not think that the problem at Powderhall was serious enough to warrant the expense of warning notices at this stage, but residents are reminded to be conscientious about collecting any mess caused by their pet. An associated problem is the number of residents who walk (with or without a dog) through flowerbeds and hedges at Powderhall, killing plants and causing bare patches to develop. Again, walkers are reminded to use the paved areas, and not take short cuts through flowerbeds and hedges.

Remarking parking bays It was suggested that the light tiles marking out individual parking bays are difficult to see, leading to cars sometimes encroaching on to neighbouring bays. Remarking the bays could alleviate this, but the committee decided that the expense for the small advantage could not be justified at this time.

Levy for PVOA Sarah needs to be instructed to collect the annual £3 levy for the PVOA working fund in the next quarterly bill.

**Action 27/1/10 Bill to write to Sarah to include this levy in the next bill.**

Moving date of AGM The committee discussed the disappointingly low turnout at the AGM and decided that the early January date, so soon after Christmas and with a high probability of cold weather, may have contributed to this. It was decided to move the 2010 AGM to March 2011.

### **Next Committee Meeting**

The next Committee Meeting will be in Roddy's flat ( 4/6 Rigg) on Wednesday 17 March 2010 at 7.30pm. Ian will produce the Minutes of this meeting.

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## **Powderhall Waste Transfer Station**

**Briefing Note 18 Jan 2010**

### **The Council's Current Arrangement**

The City of Edinburgh Council operates its own waste transfer station at Powderhall, and has a contract with Viridor to send 150,000 tonnes per annum by rail from Powderhall to Viridor's site at Dunbar until 2010. This reduces to 110,000 tonnes per annum by 2020.

Powderhall Waste Transfer Station operates 8 tipping stalls and has the capacity to process 40 refuse collection vehicles per hour. Refuse collection routes a total of 37 vehicles into Powderhall daily tipping on average twice per day. Refuse collection currently operate Monday – Friday. Daily tonnage throughput is between 400 – 600 tonnes. Weekly tonnage throughput averages 3000 tonnes.

Current EU and UK legislation encourages local authorities to make a comprehensive shift away from waste landfill solutions. This change in government policy has therefore necessitated a review of the existing City of Edinburgh Council waste strategy and will inevitably result in a delay in the procurement of further residual waste treatment facilities by this Council.

We are working with Midlothian Council to develop a residual treatment facility for municipal waste that will see waste diverted from landfill. The Councils will be offering the use of a site at Millerhill but contractors will be free to offer up other sites. Until we are clear on which site will be used for these facilities we will not be able to make a clear decision on the need and location of transfer facilities such as Powderhall.

### **Future Requirements**

The residual treatment facilities will not be up and running until 2014 and so it is highly unlikely there will be any change of use at Powderhall or the associated railway before then. Beyond that there may still be a requirement for the site at Powderhall but that can only be assessed when we have more information on the outcome of the residual waste treatment contract, procurement of which is due to start in February 2010.