

Luxborough Tower Residents Association

Minutes and Notes from meeting Thurs 6th May 2021

Covid Pandemic regulations still in place, and constitution suspended, maybe until late June. However, everyone on the LTRA side had been vaccinated and all but one with second injection and mostly plus 2 weeks. So, a safe and quorate meeting.

Present

- LTRA: Mike Kostyn Chair, Nick Vinson Vice Chair, Andrew Hughes Secretary, Committee Michael King, Alex Reid, Anthony Styant, Observer Sian Reid on Zoom
- WCC on Zoom Dalya Charif, Karim Carruthers, Jason Killeen, Gavin Ridgewell, Michael Stewart, Liz Waine

Minutes and notes of previous meeting

- were distributed in October 2020, with changes and notes made at the time. Finished version on LT notice board
- matters arising included in full agenda distributed for this 6th May meeting. No particular order to the items listed: sorry for jumping around between topics

Noise from Paddington Street Gardens

Exercise classes, with loud music and boxing classes. This has been taken up by several people, with strong representation to BXR, letter to Councillor, WCC noise and parks departments notified, local CSO briefed etc

- WCC discussions on-going with BXR. We hope that the problem will largely stop when indoor classes are allowed after 17th May

Carbon Monoxide leak

Sunday 21st March 2021 a resident's carbon monoxide alarm went off. Cadent (Gas Emergency engineers) came and shut down the University gas boilers. Their theory was that a flue from the University boilers travels up inside Luxborough Tower and is corroded so that carbon monoxide seeped into the building. No one was injured but a serious problem.

- JK said that major discussions on-going with University over how to solve the problem. Will report back
- When safe, smoke test and optical scanning inside flues to discover source of seepage
- Assured the meeting that none of the University boilers would be used until the problem was resolved
- Tenanted flats have carbon monoxide alarms fitted – offer reduced price fitting to leasehold flats?

Video Doorbells

These seem to break privacy law since they are private CCTV systems. What is Westminster's line on this?

- DC explained the process that flats have to go through before such VCR equipment can be installed. Will report back
- NV and the committee felt strongly that this installation is not acceptable as it directly records and stores private activity, including into the bedroom of some flats

Roof of 'Temporary' heating boiler

This was reported in October and we were told had been inspected and fixed, but ...

- JK said that new roofing felt was to be installed the next day (and done)

Temporary Boiler

Any news on when the temporary boiler will be closed for the summer (usually 1st May). Important because there are sometimes minor leaks associated with the pipe work cooling down, and the plumbers need to be warned in advance.

- JK has a block letter about to go out to all flats: Heating close down 17th May. Engineers notified in case of shrinkage leaks
- JK agreed that the heat exchangers hadn't been cleaned and serviced for a couple of years. A fire risk? To be done this summer

Then plans for next year? The temporary boiler was installed 2018 for one winter only – now 3 years. What news of repairing the boiler in the University basement?

- GR said there are issues with agreeing the lease and the university had paused the replacement/repair of their boilers
- GR said WCC had been having and are soon to have further discussions re the issues with the university
- LTRA asked who was undertaking the negotiations on the lease. GRI confirmed the WCC legal Team and recognised this had been going on a long time, due to its complex nature. However, LTRA reminded WCC that these discussions on a heating supply contract had already been going on for maybe 10-15 years

Lift CCTV

We raised this a couple of times, but got no reply. The lift people said that they didn't use the lift CCTV to identify the causes of breakdowns, because it was too slow. We pointed out that since then the block has been wired for superfast broadband by CommunityFibre. Could the lift CCTVs be connected to the superfast system. Then, better analysis of faults

- DC said that the lift CCTV had been connected to the fast CommunityFibre system (yesterday) and reported as working

- If footage wanted because of criminal/ASB behaviour, still the limitation that WCC require a police referral before they can look it up. And limit to a 2 hr window
- **LW to investigate if same referral required if footage wanted because of damage to the lift**

Window Cleaning

Why we are having abseil cleaning? The Association is clear that this is not value for money (abseil clean £1,800, pole clean £300). The traditional cleaning, inside and outside had been going on for 50 years – why the change? Why no discussion about it?

- MS discussed this. Technically there was consultation since a section 20 notice was issued. LTRA members still unconvinced. **Agreed to on-site meeting between Michael Stewart and LTRA**

Anti-Social Behaviour

Work will start in the summer on site for landscape and security works and new flats. These works will have an impact on ASB, we hope for the better, but it seems important that someone looks over what is planned, before work starts and talks it through.

- AH met KC, the local CSO and Graham Snowden from the Housing Office on Fri 7th May. Identified the 3 main, existing problems: noise from Paddington Gardens, noise and aggression from intruders into our grounds, aggressive intrusion from intruders going up the staircase and socialising on the higher floors. This was a repeat of previous conversations
- AH discussed the future layout of a new security fence and gates. All felt this to be a good thing but no particular comments

Protocol on inter-flat leaks

This was being discussed by WCC, but is there a finished document? Is it being used? On Jan 6th Nick Vinson reported a leak into flat 99 caused by balcony drains, but no reply

- LW asked for this item to be carried forward. **AH to organise a meeting** so that WCC can explain and discuss more fully: Nick, Mike and Anthony interested in attending

Maintenance of Communal Parts when building work in progress

People move in and out of the block all the time, with mess and fuss to the lifts, corridor, foyer. Plus the accompanying noise of building work and redecoration. And blocking the lifts. Discussed many times. It has been quieter recently because work was stopped for the pandemic, but we can imagine it all starting up again.

- LW recognised the complexity of the works: authorised or unauthorised, WCC void works ... WCC willing to emphasis the existing protocols and enforce where necessary
- **LW and MS to discuss with cleaners, since they are nearest to the problem**
- **Residents should report problems to the LTRA officers who will contact Dalya or Liz directly**

Rubbish and recycling

How can we educate the block? We put out a page of notes about the different ways to get rid of rubbish. But still stuff is stacked up in any old way, and general rubbish mixed up with recycling, etc ... Is there a better way of doing this?

- LW organised for labels to be applied to the recycling bins, identifying what should be put in them. Thank you
- LW has supplied a new bin for general household waste. Thank you
- We now have 5 rubbish bins and it is a bit overwhelming when people don't use them properly and the rubbish accumulates
- DC has organised for A3 notices to be put up identifying what should go in the recycling bins
- AH to do A3 sheet explaining simply where the different types of rubbish should go

Estate Inspections

These were stopped for the pandemic. When do they start again? I agree the inspections are usually only about minor works, but nonetheless they are one of the few ways left for residents to meet Westminster Estate staff. Eg broken louvred windows

- These should restart after lockdown ends in June. Meanwhile, report problems to the standard repair line. If a particular problem WCC will make a site visit with LTRA

Local Plan

Sometime last year we were asked to put in for small scale improvements to the block. We asked for some signage and new bicycle racks. We would still like the bicycle racks

- DC picking this project up from Ruth
- AH to look into what we received and what we still want
- NV asked LW to see if the Ariel Fund could pay for any of the items being lost from the Landscape Project – eg. benches

AirBnB

The council promised a push against illegal subletting. This has been less of an issue during the pandemic, but we might get a busy summer. Has anything happened?

- LW to do block letter reminding residents and non-resident leaseholders that short-term lettings not permitted – done. Thank you
- Report suspicious lettings to the leasehold department who will investigate

Luxborough Street Development

Progress in getting started is slower than expected – there are discussions about budget. The archaeologists have finished on site. Plans are for the main work on site to start maybe in July 2021 and last for approx. 90 weeks (maybe about May 2023)

- The original estimate for these works was £550,000. On a recent detailed costing the project came in at £970,000. Clearly a compromise required that will keep the main purposes of the work, whilst enabling the whole project to go ahead
- **LTRA Landscape Project Working Party to meet with the WCC developers**

Roof Leaks

When the snow came it led to leaks in some of the north facing flats at the top of the building. An abseil survey was done and found various gaps between wall and roof and some points where the concrete surface had been pierced. A job has been raised to fix these

Major Works

There has been an exchange of letters between Westminster's legal department and LTRA. Westminster has agreed to pay for a survey of the building to establish what actually needs doing now. Some legal detail to be sorted out. Legal fees in 3 stages:

- stage 1 – letter to council & independent surveyors - done
- stage 2 – detail of instructions for Surveyors - soon
- stage 3 – negotiations of consequences with WCC

Car parking

Changes to parking arrangements seem to be working, but the car park seems quite empty.

- Housing Office checking through car parking allocations
- SR raised query about charging points for electric cars. AH had had a response on this previously – apologies for not passing it on. **LW to see if information available**

Building Insurance

Thank you to Jennifer Grimshaw for following this up with Westminster. There are clearly discrepancies in the way the insurance costs are passed on to residents.

- Jennifer following up

Meeting Room Repairs

The meeting room is still a mess. 25th February 2021 we detailed what needed doing with photos to support this .

- **DC Now done – thank you**

FRA - Fire Risk Assessment

The last one was done some time ago now. We are interested not in how to get a copy of the FRA but how often is it renewed?

- **LW had supplied latest copy of FRA to AH. Will check if any updates since**