

NDRA Meeting 04.06.2019 @ Selwyn Samuel Centre

Attendees: Phil Rees, Alison Rees, Corinne Ferris, Gwylm Arthur, Kim Broom, Paul Davies, Alison Evans, Mike Foster, R P Cleaves, Sean Rees, Hayley Woodall, Stefan Pearce, Caroline Stokes, Paul Shapley, Rachel Nelson, Robin Walter, Brian Page, Chris Young, Paul Attwell, David Joel, Amanda Kruger, Victoria Collins, Richard Collins, Ken Francis, Roy Jones, Derek Smith, Trudi Francis, Dianne Connor, Paula Halsall, Steve Halsall, Jon Batcup, Tracey Batcup, Ken Walsh, Jessica Lewis, Nick Davies, Mike Jones, Noela Williams, Ian Chappell, Keith Owen, Vanessa Owen, Simon Holt, Jane Thomas, John Lewis, Sue Lewis, Louvain Roberts, Helen Williams, Jonathan Williams, PCSO Steffan Lewis, A Moore, S Moore, Liz Pugh, Chris Smith, Geoff Saunder, P A Kelly, Kay Collier, Gary Collier, Tony Davies, Nevern O'Neill.

58 attendees signed in representing 45 properties on the site.

Apologies: Dave & Mary Matthews, Mike & Yvette Morrison, Alan & Sally Purnell, Barbara Toft, Jean Badman, Mark & Tracy Farmer, Joy Edwards.

The meeting was attended by Rebecca Eddy (Property Manager) and Carol Lawes (Regional Manager) from Trinity. The meeting was also attended by Charles Fry, retired surveyor and property owner, who has been advising Trinity for a number of years regarding the NHBC claim.

Individual sessions were offered to owners and residents during the afternoon to discuss any matters. Owner/representation for 4 flats was made.

The meeting was opened by Amanda Kruger (Chair of NDRA) who welcomed guests and owners/residents and explained that the meeting was going to be in two parts.

- Updates and the NHBC claim
- Information and updates from the meeting held between the NDRA committee and Trinity on 02.05.19

The questions for the meeting were collated by the NDRA Committee and submitted to Trinity to enable all of the topics and queries to be covered in the time available.

Updates

Amanda informed the meeting that a number of updates were available regarding general maintenance including:

- Car park numbering being replaced
- Bike cull taking place
- Bike sheds being refurbished
- Roads repaired on site as necessary
- Upgrading of stones and chippings
- Bins to be repaired/replaced/added
- Chains to be placed across bin stores

Question from the floor. Why couldn't permits match the numbers?

Trinity responded that this could be done but in order to do this all permits would have to be replaced and they cost £10 per permit.

Question from the floor. Why can't Trinity tell residents which number matches their parking place?

Trinity responded that they have changed over time and that each owner should be able to pay and find out their allocated space from land registry if their solicitor had not provided them with the information when their property was purchased. Trinity acknowledged Amanda's comment that Sally had spent a long time putting together a plan of most of the site but insisted that there had been changes and that each flat needed to contact land registry.

Question from the floor. What is the timescale for the jobs on site?

Trinity responded that jobs would be starting imminently if they hadn't already done so.

NHBC claim and associated questions

- **What is included in the claim?**

Charles Fry provided the background to the claim as he had started the claim as an owner about 10 years ago. He had then continued to support and advise Trinity about the claim in subsequent years.

The main problems are the render and lintels. This causes compression of the timber and frames causing problems especially over the windows and balcony doors.

Elan Homes took over when builders David McCleans went into liquidation in 2009 and they tried to start mending windows and patio doors without success.

NHBC will not cover any defects in the windows.

The priority for the current claim is the render and lintels as the lintels are rusted but the physical damage is not recognised.

NHBC make any contact or claim very confusing e.g. providing different reference numbers for every part of the claim, taking a long time with responding and then claiming that they haven't got anything, changing the person who is dealing with the claim etc.

The lintels are galvanised and should be stainless steel. The render is not fit for purpose on a coastal building.

Building regulations should have a maintenance life of 60 years but the lintels are not part of this. Furthermore, the total number of lintels on site doesn't meet the minimum claim value required to make a claim. However, the claim value changes constantly.

- **What is the current position of the claim?**

All claims are still lodged with NHBC.

- **Is there a cut-off date after which Trinity will stop pursuing it?**

The solicitors were changed last year and an independent expert has been involved. The instruction of a barrister will be the next step. Trinity are currently waiting for everything and this is a pivotal point.

Oct/Nov will be the possible cut-off date for the decision, but there are no guarantees.

The information will go to the NHBC from the barrister and when this happens there will be a further 28 day wait for the decision to go to court or not. Trinity will be making the decision of whether to stop or go to court.

The NHBC did the building control work rather than Carmarthenshire County Council which could be a useful factor in the claim.

Question from the floor. How much is available in the fund to start the work that will be required?

In July 2018 there was £450,000. There was a further £120,000 added this year. Trinity hold the sinking fund and this will contribute to the works. The costs to the leaseholders have not been estimated yet.

- **When will the remedial work start?**

This will be the next stage and cannot be started in the winter months. The possible starting time for the work is therefore spring 2020. One block will be started first to complete some investigation work. Cambria and Pandora are considered to be the worst affected blocks.

There will be consultations with the leaseholders by Trinity over the winter. Contracts are already being explored so that there will be no delays in starting work when it is needed.

- **Are all blocks affected?**

Yes. The main ones are the sea facing blocks.

Question from the floor. Is the problem due to the lack of maintenance by Trinity?

The expert report from NHBC suggests that it was problems caused by the builders e.g. wrong render used, defective windows, wrong angle of sills. There are clear failings documented in the report.

Question from the floor. Why is the ombudsman not used?

There is concern that the claim wouldn't be accepted.

Question from the floor. Why hasn't this gone to the media?

The media have run articles in the last few months but this is not helpful for residents and owners who are considering selling property.

Current maintenance

- **Carpets and decoration**

Trinity have sent a survey regarding carpet replacement and painting of entrance halls. A response is required from leaseholders to instruct Trinity of the preferred option. It needs to be remembered that all common areas will be accessed by the workmen once work begins and this is bound to cause further wear and tear. Work continues on the external painting of all doors and porches.

Action: Trinity will resend the options and instructions for responding as a number of people had not received it.

Maintenance to heaters, walls and carpets is needed in one block. Complaints and reports will be dealt with by Trinity when contacted by phone, email or via the portal.

Comment from the floor. Roof problems, water ingress and balcony problems are not dealt with properly by Trinity.

The resident was asked to report everything to Trinity who said they were aware of ongoing problems. These types of issues will be covered by the building insurance and would not be part of the NHBC claim.

- **Bins**

Kim Broome, on behalf of the NDRA has been working closely with local councillors and Carmarthenshire County Council (CCC) regarding the problems with bins and recycling. CCC are on site 3 times weekly at the moment until bin capacity is resolved. This will gradually decrease to 1 black and 1 blue collection per week. Reference numbers will be given to each bin store so that Trinity can deal with particular problems if they are reported to them with the reference number.

It is recognised that there is a need for more bins to be supplied and the old broken ones on site are going to be repaired and brought back into use. Extra spare ones currently at Trostre recycling plant are being sourced. It was emphasised that all residents need to take responsibility for making the system work and any fly tipping needs to be reported to CCC. Signs will be put up near to bins to warn of the consequences of fly tipping.

Action: Trinity will put a reminder about bins and responsibilities of residents in the next newsletter.

- **Caretaker**

Question from the floor. Why can't the caretaker post continue?

There is no caretaker on site. The cleaning contractor is now taking on this duty. A resident suggested that this was not working as the next site inspection needed to include looking under the bushes at the rubbish.

The specification for the cleaners asked for by the NDRA committee has now been put up in the communal hallway in each block. If there are any problems please report them to Trinity.

- **Parking**

The parking firm will ticket cars in the wrong spaces and without permits if residents report somebody is in their space. Land registry will confirm the space originally allocated to each flat. Collapsible bollards can be erected on your own space.

- **Water bills**

Question from the floor. Why can't water bills be split up for individuals?

There is no way of changing the way the water bills are arranged due to the way that they were originally set up. The bills are sent out twice a year usually but there has been a delay with the current one due to a technical hitch. The meters are read by Trinity.

The £6,000 annual charge for administration is being looked at by the recharge team.

- **Residents portal**

Question from the floor. Why is the portal not maintained and maintenance requests/progress logged?

This is being looked at by IT who are working on the changes needed for the portal.

- **Management fees**

There has been a 2.5% uplift but there is no extra charge for fees.

- **General questions and comments from the floor**

There are a number of damaged grills on the flats which need to be replaced. Birds are nesting in them which is also causing problems for residents. Trinity responded that they are not responsible for these as they are demised to the individual flats. Trinity was challenged on this comment as previously there had been some damaged grills replaced by Trinity when a former estate manager was in post, additionally it was unreasonable for residents living on a third or fourth floor to replace them.

Action: it was agreed by Trinity that they would inform all residents when a cherry picker was going to be on site for other maintenance e.g. gutter cleaning, next time to give residents the option of paying to have grills replaced.

Legionella testing does take place as necessary. Clearwater carries out testing and reports are produced.

Action: Reports and advisory reports to be made available by Trinity.

Concern was expressed regarding the cladding, especially on the penthouse flats where some residents had used rubber strips in the gaps.

Action: Trinity will be in contact with the residents in the penthouse flats to continue dialogue on the problems.

It was queried when the next newsletter would be sent to residents as there were a number of issues to be addressed and information shared.

Action: Trinity will be sending out a newsletter next month (July).