

## Sinclair Estate 2017 AGM - Report of Sinclair Resident Committee

The 2016-17 Sinclair Estate Resident Committee members have been:

Rosina Weightman (Chair) - Sinclair Place (Townhouses)

Alan Eccles - Sinclair Place (Flat)

Pamela Gidney - Sinclair Place (Flat)

Mercedes Gordon-Regis - Sinclair Place (Flat)

Gill Hansen - Sinclair Place (Flat)

Basil Morrison - Sinclair Place (Flat)

David Niven - Sinclair Close (Flat)

Jean-Baptiste Richon - Sinclair Place (Townhouses)

Niall Scott - Sinclair Gardens (Flat)

### **New Factor for the Estate**

At the 2016 AGM there was considerable discontent that DCPM's performance was still far from satisfactory. It was highlighted that there is considerable work involved in researching possible replacement factors and volunteers were sought to take on this task. Gill Hansen and Rosina Weightman agreed to take on the task of researching and short-listing possible candidates with the help of other members of the committee.

Four companies were initially considered. These were Charles White, Spiers & Gumley, Hacking & Paterson and Myreside Management who were each asked the same set of questions regarding their factoring service. Following consideration of the answers provided and nature of responses received such as turnaround time, the committee agreed to shortlist Charles White and Myreside Management as the final candidates.

DCPM were informed of the re-tender process in December 2016 and invited to tender for the contract. Chris Lyon (Factoring Team Leader) subsequently confirmed in writing to the committee of DCPM's decision that they do not intend to put forward a tender to factor the estate following the 2017 AGM. It was stated this is due to internal restructuring since their take-over by Wheatley Group. DCPM have confirmed they will continue to factor the estate until such time as a new factor has been appointed.

Representatives from Charles White and Myreside Management will be invited to present to owners at the AGM and a vote will be taken to change factor.

***A quorum of 35 owner votes is needed to pass a change in factor and we are hopeful that with such an important decision on the agenda there will be the necessary attendance at the AGM. One vote is permitted per property. Proxy votes are also permissible and if you are unable to attend but would like to vote you should return your completed form to your proxy or contact the committee at [committee@lists.sinclairresidents.co.uk](mailto:committee@lists.sinclairresidents.co.uk) if you are unable to arrange a proxy.***

### **DCPM Customer Relationship Manager**

The development recently experienced a further change in Customer Relationship Manager (CRM) after James Worthington resigned from the position in early December to take up another post within Dunedin Canmore. This is the fourth change in property manager since DCPM were appointed in May 2013 and third member of staff with Stuart Anderson again taking up the role and a name some owners will be familiar with from his previous involvement in the early days of the contract. The committee has pressed since December for a communication to go out to all owners who are clients of DCPM about the latest CRM change. At the time of writing the committee has been advised a communication will be going out shortly.

The lack of continuity has naturally impacted on the running of the development and progress on matters over 2016 in particular and the position continuing into 2017. Representatives from the committee have regularly met with senior management at DCPM to raise concerns regarding the poor quality of service and the Astronomical Clocks fiasco (further details below) is a typical example of that poor service.

### **Asbestos Survey**

The new committee gave further time to research this matter in the summer, which also benefited from the professional expertise of a member, and it was agreed by the committee that an Asbestos Management Survey is legally required. Owners are referred to [www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/duty.htm#what](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/duty.htm#what) for further information on the 2012 Control of Asbestos Act and its implications. The survey has now been carried out and DCPM are currently compiling and reviewing the reports with the outcome of the work to be reported to owners at the AGM.

### **Seagull Issue**

At the 2016 AGM there were several reports from residents being attacked by seagulls which are nesting on and around the estate. Action was called for and the committee undertook research into the possible ways to address the issue.

The Scottish Government provide a useful guide and summary of the research into the various methods that have been tried in the UK to deter the birds from roosting. Unfortunately the results are not simple and there is no clear effective way to get rid of seagulls from an area as there are many variables on different sites. The picture for effective deterrence is not dissimilar from when the committee at the time looked at this approximately three years ago. However, the problem will only get worse as the number of birds increases year on year and therefore at the request of the committee three quotes were sought by DCPM from Rentokil (£5,179.49 pa), EPCS (£4,226 pa) and NBC (£3,250 pa). All costs are exclusive of VAT and DCPM's 12% service charge. The majority of the committee were in favour of the NBC quote and a programme of pest control which incorporates all of the recommended best practice for effectiveness, including a regular programme of hawk flying and nest and egg removal work which will begin in late March/early April.

## **Fountains**

At the 2016 AGM considerable frustration was expressed regarding the failure to resolve the problem of the fountains rarely working and three possible options were discussed - 1) Dismantle and remove the fountains, 2) Keep them as a feature but plant as flower beds rather than water features or 3) Repair and continue to maintain them as water features. There was agreement at the meeting that they were an attractive feature and should be kept in some form.

Sadly this issue has still not been resolved. DCPM issued a newsletter in October outlining the decision to go ahead with planting the fountains with flowers as no companies could be found to quote for the maintenance contract. In response, two residents came forward with objections and suggestions of companies to contact. The three companies suggested for the work were contacted and site visits arranged in November 2016. Only one of the companies went on to quote for the maintenance contract.

The development's CRM, James Worthington, moved post shortly after these visits and unfortunately the matter remains unresolved. In view of the position with the factoring contract, the committee took the decision to leave trying to further progress the matter to a conclusion until a new factor is appointed.

## **Astronomical Clocks**

As owners will be aware, astronomical clocks were fitted in all stairwells in November 2015 under the recommendation of CRM Fiona Church-Michael at the time, so that stairwell and external path lighting would operate more efficiently and safely come on and off when needed in relation to local sunrise and sunset. The clocks did not work when first fitted and it took approaching nine months of effort by two committees to resolve the issue which was attributed to the clocks not being correctly installed by DCPS electricians.

The clocks are at last working and this does make the setting change for daylight saving twice a year automatic which should save the callout charge for an electrician to reset the timers.

## **Development Debt**

The committee has worked to obtain regular updates from DCPM about the development debt. The total debt is approx £20k, with around £12k accounted for by the accrual of direct debit account underpayments.

## **Future Maintenance**

A list of maintenance issues has been identified by the committee. Unfortunately, due to changing personnel at DCPM progress has not been as quick as hoped. The new committee will liaise with the new factor to put in place a plan to ensure issues are dealt with promptly and co-ordinated appropriately.