



Minutes of Annual General Meeting - Monday 14th October 2024

In attendance :

Martin Winham (Chair), Howard Dodgson (Vice Chair) John Hodgkins (Secretary), Andrew Wright (Treasurer), Russ Moran, David Roebuck, Elaine Henry, Patrick Morgan and Paul Hope (Committee members), Carol Dodds, Fergus Dodds, Ann Lea, David Lumb, Martyn Kenna, Pam Hodgkins and Mandy Wright

Representing Praxis Block Management :

Mohammed Khan (Property Manager), Safi Khan and Sejal Garg (Assistant Property Managers)

Apologies:

Imran Chouglay and Ray Monkhouse (Committee members), David Richardson, Edward Gulc, Freddie Coupe, David Poynton, Brian and Maria Cammack, Oliver Quarmby, Paul Teasdale, also Adam Cooper from AT Developments (Yorkshire) Ltd

1. Welcome and Introductions

Martin Winham (MW) welcomed representatives from Praxis Block Management and introduced members of the committee.

2. Updates from Praxis Block Management

Mohammed Khan (MK) provided updates with content from a prepared presentation - [see presentation](#).

2.1 Transfer of responsibility from Plymouth Block Management

MK described the responsibilities that Praxis had taken over from Plymouth Block Management. For the time being, sub-lessees of Grey GR apartments will continue to pay their service charges to Plymouth, and by the end of 2024 Praxis will become the Primary Agent to G&O Real Estate Ltd, assuming responsibility from Urbanpoint for the annual collection of ground rents (except on Grey GR apartments) and managing insurance claims. Praxis had now opened a Client Service Charge Account and would shortly open further separate client accounts for the Reserve Fund and for grant funding received from Homes England for cladding remediation.

HWROA Feedback : Our relationship with Plymouth Block Management was marked by a lack of communication, especially on important issues such as cladding remediation, and we received very little feedback on progressing the Five Year Maintenance Plan. **The Association is looking to Praxis to provide monthly summary updates on the various issues affecting Hebble Wharf and a quarterly financial statement of expenditure and account balances.**

2.2 Financial Update

MK provided details of the current balances in the Service Charge Account (circa £5k) and Reserve Account (£8.25k) together with the amounts outstanding in the Service Charge account - circa £94k in arrears (including the second quarter which had just been invoiced) and £20k due to United Utilities). It was reported that Urbanpoint had appointed independent accountants to examine the financial accounts at the point of transfer from Plymouth Block Management, and were currently in dispute with the former accountants (Foster Seechurn Morgan) who had been managing the service charge accounts on behalf of Plymouth.

HWROA Feedback – The Association was advised at the date of transfer that the Service Charge Account cash balance at 30 June was £8.5k and the Reserve Account cash balance stood at £8.25k, though the Reserve Fund itself showed a balance of approximately £100,000 according to the year end balance sheet.

At the time of transfer, Service Charge arrears amounted to £47,000; plus a year end deficit from 2023/24 of £28,000 which had yet to be invoiced to leaseholders (and was still not actioned by Praxis). By 30 June 2024 the deficit had increased to £55k, suggesting that the Reserve Fund contributions from 2023/24 had yet to be transferred to the Reserve Account. While these sums remain outstanding, the available balance in the Reserve Fund continues to be severely depleted. The Association reinforced the need to resolve outstanding impasse with Foster Seechurn Morgan without delay.

The Association understands that £35k of the arrears in the Service Charge account are owed from Grey GR Partnership and there may be a further sum outstanding from the leaseholder of the commercial unit. **The Association is pressing Praxis to pursue recovery of the arrears and collection of the Service Charge deficit for 2023/24 without delay.**

2.3 Cladding and Building Safety

MK confirmed that Homes England had approved the release of the pre-tender grant towards cladding remediation but that it had yet to be paid into the Hebble Wharf Client Account. As primary agent to G&O Real Estate Ltd, Urbanpoint would be overseeing the cladding remediation project and reporting regularly to Praxis.

The Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) and Compartmentation Survey undertaken by Maple Fire Consultancy was due to report its findings shortly and Praxis will be arranging the necessary remedial works.

HWROA Feedback : To comply with the Homes England requirements, Praxis was asked to ensure that leaseholders receive regular progress updates and full visibility of the financial accounts relating to the Cladding Safety works. Praxis was reminded that cladding funds should be kept in a separate client account and not merged with Service Charge or Leaseholders' Reserve Funds. HWROA also reinforced the need to have input into the project planning process.

The Association also raised the need to ensure that leaseholder funds already committed to Cladding Safety works would be identified to Homes England with a view to those funds being returned to the Leaseholders' Reserve Account. Expenditure in excess of £40k has already been incurred, including the EWS1 Inspection, PAS9980 Review and upgrades to some balcony decking.

The long-delayed Compartmentation Survey and Level 3 Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) was expected to highlight the need for remedial works within the block, some of which may result in a Section 20 demand on leaseholders – however, it was pointed out that remedial works classified as ‘Relevant Defects’ in the Building Safety Act were the responsibility of the Head Leaseholder and not individual leaseholders.

With this in mind, the Association reminded Praxis that the Head Leaseholder needs to actively pursue the original developer (or, in this case, their successor) as this may be a key route for the Head Leaseholder (Landlord) to potentially avoid future liability for the cost of rectifying any "Relevant Defects", ie if successful in pursuing the original developer, then liability (and associated costs) should become the responsibility of the original developer (or their successor) under the Building Safety Act.

2.4 Five Year Maintenance Plan

MK advised that the Head Leaseholder had requested a further inspection and condition report to update the original inspection undertaken by William Ossitt in 2020. There had been further deterioration on some parts of the block and the cost estimates produced in 2020 had now increased significantly, and an informed prioritisation of works is now essential.

HWROA Feedback : The prioritisation of works will need to take account of the funds available if the original intention (of avoiding unexpected supplementary demands) is to be met. The Association considers it vital that monies due into the reserve fund are recovered swiftly and any further survey carried out without further delay.

2.5 Water leaks at Hebble Wharf

MK reported on the six significant water leaks that had occurred since Praxis had assumed management of the block; in each case the leak originated in the water supply pipe between the water meter (located in the riser cupboard outside the apartment) and the stopcock within the apartment and in some cases had affected two or three other apartments as well as the garage.

He reported that all pipework exclusively serving an apartment (ie from the water meter onwards) was within the demise of the lease and therefore the leaseholders’ responsibility but given the number and similarity of the pipe bursts a suitably qualified surveyor/plumber was to be urgently engaged to inspect the pipework between the risers and the apartment stop cocks to identify whether an inherent defect in the original materials and/or workmanship may require a building-wide modification of these areas to mitigate this current pipe burst risk - this to also include an "on site" establishment of the water pressure to determine if a reduction may also help to mitigate this risk. This pipework inspection to also include a "leak detection survey".

HWROA Feedback : There have now been at least 12 incidents of this type since 2020 and whereas the terms of the lease make it clear that this section of pipework is the leaseholders’ responsibility, all of the evidence points towards a defect in the original installation that needs to be addressed on a building-wide basis and not left for individual leaseholders to decide whether or when to address the problem.

The Association has also been in contact with Yorkshire Water to establish the supply pressure entering the building and is of the opinion that further incidents could be averted if the water pressure is reduced. A professional opinion is being sought on the desirability of installing a pressure reducing valve at the point of entry to the block.

3. Other issues raised with Praxis

3.1 Leaseholder Deeds of Certificate

Praxis have established from Plymouth Block Management that about 80% of leaseholders had submitted a valid Deed of Certificate to them in 2023 to establish their status as 'Qualifying Leaseholders' giving legal protection from liability for the cost of cladding remediation. Praxis now needs to obtain copies of the Deeds of Certificate for submission to Homes England and will be asking leaseholders to supply either a copy of the original submission or to complete a new one.

HWROA Feedback : The Association is aware that there are likely to be a number of apartments owned by non-qualifying leaseholders by virtue of the number of properties they own. Praxis confirmed that sub-lessees of Grey GR Leaseholdings qualify for the financial protection providing they meet the 'not more than three properties' criteria.

The Association asked whether cladding remediation works would be delayed if non-qualifying leaseholders did not pay their contributions in a timely manner; the current advice from Homes England suggests that remedial works would not be held up in such circumstances but that recovery of contributions from non-qualifying leaseholders would then be pursued.

3.2 Lack of Secure Parcel delivery to Hebble Wharf

The Association had raised with Praxis the lack of any secure facility for parcels to be delivered to Hebble Wharf, which was resulting in on-line purchases going astray or being stolen. MK reported that two possible options to be explored could be the installation of lockers outside the block (chargeable to leaseholders through service charges) or an agreement with [for example] the Estate Managers at Spectrum Health for parcels to be delivered to their reception desk for collection during office hours.

HWROA Feedback : The Association is aware that the number of parcel deliveries has increased substantially in recent years with the growth in on-line purchases and has encouraged residents to arrange delivery to local collection points where they can be securely stored until collection. That decision is ultimately for the recipient to make of course, but the Association can take no responsibility for lost parcels. There is currently no ability to review the cctv footage on site, which is being taken up now with Praxis.

3.3 Guide for Leaseholders and Tenants

A guidebook is due to be published for leaseholders at Hebble Wharf offering advice on how to respond in the event of emergencies, and where responsibility lays in the event of repairs being necessary. Praxis will consult with the Association on the detail before publication and will encourage leaseholders to share the information with their tenants.

HWROA Feedback : With more than 80% of apartments at Hebble Wharf tenanted, the Association recognises the need to ensure tenants are aware of how to respond when the unexpected happens and fully support this move. The Association provided a suggested format to Praxis in early September and will ensure that the finished version is also available for download from its website.

4 Questions from Leaseholders

A summary of answers provided to previously notified questions follows at the end of these minutes.

5 Block Finances

See Financial update in Section 2.2 above

6 Minutes of 2023 Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the last AGM were circulated with no questions arising. A copy of the minutes can be downloaded [here](#).

7 Chairman's Report

The Chair's report for 2023/24 had been circulated with the agenda and can be downloaded [here](#). There were no further questions on this report, following the earlier discussion.

8. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer presented a brief report outlining that the current membership of 30 represents 38 out of the 58 apartments (66%). The Association's funds currently stand at £427.25 after expenditure of £149.89 during the year on meeting venues (including the 2024 AGM) and web hosting.

There was no immediate pressure to levy a renewal subscription in 2024 and subscriptions for new members will remain unchanged at £10 per apartment. This proposal was accepted.

9. Election of Committee and Officers

The Secretary reported that there had been no notification from any committee member wishing to stand down and proposed that the committee and officers be re-elected en bloc, and that an offer from Martyn Kenna to join the committee be accepted. This proposal was unanimously agreed.

The committee for 2024/25 will therefore comprise:

Officers	Martin Winham (Chair)	Howard Dodgson* (Vice Chair)
	John Hodgkins (Secretary)	Andrew Wright (Treasurer)
Committee	Imran Chouglay*	Paul Hope*
	Martyn Kenna	Patrick Morgan*
	Russ Moran	Ray Monkhouse
	David Roebuck*	Elaine Henry*

*Note : * indicates members who are resident at Hebble Wharf*

10. Any other business

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 2200 hrs.

See overleaf for answers to pre-notified questions from leaseholders

Questions from Leaseholders

The following questions were notified to Praxis in advance of the AGM and answers are given below in red

1. What is the current position with regard to fire safety and cladding replacement at Hebble Wharf? The current position is outlined under Item 2.3 and in the presentation from Praxis Block Management. Further updates will be circulated as work progresses.
2. What is the anticipated timeline for obtaining a satisfactory EWS1? Is there anything can be done to help people trying to sell their apartments? There is no confirmed timeline until a final specification of works has been received. Based on experience elsewhere the timeline could potentially be up to 2 years from that point. Once the works are completed and a satisfactory EWS1 rating obtained, apartment sales should become easier. Currently lenders are reluctant to offer mortgages on buildings with an EWS1 rating which requires cladding remediation works until they are satisfactorily completed.
3. Will Praxis and Plymouth Block Management be working together on managing the block? How will Praxis support the Grey GR Sub-Lessees whose service charges are still paid to Plymouth? Plymouth Block Management will continue to collect service charges from the 14 sub-lessees for the time being. All other aspects of block management should now be referred to Praxis. Communication between Praxis and the sub-lessees is being reviewed in order to ensure that sub-lessees receive any communication that otherwise goes to leaseholders (including Grey GR). The Association will support this communication until direct lines of communication have been agreed.
4. Do sub-lessees have the legal right to buy out the lease on their property to bring them into line with the rest of the block? There is no legal right for Sub-Lessees to purchase the upper lease on their apartment, and anyone wishing to do so should initially contact Grey GR Partnership with their enquiry as some elements of the upper lease may not be transferable.
5. We understand that a survey has been carried out recently to investigate installation of solar panels. What is the expected outcome, and will there be a cost to leaseholders? This survey was undertaken at the request of the Head Leaseholder and the report is awaited.
6. There have been 7 serious water leaks recently caused by burst water supply pipes. What has caused this and what is being done to address the problem? See Item 2.5 above.
7. What progress is being made to identifying the ongoing water ingress to apartment 412 that has been ongoing since the Section 20 works were completed? Adam Cooper proposed to Plymouth Block Management that leak detection experts should be brought in but there has been no visible progress since then and the wooden flooring in the apartment is being damaged again. This work is still outstanding and Praxis is still awaiting a leak detection report.
8. Why have there been repeated interruptions to the TV signal? TV, cable and Door Intercom networks are routed through distribution panels within the riser cupboards on each floor. Recent water leaks have impacted some of these panels and at least one panel is damaged beyond repair and a replacement ordered.

HWROA strongly suggested that the tv and cable infrastructure that had been damaged by leaks/floods was to be double checked by Praxis to see if, in fact, the componentry had dried out such that it was now operational again - this may then obviate the need to replace these components at a potential cost of around £5k.

- 9 Have the problems with missed refuse collections been addressed? Who is paying for the private contractors brought in to clear excess refuse? Both Praxis and the Association have contacted the Wakefield Council and have been assured that collections should return to normal following removal of construction equipment from the roadway outside Tileyard North. Leaseholders and residents have been asked to inform Praxis should problems continue. Costs already incurred against service charges for removal of surplus waste are unlikely to be recovered from the council due to the potential legal fees involved.
- 10 What is the connection between the G&O Group, Urbanpoint and Praxis? G&O Real Estate Ltd is the Freeholder and Head Leaseholder of Hebble Wharf, and a subsidiary of G&O Group, who are the majority shareholder in Urbanpoint Property Management Ltd. Praxis Block Management Ltd has been managing properties on behalf of G&O Group for some years but is under separate management. The Chairman asked specifically for Praxis to confirm that they were indeed completely autonomous from the other companies, which they confirmed accordingly.
- 11 We were never confident that the Reserve Fund was being managed properly by Plymouth Block Management. What is proposed by Praxis to ensure that our reserve funds are more effectively managed? We have received assurances from Praxis that reserve funds will be managed in a separate client account and that contributions from leaseholders will be transferred into the Reserve Account at the year end once accounts for that year have been finalised. The Association's request for regular (quarterly) updates on reserve fund balances has been agreed.
- 12 Why were the Service Charge invoices for the second quarter not sent out in accordance with the agreed budget? How were the interim charges calculated? A system error resulted in incorrect invoices being issued. This has now been corrected and revised invoices issued.
- 13 Will you be changing the way in which service charges and the management charge are calculated in future years? The process for calculating service charges will not change and Praxis do not foresee an increase in management fees in the short term. The Association will be consulted on the proposed Service Charge budget six weeks before the budget is set, and our comments will be taken into account when budgets are set.
- 14 Under Plymouth Block Management, leaseholders had access to their service charge statements using the Resident portal. Is Resident still available, or does Praxis have another facility for leaseholder access? Praxis advises that they also use the Resident portal and leaseholders can request access to their account by email to Praxis. The existing Resident portal has not migrated your account information from Plymouth to Praxis.
- 15 If a leaseholder has an outstanding claim for flood damage against Plymouth Block Management, how should they be getting that resolved now? Any leaseholder with an outstanding claim for water damage should pursue their claim through the block insurer. Details of the insurance and how to lodge a claim can be obtained on request to Praxis.