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## **Hebble Wharf Resident's and Owners' Association.**

### **Chairperson's Report 2023/24**

#### Committee Members;

Martin Winham - Chair

Howard Dodgson – Vice Chair

John Hodgkins – Association Secretary

Andrew Wright - Treasurer

Members – Imran Chouglay, Russ Moran, Paul Hope, David and Elaine Roebuck, Ray Monkhouse, Patrick Morgan.

#### **General Introduction;**

As an Association we have continued, as ever, to try to provide a useful supporting resource to the Managing Agent on many aspects that have arisen over the past couple of years, whether it be budgetary, administratively, communication, or indeed regular interaction with the Managing Agent and other Key Stakeholders on most issues that arise throughout the year.

For 2023/24 this has centred, for many months, around trying to obtain the award of Cladding Safety Scheme monies for the Block, in particular, the “Pre Tender” monies to enable remediation schemes to be designed and priced, from which then, subject to authorisation by the Government (Homes England) further monies may be awarded, and selected works then awarded and undertaken.

The Key Objective here being to then gain the necessary “re-rating” of the current EWS1 Survey (B2 rating) to one which meets the necessary compliant criteria under the Building Safety Act.

This should then render the Block to be compliant from a fire safety perspective, as per Cladding Legislation requirements.

This should also then enable leaseholders to have improved piece of mind from a fire safety view along with improved capability to sell their property with a related improved EWS1 rating.

We have continued with a good and useful working relationship with the “On Site” Estates and Logistics Manager, Nick Kirk of Spectrum for Estate matters, hopefully to the benefit of both the Association and the Managing Agent.

**NOTE :** A key change has taken place this year - **from end June 2024**, in that the Block Manager, PBM (Plymouth Block Management Ltd), has been changed by the Head Leaseholder/Landlord (G&O Real Estate) to another company called **Praxis Block Management**.

This has required the necessary “handover” from PBM to Praxis of all the various operational, procedural, financial, commercial, and historical components applicable to Hebble Wharf.

In some areas, this is taking a little longer than expected, and HWROA, (in particular, John Hodgkins and myself) have been regularly interacting with their management team on a regular basis since just before, and after, changeover, to try to help wherever possible.

This has particularly focused on trying to help ensure that any Health and Safety elements continue to take place, along with the integrity of any financial/accounting elements as detailed within the handover process, plus trying to get them up to speed with the historical and ongoing components relevant to Hebble Wharf that will require their attention and action.

This has been alongside any reactive issues that have taken place since their take over, ie leaks and/or floods.

There have also been some issues related to Praxis setting up a “Dedicated Client Account” for Hebble Wharf, but, thankfully, although somewhat protracted, this has now been successfully set up.

## **Update from Last 12 Months;**

### **5 year Maintenance Plan Works**

These works remain in place to be worked through, subject to available funds, in a prioritised fashion, and the Association intends to continue liaising with PBM (will now be Praxis) and the other related stakeholders (APFM Ltd) in this regard.

The Building Surveyor, Bill Ossitt, who was instrumental in the building works has now retired but is still available for discussion should any replacement Surveyor need any pointers/help from his intrinsic knowledge of the building.

It should be said that progress on this programme has been much slower than expected, and this Block Management changeover, will no doubt impact in this area also.

Works undertaken in the past year include;

*Access/Intercom system* – Varying and inconsistent issues across the block with sound (in and out) plus some video and door opening for some flats.

This has now been successfully resolved, along with some flat leaseholder purchasing updated intercom units, where it was found that theirs were actually faulty.

The Main access panel has also received component replacement that has resulted in a much better functioning system, with the resultant overall expenditure being far less than the potential £10's of thousands that this may have extended to.

Potential further works under review include;

*Main Roof Access Platform and roof ridge repairs item* – Bill Ossitt (before retiring), along with APFM are understood to have costed this and submitted to PBM – TBA – Praxis will now need to review this accordingly.

*Intumescent paint to steel structures in the basement/Garage and fire stopping* – Bill Ossitt is understood to have submitted some quotes to PBM -TBA. Praxis will now need to review this accordingly.

*Suspended water channels to the basement/Garage* is also thought to require review and pricing etc -TBA – the materials have been purchased but have yet to be fitted.

*The PRI insulation to the garage roof* is also to be reviewed, but, with the advent of the recent Building Safety Act, and some other items, that there is a possibility of them being categorised as “relevant” defects which could be funded by other routes than the “reserve” funds – TBA. Praxis will now need to review this accordingly.

### Flat Leaks

There have been numerous leaks from apartments over the past couple of years. One aspect thought to be a key contributor to this (aside from negligence of a flat resident) is linked to the unvented Cylinder heating system.

These, if not regularly checked/inspected, could lead to incorrect pressures in the system which could give rise to pipe/equipment bursts and significant flood/leak damage, to both the apartment, and into the corridor/any areas below the leak. HWROA have proposed a local Plumbing Contractor last year to PBM, who advised Leaseholders of this accordingly.

This recommendation has been repeated to Praxis, to undertake such checks. Residents ought to remain vigilant wherever possible to mitigate the risk of water leaks etc, and this regime of checks could be a very useful mitigating action to take in that regard, along with being aware where the nearest stop tap is to enable the water to be turned off.

### Recent Leaks.

Some of these, from preliminary investigations, appear to be more linked to what is suspected to be a latent installation issue used on water feed pipework near joints. AT Developments have been instrumental in reacting to, repairing and cleaning up the resultant effects of these bursts.

The aspect of water pressure to the Block is also being investigated with Yorkshire Water – could this be a contributing factor, and if so, could any water pressure reduction be successfully applied? TBC.

Praxis are co-ordinating each of these cases, both from a repair and Insurance claim perspective, with HWROA helping wherever possible.

HWROA understand that the potential solution to this issue is also currently under review by Praxis.

### Compartmentation/FRA Report Action Update.

The Compartmentation Survey was done in April 2024, and an associated FRA is to shortly be undertaken, with some overlap with this survey.

We understand that the output from both will be given due consideration by Praxis, along with the Fire Consultant who undertook these surveys/assessments, and an action plan derived.

It should be noted that such items may also have potential to be classified as a “relevant” defect under the provisions of the Building Safety Act, so the funding route for such items may require further discussion with Praxis accordingly.

### EWS1/Cladding Update – Now classified as “Critical Works”

There had been a series of “Zoom” meetings with PBM held over the course of the last couple of years on this important matter.

The main parties to these meetings had been PBM, Bailey Partnership (their appointed Project Managers/Consultants for this issue), and some HWROA Committee members – PBM will now be changed to Praxis, and, as yet, we are unclear who Praxis will engage in the Bailey Partnership role.

Key objectives to ultimately try to achieve are the securing of a position on the DLHUC Medium Rise Scheme (MRS) and associated funding via the Building Safety Fund (now referred to as “The Cladding Safety Scheme”) to enable suitable mitigating remedial works to be done on the Hebble Wharf Block.

As stated in the “General Introduction” section above, on completion of such works, then the EWS1 status can be reviewed and rated to the extent that all the properties are considered safe enough to enable “normal” market views to be taken in terms of mortgages/lenders, and, of course, the level of fire spread risk has been established (by virtue of the EWS1 works done) as being reduced to the requisite level accordingly.

Speed of progress has been frustratingly protracted at times, linked to communication issues with PBM, the speed of the Government to initiate the “Pilot” scheme for the Medium Rise Scheme (MRS), and time taken by the Head Leaseholder to instruct on times so they can be progressed, not least due to them also having to engage Solicitors for them to more fully understand their liability under the recently introduced Building Safety Act – this has, in spite of continued pressing by HWROA, unfortunately, taken many many months longer than anticipated.

That said, encouragingly, as reported in last year’s AGM report, Hebble Wharf was indeed selected to be part of the Medium Rise Scheme (MRS), and actions taken to try to secure the first phase of funding were taken ie the application for “Pre Tender” monies from the Cladding Safety Scheme (CSS)

As mentioned above, this has taken significantly longer than expected, despite repeated interaction and pressing from HWROA

Importantly, however, HWROA were advised in the last month, by Praxis, that they have finally been awarded the initial funding (Pre tender monies) from Homes England, and they should receive this imminently, having now just set in place the

Dedicated Client Account for Hebble Wharf – value thought to be in the order of £300k – TBC.

Once monies have been officially awarded and received, timescales for the whole process via the MRS remain frustratingly unclear, but is likely to extend to a couple of years or so, rather than months, with a number of stages within the process that could stall - PBM had previously advised that they also experienced variable rates of progress on other blocks that they were progressing, ie, they advised that some have been very quick whilst others slow, there appears to be no set pattern. This will currently now lie with Praxis to determine what is to happen and when in this regard, although HWROA will continue to try to help progress this aspect wherever reasonably possible.

As mentioned in last year's AGM report, it is understood that the MRS will only consider funding items which have been identified within the PAS 9980 Compliant survey and listed within the associated EWS1.

Any further works which may be potentially classified as a "relevant defect" under the Building Safety Act may be subject to review with the Block Manager (and Landlord) and the "Project Consultant" accordingly, ie Fire related items, to understand what the approach may be taken in this regard.

Also, in the pursuance by the Head Leaseholder (Landlord) of the original Developer for any liability, should they be unwilling or unable to pay the costs for latent fire safety defects, then HWROA have been previously advised by PBM (when Block Manager) that there was an "agreement in principle" made over a year ago, that the Head Leaseholder (Landlord) G&O Investments would fund the cost of any essential fire safety works.

It is hoped that this will still remain the case, even though there has been a change of Block Manager to Praxis & Head Leaseholder (Landlord) from G&O Investments to G&O Real Estate (done around 9 months ago), but this is yet to be determined.

### Estates Related Works

As already mentioned, a useful working relationship with Nick Kirk, Estates and Logistics Manager, now exists and, consequently, the Association has more visibility of any associated work/issues, and can raise matters directly with him to see if solutions can be derived to the betterment of both Hebble Wharf, and the surrounding Estate.

This continued to be done with full interaction and knowledge of the Managing Agent, PBM until their replacement 30/6/24, as it is seen as a useful supporting/enabling function that HWROA can provide for the benefit of all parties.

Any final decisions/instructions obviously remain with the Block Management company (now Praxis) in any such instances.

Dialogue with Nick on this will continue as necessary.

Nick has kindly provided a summary update of where any estate issues currently lie as set out below;

Spectrum Community Health CIC for and on behalf of, Waterfront Wakefield Management Company;

- Tileyard North:

The *new build development* has been completed, directly adjacent to Navigation Walk. The building sees ground floor retail units while the remaining floors are given over to office space. Current rumour is that one company has taken all of the office space. This could be borne out from the number of additional parking spaces in the Waterfront carpark that have been added to the red bay, permit parking only spaces, leased from the council

*Building 12*, the stone waterside warehouse building, is currently undergoing building works by Henley Stone, a local company specialising in stone work restoration. The eventual fit out is meant to deliver a multi floor exhibition and conference space with state of the art environmental management systems and a partial glass roof

News is awaited on the *proposed hotel* development on the waterside. The building has been completed to fit out level and it is expected that a boutique style hotel will follow

- Navigation Walk:

Works will be undertaken on *all four flood barriers* through October and November. The hydraulic pipe work will be replaced along with motor servicing and fluid replacement. The timbers require treatment and once completed, all four will be left lowered, then tested monthly in line with LOLER regulations and for insurance purposes. Flood risk monitoring is undertaken through the sites FM provider Vale, who also monitor such flood sites as the Royal Armouries in Leeds. In addition, further ground works are required to rectify the drainage issue in one of the flood pits. Damage from tree roots, now removed where they grew out of the casings has caused one of the drains to collapse. We hope, subject to CCTV to drill through the roots and reline the pipe work or at worse, we have to dig out the channel and start again

The '*drip tray*' was installed *beneath the staircase landing at the end of the apartment block* to reduce the falling water into the stairwell. We will monitor the rainfall volumes and consider additional aco drains should it become necessary, linking into existing drain channels

CCTV: a review with the potential to look at upgrading the sites CCTV system will be considered. As much of the system requires attention and is somewhat dated by modern standards, the initial scoping will be to look at proposals and costs to deliver a new state of the art system

*Footbridge*: the bridge remains an issue, particularly with the local authority, to be completed. Neither Spectrum as the managing agent nor the Waterfront Wakefield Management Company have any obligation beyond maintaining what is there, not for its completion, something new officers in the local authority have taken time to understand.

Costs to bring this bridge back into use appear to be quite cost prohibitive (greater than £50k), particularly when considering that there is already an alternative means

of walking to Navigation Walk, and Tileyard North by use of the existing footway alongside the main road, but this is still under consideration with Wakefield Council.

Rutland Mills/Tileyard North – further observation;

Works continued, largely uninterrupted, with “completion” of various sections to the development over recent months – see comments within Nick Kirks summary above. It is thought, and hoped that, when it becomes more fully open and occupied, this development will bring some positive impact to the immediate vicinity of Hebble Wharf and the surrounding Estate, as it becomes more functional and part of the immediate environment to Hebble Wharf.

Budget v Spend 2023-2024

The Association has continued to experience some difficulty in receiving timely Account updates, issues with Reserve monies and cost allocation, in addition to some accounting convention anomalies for which we are trying to get clarity of. This has been compounded somewhat by the recent changeover of Block Manager. The Secretary's Item/Report will largely cover this aspect.

### **New Committee 2024-25**

Our Constitution requires that all members of the Committee resign at the AGM, but shall be deemed to be re-elected if they are willing to stand, in the absence of any other nominees.

We will take the nominations and election of the committee members later in the Agenda.