

# HWR&O Association Chair Report 2021

Thank you to everyone here for joining us this evening. My name is Imran Chouglay, Chair of the Association, alongside:

Treasurer - Andrew Wright

Secretary - John Hodgkins

Members - Yvonne Berns, Howard Dodgson, Paul Hope, Russ Moran, Martin Winham, (Lukasz Nowakowski??)

It has ended up being 12 months since our last AGM - while the intention was to try and have this earlier, the committee wanted to try and get to a point where there were more answers than questions surrounding the developments and challenges we face. Now, unfortunately I don't think we have been able to get as far with that I we'd hoped, however due to the current implications on all leaseholders, it's important to update as to where things stand.

I realise a number of things to report on from the last year remain ongoing, and we'll be picking these up in more detail as part of the agenda.

Firstly, I have to thank the committee for their work and dedication. While progress has often felt frustrated, it has not been through the lack of effort to engage with the managing agent, and offer support and advice where they can. While at the beginning of the year, efforts have been made to help support and engage the Hebble community, picking up the suggested point of creating an updated Homeowner manual and issuing an Association newsletter for updates, focus also shifted to try and position ourselves as a supporting resource for the managing agent to use, in order to help facilitate significant actions that affect all of us.

At last years AGM we shared details of the building survey carried out to formulate a 5 year maintenance plan. Since that point a great deal of work, particularly from John (association secretary), has gone into formulating a prioritised Maintenance Plan, spread over up to seven years, subsequently spreading financial impact on leaseholders, as well as a proposed financial plan aligning available funds against planned expenditure. In summary, each year, £30,000 has been allocated from Service Charges to Building Reserves, and a further £3,000 from the Car Parking Service Charge. The Association has agreed with Plymouth Block Management that interim accounts will be produced every Quarter so that we are all able to have a clear overview of how our Reserve Funds are being used.

Soon after this proposal was put together, a revised plan was necessary, due to the required work identified in the Fire Risk Assessment report carried out in June. With these works posing significant health & safety risks, it was appreciated that scheduled maintenance work from year 1 may need to slip to accommodate these. As the financial and organisational challenges were increasing with a multitude of items to address, the Association repeatedly enquired about having visibility of some sort of scheduling programme/tracker from the managing agent, to be convinced that there is a system in place to ensure that we can be better kept in the loop as work progresses, and offer whatever support we can to facilitate that. This, along with concerns around financial shortfalls due to arrears, resulted in a letter to Mark Christie (MD, PBM) at the beginning of August, raising these points in the hope to gain confidence these were being addressed. The reply, while not providing any response to how works were being managed/scheduled, did state that service charges arrears had been transferred to the hands of PBM's solicitors for recovery. With the exception of one whose address we need to clarify due to recorded delivery letters not having been signed for. It was also stated that Reserve Funds (critical to the maintenance programme) are not used to cover shortfall of Service Charge.

Running parallel with this, came the somewhat expected issuing of Section 20 notices, to address the water ingress issues (works cost of circa £150k). With the consultation period deadline of mid June, it was anticipated from PBM that, providing payment of funds, the work would be instructed late June/early July and then completion dependent on contractor lead times. In order to try and expedite the process, the committee proposed work to be instructed on receipt of £100k of the section 20 monies, with the knowledge the remaining £50k could be covered by reserves while the arrears were collected.

However, this figure was only reportedly reached by mid August, forcing the works to be pushed back. Concerns around the timing of work now falling in the height of autumn/winter, and the subsequent effects of adverse weather, alongside industry-wide lead times on materials supply, means that the commencement of works has now been pushed back to 2022 - and this is likely to be further disrupted by the ESW1 findings, which I'll pick up later in this report.

Over the last year, the garage has been a focus area to try and address 2 key safety concerns.

The first being the historic run-off of water we have seen, coming down the ramp and into the garage from the cobbled estate road. In March, Spectrum Health commissioned work to replace the drainage gulley across the entrance to the car park, as well as an additional gulley running perpendicular to the entrance. On completion of the remedial works, there was scepticism shared with the estate management around the effectiveness of these works, and in particular the placement of the addition drain gulley on the 'lower' side of the garage entrance, meaning the garage was still suffering with flooding and water could

be clearly seen running in from the other side of the garage entrance. On further inspection, it was found that the gullies were becoming completely blocked, meaning water was easily running over the drains and into the garage. Since then, and with the appointment of a new facilities management company, we have been assured that the checking and clearing of debris will be regularly conducted and from recent evidence, we have seen a marked improvement in the performance of the drains under heavy rainfall. In a recent update from Spectrum, a mains drainage clean is planned once the trees drop their leaves.

The second area of concern the association has attempted to address has been the obvious damage to the garage door, rendering it out of action since June. Unfortunately since that point, we have suffered a slow insurance process, having sight and input to various back and forth between the insurance company and loss adjuster. Despite an initial proposal to try and repair the existing door, it was eventually agreed in October to proceed with the replacement of the door, and we'll have updates on this later in the Agenda.

As mentioned, the facilities management for the estate has been transferred from Grant Fieldhouse to Vale Services, and we hope that this brings with it a more productive relationship with PBM. Nick Kirk, Estates & Logistics Manager of Spectrum Health, who is managing the contract, has shared a programme of remedial works to be carried out, already funded by service charge budgets:

- Repair and reinstatement of the flood barriers - due to commence the last week of November and complete first week of December
- Edge protection will be installed for pedestrian safety in the areas exposed when the flood barrier repairs are complete
- The cobbled and seating area behind the large flood barrier will be repaired and reinstated
- Health & safety signs have been installed, as well as new site directional signage
- The street lighting on site will be upgraded and in the case of the lights by the large flood barrier, repaired;
- All footpaths will be deep cleaned;
- The glass balustrade and handrails to the steps and patio area by the vacant retail unit will be repaired;
- Vehicle bollards will be installed to prevent parking outside the entrance to the apartment block on the sandstone paved area.

In terms of wider developments around the estate, Navigation Warehouse will be used as a Job Centre as part of the governments initiative to set up additional temporary centres to match increased demand, supporting people back into work. The Rutland Mills

development remains seemingly on course for completion, receiving £8m portion of Wakefield's 'Levelling Up' funding bid.

While focus has been predominantly on 'internal' challenges at Hebble Wharf, this is definitely an area to pick up over the coming months to better understand the implications and plans to manage increased footfall & traffic around the area.

That brings us on to the final area to touch on in this report, to then be discussed later in the Agenda as a key outstanding area of concern; The ESW1 inspection.

A meeting with PBM in March suggested the survey was due to be carried in April after delays caused by country-wide demand on a small pool of qualified inspectors. Unfortunately, this was later discovered to only be an estimate, and it wasn't until May that PBM received a quote for £32k to conduct the inspection. At this point, a big thanks goes to Martin (committee member) who pursued further quotes for the work, resulting in the eventually agreed £14k quote from HS Roofclad. In order to help expedite the process, the quote was split into two parts, in order to avoid the need for another Section 20 demand.

Frustratingly, between booking the inspection works and them being carried out, the government released a statement which suggested relaxations, of which Hebble Wharf found itself sat in a grey area. The decision to go ahead with the inspection was taken with careful consideration of surrounding factors. Firstly, due to the late stage of this announcement coming in relation to the survey works, we were beyond cancellation period so would have incurred all costs. In addition, we were advised that because the announcement had not been accepted by lenders and insurance companies across the sector, this posed significant impact and restrictions on leaseholders.

On Friday (November 5th) leaseholders received a statement from PBM as to where things currently stood and the ongoing dialogue between themselves and the fire officer team to put forward alternative measures addressing the highlighted concerns to achieve a satisfactory ESW1 grade.

This has clearly had a widespread impact on many leaseholders, potential leaseholders and will inevitably impact and delay on both the Section 20 works and items referred to the ESW1 by the FRA. Moving forward, it is imperative a resolution to this is reached as a matter of urgency as part of the agenda, we'll look at any thoughts and suggestions the association has on how we can support this.