

Hall Forest Residents Association

Minutes of Special Meeting held at Forest Park Development, Kintore on Friday 21st October 2005

Attendees: J. Stewart, D Slater, G McDonald, J&S Brown, M Aiken, G Morrison, N&H Lovelady, G Rennie, K&A McPherson, K Will., P MacKenzie, Alex Middleton (Greenbelt), Beverley Burnside (Greenbelt).

No representatives from any of the developers were present

| Item | Description | Action |
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| 1. Introduction | Association welcomed AM & BB of Greenbelt to Kintore. | |
| 2. Opening Discussions | A thorough description of the company was presented by AM stating that the company (Greenbelt) was initially set up as a charity circa 1991 in the Strathclyde area. This was to provide maintenance and advice with new and up and coming housing developments within the area. The company at that time and was owned by the local authority before being a limited company as it is to date. | |
| 3. Reporting structure | <p>With regards to the reporting route for complaints on quality of service provided by Greenbelt on active developments, of which this Kintore development currently is, it was stated by AM that essentially Greenbelt would normally be contacted by the developers (Persimmon, Stewart Milne, Bett etc) in the event of unsatisfactory standards of workmanship on landscaping. However this can only be achieved if the residents initially raise the points to the developers. No developers were present to comment.</p> <p>Residents Association to become focal point of complaints from Residents. Residents Association will pass on complaints to both the developers and Greenbelt.</p> | |
| 4. Customer Service – Greenbelt communications. | <p>JS pointed the fact out to BB&AM that when trying to contact a representative at Greenbelts business address it proved to be nigh impossible as 90% of the time you were directed to an automated answering system or asked by a customer services employee to file the issue by letter to the company, on both occasions it was agreed by both AM and JS that the response time was unsatisfactory.</p> <p>It was mentioned by AM that their customer service system has been overhauled during the past few months and now is now a more efficient vehicle.</p> <p>AM also included that he appreciates the fact that residents take time out to build resident associations and that Greenbelt is committed to meeting future residents associations.</p> | |

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| 5. | <p>Areas owned/managed by Greenbelt, and dates for transfer of remaining areas.</p> <p>It was stated by AM that the landscaped areas and open areas within the developments are to be passed over from the developers to the Greenbelt, whom will then become the owners of the land. This will occur when the developers have completed work on the development.</p> <p>The agreement between the developers and Greenbelt group allows Greenbelt to start managing the open spaces before the transfer of ownership is carried out on completed phases. Areas under Greenbelt's management have been previously identified in correspondence sent to the Resident's Association. Greenbelt is unaware of dates when the handover of others areas will happen as this is dependent upon the pace of development by the developers. AM said that Greenbelt would like to have ownership of the areas as soon as possible so that they can landscape the area as soon as possible, thus creating a pleasant environment for residents.</p> <p>There was uncertainty during discussions as to who actually was responsible for what as information being given by Greenbelt had conflicted with information given to residents by the developers.</p> <p>A meeting with the developers, local council and Greenbelt needs to be arranged by the Residents Association to clarify the matter.</p> <p>It is will be Greenbelt's long term responsibility for the maintenance and management of the open areas owned by them. Where Greenbelt owns the open spaces, the Residents cannot appoint another factor to manage the open spaces. This is because the land is owned by Greenbelt rather than the residents.</p> <p>AM suggested that it would not be an impossible task to have a local landscape company maintain these areas in place of the contractors currently being employed by Greenbelt. This should make it easier for the landscape team to manage the maintenance of the development thus improving the site frequency and length of time spent on-site.</p> <p>AM would be happy for the Residents to suggest through the Residents Association a local contractor(s) that they would be happy to manage the site. AM would however prefer a company that could manage all aspects of the site rather than using several for different tasks.</p> <p>This is an avenue that AM would like to see come to fruition as the next ten years will see similar developments multiply, simultaneously the same will happen with landscaping contracts. Although it was unclear if Greenbelt would give up the land early.</p> <p>Although AM did state that he has a strategy in place for future personnel requirements he did not mention what experience is required to fill the required roles.</p> | <p>JS/GM</p> |

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| <p>6.</p> | <p>Inspection of open Areas</p> <p>Although the growing season has ended it was still clear to Greenbelt that there are certain quality control issues on the landscaped areas.</p> <p>Both AM and BB walked round some of the landscaped areas of Persimmon and Stewart Milne along with the residents present. JS pointed out the areas of concern namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lack of repair to damaged grass areas • Lack of proper and seasonal plant maintenance • Negligible weed clearing in close proximity to plants and shrubs • Poorly managed soil – starting to moss over • Neglecting duty to remove waste, stones & general rubbish from plantation areas. • Poor method of grass cutting – areas missed due to uneven ground • Lack of removal of dead trees and shrubs • Lack of replacing other previously removed plants • Lack of cleaning up grass cuttings from pavements and roads. <p>It was noted that some roadside storm drains were not in place, presenting an open kerbed area which in turn is filling up with roadside grit and mud which in turn prevents the soak-away section from “doing its job” in situations of prolonged rain</p> <p>BB mentioned that certain plants and shrubs are still in their early stages and would require certain care and maintenance before regular seasonal trimming and prepping cold take place.</p> <p>As the strip of grass roadside will be handed over to the council as part of the road care program when the development is complete it would be beneficial to maintain this area at the same time that the main factoring is taking place. A co-operative and systematic approach by Greenbelt and Aberdeenshire Council should be in place to maintain continuity of the areas.</p> | |
| <p>7.</p> | <p>Snagging List</p> <p>It was agreed that the Residents and the committee would work towards creating a snagging list of current problems and submit these through the Residents Association for remedial action to be taken. The snagging list is to then be submitted to relevant developers and Green Belt for action.</p> | <p>JS/GM</p> |
| <p>8.</p> | <p>Timescales for Remedial Work</p> <p>Upon receipt of snagging list, Greenbelt will pass on list to contractors for action. Greenbelt will inform the Residents Association of the timescales when they have received the snagging list.</p> | <p>BB</p> |
| <p>9.</p> | <p>Contractor HSE Reports</p> <p>Not Discussed</p> | |
| <p>10.</p> | <p>Contractor Work Instructions</p> <p>AM stated that the contractors that they use are aware of the requirements for the site. They currently employ a contractor from outside the area which may be part of the cause to some of the problems being reported.</p> | <p>JS/GM</p> |

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| 11 | <p>Approval of Work Done In Future Works</p> <p>We were told by AM that someone from Greenbelt does inspect the state of developments in the area under their care on a fortnightly basis. They are however unable to visit every site when they are in the area and an inspection of this site may not occur when they are in the area.</p> <p>As residents have a copy of the maintenance plan for the development, they can through the Resident Association report to Greenbelt when work has not been carried out or is not the satisfactory standard expected.</p> | JS/GM |
| 12 | <p>Benefits of Continuing Annual Maintenance Service</p> <p>Greenbelt Group is able to take over responsibility for all aspects of the non developed parts of the development, from woodlands and landscaped areas, to recreational facilities, drainage and structural features.</p> <p>Each requires a different management approach and our structure and substantial experience allows us to provide a comprehensive management service to of all areas of responsibility.</p> <p>Only quality landscape/safety managers and contractors are employed.</p> <p>A year round programme of summer and winter maintenance is provided. The standards to which work is done and the frequency of visits depends on the nature of the areas Greenbelt Group are responsible for and also the nature of the agreement entered into between the Developer and Greenbelt Group. This is obviously reflected in the level of the Annual Management Charge set between the Developer and Greenbelt Group at the beginning of the development. Visits are more frequent in summer months to reflect the rate of growth of vegetation at this time.</p> <p>In general where required, 3 categories of work are undertaken on each development:</p> <p>Safety:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping the areas we are responsible for on the development safe • Play area inspections and repairs • Safety inspections and safety works on mature trees <p>Routine Maintenance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cutting grass • Pruning shrub beds • Maintaining young shrub beds to ensure their establishment • Replacing dead shrubs when appropriate • Collecting litter • Reducing grass competition within young tree plantings to ensure successful woodland establishment • Management of woodlands <p>Non-routine Maintenance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove fly-tipping • Repairing fences | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repairing vandalism to structures including play areas • Play areas are inspected quarterly and annually by independent health and safety inspectors. Litter bins are emptied during every maintenance visit and contractors are required to report vandalism and other health and safety concerns to the Group's Lands Division. • Our contractors will visit your development within a few days either side of when we ask them to. We do not ask them to keep to a rigid schedule as this can be affected by weather conditions, plant and machinery availability, and their schedule of other work. This flexibility enables us to maintain a cost efficient service. • Our contractors can visit at times outside the planned schedule, for instance, to carry out emergency works. If these works are not covered in your AMC, the cost may be passed to the residents. Greenbelt Group undertakes liaison with other organisations (utility companies, local authorities, and community police). • Insurance cover is maintained to cover public liability and damage to woodlands by fire and damage by fallen trees. | |
| <p>13</p> | <p>Charging Level The annual fee charged was agreed by the developers and Greenbelt based upon the number of properties in the development and the extent of management required for the open areas in the site.</p> <p>Included in the annual maintenance charge is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Liability Insurance. • Woodland Insurance Policy (in case of fire and damage from fallen trees). • A summer and winter maintenance programme. • Enquiry Management Service (freephone enquiry line and liaison with residents). • Liaison with other organisations (e.g. utility companies, local authority, community police). • Administration (billing administration, finance, etc.). • VAT <p>The initial fee paid to the developer helps to fund Greenbelt's initial set up costs (including finance, billing database administration, legal costs and graphics). Greenbelt is however restricted in the amount they can increase this level as laid out in the resident's property deeds.</p> | <p>AM</p> |
| <p>14</p> | <p>Identify Responsibility For Roads, Footpaths, Gritting, Filling of Grit Boxes etc. Greenbelt believe that responsibility of the roads, footpaths, filling of the grit boxes is still with the developers and will be ultimately handed over to Aberdeenshire Council. RD has confirmed with Aberdeenshire council that the developers have not yet handed over responsibility of these to them to date. Council to confirm to RD within the next week</p> | <p>RD</p> |
| <p>15</p> | <p>Establishment of Landscaping, Woodlands and Open Spaces</p> | |
| <p>16</p> | <p>Compensation for Sub-Standard Work To Date</p> | |

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| | JS asked about compensation for residents for work carried out to date. AM to consider and will revert back to Residents Association. | AM |
| 17. | AOB | |
| 18. | Date of Next Meeting No date arranged - TBN | |