

**Minutes of the**  
**Fernwood Central Residents' Association (FCRA) Committee Meeting**  
**Held at 19:15 hrs on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024**  
**Fernwood Village Hall**

**1. Attendance:**

Present		Apologies
John Newton (JN)	Henry Micah (HM)	Barry Smith (BS)
Nick Roberts (NR)	Terry McSwiney (TM)	
David Heath (DH)		
Brenda Wright (BW)		

Members of the public were in attendance with particular interest in item 5 on the agenda relating to concerns raised via Facebook.

**2. Previous Minutes**

Proposed as a true record – Carried unanimously

**3. Chair's Report**

- i. For the particular benefit of newcomers to Fernwood, the Chairman explained the history of Fernwood and how the open spaces and private parking within Central Fernwood were still owned by Barratt David Wilson Homes (BDWH). BDWH had contracted FirstPort to maintain the area for 999 years. Approximately 80% of houses were freehold and 80% leasehold. All pay schedule 1 fees with leaseholders paying a second fee relating to their specific building or parking.

Residents were generally content with the open space maintenance provided by FirstPort with their biggest issue being the management fee. Over 2 years, the maintenance cost had increased by 3% but the management fee had increased by 14%. TM said that insurance had seen a large increase and was provided by Knights Square which was a company within the FirstPort group.

FCRA was concerned that £47,000 had been spent from Reserves without consultation or detail of how it had been spent. This would be raised with FirstPort along with other aspects of the budget.

FCRA had been hoping that support would be given via the Parish Council, which for 10 years had been pressing BDWH to transfer ownership of the land to the PC which in turn would give a measure of control over FirstPort. However, a change of composition of the Parish Council had resulted in the Council holding a meeting behind closed doors and deciding to not progress the issue of land transfer. FCRA had subsequently submitted a Freedom of Information Request in order to review the advice upon which the Council had acted. The Council had responded with a Section 22 which meant that they said that they would make the information public, but without stating a date for which this would happen. Six months had elapsed since the date of the meeting when the decision was made.

Another current issue was the delays to Deeds of Variation, which some buyers solicitors require during a house purchase. These delays appear to be caused by FirstPort

#### **4. Treasurer's Report**

- i. DH in the absence of the Treasurer reported that the monthly report had been circulated and the only item of expenditure for the previous month had been £2.99 for the hosting of the FCRA Web site.

#### **5. Fernwood Residents Concerns**

A member of the public raised the concern of increasing overall cost of maintenance. JN responded that FCRA would be meeting with representatives from FirstPort and BDWH the next day to raise a long list of concerns.

It was also raised that the FirstPort bill had apparently increased by 25%

It was suggested that the FCRA should improve on the publication of information, especially regarding meeting agendas and minutes. It was pointed out that these could be found on the FCRA web site and the notice board. However, it was agreed that this would happen.

#### **6. Progress updates**

- i. Regarding the Freedom of Information request. The Parish Council had not responded to the email from the FCRA regarding the lack of a formal decision to publish the information. The documents are still awaited.
- ii. The proposed meeting with FirstPort had been arranged for the next day and that 2 representatives from BDWH would also be in attendance.
- iii. TM reported that she had undertaken more background work on the Deed of Variation but her solicitor still complained about the lack of progress with FirstPort in her own case.

#### **7. Chairman**

The Chairman stated in closing the meeting that the concerns raised would be taken to the meeting with FirstPort with the outcome being reported back to residents.

#### **Future meetings:**

Committee Meeting - **Thursday** 19<sup>th</sup> December 2024 at 7:15pm – Village Hall

Committee Meeting - Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 7:15pm – Village Hall

Committee Meeting - Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at 7:15pm – Village Hall

#### **Meeting Closed 21:20 hrs**