

MANAGEMENT REPORT, URB IRIA V, AGM 2022

I agreed to take the role of president, not because I wanted it, but because I felt it was my duty to do so, as an owner/resident of Iria V. This was a very quick decision made on the night before the EGM, as we knew from past experience, appointing a president by “pulling a name out of the hat” wouldn’t work. I had a quick chat with my friend and neighbour, Sue Spencer, and she agreed she would support me on the committee, should I agree to be president.

GATES

One of our first “problems” was the electric gates – we had a very few fobs left, and could not get anyone to supply new ones. We therefore needed a new supply, but also needed the code numbers to obtain these. Our previous supplier was very hostile and aggressive, he wouldn’t help, and I understand he had told a previous president he would only give this code up for a sum of about 500€ and that he wouldn’t work on our urbanisation again. The problem was solved by adding a new receiver next to the old – basically, we now have two – the original one continues to work, but when anyone needs a new or replacement fob, they will work on the new receiver. The cost of this was 794€ inc IVA (a cost of 6.67€/per house) instead of a similar amount to “buy” our own code number. We now have a more modern system, and better-quality fobs, the new fobs costing 45€ each.

We have two companies on contract for our gates – one who deals with the manual gates, the other for the electric. It makes sense to have one company for both, so we will look at this when the contracts are due.

DRAINS

Our contract for the drain cleaning was due and we discussed this with the company. Our drains are contracted to be cleaned March and September, and the company offered an addition cockroach treatment in July for a cost of 96.80€ (0.81€ per house) which we thought was a great idea and money well spent, as the strength would have worn off by the height of the summer when they are a problem, and except for the odd one, we don’t think there were problems with the cockroaches this year.

GARDEN

We had a problem with pigeons taking up residence in the tree in the garden by the pool. Our then gardener/pool guy was of no help, and as they were beginning to cause a problem with droppings, and generally flying around the urb, landing on patios etc and making a terrible noise every morning at sun rise, we took advice from another gardener, who suggested a sonar type device, which we bought for around 25€, and this more or less solved the problem. This tree was completely cut back last week as half of it was dead, so all these actions should solve the problem for now at least. Our newly appointed gardeners/cleaners so far are proving to be very good. They also removed the wooden wishing well from the garden area last week as it was rotting and falling down. The garden is presently a work in progress, and as the weeks pass, we will see a bit of a transformation taking place.

We all know that rats are a problem everywhere – an owner recently drew our attention to their neighbouring house, which has been unoccupied for many years, and reported that the garden was not only completely overgrown, but also full of household rubbish – mattresses, furniture etc. Rats were using the garden/mattresses to nest. We are not sure who actually owns the house at this moment in time – it was “handed back to the bank” many years ago. As an urbanisation we have a duty of care to each other and our properties, and nobody should have to live next to a house in this state. Therefore, the garden has now been cleared entirely, the cost has been met by the urbanisation but this will be added to the debt on the house, hopefully to be re-paid when the property is eventually sold. The gardeners have done an amazing job – especially as they had to climb over a high gate to access the garden and work with rats around them and they have filled one large and one medium size skip. There is another house on the urb where the garden is terribly overgrown and derelict from the original owner, so that too will be cleaned out this week. Speaking with the gardeners, it seems that we are very lucky not to have a rat problem, and to keep this under control, we must make sure all common and private areas of the urb are kept clean and uncluttered.

POOL

The biggest financial liability on most urbanisations is also their best asset – the pool. We are all well aware of the problems our pool has caused for many years – solve one problem, then another arises. In Jan/Feb 2020, the then president arranged for the pool to be re-grouted, and I think, overhauled in general. Everything looked ok until around the time we were allowed to re-open it after covid, and then we saw how black algae had started running up the grout lines, the area was dirty in general, despite the fact that we had continued to pay the monthly pool maintenance fee.

We had many, many discussions, meetings etc with our then pool company, who had also been appointed to do the grouting. It transpired he had sub contracted this work out. He kept telling us he could put it right, telling us it was because the pool hadn't been used, etc etc etc. This went on for months, and to be honest, the pool was probably in the worst state it had ever been in, over the summer months. Tiles were also coming off in strips all over the pool floor. In the end, we dismissed him of his services. We had a meeting with the pool company, in Penta's office, with Jose Ramon, Amanda and our community's lawyer. After a lot of discussion, they agreed to re-imburse us 4000€ - more or less the cost of the work, plus the cost of water and the reports etc. We issued an ultimatum to them to reimburse 4,000€ to the community within 14 days pay to avoid having to (potentially) go down the legal route. To our amazement, they paid in full on the last day. Penta were instrumental in this, particularly Amanda, for which we are very grateful. Part of the agreement made with the pool company was that this “deal” was strictly private and confidential between the community of owners and them. Therefore, all owners are asked to not discuss this matter externally (i.e., with anyone who is not an owner in Iria V).

We then needed a new pool maintenance company urgently, and general urbanisation cleaner. We discussed this with two other companies, choosing one of them. They did a good job of getting the pool back into a decent condition, but it was clear that it needed another complete overhaul. We then obtained five different quotes from five different companies for this work – ranging from 32,000€ down to 7700€. Two of the five

companies were convinced that subject to checking pipework etc, that the pool was salvageable – in other words, it didn't need ripping out completely, and starting afresh. We were on the verge of appointing a company, then did a little bit of anonymous research on local social media groups, asking for reports of local pool companies – good and bad. The company we were about to appoint had some terrible reports, but one company's name kept coming up, who we hadn't considered, with excellent reviews. So, we contacted them. The owner came, and as with all the others, straight away told us that the problem with the algae was that the incorrect grout had been used on the pool – hence the black. After many discussions with him, we felt 100% confident of his experience and his advice and decided they were the company for the job. Most of the men who do the work are directly employed by him, and have been for many years, as opposed to him sub-contracting the work, which had happened with the previous work (and incidentally, the people who did the job went back to their country of origin). All of the companies who quoted told us immediately that our pump house was totally illegal and dangerous – the steps down into it were broken, it was full of condensation because there was no ventilation and, therefore, had been over heating – not helping the machines etc. It was filthy and the auto chemical machine didn't work, which we knew. If we had gone ahead and had a new pool, we were obliged by European law to have disabled access, so we thought this the right time to install these. Again European law dictates that we have to have an automatic chemical machine – the previous maintenance company had tried to do it manually, which probably contributed to its state.

We discussed the pool at length with the Administrator as we knew that a lot of owners would be happy to no longer have the pool and the associated expense and trouble. Again, in law, this cannot happen, as all of us who bought on here did so with the knowledge that there was a pool, and has to be maintained to a usable standard. The only way that this can be overturned is to give all owners a one year notice to vote – at the end of that one year, if 118 houses vote to close, it cannot – the vote has to be 100%, or 119 houses. Between us, we felt that the proposed work and costings were the right direction to go in, and work started and finished in January. The company has been exceptional in their standards, but the proof will be in the use of the pool. To this end, we also appointed them as our pool maintenance company, together with their associated garden maintenance company, so that any problems with the pool would be dealt with by them.

During renovation, it became apparent that half of the tiles on the pool floor were loose, so from the middle of the pool to the end of the deep end, all the tiles had to be removed, the basin acid washed, waterproofed and re-tiled. In the end, the complete overhaul of the pool cost us 11,548€ inc IVA – 97€ per house. We received 4000€ back from the previous company who undertook the work, plus we saved at least 2900€ in monthly maintenance fees whilst it was closed/being renovated. So, in real terms, the renovation of the actual pool cost the urb just over 4,500€.

Both gates into the pool area were a mess, dirty and difficult to open, so these have also been replaced, with automatic closing as have the signs showing the rules, and the showers re-grouted.

The new monthly maintenance contract is more than we had been paying, because they are making more visits. In the old contract, they only came three times a week in the height of the summer, which clearly isn't enough, but then we found out that again, in Valencian law, that a public/urb pool like ours has to be maintained a minimum of 5 times in the summer months, or from the 14th June to the 14th September, reducing in other months.

Regarding the gardening and general urbanisation cleaning, this contract again is more expensive than our previous one, but now includes not only the garden and general cleaning, but also, cleaning of all our entry gates, letter box doors, electric and water meter doors, etc. We should now be in a position that our pool costs us nothing in extraordinary repairs/replacements for the next five years – which is the length of the guarantee on it. We felt it was the right and sensible decision to have the same company maintain it as who had repaired it – they can't blame each other if we do have problems.

The only thing left to consider regarding the pool is the green concrete area around it. It was painted some years ago when the rest of the public areas of the urb were painted. Unfortunately, the people who did it used non-porous paint, and we now have the problem of water standing in puddles either when it rains, or when the pool is in use. This is unsightly, dirty, and obviously unhygienic, as the water stands for a few days after it rains. Any dirt in the puddles is then transferred into the pool – the pool becomes dirty – and so it continues. We have had various opinions and quotes, again ranging from 25,000 to 6,000. It has sunk in many areas, and therefore is uneven with many trip hazards. We need to consider what to do with it. Firstly, should it be done, yes or no. Secondly, if yes, should we completely re-do it or concrete over it? Thirdly, when, this or next year? Our new pool company have recommended someone to do this work for us. Before anything is done, they need to drill down in various areas to see if they can determine the reason for a lot of the areas sinking. Just like with the pool itself, more problems may become apparent as the work begins on it. This is something we feel needs to be discussed and voted on in the AGM on Wednesday 9th February 2022.

Incidentally, some other research we did was on the value of our homes with/out a pool. A three bed house on the pool street for example, may be valued around 150k but without a pool, maybe around 120k and take at least three times longer to sell if it were for sale. These figures were given verbally from two different estate agents.

INSURANCE

Last year, we transferred our cover to a company called GES. Despite the fact that there was quite a saving in premium – approx 2000€, this saving of around 17€ per house wasn't a wise saving, as a lot of owners felt they had to increase their cover with Mapfre/own insurer, to make sure all water loss claims were covered. GES have told us in writing that water loss is covered from the house to the main water supply, and charged us an additional premium for it, however, the wording on the policy is very ambiguous. Additionally, their office is in Alicante (Mapfre are at La Zenia), and have no English speaking staff. We don't think there have been any claims this past year, so we don't know how their claims service is, but we don't feel confident with them. Mapfre have quoted us for this year 3578€. We haven't had the renewal quote from GES yet, but they tell us there is not likely to be an increase. Their premium last year was 2950€, so

the difference is now around 628€, or just over 5€ per house. This is also a matter we feel needs to be voted on.

BANK

The bank account requires two signatures for any monies to be paid/withdrawn, one from myself, the other from Penta, and this assures the security of the account. The closing balances over the last three years in the bank at 31/12 are as follows – 2019 – 36,510€, 2020 – 42,309€, 2021 – 49,538€, so we are in a very good position financially, which is thanks to all presidents over very many years and consequently means we have no intention of increasing our urb fees this year.

Incidentally, again after some investigating, we have found that most houses on our size of urbanisation pay anything up to 500€ a year.

As there have been so many other things taking our attention this past year, we have not used the web site to its full potential. However, this year, having cleared everything from the years we couldn't hold AGM's, we will post planning apps as and when we receive them as also newsletters to keep owners updated.

It is all owner's responsibility to check the web site for any updates". Penta will also use the web site for any information they need to give us.

The address is www.iriav.com.

If you are not already registered, simply click "login/register" (at the top of the page) and then – "don't have an account" (under the log in boxes). Complete the necessary fields and someone will contact you to confirm your registration.

I look forward to seeing you at the AGM. If you cannot attend, please use your proxy votes to participate in the running of our community.

Thank you.

Daphne Gellert (President)