



Approved Minutes of Highfield Residents Association
39th Annual General Meeting
Held on 30th April 2015
Highfield House Hotel 7.30pm

Present	Roger Brown,	Chair
	Jerry Gillen	Vice Chair
	Jill Baston,	Secretary
	Chris Klewe	Minutes Secretary
	Headley Rossell,	Treasurer
	Adrian Vinson	Member for Planning
	Simon Hill	Member for Little Common

Attending Ward Councillors, Committee members, and 77 HRA members.

1. Welcome

Roger Brown welcomed all HRA members, Ward Councillors, Representatives of the University and the Police and other guests.

Apologies were received from Sue and Phil Hartley, Peter Workman, John Haywood, Clive Clifford, Denise Long, Josie Brown and Nadine Johnson..

2. Minutes of the previous AGM were taken as read and approved.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Chair's report.

This had been published in the Spring Newsletter and is only summarized here.

Roger Brown thanked the committee and members for all the work that they

had carried out during the year.

The main matters dealt with over the last year were connected with planning, HMO licensing, and maintaining a balanced environment. Relations with our Local Councillors was excellent and Roger Brown outlined the part the HRA had played in objecting to the proposed development of the Highfield House Hotel. A grant had been obtained from the National Lottery fund and had been used to promote improved relations with the local university students, finance the Newsletter and part fund the improvements to the Little Common.

The Chair confirmed that there were no plans to increase members subscription rate, but that there might need to be a special call if an unforeseen need arose.

The Chair outlined the new website and hoped it would prove to be very useful. Hanks were due to Nadine Johnson. The Webmaster was Ross Gordon. Members were urged to use the website and to post interesting photos of the Highfield area. It was hoped to issue a prize for the best photograph.

Roger also confirmed that there was sufficient funding for 2 newsletters this year.

5. Planning Report

Adrian Vinson summarized the work carried out by the committee on planning matters. Adrian checks all local applications and if necessary seeks professional advice. He works within the Associations agreed policy guidelines. The committee discusses any likely to be contentious and put in an objection on behalf of the committee or a local resident. Last year there were 23 objections entered, of which 4 were agreed to, 3 projects abandoned, 10 objections were over ruled and the rest were deferred. 9 appeals had been lodged, of which 4 were rejected, 3 upheld and 2 are still waiting.

Other key points were that our work on HMO's and information to the Council were well received. Indications were that HMO's would be limited to 10% of the housing stock and that the council are attempting to take action on the continuing spread of lettings boards, a form of urban blight

6. Report on Building Bridges.

Jerry Gillen reported on this project to improve relations between residents and the student community. This had worked well initially, with two joint social gatherings, but had run into trouble with the change of Student Union officers midway through the programme. Any unspent grant money had been put towards work on clearing the Little Common. Students still support work parties on that project.

7. The Little Common.

Simon Hill reported on the 5 year project to open up this area of common land. In the past, the Council or its staff had allowed the area to become overgrown. 3 out of 37 hectares had now been restored to their original condition, and it was hoped to carry on clearing more areas in the future. The Council had also agreed to create a plan for the Common.

8. Treasurer's Report.

Copies of the Accounts were circulated, discussed and formally approved. The difference between restricted and unrestricted funds was queried and the Treasurer explained that restricted funds were reserved for specific projects (such as building bridges or certain planning appeals) and could not be used for general expenditure.

9. Election and Ratification of Committee Members

The following members were re elected to the committee.

Headley Rossell, Nicolla Martin, Nadine Johnson, Simon Hill, Roger Brown, Jill Baston and Bryan Wakely. Oliver Dicker was confirmed as the Accounts Examiner.

10. Question and answer session

Members and Visitors were invited to raise any matters that concerned them.

? Is the Burgess Road Library likely to close in the near future?

A None of the Councillors present had any specific information.

? Steven Johnston raised the problems caused by a certain member of the public (name given but not published here,) who was feeding rats and birds on virtually an industrial scale. Steven hoped to receive support from the local community with a view to tracking this person down and being able to collect additional evidence of what was going on that could be passed on to the Local Council or other authorities.

A The general advice was to collect as much specific evidence as possible, particularly in the way of pictures or videos to pass on as appropriate.

? Would it be possible to get a 30 mph speed limit on The Avenue as far as Burgess Road.

A The committee agreed to look into this.

The meeting ended at 9.00pm and was followed by an informal social gathering.