



HIGHFIELD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the committee meeting held on Monday 13th February 2012
At Highfield House Hotel.

Present Jerry Gillen - Chair, Sue Hartley – Vice Chair, Caroline Knight – Secretary, Headley Rossell – Treasurer, Bryan Wakely, Roret Blue, Steve Connolly, Nicolla Martin, Keith Reed, Julia Brooking, Nadine Johnson, Peggy Augier and Simon Hill

Apologies Alison Shelly

Minutes of the January meeting

Agreed.

Matters arising

- Magistrates fines – next month's agenda

Committee Issues

This was a closed meeting as the committee wished to address allegations that we were becoming politicised because we have Keith Reed on the committee, who is a Lib Dem candidate, and also because we have invited Jill Baston to join the committee as secretary. The committee takes any such allegations extremely seriously and therefore the majority of the meeting was devoted to debating these issues. There was a full and frank discussion.

- Sue Hartley chaired the meeting.
- Concerns had also been raised about the content of Keith's personal blog in which he states he is the Planning member for HRA. This includes documents that he has produced on behalf of HRA and as his blog also contained information about his Lib Dem role it was felt he was expressing opinions that are clearly party political.
- Keith's blog was discussed at length and Keith agreed to change the wording of his introductory paragraph to make it clear that his role as an HRA Committee member is separate from his political roles. The inclusion of HRA documentation was discussed and it was pointed out that once a letter has been sent to the Council re planning issues, it is then in the public domain and could be reproduced on any forum.
- The matter of the political, or any other allegiance, of committee members was also debated at length.
- It was pointed out that in the past we have had committee members from all the main political parties as committee members and also an independent candidate so the committee felt the accusations of being politically partisan were unfounded.
- Re Jill joining the committee – it was felt that to prejudge someone because of their political, or any other, affiliations was discriminatory and could not be defended.

- In conclusion the committee reiterated that HRA is an apolitical organisation and the committee defends the right of every individual member of the committee to hold whatever views they choose so long as these do not bring the reputation of HRA into disrepute.
- We also discussed the difficulty of finding people willing to give their time to join the committee and serve their community. Nicolla wanted it recorded that the committee values the excellent work Keith does on behalf of HRA and this was supported by the rest of the committee.
- We did not have time to discuss the election of committee members and replacement of officers so that will be an agenda item for next month.

Membership - Nicolla

The rolling total is 488 – the database stands at 633 households.
2012's rolling paid up is now at 41. This is the figure we all will be hoping that increases month on month.

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Finances – Headley

- Headley reported that the finances are healthy.
- Headley passed round copies of the year end accounts for approval. These were proposed by Bryan, seconded by Nadine and will now be sent to our examiner.

Planning and Licensing – Keith and Jerry

- Report as circulated.
- Keith has received a letter from a landlord who wants to increase his HMO from 6 beds to 7 beds asking for the opinion of HRA. Keith will reply stating our policy.
- It was suggested that we could ask street reps to identify houses in a poor state of repair. It was felt that at the moment the Council were struggling with enforcement.
- We will not be opposing the licensing application of Highfield House Hotel.
- 5 Crofton Close- a formal letter of objection will be sent to the enforcement team re lack of action.
- 13 Grosvenor – it is hoped this will be heard at a public enquiry.
- HMO SPD meeting at the Council on 14th Feb- Jerry will attend.

Website – Stephen

- Steve has arranged a meeting with James.
- All the updates form last month have been done.
- The list of committee members needs to be updated. CK will email James.
- We would like to know the number of hits the site is receiving.

Newsletter

- The copy goes to Uniprint at the end of the week.

- Sainsbury's are submitting an article and an advert.

Winter Event

- We need to push the tickets.
- We need to sell at least 60.
- We need to give Ghandi's the final numbers a week before the event.
- Caroline has printed the tickets and some flyers.
- The advert is on the website.

Common Sense

- Simon circulated a diagram showing the work completed.
- Simon will be doing a walk round with Simon Buston.
- The tree surgeon can be available for half a day but his works needs to be done before the wildlife reawakens in March.
- The committee approved the authorisation of expenditure to cover the cost of an independent contractor to do the work that the Council cannot do.
- We will make a grant application later in the year to cover the cost of building up the bank in the summer.

AGM Format

- We are going to go with the same format as last year.
- We will be serving drinks only for the social part.

Any other business

- Nadine suggested that we compile an email database. She said that she would be willing to assist. This will be an agenda item for next month.
- Bryan said that he is now able to access his emails.
- It was reported that there have been 5-6 more houses changed to HMOs since November.
- Jerry told the meeting about the catering facilities at City College. It was suggested that we could have a committee meal there.

The meeting ended at 9.02

The next meeting will be Monday 13th March.