



HIGHFIELD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

www.highfieldresidents.org.uk

Newsletter – Spring 2017

Committee Members

<i>Chair:</i> Roger Brown	<i>Newsletter Editor:</i> Caroline Knight
<i>Vice Chair:</i> Jerry Gillen	<i>Social Events:</i> Bryan Wakeley
<i>Treasurer:</i> Mark Batchelor	<i>Common Sense:</i> Simon Hill
<i>Secretary & Planning:</i> Jill Baston	<i>Environmental Liaison:</i> Steven Johnston
<i>Minutes Secretary:</i> Chris Klewe	<i>Committee Member:</i> John Bradshaw
<i>Membership Secretary:</i> Nicolla Martin	<i>Committee Member:</i> Steve Connolly
<i>Planning Appeals:</i> Jerry Gillen	<i>Webmaster:</i> Ross Gordon (non committee)
<i>Website Manager:</i> Nadine Johnson	

HRA 41ST AGM

THURSDAY 20TH APRIL 2017 – 7.30 PM

HIGHFIELD HOUSE HOTEL

As part of the formal business, members of the Committee will speak and answer questions about their areas of responsibility. This will give residents more opportunity to raise issues that concern them. It would be helpful if these could be submitted in advance to thesecretary@highfieldresidents.org.uk

or

by dropping them in at Highfield News.

The formal meeting will be followed by a social gathering and complimentary drinks.

CHAIR'S REPORT

I am once again pleased to present my Chair's report on the work of the Association over the past year. Let me start by thanking the HRA Committee for their hard work and support during the year. Also a big 'thank you' to our Examiner, Olliver Dicker, and to our excellent Street Reps. I should next like to express our appreciation for the advice and help we received from our Ward Councillors during the year: Matthew Claisse, Linda Norris, Paul O'Neill and John Savage. Finally, we also greatly value the help and advice of our local police officers although we also understand the very clear resource constraints that they, and indeed other key public services, operate under. This time last year I indicated that if reappointed I would step down as HRA Chair this year, and this remains my intention. So as well as giving an account of the Association's work during the year I should also like to say a few words at the end about HRA and its future. There has been no single, dominating issue this year, but a very wide range of matters, mostly concerning the local environment, have occupied us. Since there is plenty of information on the website, I will give only the main points. As previously, we have spent a good deal of time on planning issues. Earlier in the year we were delighted at the Inspector's dismissal of the landlord's appeal at 38, Grosvenor Road, and especially at his remarks about preserving the character of the area and the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) constraining the development of new HMOs. We were also pleased at a similar outcome at 14, Westwood Road. However we have been disappointed with the difficulties we have experienced in liaising with the Council's planning team. I am also sorry to have to report that in spite of considerable efforts on our part, the Council's Solicitor, Richard Ivory, declined to share with us the Council's legal advice on 1, Salisbury Road or to explain his reasons. I regard both the lack of transparency and the lack of courtesy as highly

regrettable, especially as they cannot be put down to lack of resources. We were however pleased with many of the changes to the SPD, although our longstanding demand for a 10% limit on HMOs ward by ward remains unanswered. Finally, after the Leader's helpful visit, the Council agreed to some of our suggestions about Highfield Road; others the engineers subsequently ignored and their designs for the most costly parts are ineffectual in calming traffic and prioritising walkers and cyclists. In my report last year I mentioned the desirability of improving relations with the University of Southampton. We have made some progress here and now have a regular slot at Committee meetings where University representatives tell us about developments and events that may be of interest. This is working well although we were sorry that there was no prior consultation with HRA before the application to improve the Steps between the Common and the Highfield Campus was submitted. So there is still work to do here, especially as there is still concern about the development at 1, Salisbury Road. Lastly under this heading we have enjoyed good relations with SUSU (Southampton University Students' Union), and especially applaud their efforts to help educate students to be good members of the community (as a former Vice Chancellor, I know how challenging this can be). The Steps application was only one of a number of matters relating to Southampton Common that came before us during the year. HRA continues to support the work of Simon Hill and Common Sense in trying to restore the appearance of the Little Common back closer to what it was before parts of it became so overgrown. We have expressed our concerns about various aspects of the management and maintenance of the Common. These concerns embrace ones relating to the three improvement projects submitted last year by our Ward Councillors under the Council's Minor Projects programme, including the clearance of the Old

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Carriage Drive to return it to grassland. More positively, I am glad to say that the new Southampton Common Forum, which will provide a focal point for attempts to enhance the Common, and which was set up at the initiative of HRA and SCAPPS (Southampton Common and Parks Protection Society), has now been formally established, and I shall serve as the Association's representative initially. I look forward to reporting back in due course. As those of you who follow our affairs on the website will know, we have also been much concerned this year with the anti-social activities of a local resident who feeds rats and other vermin in industrial quantities in our area and beyond. He has been served with a Community Protection Order but this has so far had only a limited effect on his activities. I should like to commend Steven Johnston, of the HRA Committee, and Stephen Hayes-Arter, of the City Council, for their tireless efforts here, efforts which came in Steve Johnston's case at some physical cost (as far as we know, he is the first person actually to be injured in carrying out his HRA responsibilities). Mention of the website leads me once again to commend Nadine Johnson and Ross Gordon for all their hard work on our behalf. Nadine has also to be thanked for promoting advertising on the website and also for obtaining discounts from a number of local traders for HRA members, discounts that very quickly offset the cost of your subscription. This in turn takes us to finance. I warned last year that our finances were coming under pressure and we subsequently increased the subscription to £5, once again more than surpassed by voluntary donations. Our finances remain under pressure with the costs of legal advice a particular worry. There is no immediate crisis but we shall have to keep things under review. Unfortunately although the Paella Evening in July was a social success it

made a small loss. It is partly for financial reasons that this year's printed Newsletter, so ably edited by Caroline Knight for so many years, is reduced in size and might be the last. I said at the start of this report that I would say a few words about HRA and its future. These are based on my having been Chair for the last four-and-a-half years, and Chair of OTRA (Oakmount Triangle Residents' Assoc.) for seven years before that. The Association is now the largest and strongest residents' association in the City. In so far as any such body can exert influence over the decisions of such bodies as the City Council, the University and major commercial entities, HRA does so. This reflects many years of tireless endeavour by successive officers of the Association, especially Jerry Gillen, the Vice Chair; however we remain heavily dependent on the commitment and efforts of a very small number of people. Moreover, most of them are beyond retirement age and have many other responsibilities as well. Unless we are able to get some new blood into the Association, starting with my successor as Chair (someone as yet unidentified), I do not believe that we can continue to be as effective as we have been in representing your interests and those of the local community more widely. This would obviously be a great pity, not only for Highfield and Portswood but for the City generally, but I see it as being almost inevitable on present information. Ladies and gentlemen, it is up to you. Finally, may I say how much I have enjoyed the support of the Committee, the other officers and the members of the Association over the past few years, how grateful I am to them, and how proud I am of what we have achieved in that time.

Thank you.
Roger Brown

LITTLE COMMON

The Little Common

The winter of 2016/17 was the first for 8 years when we have not had volunteer working parties. But why, when there is still much more to do?

During last summer the standard of the regular grass-cutting maintenance by the Council was changed, without consultation, so that areas that we had spent so much time clearing over several years were, by stealth, being left to re-grow. This was due to the same staff, whose actions from the early 1990s had led to much of the Little Common becoming unsightly and impenetrable (behind the oppressive unlawfully-planted hedge which had sealed off access from much of Highfield Road), again being given the upper hand by the newly appointed manager responsible for The Common. He also announced that the Carriage Drive, which was always intended to be returned to a grass ride as it was until 2012/13 in accordance with its long history, the 1992 Management Plan (MP) and the Little Common Action Plan (LCAP), was to remain primarily as dense gorse.

This change came as a complete shock and, in effect, as a direct insult to volunteers whose immense efforts had achieved so much to undo what should not have been allowed to happen in the first place. Against this background I could not in all honesty ask volunteers to

do work that would be negated thereafter by the new manager's unilaterally changed management regime.

However, with the strong support of all 3 ward councillors we secured assurance from Richard Crouch, SCC's new Chief Operations Officer, following a recent visit to the Little Common, that it will once again be maintained by staff working to complement our volunteer efforts in accordance with the 1992 MP and LCAP.

Accordingly, Richard Crouch also authorised immediate work for the Carriage Drive to be returned to an accessible grass ride. HRG Tree Services, who had worked with us to remove the roadside hedge and overgrowth behind, used their new 'mega-muncher' to remove remaining gorse and roots to create a tilth that should spawn machine mow-able grass by the Spring. We are most grateful to Henri Ghijben's team for carrying out these works so efficiently and entirely free of charge. They will be complemented by both the laying of an all-weather gravel path between the underpass and the Highfield Avenue crossing and creation of a welcoming entrance to The Common – thanks to a successful bid to SCC's Small Projects Fund by our ward councillors. So there will now be working parties, see below, to follow up by hand those parts the machine could not reach. Next winter, we could move on from restoring amenity and park grassland on the 3.5ha between

Highfield Road and the underpass to recreating richer heathland biodiversity on the 11+ha that have become overgrown with juvenile woodland in the last 30-40 years.

The Little Common experience prompted a wider initiative for the whole Common and the recent formal establishment of the Southampton Common Forum, in which all are encouraged to participate – go to www.southamptoncommonforum.org and www.facebook.com/southamptoncommonforum for details.



Working Party Dates:

2017	
Saturdays 10.00-13.00	30 Sept, 21 Oct, 25 Nov, 09 Dec
Wednesdays 13.00-16.00	4th & 18th Oct, 22 Nov, 13 Dec
2018	
Saturdays 10.00-13.00	13th & 27th Jan, 24 Feb, 10th & 24th Mar
Wednesdays 13.00-16.00	10th & 24th Jan, 21 Feb, 7th & 21st Mar

Meet opposite end of Omdurman Road – bring own gloves, loppers, saws if you can, though some will be available.

Simon Hill

SMITH & SON, ALIAS PORTSWOOD HARDWARE

Affectionately known as Portswood Hardware, 'Smith & Son', as in the sign above the door, is a Portswood landmark and has served the local community for 28 years. It is one of the few original remaining Portswood shops. The store is an absolute treasure trove of items, stacked from floor to ceiling with every bit of space carefully and economically used. It is a unique blend of all imaginable household and garden essentials but where it is still often possible to acquire a single entity instead of a huge box or packet. The expert knowledge is second to none and it is rare that a customer leaves the store without their quest having been fulfilled or at least answered comprehensively. The service is impressive. And so it was that in 1989, Ken Smith purchased a hardware store called O'Dells in Portswood from Clifford O'Dell, and Portswood Hardware was born. Twenty eight years later, in January of this year, I arranged to meet Steve Smith and Louise Fryett, son and daughter of Ken Smith, who now run the store together on a full-time basis, to find out how the store has evolved to what it is today. Ken and Steve worked in the store from the outset, with Louise joining them one year later with Angela Adams, an employee of 27 years, who still works in the store 2 days a week. Very quickly they set to work to change the layout of the store with new racking; their aim was to put everything in relation to each other and they fine-tuned this over the years. Later, they introduced wool products, haberdashery and additional tools but stopped stocking Calorgas about 10 years ago, a move which neither Steve nor Louise regret as it involved huge amounts of heavy lifting. Their fantastic array of products range from pet food; paints & decorating products; lighting & electrical components; wool & haberdashery; gardening items; tools & hardware; cleaning products & Dylon dyes; key cutting; wooden signs; brooms, brushes & mats; maintenance items and a multitude of other household products. The shop mirrors the comings and goings of the local community. Pre-Christmas is busy but there is a lull in January. February and March is the start of the gardening season. In May and June, students are looking to repair broken items in their accommodation before they leave for the summer. In September and October, students are moving in and furnishing

their accommodation. October and November is the preserving season for making jams and chutneys. Restocking is done manually with Steve checking everything on a regular basis to ensure that the shop is well stocked. Very occasionally he has found O'Dell tickets on some products but this is a very rare occurrence now as they do regular clear-outs. However, this is a sign of the sheer volume of items on display, that even the occasional 'antique' will slip through! Portswood Hardware was recently voted the best shop in Portswood by customers responding to a local radio station competition, and Steve & Louise were interviewed just before Christmas 2016 on air to receive their award. Such is their reputation for stocking everything, they have even been asked if they sell nappies; cream for rashes and even fish & chips, with customers reluctant to believe that they actually do not! Ken Smith retired in 2006 but can very occasionally be seen helping out in the shop. He is enjoying his busy retirement, playing bowls and has recently moved house. So, what of the future? Steve has no children and Louise's daughter is studying for a career in Nursing at the University, so once Steve and Louise retire, there is no one to take over the business. However, let us all hope that, like the deliberately unchanged sign above the door, Smith & Son, alias Portswood Hardware, will live on for decades to come as a familiar face in our high street and as living proof that independent retailers are an essential and vibrant part of our local community.

Nadine Johnson



"Louise, Ivan (shop assistant) and Steve behind the till"

WHERE NEXT FOR THE HRA WEBSITE?

It is now two years since we launched the new HRA website and, incredibly, it is now averaging around 1,000 hits a month with about half of these from first time visitors! Over the last couple of months, we have been carrying advertisements on the site to help the HRA become more sustainable. We are very grateful to Pearsons, First Choice Financial, Portswood Cycles

and Innervision Hair and Beauty for their contributions. If you would like to know more about this, please email me on: highfieldracomms@gmail.com or via the website: www.highfieldresidents.org.uk.

I very much look forward to hearing from you.

Nadine Johnson

Website and Email Database Manager



ESTABLISHED 1900

Unrivalled local knowledge and expertise in the sale and let of quality homes in Highfield.

Contact Pearsons for specialist property advice in the Highfield area. We offer a superior marketing strategy for homes of distinction, including listing on the brand new property portal OnTheMarket.com.

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pearsons.com



SOME OFFERS FOR MEMBERS (SEE WEBSITE FOR FULL LIST)

Ceno's Restaurant & Wine Bar 10% loyalty discount off food & drinks, when taken together (cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer)	8055 4400	Kuti's Brasserie 20% discount, on midweek, non anniversary days.	8022 1585
Coffee#1 10% discount on all food and drinks.	8055 7396	Lorna's Dishes 15% discount on all meals.	07806 792294
Highfield House Hotel 10% off published prices	8055 4223	Mango Thai Tapas Bar & Restaurant 10% on food.	8067 8877
Highfield Natural Health Centre (Complementary Medicine/Acupuncture) £5 off standard fee for all treatments.	8055 4076	Nuffield Theatre 10% discount on all main house productions.	8067 1771
Innervision Hair & Beauty (includes a Barber) 10% discount on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.	8055 5165	Portswood Cycles 5% off all bike purchases and 10% off servicing and parts.	8032 2526
Kate's Cafe Lounge Half price cake with purchase of hot drink (Monday to Friday: 2.30-4.30 pm).	8058 1872	Scoops Ice Cream Parlour, Portswood 10% discount for Members.	8055 9988
Kohinoor of Kerala 10% off all food, any day of the week, includes takeaways.	8058 2770	Trago Lounge 10% discount on hot drinks and cakes. (Monday to Sunday) for £9.95 for HRA members only. Please email: highfieldracomms@gmail.com for other discounts you would like us to try!	8055 8515

Note: All above offers are conditional on production of a current HRA membership card at the time.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

I/We would like to join/renew membership of the Highfield Residents' Association and enclose the subscription of £5.00 (One subscription covers all members of the household)

Name(s) of adults _____

Email _____

Postcode (please include) _____ Date _____

Address _____

Tel No. _____

I enclose my membership fee of and a voluntary donation of Thank you!

This form, together with the subscription, should be sent to Membership Secretary, 5 Marlborough House, 2A Oakmount Ave, SO17 1BX (if by hand, before mid-day); or can be dropped into Highfield News; or can be brought to any HRA social event or meeting. Cheques should be made payable to Highfield Residents' Association. Please do not send cash through the post as it may get lost.

Newsletter Team: Jerry Gillen and Caroline Knight.

Contributions welcome. Please send to thesecretary@highfieldresidents.co.uk in Microsoft Word format. The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of Highfield Residents' Association or its members.