

**Minutes HRA Committee Meeting  
Held on 11 February 2019  
At Highfield House Hotel 7.30pm**



**Committee members present**

Jerry Gillen (Chair), Nicolla Martin, Ken Burtenshaw, Steven Johnston, Stephen Connolly, Adrian Vinson Bryan Wakely, Nadine Johnson, Barbara Claridge (9)

**Attending**

Lisa Mitchell, Peter Etheridge, Sarah Watts (U of S), John McGavin, Andrew Jackman, Nick Bacon, John Savage, Sue Ingham, Roger Brown, L Seymour/A Seymour (will join the committee from next meeting), Matthew Claisse, Tom O'Conner (PRG) (13)

**1. Welcome, declaration of interests**

Jerry welcomed all present. There were no declarations of interest

**2. Apologies.**

Simon Hill, James Burgess, Adrian Ford, Jon Walsh

**3. Minutes and Amendments of the previous meeting held on 10 December 2018**

The minutes had been circulated previously. There were no amendments. Minutes were then agreed.

**Matters Arising**

- CareTeam App. Barbara exchanged information with Dr Turner following his excellent presentation in the 14:01:18 meeting. An article has been produced for the Newsletter and the Website. Thank you to Nadine for posting.
- Jon - *report on his discussion with the International Office re Barclays and a foreign student.* Jon was not present, and Sarah represented the University. She explained Jon had not followed this up and that the student herself would have to report the incident to Student Services. This had not been clear at the previous meeting. Nevertheless, Jerry would now advise the student to contact Sarah or Jon direct, if she wanted to pursue her complaint. (Action Jerry)
- Adrian - *to bring list of regular advertising sponsors to the meeting.* Adrian was not present to complete this action
- Jerry - *report back on his letter to the LA regarding planning enforcements* and asking for clarification on their policy on the issue of parents running their car engines outside of schools and the impact of this pollution in order to feedback to NORA. Jerry had completed these actions and there would be further discussion under the Planning Agenda item.

The issue of parents running car engines outside of schools when waiting for their children was not just relevant to Highfield but all of Southampton. It was passed to the Councillors present. John Savage agreed to bring it to the attention of SCC regarding pollution. In Highfield, the question would concern Highfield and Portswood Schools. Lisa suggested she write to these schools about the problem asking them to contact their parents. (Actions: John Savage and Lisa Mitchell)

**4. Presentation by Paul Upton, the Manager of Highfield Hotel, about the hotel's expansion plans**

- *postponed*.

Jerry stated that plans for the hotel expansion are in the public domain. He reminded the meeting that previous owners had submitted plans for expansion but that this had lapsed when the hotel was sold. There had then been proposals to convert the building into student accommodation, which had been opposed by HRA. It was felt to be a positive and much needed step to increase the hotel accommodation in the local area with this new round of planning application. He recommended that HRA support the planning application (given that individuals always had the right to submit their own approval or objection to planning issues).

5. Presentation by John McGavin regarding various serious incidents at Donnington Grove

John thanked the meeting for inviting him to attend. John Lives in Donnington Grove (a cul-de-sac) and he described that shortly after Christmas there had been a sudden 'spike' of criminality in the grove. There had been the theft of a bike, two men driving around wearing balaclavas and hoodies, various drive rounds (difficult and very obvious in a cul-de-sac). Then there had been the attempted theft of two cars and other examples of inappropriate conduct. The nature of a cul-de-sac means that goings-on are visible to residents. The unsociable behaviour ceased soon after the strangers were challenged. This was done in a polite way - 'Can we help you? Are you lost?' approach. This was enough to let them know they had been sussed.

John explained that the learning from this for grove residents was that they recognised the antisocial behaviour was unusual and 'spiked' and that a polite challenge can have good result. Although the most serious incidents had been reported to police, the police were not in a position to do much (they had been invited to the HRA Meeting). John advised that we all have responsibility to look after our own security; five houses in the grove now have CCTV.

Jerry thanked John for his presentation and congratulated the residents on the good outcome even though there was no official organised neighbourhood watch in his area. It is important to report all suspicious incidents on 101 as in this way patterns in anti-social behaviour can be detected.

**Message:** be attentive, be vigilant and challenge

Agenda item 6 and 7 were reversed at this point

6. University Liaison - Sarah Watts reported on behalf of the university in the absence of Jon Walsh.

- a. Sarah reported that the University Vice-Chancellor, Sir Christopher Snowdon, was to retire at the end of March. Prof. Mark Spearing would be interim VC until a new appointment was made, probably in the autumn.
- b. The university was to hold its popular Science Week (Science and Engineering Festival) in March. On 16<sup>th</sup> March there was to be a special family day.
- c. The recycling bag student project had resulted in 3000 bags being given out so far to students living off campus in shared or purpose-built accommodation. These were designed to 'educate' and encourage students into the proper re-cycling practices in the city. 1800 bags remained and the intention was to reserve these for next autumn when new students would be heading out into independent living again.
- d. The 100 Year Anniversary of Highfield Campus would result in more banners being furlled to celebrate!
- e. Work on Salisbury Road was due to finish by the end of May (better access for

pedestrians and cyclists)

- f. The lighted handrail to the footpath steps that had been stolen would be replaced with another lit rail

Jerry asked about the success of the recycling bag scheme. Sarah reported that they were looking for hard evidence (plenty of anecdotal positive feedback) as, in order for the scheme to be repeated, then funding would be needed. Funding needs evidence! The bags were aimed for students in houses. Bags could be sourced from the Unilink Office on Campus.

John savage reported that graffiti had reappeared on a familiar fence of Highfield Hall by Avenue Campus. Sarah agreed to report this to the correct university office. (Action: Sarah/ University)

## 7. Presentation by Roger Brown - Update of progress regarding Southampton Common Forum Strategic Plan

Roger began by highlighting that the setting up of Southampton Common Forum (SCF) had been a joint initiative between HRA and SCAPPs (Southampton Parks and Commons Protection Society). The Common was a city-wide resource and much loved and used by a wide community.

One of the first actions for the newly formed SCF was to undertake a significant public survey of Common users. 2200 responses were analysed and from this a Strategic Plan was drawn up. Five top-level outcomes were generated and can be viewed here:

<http://www.southamptoncommonforum.org/scfdownloaddocs/2019agm/CommonPlan2018adopted.PDF>

The Strategic Plan was adopted by the full council before Christmas. SCF is committed to joint working with the council.

Three working groups called Hot-topic Groups of interested volunteers were then established to deal with issues raised by the Survey: Green Travel and Safety; Improvements at The Hawthorns; Landscape (including toilet provision).

On 26<sup>th</sup> February there is to be an SCF Open Meeting followed by the AGM at the Hilton Doubletree Hotel, at the top of the Avenue. The council no longer has the capacity to manage The Common, the Hawthorns needs a massive injection of cash. The Governance of The Common in difficult circumstances is most important.

A new Charitable Trust will be set up providing an independent source of advice. A shadow Board of Trustees is needed, and they will prepare a budget so that applications can be made to grant funding bodies. More information can be found on the SCF Website where there are links to the SCF Facebook page.

<http://southamptoncommonforum.org/index>.

The focus of the forum is not only strategic, a volunteering programme is underway (see website or Facebook) and other improvements have been started: the establishment of two drinking fountains, cash-less payment facilities at the café and rejuvenation of The Hawthorns room. There is also a need to improve signage in several locations and habitats.

Jerry thanked Roger for his informative update.

A question was asked about the consultation on the 'Cycle Super highway' and whether this had anything to do with a cycling commuter survey currently being posted by SCF. Roger explained that cycling routes (including with and against dogs and pedestrians) was to be the subject of a mediated 'charrette' meeting to be held for invited representatives from interested appropriate groups was being organised for the week beginning 25 March. The future of Lovers' Walk would be discussed at this point as well as the council mooted cycle routes either side of The Avenue. HRA Committee would be invited to send two representatives to this meeting. Although Dave White and Barbara Claridge asked who might represent the HRA Committee, no decision was made at this time.

## **8. Reports**

### **a. Finance**

In Adrian's absence the finances were reported as being in good shape. Adrian had confirmed that a full set of audited accounts would be available for the AGM. Jerry asked for it to be formally recorded in the minutes that Adrian, who was to step down at the AGM had done sterling work as Treasurer and thanked him. The committee endorsed this vote of thanks. Jerry reported that a previous treasurer, Martin Benning, had been approached and was willing to stand again as Treasurer at the AGM.

### **b. Membership**

Nicolla reported the membership as follows:

Database 470

Paid up 414

YTD. 25 (The Rolling total reflects the start of a new year with members paying subs throughout the year)

Membership renewal letters would go out in March and April when most renewals are due. This makes a busy period; some might be a little early so as not to coincide with Newsletter delivery. The Street Rep Delivery lists - pending.

### **c. Planning Issues**

A Planning Report had been prepared by Jill Baston and circulated in advance. Jill is now standing down from the committee. Jerry thanked Jill for her roles as Secretary and Planning Rep and her service to the committee over many years. The Committee fully endorsed this sentiment.

A complex exchange had taken place between Jerry and Stephen Harrison (SCC) in recent weeks concerning two outstanding Planning Enforcement issues: 12 Russell Place and 8 Westridge Road. HRA had previously lost a judicial review on 12 Russell Place and it was welcomed that the council was now taking a firm stand with an enforcement notice against the unauthorised work. An appeal against the Enforcement Notice is to be expected.

Tom O'Connor stated that there had been limited time to canvass opinion from PRG members but that our approach should be to work with SCC who would only be taking this action if they were confident of their case. It was felt likely that Michael Rudd should be instructed again once any Appeal is lodged. Tom said he would report back after his meeting at the end of the month (Action: Tom).

Matthew Claisse commented, that as the enforcement notices had been issued, we would be duplicating efforts with the council who were now firmly on the 'same side' as HRA. His advice was to wait and see. There was a danger that further HRA involvement sets one side up against another in the community and the council should take on the enforcement. Tom concluded, that if we need to, we could go out to HRA

members for their views, but individuals could express their opinion to the process at any time.

Adrian Vinson added that all previous submissions would be re-submitted before the appeal process including those prepared initially by HRA.

John Savage cautioned that the whole process, including appeals and enforcements could take as long as two years.

With Jill Baston leaving the committee and the Planning Reporting responsibility, Jerry introduced Angela and Leigh Seymour to the committee as they had volunteered together (as one!) to take on this committee responsibility. Jerry would now inform the council so that appropriate Planning Notices could be sent direct. Jerry would also send Angela and Leigh the HRA Planning Report Guidelines. (Action: Jerry)

John savage reported that permission had been granted to turn small store rooms/ garages into student accommodation (Bevios) as the council had lost its appeal.

The inappropriate and high fence at 17 Brookvale was again discussed as to why no enforcement. Matthew had raised this with council only to be told that it wasn't a priority and that 'enforcement' had a long list. However, this approach is inconsistent with other similar 'fence' issues. All three councillors present are to apply pressure to the council. Lisa additionally agreed to look into the fence issue. (Action: John Savage, Matthew Claisse, Lisa Mitchell).

It was reported that the HMO Licensing Dept SCC, had extended the deadline for applications to the end of February but that there was a backlog. It was known that approximately 5,000 HMOs were registered in the City but that there were 12,000 such properties.

At 11 Oakmount Avenue, the wall had been re-built and the dropped pavement completed.

## **9. Website**

Nadine had nothing to report about the website, everything was working well. She had not been asked to provide a list of regular sponsors for the meeting but did report that Pearsons had again taken out their usual advert for the website.

### **Newsletter**

Steven reported that the articles planned and agreed at the Newsletter Team Meeting in January were in hand and on time. He would begin to pull things together in the next week or two. First copy deadline had been set for 24 March and publication and delivery the week of 11 March.

Ken asked if there was scope for articles about the wider Southampton area to be included as he had an idea about the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mayflower. Steven thought this would be a very good idea, but that this newsletter edition would probably be complete and such an article would just be held over. Barbara will liaise with Ken regarding his article idea. (Action: Barbara).

## **10.A.O.B.**

John Savage concurred and said that there were plans to celebrate this Mayflower 400 event with celebrations designed to 'put Southampton on the map' next August, including historical records. He added that there was going to be some funding available for associations to bid for to run their own celebrations like street parties.

With the AGM coming up, Nicolla agreed to contact Jill Baston about the 'three-year committee serving schedule' (Action: Nicolla).

Chris Klewe has resigned from his role as Minuting Secretary. Grateful thanks are recorded for all the support Chris has given in his committee position in recent years.

Barbara read out a thank you card from two residents, Alison and Leslie, who were praising the work of the committee and stating how useful and informative they found the website and the efforts HRA apply to Planning Matters. Thank you, Nadine.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.40pm

The date of the next meeting is **Monday 11 March 2019 at 7.30pm, Highfield Hotel.**