**HMO and Student behaviour in Highfield for HRA 8 July 2019 (Supporting paper)**

Dear Barbara.   I am not sure that you will be able to help me with this, but I figure it is worth a try. I am wondering what, if anything, can be done through the HRA or by independent action in collaboration with it, to mitigate the nuisance from HMOs, and from one HMO in particular!   I realise that HMOs are a longstanding problem in Highfield and that if there was a simple solution you would probably have found it by now, but still …..

My wife, Rie Sugimoto, and I live at 35 Khartoum road. Our house is on   the corner of Khartoum and Heatherdeane roads adjacent to the back entrance to the Avenue campus. We have been here for almost nine years, and for 99% of the year this is a pleasant and peaceful corner of Highfield. The problem we have, and it has been a problem for most of the time we have been here, worse in some years than in others, has been the very large HMO at 51 Heatherdeane Road.   This creates a real nuisance for us and for other close neighbours at fairly regular intervals through the University year. It was particularly bad last weekend (Friday 9th) when the occupants held a party which started at about 10pm and went on until 3am. There were a large number of people on the premises or in the street (100 or more, I would estimate).  The noise was impossible to ignore and   the behaviour of the mainly drunken guests on the street was pretty shocking   with a constant stream of partygoers (of both sexes!) on the street urinating on the pavement in front of adjacent properties, or in the road itself !….  It is difficult to know what one can say about this sort of behaviour, except that it is has not been uncommon over the years!   I went out a couple of times to tell the offenders to behave but this had zero effect, as did a number of SMS messages I sent to the organiser ..  I am never sure these days whether this this sort of behaviour is sufficient grounds to call the police, I suspect not, given that while it is disgusting it does not represent an immediate danger to the public (?).

I mention all this because, after putting up with it for many years, and noting that it seems to be getting worse rather than better, I do wonder whether there is anything that can be done through official channels to ameliorate it?   Ideally of course one would like a mechanism whereby action was taken by the City Council to deregister HMOs whose owners consistently permit antisocial behaviour by their tenants…  but I suspect the possibility of this is remote. However, if there is anything that can be done I would be happy to cooperate with the HRA to act, especially with regard to this particular HMO.

I note also, with apprehension and dismay, that a second really large HMO appears to be under construction further along the street at   number 39 Heatherdeane Rd where the rear of a relatively modest student house is being extended to cover most of what was a back garden, presumably with planning approval (?). This seems likely, to double the problem that we have at the moment with number 51.

I would be very happy to have a chat with the HRA committee about this issue if it is worth doing so. My mobile number is 074 82 78 62 92. Your contact details incidentally came from Nicolla Martin to whom I mentioned the HMO problems we were having when she phoned me on a different matter to do with our annual HRA subscription..

Kind regards.

Jeremy Astley and Rie Sugimoto

**Jerry Gillen’s e-mail in reply**

Dear Jeremy and Rie,

I have just received your email from Barbara our Hon Sec and felt the need for an immediate reply and request for action:  in this regard you will see I have copied in all three of our Ward Councillors, the University External Affairs Team and also HMO Licensing and Planning, with a request for action from all concerned.  Unfortunately, this is a common problem with HMOs, not just here in Southampton but nationally as well, as with the recently well publicised problem of the lack of any effective Enforcement, largely due to a lack of resources with all LAs.

However, what you now need to do is to contact the Council’s Environmental services and HMO Teams and make a formal complaint to them and by copy of this email I will also request similarly from everyone concerned.  I will try and visit you shortly and if you could attend our next Committee meeting on Monday 8thJuly, 7.30 PM at the Highfield House Hotel that would be helpful.

Regards, Jerry

Action requested:  All – please see email below

Planning – can we confirm these HMOs at 51 And 39 Heatherdene Rd have Planning Permission please?

HMO Licensing – do these properties have up to date HMO Licenses?  If not please take the appropriate action against them.

Environmental Health – as above

University – can you ascertain if the culprits are your customers?

Ward Councillors – please follow up and coordinate the necessary actions.

**E-Mail reply from Jack Barnett SCC HMO Team**

Good afternoon,

From the HMO team’s perspective 39 Heatherdeane Road has been unoccupied throughout the time since the current additional licensing scheme has been active and, as such, has not been required to be licenced. Once new tenants take up occupancy a new licence will need to be sought.

51 Heatherdeane Road is licenced as a mandatory HMO until April 2022. As I’m sure you are aware, it is a requirement to have adequate management arrangements in place to deal with issues such as this effectively. In the case of 51 Heatherdeane Road this management is carried out by Homelife Lettings so if you/the complainant have not raised this nuisance with them already I would advise getting in touch so that they can take appropriate action.

**E-mail reply from Cllr John Savage to Jeremy Astley**

Hi Jon and Sarah,  
You will have already seen this email from Jerry.  
How close are we to the running of your website as a vehicle to report and control student ASB? To my mind, drunks who urinate in the street should be in some danger of failing to progress on their UoS course... or are we going to suggest that they are not university students. If this gets to the paper, it would not reflect well on UoS.

Clearly residents’ lives being made a misery is completely unacceptable. I welcome an opportunity for all local councillors to meet with the UoS leadership team to sort out these matters and while this is a Portswood example, general problems exist in Portswood and Swaythling. (Hence the Cc'd to all local Cllrs)  
We will of course be looking at other avenues to resolve this sort of thing going forward.

**HonSec e-mail to Jack Barnett**

Hello Jack

Could you confirm that 39 Heatherdeane Road will need an HMO licence for 4 or more (5) students BEFORE anyone moves in not after?  This surely must be the case to ensure that the premises meet all HMO regs including safety standards?

Would it be safe / legal for tenants to move in before such a licence was approved?

How long is it currently taking for an HMO licence to be issued, assuming all aspects of a property meet the criteria including an independent or SCC survey?

Many thanks for helping HRA on this important issue.

Best wishes

Barbara Claridge

HRA HonSec

**Jack Barnett SCC HMO reply to HonSec**

Hi Barbara,

To be able to apply for the ‘Timely & Compliant’ route of application (which saves the applicant a significant amount of money on their licence fee) then the application will need to be made within three months of the licence being issuable which, in this instance, will be when it in ready to have tenants move in. If the applicant applies through the independent surveyor route then the surveyors Certificate of Compliance must be provided as part of the application.

As you can imagine, Student No Fee are very well versed in the HMO application process having had so many properties to licence across the city, so I am relatively comfortable that their application and the standard of the property on offer will be done to HMO compliance.

Thank you,

Jack Barnett

HMO Licensing Surveyor

**Southampton City Council**