



HIGHFIELD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the committee meeting held on Monday 13th June 2011
At the Highfield House Hotel.

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

Apologies Sue Hartley, Cllr Vincenzo Capozzoli, Allison Shelly, Declan Hayes and Billy Fitzjohn.

Attending Cllr Jeremy Moulton, Cllr Matthew Claisse, Cllr Adrian Vinson, Jackie Barnes, Peter Knight, Chris Knight, Stuart Heather, Bert Baker, Martin Moore, Sarah Watts, Paul and Pat Roux, Fiona Geddes, Ian Hart, Michael Mace, Trevor and Hilary Foster, Paula Prenke, Ron Meldrum and Derek Willis and two other representatives from Grosvenor Rd.

Jerry introduced Keith Reed and Nadine Johnson who have both agreed to join the committee. Keith will take over from Matthew as Planning Representative.

Nadine, who lives in Crofton Close, said that she worked for 31 years at Southampton University and has experience of the disruption that HMOs can cause in her own neighbourhood.

Keith has lived in Khartoum Road for 5 years. He works as a Chief Executive of a charity and has experience on a planning committee when he lived in Epsom.

Minutes of the April meeting

- Were taken as read and accepted as accurate and AGM minutes proposed by Peggy and seconded by Steve.

Matters arising

- None.

Correspondence

- 3 letters relating to planning issues.

University

Sarah Watts explained that there have been changes in the roles of the new SU president and Vice President. The VP has welfare and community in the job description and will therefore attend our meetings. The new president is Sam Ling who lives locally, is married and has a child. He will try to get to a meeting to introduce himself.

Sarah explained her role: with a background in media she has recently been involved in a more community role. She is also involved in facilitating a dialogue between the students and the community and the Council.

Simon Higman has left and his successor will be taking up her post in the autumn.

Membership

- At present we have 633 households which is the highest number we have had. There have been 267 renewals to date. The rolling total is 526. 13 new households have joined as a result of the curry evening. 2 people have joined to come to the Hog Roast.

Finances

- The finances are healthy

Planning and Licensing

- Monthly list was circulated prior the meeting.
- HRA is supporting Ridgemount Ave in their opposition to a proposed nursing home. There is a two day Appeal hearing which Jerry will attend.
- Cranford Way: HRA has written to the Council about another HMO, making 5 out of 7 houses in the cul-de-sac and at this point nothing more can be done.
- Chamberlain Road: there have been general complaints about noise and rubbish.
- Khartoum Road: There is concern about the proposed alterations to the Residents' Parking Scheme in this area. There is to be no charge for a first car a reduced charge for a second car, the option to purchase a visitor permit and the vouchers, up to 60 per year will now have to be paid for. People who don't have cars will have to purchase vouchers for their visitors. There is concern that the new scheme is not fair and also open to abuse. The visitor permit will allow people to park within 250 yards of the named property, is valid for 365 days of the year and the car only has to be moved for 2 hours during the defined period. The revision is out to consultation and objections should be sent by 17th June.
- Jeremy Moulton explained the Council's viewpoint. There is considerable financial pressure on the Council and they are trying to raise revenue. The revision is an attempt to make the system fairer. Jerry asked for a copy of the proposal. MC said that he would get hold of a copy.
- Sainsbury's: Jerry has spoken to Sainsbury's and they have confirmed that the work has not been proceeding according to plan. The store will not now be open before Christmas.
- Jerry has written to the Council asking for an immediate implementation of an Article4 Direction in respect of HMOs. JM explained the Council's position in that it will not implement the Article4 until next March as planned. This is due to the possibility of litigation resulting in compensation by landlords. The Council cannot put taxpayers' money at risk in this way. Also they feel that they want the legislation to have teeth and therefore considerable work will be necessary to ensure that the direction is comprehensive to include thresholds and areas of restraint and is enforceable. Jerry said that he was alarmed that having been told by the previous cabinet member that the work was already underway and now believes that it is not. JM confirmed that there have been no formal areas of restraint or thresholds have been identified. The exercise will be city wide and an evidence based approach will be used. At what level of HMO density a tipping point is reached has to be decided. It could be argued that the Polygon and Highfield are already beyond that point. Jerry will be meeting with JM and the relevant Council Officers.

- 13 Grosvenor Road: Building work has been going on since last January and on Wednesday it was confirmed that students have paid a deposit. There are to be 8 living in the main house and 7 in the annexe. There has been no planning permission sought for this development. One address with 15 inhabitants requires planning permission as an HMO. There is some confusion about the planning history of this property and it is not clear what has and has not been approved or what conditions have been attached to any approval. The landlord has been identified as AAJs and although it is not registered at Companies House the landlord has been identified as the director of eight leasing companies. An immediate Stop Order is to be sought in regard to this property before the students can move in. Once they are residing in the property any actions against it become much more problematic. Adrian Vinson circulated a letter requesting the Council to issue an immediate Stop Order.
- JM was asked what the council are doing about the strike affecting refuse collections. JM replied that ACAS was involved and meetings have been arranged with the Council workers involved. The Council has considerable financial problems and money needs to be saved. If resolution cannot be reached then matters affecting health and safety will have to be addressed. Tower blocks are posing risks of fire and the Council has been in contact with the Fire Brigade. A possible solution could be to position skips on streets for residents to put their rubbish in. The Refuse site at Endle St. is open and it is possible to take rubbish there.

Summer Event

Bryan reported that everything is under control for the Summer Event. He asked for help at 3pm on the day of the event to help to put up the tables etc. He also asked for help in clearing away after the event and also at 10am the next day. So far 67 tickets have been sold.

Proposed change of meeting day

Following a discussion it was felt that the best option was to leave our meeting day as it is on the second Monday of the month.

Newsletter

Caroline reported that there has been good feedback for this issue. Peter knight referred to the article by the Head of Highfield School asking for parking spaces. It would appear that the Crown and The Highfield pubs have already offered space.

Website

Caroline has been contacted by James Hughes who has offered to take over the management of our website. He has a business dealing with community websites and after discussion Tony thinks that it would be a good idea. The committee agreed that it would be useful to have our website managed professionally and Caroline will set up a meeting to include Jerry and Steve.

Any other business

- Three Physios Lucy, Laura and Sandra talked to the meeting about their MSc project for which they needed male volunteers between the ages of 65-85 to trial a muscle testing device. Several men volunteered.
- A question was asked about what a Stop Order would achieve. As the name suggests it enforces the immediate cessation of any work on the property in question.
- Portswood Central Residents' Association is up and running.
- Bryan has spoken to Erica at the Church re the possibility of another joint event next year. However unless a clear contact for organisation is set up this could be problematic.
- Caroline asked the committee to consider if we should have a formal process when people wish to join the committee in order to prevent misunderstandings and HRA appearing to be unprofessional.

The meeting closed at 9.20.

The next meeting will be on 11th July.