



HIGHFIELD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Minutes of committee meeting held on Monday 12 November 2012

at Highfield House Hotel

1. Welcome and apologies

Apologies received from Nicolla Martin, Cllr Claisse, Peter Knight, Cllr Norris, Julia Brooking, Nadine Johnson, Caroline Knight.

Present: Roger Brown (Chair), Alison Shelly, Keith Reed, Jill Baston (Minutes), Sue Hartley, Roret Blue, Jerry Gillen, Peggy Augier, Steve Connolly, Headley Rossell.

Attending: Cllr Vinson, Nick Bacon.

2. Minutes of last meeting

Taken as read. The committee's thanks are recorded to Jacky Barnes, who took the minutes of the previous meeting in the absence of Jill Baston.

3. Matters arising

Roger has written to Cllr Thorpe and received an email in return saying that our policy issues had been noted, and that he would ask Chris Lyons to reply. No letter has been received so far. For the next agenda.

The amended planning guidelines will be posted on the website.

4. Sub-committee reports

a) Finances

Headley reported that finances continue healthy. The newsletter had been paid for. Southampton City Council have informed him that our public liability insurance will stop at the end of November. We need to take out our own insurance, which will also cover OTRA and PRG. Agreed.

b) Planning

Keith had circulated a report via email.

- HRA will not object to the plans for 33 Highfield Road.
- The application for 158-168a Portswood Road will go to the planning committee on 20 November.
- Peggy will check on the current use of 25 Roselands Gardens.
- 1 Blenheim Gardens should be reported to Enforcement.
- 19 Abbots Way had been approved despite objections from Portswood Residents' Gardens.
- Sainsbury's application for extended hours (7am – 11pm) had been approved.
- Jerry reported that 53 Shaftesbury Avenue had been visited by the inspector the previous week.
- Bassett Residents' Association had circulated an appeal submission written by Sarah Clover. He feels this material would be valid for other appeals and applications.
- East Bassett Residents' Association face a difficult situation with 30 Glen Eyre Drive, as there is no other HMO within the critical distance. The question arises as to whether we might contribute to the expense of employing Counsel, since EBRA have no adequate funds. Decisions in other areas will impact on policy, so would affect the HRA area.
- Various points were made: we could take it case by case but criteria for our decisions would be a problem; we could use our planning guidelines to determine support, or perhaps the Community Action Forum could help; we could support other Residents' Associations within the HRA area.
- Could financial support to RAs outside our area be enlightened self-interest? Among points to consider: how would we ensure best value for money; how to decide how much to contribute. It was agreed that a minimal helpful contribution without straining our own finances may be appropriate on a case by case basis.
- Given that submissions will be similar in many respects in other areas, perhaps Sarah Clover could submit much of the same material in different applications without needing further research, and might therefore be able to offer a reduced price. Jerry will investigate.

5. Communications

- Caroline had sent apologies, and is willing to convene contributions for one more newsletter. As she now lives out of the area, she is standing down as Vice-Chair and newsletter editor.
- Nadine offered to look after the email database when she has more free time.
- Roger initiated a discussion about communications, on the basis that he did not expect any decisions to be made at this meeting.
- The website is seriously out of date.

- There was some feeling that the committee meetings were not sufficiently well publicised on the website, so members may not come.
- We could run a stall in a local supermarket to pick up new members, or put a poster in the library.
- The letter to new members gives useful information on meetings. People tend to turn up if there's a problem!
- A higher profile for meetings could be included in the newsletter. Alison Shelly volunteered to look after the HRA page in FaceBook.
- The database will happen but we do need the member information to make it useful.
- The personal touch, face to face, is still needed. Not everyone is on email.
- All residents receive the newsletter, not just members.
- Perhaps we could send an annual printed newsletter to all residents, by email to members. Technology allows us to know whether people haven't opened our emails, so we could write to them in order to avoid inadvertently excluding individuals.
- Roger noted the various concerns about the effectiveness of our communications. For the AGM agenda.

6. Date for Christmas social

A post Christmas date will be most convenient. Jerry will liaise with the committee re organisation and will circulate a date.

7. AOB

- Nicolla was still away but had sent an update on members via email. A new member had been recruited via the website. Paid up members now number 389. She has activated holiday renewals on the membership database.
- The current mayor, Derek Burke, had commented that HRA is well respected and had offered to attend a meeting. It was felt that he could be invited to the dinner in the New Year, or attend the AGM on 18 April. Sue will progress.
- AGM format – to be considered at January committee meeting.
- Peggy reported continuing problems with the refuse bins at the east end of Highfield Lane.
- Peggy encouraged members to take another look at the Highfield pub, now that the kitchen has been upgraded.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.