



# HIGHFIELD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

[www.highfieldresidents.org.uk](http://www.highfieldresidents.org.uk)

Newsletter - Summer 2010

## Committee 10/11

Jerry Gillen	Chair
Sue Hartley	Vice Chair
Caroline Knight	Secretary
Headley Rossell	Treasurer
Nicolla Martin	Membership
Stephen Connolly	Website
Matthew Claisse	Planning
Peggy Augier	
Josie Brown	
Bryan Wakely	
Allison Shelly	
Roret Blue	
Julia Brooking	

## HIGHFIELD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION SUMMER PARTY

*SATURDAY 17th JULY 7.00-11.00*

*£17.50 per head*

*The Pavilion, Residents' Gardens, Abbotts Way  
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*Application forms on Page 8 or download from the website*

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## REPORT ON AGM

The 34th AGM was attended by some 80 members and guests which was slightly down on the previous two/three years: we put this down to the leadership debate on the same night. Having watched the highlights later, I think it is fair to say our meeting was the more interesting of the two.

**Elections** - One new member was elected to the committee and the Vice Chair and Accounts Examiner were re-elected for another three years. Adrian Vinson, who has performed a sterling role as our Planning member for the previous year, has had to stand down and we are very grateful for his efforts in moving the organisation and effectiveness of this role forward.

**Treasurer** - Our finances are the strongest they have ever been and we are indebted to our sponsors and advertisers for their ongoing support: without them we would be unable to maintain the current level of community involvement.

**Chairman** – tribute was paid to the Treasurer for his hard work and members were referred to the Spring Newsletter for a summary of the year's activities. Whilst thanking the current Council Administration for their

support during the year, he also pointed out that, as an organisation, HRA is and must be apolitical. He reported on HRA's involvement with NORA (National Organisation of RAs). At their recent AGM a common problem, reported by all cities represented, was one of Enforcement (lack of): this is usually a resource issue. He referred to our achievement in obtaining legislative change to regulate HMOs (Houses in Multiple Occupation)

**Previously submitted questions** – a number of members and residents raised concerns over the Students' Union's intentions regarding further applications for extended hours; at present the SU is using Temporary Event Notices to get around this. No undertakings were given by the SU.

**Houses of Multiple Occupation** – an opportunity was given to the three main political parties to state their position on this issue:

Dr Alan Whitehead MP confirmed his party had managed to put the necessary changes to the regulations in place before Parliament was prorogued.

In future any change from a family

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home to an HMO would require Planning Permission. The definition of an HMO would be the same for Planning as it already was for Housing and Local Authorities (LAs) would have the powers to declare Areas of Restraint and Thresholds. Licensing would be discretionary.

Cllr. Jeremy Moulton said that, whilst his party had reservations about the blanket use of the new powers, his administration would work with the new regulations and support the local community in its ongoing campaign on this issue.

Cllr. Jill Baston confirmed her group's ongoing support for the changes and wondered why it had taken some ten years to bring to them to fruition.

**Planning** – Adrian Vinson gave a comprehensive report on the year's activities (see AGM minutes on website) and referred to a number of successful objections for inappropriate developments upheld at appeal and the licence extension refusal for The Cube. Particular tribute was paid to Sarah Clover of No 5 Chambers for her invaluable support and representation.

**Guest Speakers** – We are indebted to all three of our Speakers. Simon Higman, University Registrar and Chief Operating Officer, extolled the values and successes of the University and of its intention to be in the top 50 Universities in the world (currently 80th) and the importance of its students in the community. However, he was unable to give any reassurances regarding the University restraining anti-social or inconsiderate student behaviour.

Sarah Clover explained the role of Public Access Barristers and the support of No 5 Chambers to both individuals and communities such as ours. Members are welcome to approach No 5 direct for an initial discussion, which is free of charge.

Inspector Mark Lewis and Sgt Stewart Chandler reported that crime was down in our area for the second year running and stated that they are committed to working with the local community and gave Operation Batcombe as an example of trying to control late night noise and nuisance.

**Common Sense** – Simon Hill reported on the successful working with the Council, University and HRA for making improvements to the Little Common.



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## TEN GOOD REASONS FOR BELONGING TO HRA

- 1) Protect and preserve the area in which we live
- 2) Support and representation for Planning and Licensing applications
- 3) Effective campaigning on local issues
- 4) Recognition by statutory authorities, local and national
- 5) Be an active member of the community and larger community network
- 6) Opportunity for social inter-action and participation in social events
- 7) Reciprocation and support of local businesses as part of members discount scheme
- 8) Numerical strength gives us influence and credibility
- 9) Gives you an additional voice in local affairs
- 10) Care about **your** community

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10% off published prices

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

## SPORTS CENTRE – OUTSOURCING LEISURE

The City Council is very short of money. In terms of public expenditure, leisure cannot come before protecting jobs and the economy, the children, the elderly, public protection, the environment and waste recycling. Some of the leisure facilities are not in very good order. At the Sports Centre the pitches and changing rooms are in poor condition and spectator provision is inadequate. The golf course needs drainage and greens improvement, the pavilion needs an uplift, there are no proper training, practice or driving facilities and no academy.

Therefore the management – not the sale or disposal of – the leisure centres (Quays, Bitterne, Chamberlayne) and water activities (Woodmill and SWAC by Itchen Bridge) and the Sports Centre are being “outsourced”. Some years ago the Guildhall, Fountains Café and the Ski Slope were successfully outsourced and but for outsourcing they may have eventually been closed.

The 15-year contract is with a commercial company with a charitable trading arm. The company will bring investment, expertise and improvement. It must obtain national accreditation and meet objective customer satisfaction standards. Energy saving techniques must be used. The usage must increase by 3% per annum; otherwise there will be financial penalties. Prices are to be fixed in consultation with the Council and there will be the usual concessions. The company is responsible for repair and maintenance and the Council remains responsible for structures and major defects. The Council staff are being “TUPEd” over, with full protections for

Photo: © Gary Reggae



conditions of employment and pensions. The Council will pay a management fee, £1.4m, on a reducing basis, and there are profit reinvestment and profit sharing arrangements.

The benefits will be better and better run leisure facilities and a saving to the taxpayer of at least £8m over the contract term.

Similar and successful arrangements have been set up in recent years in Winchester, Test Valley, Eastleigh, East Hampshire, Portsmouth and Gosport.

*Cllr Alec Samuels*

## HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (HMOs) CHANGES IN PLANNING CONTROL

Following consultation, the previous Government published its changes to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes Order) 1987 as amended to provide a new Use Class (C4) specifically for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). This change came into force on 6th April 2010 and means anyone wishing to convert a family home for this purpose must now apply for planning permission.

Prior to the introduction of Class C4, planning legislation defined neither “multiple occupation” nor HMOs as such and although theoretically an HMO of more than six people did require planning permission this was seldom upheld by Planning Inspectors on appeal.

The situation has now been addressed by the insertion of class C4 into the 1987 Use Classes Order - Use of a dwelling house by not more than 6 residents as a ‘house in multiple occupation’, using the HMO definition in section 254 of the Housing Act 2004

As a consequence of this new Use Class and HMO definition a change of use may now be considered to take place when a dwelling house (C3) is then occupied by 3 or more unrelated people living together (other than as a single household) and sharing facilities as a ‘C4’ use (an HMO). Furthermore, in such cases a planning permission may be required when this change of use is considered to be ‘material’.

Movement between the new HMO Use Class back to the C3 (dwelling house) will not require planning permission. The amended legislation will not:

- a) be retrospective, i.e. all HMOs which can prove established use at 6th April 2010 will not require permission

- b) allow for direction or control over the types of occupants of HMOs which could be seen as discriminatory or interventionist

There has also been a flurry of planning applications for ‘wrap around’ extensions recently, typically side and rear and sometimes two storey, often claiming permitted development rights: should the property already be an HMO then planning permission **will** be required and members should notify us if concerned.

It now only remains for SCC to develop its own local policies into the Local Development Framework (LDF) in support of the new legislation, such as declaring *areas of restraint and thresholds*. It is already well placed to do this as an overarching policy has already been approved by the Government Inspector within the City’s Core Strategy (CS16) & Local Plan Review (H4) and this association is co-operating with our Planning Dept. in helping develop local controls.

Following the Conservative Early Day Motion (EDM) to revoke this new legislation prior to the election we have held meetings with two, then, Shadow Ministers and at my meeting with Caroline Spellman she undertook to withdraw the EDM, work with the existing legislation and not to recommend any amendments without prior consultation. She also defined ‘*light touch*’ as meaning giving discretion to Local Authorities.

Overall then, an excellent result for ‘people power’ and residents’ groups such as ours, whose efforts eventually prevailed.

*Jerry Gillen*

## THE HAWTHORNS URBAN WILDLIFE CENTRE – PROMOTING OUR LOCAL BIODIVERSITY

Situated towards the southern end of Southampton Common, The Hawthorns Urban Wildlife Centre fulfils many roles related to the natural life of The Common and elsewhere across the city. Opened in 1990, having been built on the derelict site of the old Southampton Zoo, the Hawthorns is, amongst other things, a public visitor and information centre, the base for the city council's natural environment team and an educational setting offering both formal-led visits to school and other groups and less structured events and activities to the general public. There is now also the Café at the Hawthorns giving people the chance to stop for some refreshments amongst the peaceful natural surroundings.

Whatever the Hawthorns team does, one of the main aims is to help people to understand, appreciate and enjoy the fabulous range of wildlife all around them. We call this range of wildlife 'biodiversity' – and this year is the 'International Year of Biodiversity', making the Hawthorns' work especially relevant.

Southampton has lots of biodiversity! Biodiversity is the 'variety of life' – (bio = life). 'Biodiversity' describes the range of different living things, from tiny microscopic organisms up to the largest trees and animals, and everything in between – including ourselves!

Nature has a massive variety of sizes, shapes and behaviours, with each living thing fitting-in and living best in the conditions provided by its own particular home or habitat (adaptation). Southampton is a city that is lucky enough to have a good mixture of different natural habitats, such as meadows, woodland, grassland, streams and rivers, bogs, heath, reed-beds, tidal mudflats and seashore. Each of these habitats supports certain types of wildlife. Amongst all of this, in our built habitat, we live as part of the ecosystem (often forgetting that we are part of the biodiversity ourselves and are connected in many ways with the other, wilder, inhabitants of the planet!) So, with such a varied collection of habitats, Southampton – with the Common in the midst of it - is also home to a great range of living things – our great natural 'biodiversity'.

The Hawthorns will be making special efforts to promote understanding of biodiversity and how it is essential for a healthy and interesting environment, both locally and globally. People will have many chances to get involved in appreciating and helping to conserve the local wildlife that can often struggle to cope with the pressures placed on it by human activities and behaviour.

Some of the many activities that the Hawthorns will be promoting are:-

**Common Conservation Walks** – 6 July, 3 August, 7 September, 5 October, 2 November, 7 December

The City's Land Ecologist will take you around the Common to show you how it is managed to encourage



*One of the wild residents at the Hawthorns*

biodiversity. The type of nature you will see changes as the seasons change. 2pm departing from the Hawthorns Urban Wildlife Centre.

**Activity Days** – 11 August, 25 August and 27 October

These free family days take place during school holidays and aim to celebrate aspects of Biodiversity using crafts, trails, and activities. The days run from 11am-4pm

**Wildflowers and Butterflies Walks** – 4 July, 31 July, 1 September, 5 September, 6 October

The Friends of Southampton Old Cemetery (FoSOC) guide you around the fantastic wildlife habitat of Southampton Old Cemetery. On the first Saturday of every month there is also the opportunity to get hands-on and help with conservation tasks to help manage this bio diverse habitat.

**Southampton in Bloom** – closing date: 2 July

This annual competition enables residents, schools and businesses to enhance their environment with planting, and a Wildlife Gardening category alongside sustainability related judging criteria help to promote biodiversity.

So, there are plenty of chances to get out-and-about on the Common and find out more about the amazing wildlife with which we share this part of Southampton.

For more information please contact the Hawthorns – Tel: 023 8067 1921

email: [hawthorns.wildlife.centre@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:hawthorns.wildlife.centre@southampton.gov.uk)

or visit: <http://www.southampton.gov.uk/s-environment/Biodiversity/internationalyear.aspx>



*Some of the great variety of plant-life in the Hawthorns' grounds*

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## THE LITTLE COMMON



'Common Sense' seeks to make the part of the Little Common between the Highfield Avenue/Lane/Road crossing, the Avenue underpass and the Avenue Campus entrance more open. This is to make the area more appealing and less threatening to the many that pass through or use it for recreation.

Much progress has been made in the last 18 months across the area between Highfield Avenue to the Avenue Campus. Most evident was clearance of the Carriage Drive of mature vegetation. This has let light in, allowed it to dry out and generally re-created a more open appearance that feels less daunting to users. The heavy works carried out by professionals were followed up by volunteer working parties, which generally tidied up and started to remove infestation of holly, bay and laurels that blot out heathland species. Although the after-effects of the main works left the Carriage Drive looking raw, it is now re-naturalising, with heathland species such as gorse and heather establishing strongly. The restored ditches and the hoggin path are helping to keep the walkway drier for the many users passing on their desired line directly between the Avenue underpass and the Highfield Lane Avenue/Lane crossing. In wet seasons, surface water is held in the ditches, and so helps sustain the water table when drier conditions return.

The hawthorn hedge along the northern end of Highfield Road has been largely removed, making the area behind more visible and opening up views of the Common to pedestrians and cyclists on Highfield Road, which now feels less enclosed and threatening. Stumps have been left pending re-profiling of the roadside bank to act as an effective vehicle deterrent, which will hopefully be carried out this autumn. Close to Highfield Avenue, and in the heathland clumps, working parties have removed small trees and other vegetation to encourage heathland species and to clear creepers that were threatening the survival of old hawthorn trees. Opposite the northern part of the Avenue Campus the University has contributed to the cost of professional clearance of holly and creepers that removed the once more open character and overran mature hawthorns. Within days it seemed that the less intimidating atmosphere led to more use being made of the grassed enclave south of the Khartoum Road underpass footpath by picnickers and groups for recreation. The sides of Lovers Walk off the southern end of Highfield Rd. and the Oakmount Avenue footpath have also been cleared.

More clearance work is yet to be done, particularly opposite the Avenue Campus and opposite Kingfisher Court. It has to take account of the increasing importance of protecting and promoting biodiversity and to await

establishment of alternative areas of similar habitat in which wildlife can thrive. However, the area being restored to its more open character, where the needs of homo sapiens are also being emphasised, accounts for about 2 of the 37 hectares of the Little Common (east of the Avenue) and the 146 hectares of the whole Common. Restoring openness can also encourage more diverse and interesting habitat than the dense woodland with evergreen under storey that covers large parts of the Common and to which it would all return if regular maintenance did not substitute for the grazing that took place up to WWII.

Many thanks go to the City Council, councillors and officers, who have secured the resources, with the help of a Forestry Commission grant, for the major clearance works and facilitated and actively helped with the volunteer groups.

If you would like to learn more about how the Common is managed and the immense range of flora and fauna that exists in the middle of our city, come on a fascinating evening walk with Andy Welch, Southampton's City Land Ecologist.

Tuesday 29 June 19.00 hours: meet at the Hawthorns Wildlife Centre

That will be preceded by an informative walk round and litter pick of the Little Common at 16.00 hours and an early evening picnic 17.00 hours in the enclave opposite the northern end of the Avenue Campus.

Working parties will be on

Sat 13 Nov 10.00 -13.00

Wed 17 Nov 13.00 -16.00

Sat 11 Dec 10.00 -13.00

Wed 15 Dec 13.00 – 16.00

All meet opposite end of Omdurman Road

If you would like a copy of the Action Plan or other information about Common Sense please contact Simon Hill 023 8055 5394 or [mail@southamptoncommon.org](mailto:mail@southamptoncommon.org)

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## **DON'T THROW IT AWAY FREecycle IT**

Chicken poo, a Hammond Organ, a dog cage, a child's bike, a baby car seat, a broken lawnmower and some compost: these are all items that I have given away on Freecycle recently. Freecycle is an organisation which started in Arizona in May 2003. It's an entirely non-profit making movement of people who are giving away and getting stuff for free in their own towns. It was founded by Deron Beal who worked for a non-profit making organisation called RISE which provided recycling services to local businesses. The recycling involved a lot of driving around to approach local groups to find out if they could use items and it occurred to him that there must be an easier way to communicate and so he set up an email group so that all of the inhabitants of Tucson could communicate. From those beginnings the network has gone global and there are Freecycle groups all over the world. It is an internet based forum where you can post information about items that you no longer want, ask for things that you need and respond to wanted notices. Each local group is owned and moderated by a volunteer who, with a team, moderates all the postings. Southampton has its own group which is very active. I am sure that I am not alone in finding it difficult to throw away items that "might come in useful one day" and over

time the shed, garage and attic become cluttered. However getting a Freecycle update everyday prompts me to offer items to people who can make good use of them: one person's clutter is another's treasure. You might find that you need something; a couple of years ago my daughter wanted a bike so that her son could learn to ride in preparation for the new bike that he was getting for Christmas. I posted a wanted ad on Freecycle and later that afternoon we picked up a bike that was in such good condition he did not need the one on order for Christmas. He rode it until he outgrew it and two weeks ago we passed it to another family in Netley.

I know that some people in the HRA area know about it already as I see notices posted from Highfield but I think it is so worthwhile that I would like to spread the word. If you are interested just go to <http://my.freecycle.org> and sign up. The chicken poo – a young couple posted a wanted notice asking if anyone kept chickens and could give them some manure to enrich the vegetable plot that they were starting. I was able to oblige with that and also gave them several bags of compost from my over-flowing heap!

*Caroline Knight*

## **HIGHFIELD HOUSE HOTEL - NEW VENUE FOR SOLENT CITY JAZZMEN**

The Hotel has obtained its licence for acoustic live music and has successfully hosted regular monthly jazz evenings since December.

The Solent City Jazzmen, now organised by local resident Ray Goold, was formed in 1959. Ray became a member in 1963 and along with most of the current musicians, all have played on a regular basis with this band since those early youthful days.

The monthly jazz evenings, on the third Tuesday of each month, are attracting audience from far and wide. Some local residents are benefiting from the easy walking distance of the venue, but it would be nice to see more enjoying this great seven-piece band playing fine traditional New Orleans jazz. This is a nice comfortable atmosphere conducive to dancing if you like or just enjoying quality musicianship at acoustic sound level for ease of conversation.

The Jazzmen are fronted by Cuff Billet on trumpet, of international repute, and such great musicianship on our doorstep needs local support. The next dates (on the third Tuesday of the month) are:- 15th June, 20th July, 17th August, 21st September, with entrance admission at the door of £6 or ring Ray Goold on 023 8055 6026 to book a table in advance. Please come along!



## **OAKMOUNT TRIANGLE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION PLANT SALE**

On Saturday May 15th OTRA held, what has now become, their annual plant sale and coffee morning. This event serves as a fund raiser and also an opportunity for residents to get together, chat, buy plants, baked goods and cards and enjoy a cup of coffee and a slice of cake. The Bradshaws host the event and most of the plants are provided by Pam Paul, Fran Naylor and Bob Sanderson.

Many local residents also drop off their contributions of plants, cakes and biscuits. Members of the OTRA committee helped with selling, coffee making and washing up. There was a good turnout this year prompted by the fine day and happy residents left with bags, and in some cases wheelbarrows, full of plants to add to their gardens.



## **FASTEN YOUR SEATBELTS...HERE WE GO AGAIN. COALITION PROGRAMME ANNOUNCES CHANGES TO LICENSING REGIME.**

The new Coalition Government has announced that a "complete review" of the Licensing Act 2003 will be undertaken after speculation earlier in the week that Licensing was going to go into the fold of the Home Office. In more news announced on 20th May, John Penrose MP (Con.), recently appointed as Minister for Tourism and Heritage, will also take the brief for alcohol and entertainment licensing. Mr Penrose sits across the Department for Business Innovation and Skills and the Department for Culture Media and Sport as a Parliamentary Under Secretary of State. We have yet to hear what he has to say about life and licensing.

New Home Secretary, Theresa May told the Police Federation conference in Bournemouth that the new Government was now proposing an "evidence-based approach" to an overhaul. She reminded the conference that the Conservatives had always vowed to undertake this exercise in the election manifesto.

Ms May's comments were confirmed in a published plan by the new Government, as part of their overall programme, which includes a list of proposals for the licensing regime. Interesting too that the majority of comments relating to licensing appear in the section entitled "Crime and Policing" as opposed to "Culture, Media, Olympics & Sport".

The precise nature of the "overhaul" is not yet clear, but the indication is that it will include increasing powers for police and local authorities. What these powers might be is uncertain, but the plan out today indicates that the powers will be aimed at removing licences from, or refusing to grant licences to "problem premises".

Other items on the programme list include:

- Allowing Local Licensing Authorities to make additional charges for late-night licences to pay for additional policing. Only time will tell how similar this proposal is to the discredited ADZ policy introduced by the last Government.
- Banning the sale of alcohol below cost price – a measure particularly aimed, no doubt, at Supermarkets.
- 'Permanent' closure of premises persistently selling alcohol to young people – it remains to be seen what the new Government thinks "permanent" might mean. This power will reside in the police and local authorities.
- Increasing the fine for under-age alcohol sales, bringing the new maximum level to £20,000.
- A review of taxation and pricing on alcohol – the exercise is said to be an attempt to find a balance between tackling binge drinking without impacting unduly on responsible drinkers and operators. This may prove to be an interesting challenge.

Ms May criticised the previous Government's attempts to introduce a "café culture", and branded the effort a failure. She identified problems on the streets, and the so called "binge drinking culture" as a consequence of Labour's licensing system.

It is to be noted that the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats did not entirely agree on the correct approach to licensing laws during the run-up to the election, with the Liberal Democrats adopting a more cautious and restrained tone, in favour of more minor adaptations of the

existing system. It appears, however, that the Conservative approach has prevailed, and we can look forward to more dramatic changes to the still relatively new regime, which has already seen its fair share of tinkering, even in the first five years.

There are already big hints that the new Coalition will be promoting the Conservatives' "Big Society Plan". David Cameron gave a speech on the 19th May declaring that he wanted to give communities the power to intervene far more in their local community, and to have the power to buy their local public house or post office – the so-called "community right to buy". This is in tandem with the intention to give communities a greater say over the planning system and give them rights to appeal decisions. The Coalition has specifically agreed on the notion of "driving power back" to local authorities and community groups.

It is worthy of note that so much has been said that is specific to the licensed trade in so short a space of time, and this could be an indication that it is a matter rather higher up on the Government's agenda than might have been supposed.

This may all be good news for lawyers and bad news for those trying to function in the licensed trade. We have also been promised more regulations.....

So – fasten your seatbelts. We may be in for a bumpy ride.

*The full text of this article is available on the HRA website*

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## Supporting your local community



Whether you are buying, selling, letting or renting, contact **Pearsons Estate Agents** for specialist advice in the Highfield area

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Southampton, SO15 2AH

[www.pearsons.com](http://www.pearsons.com)

Tel: 023 8023 3288

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

I/We would like to join/renew membership of the Highfield Residents' Association and enclose the subscription of £3.00 (One subscription covers all members of the household)

Name(s) of adults \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

Postcode (please include) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Tel No. \_\_\_\_\_

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, 54 Highfield Lane**; 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.

I wish to buy  Summer Event tickets at £17.50 per person and enclose cheque/cash for total of  Tables are for 8 people. Please indicate with whom you would like to be seated and if you require a vegetarian meal.

**Newsletter Team: Jerry Gillen and Caroline Knight. Assistance from David Bothwell and Stephen Ashfield. Contributions welcome. Please send to [thesecretary@highfieldresidents.co.uk](mailto: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.

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