



HIGHFIELD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

www.highfieldresidents.org.uk

Newsletter – Spring 2016

HRA 40TH AGM

THURSDAY 14TH APRIL 2016 – 7.30 PM
HIGHFIELD HOUSE HOTEL

As part of the formal business, members of the Committee will speak and answer questions about their areas of responsibility.

This will give residents more opportunity to raise issues that concern them. It would be helpful if these could be submitted in advance to hrasec@gmail.com or by dropping them in at Highfield News.

The formal meeting will be followed by a social gathering and complimentary drinks.

HRA Summer Paella Party

FRIDAY 1ST JULY 2016 7.30 – 11PM
HIGHFIELD HOUSE HOTEL

Paella – Live Music – Cash Bar

Only 80 tickets available so book early
– form at back of newsletter

Committee Members

Chair: Roger Brown

Vice Chair: Jerry Gillen

Treasurer: Mark Batchelor

Secretary: Jill Baston

Minutes Secretary: Chris Klewe

Membership Secretary:
Nicolla Martin

Planning Officer: Adrian Vinson

Planning Appeals: Jerry Gillen

Website Manager: Nadine Johnson

Newsletter Editor: Caroline Knight

Social Events: Bryan Wakeley

Common Sense: Simon Hill

Environmental Liaison:
Steven Johnston

Committee Member: John Bradshaw

Committee Member: Steve Connolly

Webmaster: Ross Gordon
(non committee)

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CHAIR'S REPORT

I am pleased to present my Chair's report on the work of the Committee over the past year. Once again we have benefitted from a stable membership. We were however delighted to co-opt onto the committee Steven Johnston and Mark Batchelor, who has taken over from Headley Rossell as our new Treasurer. We shall be marking Headley's many years of excellent service with a presentation at the AGM. As always I should like to thank all the officers and members of the Committee for their contribution to our work. I should like to say a special 'thank-you' to our volunteer street representatives who do a great job as our 'eyes and ears' on the ground: we are most grateful for their help. Yet again our main focus has been on planning and the environment. This year has been one of both successes and failures.

On the plus side, we were delighted when an Inspector upheld the Council's rejection of the application to turn 13 Grosvenor Road from a family home into a multi-occupant dwelling. This was the third Appeal made on this property in the last five years, which suggests a serious imbalance in the planning system. This was a particular success because it would not have happened without the persistence of HRA and local residents, with legal advice and

support from King's Chambers, and in the teeth of opposition from the then head of planning and the Council's legal officer. The more recent case of 38 Grosvenor, where a cognate application was also rejected, suggests that our victory on 13 Grosvenor may now be having a more positive effect on the Council's consideration of such matters (at the time of writing, we are waiting to see if the applicant will decide to appeal against the Council's decision).

On the minus side, we were extremely disappointed at the Planning Panel's decision to grant permission for Orchard Homes to erect yet more student accommodation at 224 Portswood Road at a time when the need is not for more local student dwellings but for affordable homes for the City's people (as promised by the initial developers). As I said in my Chair's blog at the time, both the decision itself and the way it was arrived at left a good deal to be desired, not least the evident ignorance or unawareness of the Panel members of our local circumstances. We shall continue to press the Council to change the process so that there is a better chance of local knowledge being brought to bear on these critical decisions. In the meantime we are seeking a high level meeting with the University to discuss the future impact

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on the area of the University's continued expansion, not only in terms of student accommodation but other aspects as well.

As Simon Hill's report elsewhere in this Newsletter shows, good progress continues to be made in clearing the Little Common and returning it to its historic condition and role. It was in accordance with this policy that HRA objected to the plans to enlarge Lovers Walk as a means of managing conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians along what is sometimes a busy path. This was partly on the basis that we were not convinced that this was the best solution to the problem, and partly on the basis that we thought that too much weight was being given to the interests of cyclists at the possible expense of other users, especially pedestrians. At the time of writing this, the outcome is not known.

One thing which this issue has thrown up is the potential desirability of having a broadly-based representative forum which can act as a 'sounding board' for initiatives and developments on the Common. With the agreement of the HRA Committee, we have begun discussions with other Residents' Associations and other interested parties with a view to establishing such a body. I will report further at the AGM.

I am delighted to report on the success of our new website, for which HRA owes Nadine Johnson and Ross Gordon a considerable debt of gratitude. We have so far exceeded 20,000 page views and 8,000 'hits', and many people tell us that they check it on a daily basis (see Nadine Johnson's article in this Newsletter). We are also expanding the range of companies that will offer us discounts. The website is proving an excellent vehicle for

information but we also plan to continue with the printed Newsletter on an annual basis. We are very grateful to Caroline Knight for her excellent editorship of this popular and well regarded publication, which we shall continue to publish as long as resources permit.

We continue to work with the Southampton University Students Union on activities to bring students and residents together. Unfortunately the Curry and Quiz night in November was poorly attended on our side. We are however confident that our next social event – a tapas and paella evening at the Highfield House Hotel on Friday 1st of July – will be a success (details can be found elsewhere in this Newsletter). We also work closely with our three Ward Councillors – Matthew Claisse, Linda Norris and Paul O'Neill – all of whom attend our meetings when they can and give us very useful input, encouragement and advice, which we very much appreciate. We also appreciate the input of the local police although this has recently been somewhat sporadic.

In my report last year, I warned that our current subscription of £3 might not be sufficient to meet our needs, though we do receive donations that exceed this in total. It is many years since we raised the subscription and the Committee will be approving a raise to £5 before the AGM.

Finally, I should mention that this report will almost be my last as HRA Chair. I have indicated that if re-elected this year it is my intention to step down in April 2017. I am sure that the Committee will be able to find a suitable successor, but if any member would like to be considered for the role, the Secretary, Jill Baston (hrasec@gmail.com), will be pleased to hear from you.

Roger Brown (Professor)

LITTLE COMMON

Little Common

The paths worn in areas previously impassable are testament to the popularity of the restored openness of parts of the Little Common. We did only a little work last winter, as many of the key tasks were carried out over the previous 6 winters. I was not around as often to organise things, lost the distribution list on my computer and felt a bit of a break would not go amiss anyway. We had a few sessions clearing around the eastern approach to the underpass and path to the bus stop to open the area up, making it feel lighter and safer. Many thanks to the volunteers who helped.

I have since recovered some of the Common Sense email addresses – but if you would like to take part in next winter's sessions please email me at mail@southamptoncommon.org. There are some significant areas where clearance work is yet to be done that will form the to-do list for 2016/17. They include the Carriage Drive, which needs restoring to a mainly grass ride so that it becomes a drier, safe and pleasant walk again – as envisaged in the Action Plan – with the gorse confined to the sides of the ditches. The size of the gorse after 6 years unchecked means that significant clearance will be beyond the scope of volunteer groups without the help of Council machinery and staff, for which we are pressing.

Celebrate the Little Common at the Big lunch on Sunday 12 June 12.30-15.30 – come and meet locals you know and possibly some you don't! Everyone brings their own food and drink – meet near opposite Khartoum Road.

Common Forum

The HRA and Southampton Commons and Parks Protection Society (SCAPPS) are taking the lead in setting up a Forum for the whole Common. The first meeting on 16 February was chaired by Roger Brown when it was intended a permanent groups could be established to help work on a plan for The Common and provide views to the City Council on how the Common should be managed for the benefit of all users. See the HRA website for an update on how it went.

Lovers' Walk cycle route

Late in 2105 the Council applied for planning permission to undertake a substantial widening of the tarmac path along all of Lovers' Walk as part of the Council's aspiration for what it has called a 'northern corridor' cycle 'super-highway'. The HRA accepted and supported some much needed improvement to the short sections from Highfield Road to Oakmount Avenue and between Winn and Westwood Roads but objected to the widening of the

remainder because:

- a) the urbanising effect that would damage the natural character of the Walk and The Common;
- b) straightening and widening would encourage faster cycle speeds - when there is already significant conflict with pedestrians which is unpleasant and unsafe for them on what is primarily and historically a 'walk';
- c) the installation of what is in effect a transport link on the Common, unrelated to its use for recreation, is unlawful;
- d) selective improvement and restoration of the sides where needed could be done satisfactorily with natural materials such as hoggin, with less visual damage; and
- e) in terms of promoting cycling into the City centre, there are much better candidates for expenditure of scarce resources, such as repairing the dangerous surfaces that have long existed on the underpass and its western approach.

By the time you read this there may be more to report, so check the HRA website.

Cycling to be allowed on all paths in parks

Last year the City Council applied to Government to change the bye-laws to allow cycling on all paths in all parks, following scant but apparently legally sufficient public consultation. Government has since decided that such matters should be a matter for councils but has not yet passed the legislation to give them the powers. So the idea is presently stuck in a bureaucratic limbo, but it is likely to be resurrected once authority is passed to the City Council, possibly some time in 2016.

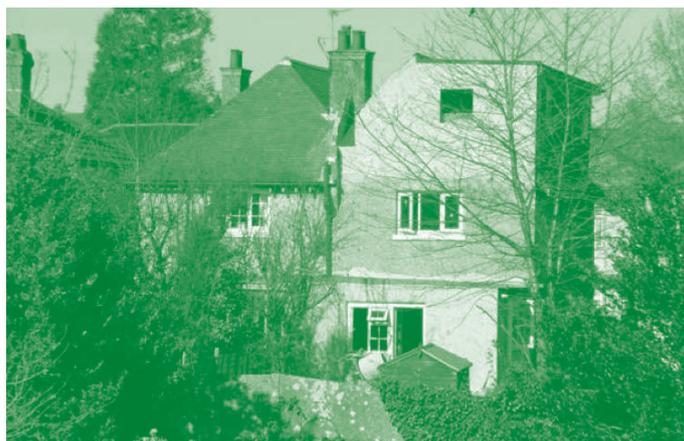
There are some paths where cycling is presently not allowed, including, for example, the two on the Common that go northwards from the fishing/ornamental lake. These are quiet narrow paths where it is pleasant to walk relaxed and without fear of intimidation from a cyclist claiming right of way without warning. It would be a retrograde step to permit cycling on them and other such paths throughout the Common and parks. At the same time prohibition of cycling on some wide paths – such as the Carriage Drive south of Bellemoor to Cemetery Road – could be reconsidered. However to make a blanket free-for-all would be harmful to the interests of walkers who tend to outnumber cyclists but who are under-represented as an interest group. I am a cyclist myself but also like to have places to walk without disturbance from cyclists. The Cabinet member for the Environment and Transport, Councillor Jacqui Rayment, is understood to have given her blessing to the lifting of all prohibition of cycling on paths on The Common and parks. **If you, like me think that is a bad idea, then email/write to her at the Civic Centre: councillor.j.rayment@southampton.gov.uk**

University proposed new teaching centre

At the end of 2015 the University of Southampton applied for permission for a large new teaching centre on Salisbury Road, within the Highfield campus. The new floorspace would be over 6,000m², yet no overt consideration has been given to the implications for the increase in student numbers on the surrounding community, particularly with regard to pressure for more accommodation. Yet there has been a statutory policy in the Local Plan since 2006 (and in draft for some years before that) which requires a commensurate increase in accommodation to accompany

increases in teaching or other floorspace that will give rise to an increase in students. The University may be assuming that its current proposal merely adds to the quality rather than quantity of its operations. However the HRA is unaware of any circumstances in which policy H13 has been applied over the last 10-15 years, during when a number of sizeable buildings were erected. During that time student numbers have steadily increased and are planned to continue to do so, no doubt facilitated in part by the current proposal. It is therefore not credible for the University to claim (and for the City Council to accept) that the particular circumstances of each new building proposal mean that it is unrelated to an increase in student numbers.

The recent and current spate of the student accommodation scheme may look re-assuring but the steady increase in student numbers on past and likely future trends will far surpass the planned increases in student accommodation. That can only lead to yet more pressure for more family housing to be converted to HMOs and/or existing HMOs to be extended in surrounding areas. The latter often do not need permission with disastrous results for the character and appearance of an area – such as the one below in Chamberlain Road next to the Highfield campus which in all likelihood will be repeated.



New HMOs can be controlled to some extent by planning policies, but that has depended on the sustained vigilance, intervention and persistence of the HRA and other residents' associations over many years. For as long as demand for yet more family houses to be converted to HMO use is sustained and/or increased then the character and community of those areas will remain under perpetual threat. It is therefore essential that the City Council holds the University to account and requires it to adhere to the clearly intended spirit as well as the letter of policy H13 and make additional student accommodation available at suitable locations through the city before any further increase in campus floorspace that will help facilitate its planned increase in student numbers is allowed.

The HRA objected in those and other terms and the application may have been decided by the time you read this – check the website for updates. We all want the University to be successful and we appreciate the benefits it brings to the city – but it should also pay its dues to the community by avoiding putting extra pressure on much needed family housing and the nature of local communities. Bit like Google. We all want it but it should pay its taxes!

Simon Hill

BEING A HAMPSHIRE POET



In 2008, the National Year of Reading, Hampshire County Council first invited applications for the role of "Hampshire Poet". Every second year since then there has been a Hampshire Poet. It's an honorary title, though you do get a lovely engraved cut-glass trophy to put on your

mantelpiece, and to keep. Although the role is honorary, devoted to promoting reading and writing and poetry across the county, there are a number of paid commissions and workshops involved. Being paid to write poems after doing it as a passion for most of my life was bliss!

The selection process is rigorous. When I heard I'd been shortlisted, butterflies went into overdrive in my stomach. The next stage was a phone interview at a pre-arranged time. Now, I don't know if you've ever had a phone interview, but it's a weird business. Clearly, you could be in your pyjamas, but somehow that doesn't put you in the correct frame of mind... In the end I dressed up quite formally, even though I knew I couldn't be seen! I was stunned – and delighted – when I heard that I'd got the post, one I'd applied for before, unsuccessfully.

It was a fantastic and very full year – or year and a bit. Working with Angela Hicken, the Hampshire Cultural Trust's Literature Development Officer, was easy. She was always there to alert me to things and lend a sympathetic ear to, and facilitate, ideas I had. I visited schools, community centres, writing groups, churches and libraries; I led workshops, talked to and listened to people of all ages; I travelled round Hampshire encouraging reading and writing and poetry; I judged various competitions. I got the chance, working with the Winchester Poetry Festival, to promote readings with various poets based in the county – and my own work was widely disseminated.

There were, in the end, five commissions, that involved lots of research as well as writing. The first was to write a poem to go on a reproduction postcard from the Front during the Great War; the brief being to write about the Artists Rifles regiment – about whom there was a major exhibition that travelled around Hampshire during 2014. The second was to write about bibliotherapy (yes, I had to look it up, too!) for a postcard disseminated across Hampshire libraries. Then it was back to the First World War for a 'long, thin poem' for a bookmark; I ended up writing about an uncle who died as

a young man on the Somme. The fourth commission was one where I could put forward a suggestion. I'm interested in poems working together with music and film and other media, and I wrote a poem to accompany a short film in the Elemental Dialogues series, on the element 'air'. The last, surprise commission came up when the county was offered a travelling exhibition of Henry Moore lithographs. Hampshire in fact owns a Moore lithograph and it became part of the exhibition, with the poem about it that I'd written projected onto the wall beside it in the exhibition space. So as you can see, the post is one where there are great opportunities to get your poems out there, being read by thousands of people. What's also fantastic is the opportunity to talk to so many different people about writing and reading and poetry – sharing and, hopefully helping prompt, a passion. I wish Isabel Rogers, the new Hampshire Poet, the best of luck in this amazing post.

Joan McGavin

Books are good for you

'A book must be the axe for the frozen sea within us'.
Franz Kafka, 1904

Everyone knows it. They make you feel better.
Now doctors prescribe them – in script or in letter.

Read Shakespeare and poems for their curative powers
or seek out a book group, spend hours and hours

with doses of Hamlet or downing some rhyme.
But no matter your taste, it can help to spend time

in a way that de-stresses, that calms or consoles
or helps you imagine alternative roles

in life to those that you normally play.
We thought it already; researchers now say:

pick up those axes – those books, bless their makers,
unfreeze the seas, join the movers and shakers

who waltz with words, who dance on the floes –
stretching hands across ice so the chain of us grows.

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE HIGHFIELD PROPERTY MARKET?

After another strong year for the national property market the local market has mirrored the broad picture and Highfield has remained continually popular with record prices being achieved in some circumstances.

Specifically, we have achieved above market trend expectations for unusual or individual homes or those of exceptional quality or location.

Highfield has an excellent infrastructure with the local schooling being extremely well regarded, extensive day to day shopping facilities, and very convenient travel communications. There is still very much a strength of community which only adds to the demand in this area.

When you couple this with the broadly positive sentiment in the property market, and an improving economic back

drop it creates an almost 'perfect storm' of conditions. It is therefore entirely understandable that there is an upward pressure on prices.

Looking ahead, with all these positive factors in mind and demand continuing to outstrip supply the expected local conditions remain favourable.

We are currently experiencing significant demand for all property types locally, with some homes having been sold within days of them coming to the market.

We are always happy to provide up to date advice on marketing and homes values and would welcome the opportunity to be of service if required.

Pearson's 02380 233288

Lee Turner

AWARD WINNING GARDEN IN HIGHFIELD

When you walk towards the university, up Church Lane, you will pass a garden on your left which has neither hedge nor fence, just a border containing a dozen Old English roses. Behind them, where a lawn used to exist, is a bed of 3,600 crocuses with a White Birch at its centre, surrounded by English Bluebells. This is our garden, which holds the Mayor's Trophy for being the Best Wildlife Garden in Southampton, according to the judges of the Southampton in Bloom competition.

The carpet of crocuses is a rich source of nectar and pollen for early bees and bumblebees and you may hear the buzz of them when you walk past the garden on a sunny, spring day. Once the summer arrives, the same area will have grown its colourful summer display of nectar rich annuals (we never know what is going to come up as we scatter loads of seed on each year, in addition to those which have self-seeded from the previous years).

One of our own joys of this display is seeing people stop to draw breath in the midst of their hectic lives as they walk past. Just for a moment they may have forgotten the worries of their day.

In the back garden we were greatly helped in enhancing our garden's appeal to wildlife by a checklist which the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust produced, e.g: log pile; small pond; herbaceous plants; long season of nectar producing plants; seed-bearing plants for the autumn and winter; supplemental food sources; nesting sites for birds, reptiles, amphibians and insects; avoiding pesticides.

Our garden is also a complete pleasure to us as all of the above are integrated into a visually-pleasing garden that also produces a good supply of vegetables and soft fruit throughout the summer, even if plenty of the fruits get taken by the birds. Watching them get to them first is still enjoyable. We are fortunate to have Glebe Copse off the back of our house and, with the cooperation of the residents of Hilldown Road, we have fortunately been allowed to release some hedgehogs into the wild through our back garden. We started with just two, Tiggy and Fangio, and we have since about six others visit the garden (yes, we really can tell the individuals apart, thanks to a PIRD-activated camera on the back lawn), including one which could be an offspring of theirs. You can even watch a compilation of their antics at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILfg5nuQnbY> or on the members features page at www.highfieldresidents.org.uk. Within the video you can see how we have encouraged them to stay around by providing a dining hall and a dormitory, but they prefer to sleep alone and so there are now two further dormitories in other parts of the garden. As with any other wildlife we can but offer them bed and board and hope that they like what they find. If they choose to stay, so much the better. The hedgehogs have been brilliant slug-munchers and you can encourage them into your own garden by creating



hogholes (the size of a cd) at the base of fences around your garden. There are plenty of dry hedgehog foods available from garden centres and they are so much easier to use than cat food – milk will give them the runs (very smelly and messy) as they are lactose-intolerant.

I know that many of your gardens also have good wildlife credentials and I hope that you will also enter the Southampton in Bloom competition this year. You are welcome to come and see what we have done with our garden.

By the time that you read this article, the crocuses should be looking good and we hope that they, and the summer display which follows, will give you reason to smile as you walk past.

Clive Marks & Mark Riley

THE WEBSITE IS OVER ONE YEAR OLD...!

Since the launch of the new HRA website in January 2015, it has had an amazing 8,000 hits and over 20,000 page views! A number of members tell me that they visit the site weekly which is very encouraging. To keep the website topical, we need to refresh it regularly with plenty of news items, events, articles and updates. Please send your

contributions either by completing the 'Contact Us' form on our website: <http://www.highfieldresidents.org.uk>, or by emailing me on: highfieldracomms@gmail.com. If you have not already visited the website, now is a good time to start!

Nadine Johnson, Website Manager

NUFFIELD THEATRE – A PROFILE

Sitting on our doorstep, on Highfield campus, is the Nuffield a multi-award winning professional producing theatre company that has a reputation for innovation and quality, creating bold and distinctive theatre that attracts the highest calibre of artist. It is an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation and a registered charity, receiving additional core funding from the University of Southampton, Southampton City Council and Hampshire County Council. Last year the Nuffield won 'Regional Theatre of the Year' at The Stage Awards 2015 and the Best Design UK Theatre 2015 for "The Hudsucker Proxy". Open all year, the programme includes classics, new writing, comedy drama, beautiful children's theatre and top class stand-up comedians.

Nuffield is also the operating company of the North Building in Southampton's new city centre arts complex. This new venue will include a flexible 447 seat main house theatre, a 135 seat studio, screening facilities, rehearsal and workshop spaces, and a café bar and bistro.

Sam Hodges, Nuffield Director said, *"We're going to be running both spaces, the new city centre venue and our existing theatre on the University of Southampton's Highfield Campus so we are working hard to make sure that our programme can offer something for everyone. We want our audiences to feel at home in both our buildings and we have big ambitions as to how we want to achieve that."*

"This new venue will transform Nuffield's ability to show new and exciting high quality professional work from local, national and international artists, built on the foundations of our commitment to extensive and accessible artist development and community engagement. It will also allow us to develop our programme to include dance, film and music. As you can imagine this is a very exciting time for us, but also a great challenge."

Back at Highfield, the new spring/summer season features two new Nuffield co-productions, **"The Massive Tragedy of Madame Bovary!"** (1-19 Mar) and **"Noises Off"** (1-25 June), alongside six visiting productions by nationally and internationally renowned companies.

Sam Hodges said, *"Our new season kicks off with a daring new collaboration between the acclaimed comedy troupe Peepolykus and one of literature's most tragic women, Madame Bovary, an unlikely marriage which we're very happy to be celebrating with our old friends Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse and Royal & Derngate Northampton, and new ones in Bristol Old Vic. Played by a cast of just five – with a fair amount of doubling – this take on the traditional tale plays on the absurdity of re-imagining a well-known tragedy through the eyes of a well-known comic physical theatre company."*

"Our second major spring production sees Nuffield Associate Blanche McIntyre return to Southampton with her new production of one of the funniest plays ever written, Michael Frayn's Noises Off, on which we're teaming up with Northern Stage and Nottingham Playhouse."

Noises Off is a riotous comedy that serves up an irresistible glimpse into the onstage and backstage antics of a touring company as they hurtle towards a disastrous first night. In addition to Nuffield's co-productions, Nuffield's Youth Theatre will present a new modern adaptation of The Odyssey.



Nuffield's spring season also features a host of visiting companies who will present a collection of classics and popular titles retold, starting with the wicked Roald Dahl story **The Witches** (16-20 Feb) for February Half Term, followed by the American Classic **a Raisin in the Sun** (23-27 Feb), a ferocious portrayal of working class life on the cusp of the American civil rights era. In April, Nuffield will welcome Filter's explosive take on William Shakespeare's **Twelfth Night** (19-23 Apr) followed by **Get Carter** (26-30 Apr), Northern Stage's dark and stylish new adaptation of the classic Newcastle-noir thriller. In May, Nuffield hosts the farewell tour of the award winning West End hit **The 39 Steps** (3-7 May) and a new sparkling reimagining of the elegant, evocative and vivid classic **Brideshead Revisited** (10-14 May). Kneehigh's and Bristol Old Vic's co-production of **The Flying Lovers of Vitebsk** (5-9 Jul) will bring the spring/summer season to a close in July. Highfield resident association members can now save 10% off tickets when booking any main house theatre productions on production of the membership card. See details below

Highfield Residents' Association Offer Save 10% Off Theatre* Tickets at Nuffield

Book online at nuffieldtheatre.co.uk or call the Box Office on 023 8067 1771 quoting code HIGHFIELD16. If the discount does not show, please do not proceed but instead call, email (boxoffice@nuffieldtheatre.co.uk) or visit the Box Office.

*T&Cs: Offer is valid on full-price and (where applicable) over 65 Band B & C seats for all professional main-house theatre productions until 10/7/16. Tickets are subject to availability and for Highfield Residents' Association members only. Please note that this offer cannot be used with any other offer or booked retrospectively. Proof of membership will be required when picking up tickets.

For tickets and the full programme visit www.nuffieldtheatre.co.uk or contact our Box Office (open Mon – Sat 10am – 6pm) on 023 8067 1771.

Bill Sainsbury

WHAT'S THE TROUBLE NOW?

One of the useful contacts that NORA (National Organisation of Residents' Association) enjoys is its annual meeting with the senior planning civil servants at the Department for Communities and Local Government. Each time a team of six or so delegates from NORA members discuss the problems faced by residents over planning legislation, and the power our government exerts on the system is uncovered.

At our last meeting in September 2015 we raised some of the problems of the ever-increasing Permitted Development Rights (PDR). In particular we complained that developers intent on ghastly extensions have no need to discuss their proposals with neighbours, and provided the size is within the limits imposed, there's nothing that either the neighbours or the Local Planning Authority (LPA) can do. The civil servants sympathised, but intimated that 'ministers are not of a mind to change the system'. Another difficulty has arisen with the PDR that allows any retail shop of less than 150 sq.m. floor space to be converted into a café or restaurant without planning consent. Having made the change it is easy to obtain a premises licence to sell alcohol and play live and recorded music, and lo and behold you have an entertainment venue adjacent to numerous residents in a town centre street. However we learnt that such a change of use needs planning approval, not planning consent, but it then allows planners to impose conditions on hours of use, noise limits and control of odours, but only if the planning authority is wise to the need!

Residents must apply such pressure on their LPA.

Another concern is the impunity with which unscrupulous landlords make a large profit from changing a small family house into a House of Multiple Occupancy without the appropriate planning consent and housing licence. Even when the LPA takes effective action, the profit made can only be confiscated when the activity is declared criminal in a court, which can take a year or so, so that all the profit made in that time is not liable for confiscation. We've been told that the only way to capture all the profit made is by making the breach of planning legislation criminal, which 'ministers are not of a mind to do'.

The latest DCLG (Dept. for Communities and Local Government) proposals are directed at making it easier for developers to gain planning consents for 'affordable housing'. If only the new 'Building Standards' recommended by the DCLG were mandatory, which would ensure that all new dwellings would have rooms of adequate sizes, but the legislation is only imposed once the LPA adopts it. **So again it is up to local communities and local councillors to pressure their councils to adopt the new standards**, otherwise we'll have even more poky flats and miniature houses.

There are probably just as many problems with licensing as there are with planning legislation. A real bugbear is the conflict between the two. That licensing authorities can grant hours of opening far in excess of those imposed in planning conditions on a premises, and for both of them to be legal is one of the absolutely absurd arrangements decided by parliament. True it may be that planning conditions are paramount, but trying to explain that to landlords and to objecting residents is not easy. The new entertainment legislation allowing amplified music from 0800 to 2300 hours without a licence is another absurdity, it means that when there is a problem of noise and nuisance, residents affected by a venue with a liquor licence can seek a licensing review, **but they need to collect enough evidence to justify their objections**. If the place has no premises licence and is just

a noisy café, then sadly **residents have to use the Noise Act to try to stop the nuisance**, and it's not easy to prove a Statutory Nuisance.

And then we have the continuing nuisance of noisy pedestrians at night, anti-social behaviour and street fouling, which should be managed by appropriate policing, but that too is inadequate because police funding is declining too. Two measures can mitigate the problems. Licensing Authorities can impose a **Late Night Levy** on licensed premises open after 2300 hours, with up to 70% going to the police to help provide night controls. Even better is the **Early Morning Restriction Order** that obliges all premises to close at an early specified hour. Several towns and cities have introduced the Levy but so far none has introduced an EMRO, but **residents can pressurise the police to seek these remedies**. We must wait and see.

In the meantime, our local Accident & Emergency Departments are over-run by drunks at weekends, and doctors are not attracted to serve in such departments, lowering their standards of care for us all.

So there are some things that residents can do to manage and prevent damage to their own environment, but they need to be **well researched, well-argued and well-organised**. Local councillors need resident support otherwise they aren't elected, so **pressure at the right time on the right issues on the right people** are the way forward.

Alan Shrank Chair of NORA

DISCOUNT OFFERS TO MEMBERS

NEW DISCOUNT OFFERS SINCE APRIL 2015:

Good Looks , Portswood High Street 20% discount	8055 8555
Kate's Cafe Lounge , Portswood High Street Half price cakes with purchase of one hot drink (Mon to Friday, 2.30 to 4.30 pm)	8058 1872
The Highfield Natural Health Centre , 17 Highfield Lane £5 off standard fee for all treatments	8055 4076
Nuffield Theatre 10% discount on all main house productions up to 10/7/16	8067 1771
Coffee#1 , Portswood High Street 10% off all food and drinks	8055 7396

LONG STANDING DISCOUNT OFFERS TO MEMBERS:

(see MEMBERS BENEFITS page of HRA website
www.highfieldresidents.org.uk for details of these offers):

Cenos Restaurant & Wine Bar	8055 4400
Gandhi's Restaurant	8055 3121
Baan Mai Thai Cuisine	8067 6063
Mango Thai Tapas	8067 9977
Highfield House Hotel	8055 4223
Kuti's, Oxford Street	8022 1585
Noorani, Fair Oak	8060 1901
The Pier Thai Restaurant	8033 9211
Lucy's Cakes	07796 953952
Jack and Will Bakery	8058 4772
Sheila Tomlinson Yoga	07963 338923
Scoops Ice Cream Parlour	8055 9988

Please email: highfieldracomms@gmail.com for other discounts you would like us to try!

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

APPLICATION FOR TICKETS FOR SUMMER PARTY

I would like tickets at £15 per head

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

I enclose a cheque for £ :

Please send applications to Jill Baston, 27 Highfield Crescent, Highfield, SO17 1SG, **enclosing a stamped addressed envelope**. Please make cheques payable to Highfield Residents' Association. Please do not send cash in the post.



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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 _____

Postcode (please include) _____ Date _____

Address _____

Tel No. _____

I enclose my membership fee of £ 5 : 00 and a voluntary donation of £ : Thank you!

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; 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.

Newsletter Team: Jerry Gillen and Caroline Knight.

Contributions welcome. Please send to 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.