

**Minutes HRA Committee Meeting
Held on 14 October 2019
At Highfield House Hotel 7.30pm**



Committee members present: Ken Burtenshaw, Steve Connolly, Angela Seymour, Adrian Vinson, Nicolla Martin, Barbara Claridge, Nadine Johnson

Attendees: Roger Brown, Andi Sutcliffe, Shirley Effany, John Arnold, Cllr John Savage, Kate Fay (UOS), Tom O'Connor (PRG), Nick Bacon, Keith Walker, Leigh Seymour, Cllr Gordon Cooper, Chris McGeehan (SCC HMO Senior Surveyor), PC 27399 Grant, PC 20568 Passfield, Sue Ingham

HonSec Introduced Professor Roger Brown as Interim Chair for this meeting.

Roger noted with sadness Jerry's absence from the meeting due to his recent hospitalisation and wished him a speedy recovery on behalf of the meeting committee and attendees.

1. **7.30** Welcome, declaration of interests (Note: the presentation on HMO Licensing will be of a general not specific nature) – none declared
2. **7.35** Apologies: Jerry Gillen, Martin Benning, Jon Walsh, Balbinder Basi, Pravin Sood,
3. **7.40** Minutes and Amendments of the previous meeting held on 9 September 2019
The minutes had been circulated previously and there were no amendments
4. **7.45** Matters Arising: Planning Application Brookvale Road - See 9 c.2 in Planning Report
5. **7.50** Presentation **HMO Licensing** with reference to Highfield – Chris McGeehan, SCC Principal HMO Licensing Surveyor, followed by questions. Chris McGeehan had agreed to come and explain the HMO Licensing Scheme with special reference to Highfield.

After presentation: HMO Members had raised problems in the recent past regarding large student parties spilling out into the streets and going on until the small hours, abuse of neighbours' gardens; bins on the pavement etc.

Questions:

- Is there a public register of HMOs in Highfield? (all of Southampton?) – *Yes see presentation notes*
- Is there a ratio of HMO properties in any one district? (this is concerning loss of housing stock and over-population of students). How is this ensured? – *The ratio is an average across a wide area not in individual streets*
- How is enforcement carried out if there is a breach of HMO Licensing rules? *Only one officer for this huge task. There are currently so many new applications and renewals (approx. 3500 with 100 still to process) that the focus at present is on issuing the Licences rather than enforcement. When the backlog is cleared, then enforcement will have a higher priority*
- Does a property have to be registered before students take up occupancy? *No, but if a property*

fails to meet the HMO Standards it has to do so before a Licence is granted

- New build or redevelopment of old sites: HMO saturating the area closest to Southampton University? *Agreed but National guidelines are being followed*
- Bins on the street? *SCC took the view of another council which failed to effectively control bins with fixed penalty notices as it resulted in negative costs.*

The HMO Scheme is supposed to be self-funding but there is not enough 'man-power'. Chris explained that this concept covers a five-year period and once all of the licence applications have been processed it should improve.

See Attachment with Chris' Presentation for further notes regarding HMO Licensing in Southampton

hmo@southampton.gov.uk

Additional Planning Guidance, which is separate from Licensing, for HMOs can be found here:

SCC Planning Guidance for HMOs:

<http://www.southampton.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/supplementary-planning/planning-hmo.aspx>

Also SCC HMO FAQs:

http://www.southampton.gov.uk/images/houses-in-multiple-occupation-questions_tcm63-368983.pdf

Roger thanked Chris McGeehan for attending

Post-meeting Note: Chris reported to the HonSec that "further today (16 Oct) I was told there has been some more movement on fixed penalty notices, and I have fed back the residents' frustration about the lack of enforcement action which has been acknowledged."

6. **8.10 Discussion - Police Liaison PC 20568 Passfield** – Debbie Passfield kindly agreed to come to our meeting. The invitation to the police to attend was due to Jerry meeting Kate Wright (Police Officer) on 30 September at a property in Westbourne Crescent when she was investigating a local burglary. **Discussion to take place about establishing an effective communication scheme between the Police and Community groups to alert people of such matters. How to coordinate?** Debbie invited to comment then Nadine to explain HRA Communication channels? Or vice versa?

Three Police Officers introduced themselves before the meeting started, this included the Area Sergeant. PC Passfield and PC Grant stayed for most of the meeting. Their input was particularly helpful and informative. There had been 12 burglaries or attempted in the Portswood area in the past 3 / 4 weeks. This was a big increase on previous months. They advised that all anti-social behaviour should be reported on-line although police attendance might not result due to police shortages.

Several social media links were given:

The current Twitter is **@SouthamptonCops** but there are possible plans for a more local Twitter account. Details will be advertised in due course via HRA Social media. A very good police Twitter account is **@HedgeEndCops**

All residents were encouraged to sign up to Hampshire Alerts via: <https://www.hampshirealert.co.uk/>

With regards to the crime searching tool the link to pass to your residents is <https://www.police.uk/>
Then add your post code and scroll down into the details.

Nadine will be re-posting any relevant local information on HRA social media now that she has these links.

Roger thanked the police for attending and hoped that a representative would be able to attend every HRA Meeting.

7. **8.30** Prof. Roger Brown – update on Southampton Common Foundation/Forum

Southampton Common Forum Update

The AGM of SCF is to be held on 26 Nov probably at the university.

The forum acts as a focus for the community who have an interest in being involved in The Common. Always appreciate the interest that HRA takes in the business of SCF.

Three areas of focus at the moment

1. Green Travel. SCC are now looking more strategically at GT across the whole Common, The Avenue and Lovers' Walk. There may be an announcement from SCC shortly

2. The future of The Hawthorns. This is a sad venue at the moment that has rather lost its way. The council have indicated to staff that it may re-fashion the purpose of The Hawthorns and let other interested parties (Like the Foundation) take it over

3. There is now agreement for SCF to apply to the Charity Commission to establish a new charitable trust (a Charitable Incorporated Organisation) to work with the council across the whole site. The proposed name is Southampton Common Foundation

Other news

There has been some joint research on the effect of different types of lighting on the bat population ((Uni and SCC). This is relevant to Green Travel

The work on the Little Common entrance has begun. The root bridge is under construction and it is hoped the work will be completed by the end of the month.

The autumn programme of volunteering has begun - details on SCF Facebook

8. **8.40** University Liaison (*Kate Fay*)

Kate explained that her role at the University is Communications Officer within the Public Affairs Team and my focus is Estates work.

There is a new Vice-Chancellor is Professor Mark E. Smith. He started 1 October

The new Centenary Building is in use but hasn't been officially opened yet. It is in use by students and teaching staff. Planned official opening for March 2020, depends on a lot of factors so I will keep the group updated.

The National Infrastructure Laboratory was officially opened by Andrew Haines, CEO of Network Rail (end of September). The building houses a large centrifuge and a reinforced hard floor to test large structures. The building marks the completion of our Boldrewood campus.

It is Week 2 of term and students are just settling in. There have been only two noise disturbances one in private accommodation and one in halls. Dealt with by the Uni.

A question was asked about whether the Uni was proactive about educating students about the need to keep bins off the streets and their responsibility to re-cycle properly and how to be a good neighbour. Kate agreed to check what messages have gone out and will speak to the Student Communications Team about this and will report back.

A question was asked about the new multi-story car park (and whether this was going ahead?). Kate replied that that she thought the new VC might have an opinion on this and all options are still being discussed and considered.

9. Reports

a. **8.50** Finance (*MB*) Post-meeting communication: funds are healthy

b. **8.55** Membership (*NM*) Data Base = 496; Paid up = 445; Rolling = 363
Thanks to Nicolla

c. **9.00** Planning Issues (*AS*) Report circulated

c.1 E-Mail received from a resident to say the planning application adjacent to 15, Oakhurst had been refused and to thank HRA for help in the matter

c.2 Following lobbying, the application for 30 Brookvale Road has been withdrawn pending amendment and re-submission

c.3 E-mail from a resident asking HRA to object to Planning Application for a 3-bedroom house on land adjacent to 16 Church Lane
Discussion took place regarding this application. It was agreed that the committee needed to be more familiar with the HRA Planning Policy in order to know how best to respond. Nadine reminded us that this policy was available on the Website under the 'Our Documents' page and on the Planning Page. The Policy will be re-circulated to the Committee Members. Angela suggested that she would look at the plot in question. Roger gave a reminder that in addition to any HRA response, individuals were able to make representation to any planning application.

Thanks to Angela for the Planning Report

10. **9.10** Website / Facebook (*NJ*) Nadine reported that everything was going well; that Events and News were frequently updated; Members Benefits had changed – 3 had been lost - Crafty Fox, Kuti's Brasserie Oxford Street (there is no discount for Kuti's Royal Pier Brasserie) and Simply Eat, but 3 have been added including The Bayleaf Kitchen in the city centre, Vibe Hairdressers and Garden Restaurant in Swaythling. A new vegan café had opened in October books on a Monday from 10 am to 4 pm.

Facebook was doing well with 278 followers and 240 likes – but Nadine asked HRA Committee Members and visitors from the meeting to 'like' the HRA page. Nadine also asked for any local news to be sent through to her for posting. The next newsletter should highlight the discounts.

11. 9.20 A.O.B.

- a. Nick Bacon - traffic lights out of sync at junction of Highfield Avenue and The Avenue; large vehicles travelling down Highfield Ave where there is a 7.5-ton limit. Who enforces?
Post meeting reply from Cllr Savage:

I contacted officers on 2 points around this junction and the compliance control regarding Overweight HGVs entering Highfield from the avenue. Here is the response:

“There is a high level of traffic using this section of The Avenue, especially at peak times as vehicle drivers leave the city after work. Unfortunately this can mean that traffic can queue across the section where Highfield Avenue meets The Avenue. Unfortunately a box junction marking would not assist in these circumstances. The purpose of a box junction marking is to keep this area free from queuing traffic. While this would prevent vehicles queuing along The Avenue, it would also prevent vehicles exiting Highfield Avenue from entering and queuing in the box junction marking as well.

In relation to the changes to the timing phases to the Burgess Road / Winchester Road traffic lights, I am copying this email to our colleagues in the ITS traffic signals team to respond to this point.

There is a 7.5 t weight limit for vehicles travelling south onto Highfield Avenue. The measures that are in place for assuring compliance are: an advance notice of the weight limit sign for south bound traffic, followed by the Highfield “Gateway” signs which include both the commencement of the 30mph speed limit and the 7.5 t weight limit.

The enforcement of moving traffic offences, which would include contravention of the width restriction is the responsibility of the Police. You may therefore wish to contact your local Police team to discuss this matter further.”

Cllr Savage will continue to pursue. Any dash-cam footage of the congestion problems or HGVs in breach of traffic regulations can contact me. HRA members please help with this issue if possible. (Note Nick could contact PC Passfield about the large vehicles?)”

- b. Steven Johnston – a zebra crossing on Highfield Lane – opportunity for lights or a lollipop person?

This item was deferred as Steve was unable to attend the meeting.

- c. Cllr Savage announced that there was to be a new initiative - there was to be a surgery for Portswood councillors once a month on a Saturday. The next dates were to be 2 Nov and 7 Dec. at a room in October books between 1 -2.30pm.
- d. Ken Burtenshaw- point of information. He was preparing a short article for the next Newsletter on the 400th Anniversary of the Mayflower.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.01pm

The date of the next meeting is Monday 11 November at 7.30pm, Highfield Hotel.