**Minutes HRA Committee Meeting**

**Held on 9 December 2019**

**At Highfield House Hotel 7.30pm**

**Committee members present:** Jerry Gillen, Angela Seymour, Stephen Connolly, Nicolla Martin, Adrian Vinson, Ken Burtenshaw, Nadine Johnson, Barbara Claridge

**Attending:** Roger Brown, Leigh Seymour, Cllr Gordon Cooper, Nick Bacon, Matthew Claisse, Tom O’Connor, Jon Walsh (Uni Rep).

1. **Welcome, declaration of interests –** Jerry welcomed everyone to the meeting especially new members. There were no declarations of interest.
2. **Apologies:** Martin Benning, Cllr Savage, Kate Fay, Sue Ingham, Steven Johnson.
3. **Minutes and Amendments** of the previous meeting held on 11 November 2019. The minutes had been circulated previously. There was one amendment, replacement first sentence: 6a) The university does not operate a scheme like that at Bristol University which had been in the news recently but the University proactively engages with the police.

The minutes were approved.

1. **Matters Arising**:

4a. Kate Fay to report on the department meeting regarding communication sent out to students living off campus (bins). This item was deferred to item 5 as Kate Fay was not present.

4b. HonSec reports there has been no response from any street wanting a ‘Bring your Bin Back in’ poster.

1. Item 6 **Community Matters** was taken in advance of Item 5 **(University Liaison)** as Jon Walsh had not yet arrived
   1. October Books – red poppies *(JG)*

Jerry spoke of this matter: people had mentioned to him about October Books not offering red poppies in the run-up to Remembrance Day but only white ones. They were offended. Jerry had spoken to staff in the shop last year and he had hoped it would change this year. He spoke to the people in the shop again this year. We have a close relationship with the bookstore. Would an idea be to ask the HonSec to write a letter asking if they could sell red poppies as well and that we had nothing against the white poppy? Steven Connolly commented that it would be a good compromise, then they could agree or disagree. Matthew Claisse added that the store could please itself but if they wanted our support maybe they would consider. Nicolla added that their name, associated with ours, was delivered in 4000 Newsletters three times a year. Roger Brown asked if a meeting might be held rather than send a letter. Any letter should be even and fair – we would welcome a conversation. The HonSec read out a statement received by e-mail from Nadine Johnson who advised caution, stressing the point that HRA was non-political and cannot let individual political views and judgements drive and define HRA policy and that we should remain neutral as HRA is non-political. October Books provide a lot of either free or nominally priced events that are open to everyone. They have a lot of support. As an Association, we ought to be celebrating this for the good of our community. There was some discussion about whether we were making a political stand and it was generally thought not; it was respecting a principle.

Further discussion included personal choice and HRA representing the membership.

Jon Walsh advised caution as it might be a door best not opened.

However the meeting overall supported asking the HonSec to send a letter.

* 1. SCF update following the AGM; The Hawthorns *(RB)*

Prof Brown provided an update since the SCF AGM. The overall achievements of SCF in the proceeding twelve months had been upbeat but the current stage was marked by delays in progress in development planning completion, delays in funding offers and so reluctantly The Foundation application for charitable status was not going ahead at the stage. It was important to implement those actions which had already been agreed. Four further SCC/SCF liaison meetings had been planned, running up to Feb 2020. The Little Common entrance looks very nice. Awaiting a sign about no cycling (on soft path).

* 1. Petition for safety crossing measures on Highfield Lane *(SJ).*

Steven was not present at the meeting, but everyone was reminded that a link to the petition about a new crossing on Highfield Lane (for safety and to slow down the traffic) was on the Newsletter and our social media. Cllr Cooper said it was advantageous to approach SCC with data from a petition rather than without such back-up data.

* 1. Parking on pavements in Portswood

Cllr Cooper spoke to say he had already been in contact with our correspondent. The matter concerned parking and management of deliveries along Portswood High Street. Cllr Cooper offered to take this forward to council. (Action: Cllr Cooper)

**HonSec Note: This is a link to the SCC Website: Parking Restrictions where residents can report illegal parking -** <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/roads-parking/parking/parking-restrictions.aspx>

1. **University Liaison:** Jon Walsh  **–**

Jon reported that their team was still one person down but that they were working on a new communication strategy for the next intake of Freshers (Sept 2020), one idea being to write and distribute a ‘Living in the Community’ pamphlet. There had been a pre-Christmas Concert. Money had been raised for Mencap. The new swimming changing rooms in the Jubilee Sports Hall had been opened. The new VC had been formally installed along with the recent Graduation Ceremonies that had been taking place. The Uni Annual Travel Survey had reported a 9% drop in single use cars.

A HRA member attended the meeting to follow up on communications of recent weeks between himself and HRA committee over student anti-social behaviour. Jon Walsh reported that resource, time and effort had been in place; a robust effort to support the community; and that the university does take disciplinary action. The member acknowledged these efforts but added that while residents were happy to welcome students to their community, some issues arose time and again. He wanted to encourage the university to be more pro-active in this respect.

He commented that it seemed that it was always the established residents who had to do all the work and reporting, and he suggested that a collaborative approach between the University, the Students’ Union, the HRA and landlords might be the way forward.

The HonSec is to contact the SCC HMO Team about Landlord’s responsibilities for the anti-social behaviour of student tenants (Action: HonSec)

The HRA member welcomed the opportunity to meet Jon Walsh and discuss possible future courses of action with him.

1. **Reports**

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| * 1. Finance: Changing Bank proposal; insurance *(MB)*: volunteering   There have been no significant changes in the financial position of HRA. The plan is to move our account to a Community Directplus Current Account with the Co-operative Bank - this will allow us to do on-line banking and have more immediate access to balances etc. There would be no need to change the current way that we collect membership subscriptions unless this was seen as an advantage for some members or the payment of expenses.  Martin is liaising with Mark Batchelor (HRA Accountant) about his views on the change of accounts and the transfer of bank details such as monthly statements to Martin, but has not yet had a reply. HRA’s end of financial year is December 31st. After this time a full set of accounts will be prepared in readiness for the AGM.  The HRA Public liability insurance had been expensive this year but was necessary to cover any HRA events and volunteering which includes activities such as delivering Newsletters and CommonSense. Best value insurance is to be researched before November 2020. |
| * 1. Membership *(NM)*   Nicolla Martin reported membership figures as follows:  Data Base = 498; Paid up = 432; Rolling = 412. The Newsletter had brought in at least 6 new members. Recent HRA involvement with residents had brought in 3 members (new and lapsed) |
| * 1. Planning issues *(AS)*. The Planning Report has been circulated   JG: Planning on *15 Orchards Way* had been refused due to its strong conservation status. The application was for an extension on an end-of-terrace iconic terrace which would have changed the nature of the area (article 4 objection)  JG: *11 Russell Place* – the front wall adjustment seemed to be stalled. Tom O’Connor (PRG) reported that Mr Ahmed was seeking a compromise and had held two meetings with neighbours and planners. JG said that at least the wall should be lowered, the ornaments removed and the colour of the bricks was not right. Tom reported that there was a difficulty as the front wall matched both side walls to the property and had been in place for 15 years. Tom advised that HRA waited to see what the compromise might be. JG agreed.  JG: *8 Westridge* hearing was tomorrow (10 December) JG not able to attend  Another HRA member joined the meeting to explain about a problem in the detached property next to his at 13 Grosvernor Road. This house had a long history and various planning applications had been refused over a number of years. The property had deteriorated seriously over the past three years and now squatters had moved in. Homeless people had been hanging about. Not a safe structure. He is concerned for his family. In the past month the police have been involved and the house owner, Mr Singh, came with some ’heavies’ to turn out the squatters. The house is vacant, although some committee members thought some of Mr Singh’s Polish workers had been living there. It was agreed that the situation needed Council intervention. Cllr Cooper agreed to look into it. (Action: Cllr Cooper)  Lettings boards – (see supporting papers). Angela Seymour had raised this issue. Boards had been put up on a neighbouring property to hers’ advertising other properties , not the neighbouring house itself. However, due to swift action by Angela the board had been removed. |
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1. **Website / Facebook *(NJ)***

Nadine reported Facebook had 255 likes and 343 followers. She had had a query from someone asking to join HRA who didn’t live within the Highfield boundary. According to our Constitution (this is posted on HRA Website under Our Documents) to become a member, one must live in Highfield. She mentioned that people from outside Highfield might be interested in joining HRA to take advantage of all of our member discounts. This issue of eligibility for HRA membership and the Constitution will be discussed at the January meeting.

There was a new discount available in Portswood High street: Pho Vietnam

1. **Newsletter** November 2019 edition: any feedback? *(SJ*.*)* Steve was unable to attend this meeting. Many thanks were expressed to Steve for producing the Newsletter and to Nicolla for her outstanding organisation of the delivery rounds. Positive comments had been made to the HonSec on meeting people when delivering.
2. **A.O.B.**
   1. Squatters at 13 Grosvenor Road (Dr Homes) (Taken in Planning Agenda Item 7.)
   2. Future dates: AGM Thursday 16th April 2020
   3. Summer Event with Portswood Residents’ Gardens: Sunday 26 July 2020

JG asked for AOB round the table.

-There is to be a new vegetarian restaurant in Portswood

-Matthew Claisse commented that the HMO Licensing scheme did not seem to be working in that when it was set up, it was supposed to be self-financing (fees paying for the service)

-Prof Brown welcomed Jerry back to HRA

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.34pm

Mulled wine and mince pies were enjoyed by all who stayed for the social. Thank you HRA!

The date of the next meeting is Monday 13 January 2020 at 7.30pm, Highfield Hotel.