

Minutes HRA Committee Meeting
Held on 9 March 2020
At Highfield House Hotel 7.30pm



Committee members present:

Martin Benning, Stephen Connolly, Ken Burtenshaw, Adrian Vinson, Nicolla Martin, Nadine Johnson, Barbara Claridge

Attending:

Roger Brown, Greg Churcher (SCC), Tom O'Connor (PRG), Andi Sutcliffe, Shirley Effany, Cllr Gordon Cooper, Peter Loizou, Graham Linecar, Karen Edwards (PRG Planning), Nick Bacon, Jon Walsh (Uni Liaison)

- 1. Welcome, declaration of interest:** Martin Benning who was standing in for Jerry Gillen opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Jerry was indisposed and sent his apologies. The new PRG rep, Karen Edwards, was welcomed as Tom O'Connor has retired from PRG
- 2. Apologies:** Jerry Gillen, Simon Hill, Dave White, Cllr Savage, Cllr Mitchell, Sue Ingham, Steven Ossont
- 3. Minutes and Amendments** of the previous meeting held on 10 February 2020
The minutes had been circulated previously. Martin commented that the response from SCC following the discussion about local graffiti was not acceptable (as reported in the Minutes of the February meeting, Cllr Savage). Peter Loizou reported that members of his team had removed graffiti in Brookvale Road as he was concerned that the Council were taking no responsibility. Greg Churcher (SCC) offered to send the Secretary a contact for BT (phone utility boxes) to inform them of the graffiti problems. The Secretary will reply to the council that HRA do not think their response was acceptable
- 4. Matters Arising**
Adrian Vinson believed that the lengthy discussion on the revised Constitution at the previous meeting had concluded with agreement that the words, 'subject to the approval by the committee' had been added to the clause about membership outside of the Highfield Association boundary. There remained confusion about the powers and authority of the main committee and the executive committee. AV asked if the issue could again go back to the executive as a concern: 1. Outside Highfield membership applications 'should have a safeguard' 2. To establish a clear role for the main committee. He asked that this could be minuted
- 5. Presentation:** Greg Churcher SCC Strategic Cycle Scheme Proposal
Martin introduced Greg Churcher (SCC) who presented The Strategic Cycle Expansion Scheme (The Avenue and Lovers Walk). Full details of the two schemes were available on the council website and had been widely circulated in advance of the meeting. Following his presentation Greg responded to questions. Martin thanked Greg for the presentation and Greg then left the meeting

HRA Committee response to cycle scheme (to be collated by Barbara Claridge). First to speak in support of the proposals was Roger Brown. He explained why he had changed his view, particularly on the Lovers Walk Planning Application. The previous times this had been presented, HRA had objected but now the LW scheme was part of a much larger strategic scheme based on data. He felt that The Avenue scheme would take some cycle traffic away from LW but that the widening was now also necessary. This Planning Application had the advantage of an ecology survey and compensation plan, off-setting tarmac with

increased green spaces. There was no alternative as cycling in the city had to be supported. He summed up by saying that the schemes would greatly enhance cycling opportunities for a marginal loss of green space. He recommended that the committee take this view

Adrian Vinson questioned whether shared routes (cyclists and pedestrians) ever worked

Cllr Cooper replied that they were widely established and used safely in other parts of the city

AV then commented that cyclists often rode on pavements and that, as parts of The Avenue scheme involved shared pedestrian/cyclist use on a pavement, it would encourage cyclists to think it was acceptable to cycle on pavements everywhere. He conceded that it was a difficult problem

Ken Burtenshaw asked for clarification over the Winn Road junction and new crossing

Graham Linecar expressed the exact opposite view to Roger Brown, stating that his main objection was landscape impact. The scheme on LW was damaging to an attractive woodland and grassland. The volume of use described in the council scheme was misleading and stated that patterns vary throughout the day and university term and holiday periods. The widening of the path was not necessary, pedestrians make up the majority of users, cyclists are in the minority. He also felt that behavioural change and cooperation was difficult to achieve. There were other ways to open up the path by maintaining the margins as they were supposed to be, repairing the surface and addressing the real problems

Peter Loizou commented that there should be lighting on the southern section of LW as there had been previous incidents of drugs, thieves, rape and abuse. Lighting and widening would improve safety. Ken Burtenshaw agreed

The Secretary reminded everyone to make their individual responses via the SCC portal and asked that all committee comments should be sent to her by 26 March (this date was later amended to 16 March for any comments relating to LW)

6. **The City Plan:** HRA's view (to be collated by Nadine Johnson)

Cllr Cooper spoke of the City Vision. Full details of this and the SCC questionnaire had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The consultation was mandatory to councils throughout the UK: a legal requirement. It would guide the future development of the city for a minimum 15-year period. This was just the start of the process and the consultation would run between January and April 2020. Nadine asked that all comments should be sent to her by 31 March so that an HRA Committee response could be submitted. Martin thanked Cllr Cooper

7. **Questions to Councillors /** Information from Councillors (JS, GC, LM)

None. Cllr Cooper left the meeting at this point

8. **Planning Report** (AS had prepared the report but was not present at the meeting)

- a. Roger Brown gave an update of the OTRA Committee decisions regarding the Planning Application for 5, Blenheim Place. A1 status had been granted by SCC Planning panel. OTRA could accept the business use status change, as other dwellings in the Triangle were registered as businesses. The main issue was over the granting of A1 status and the impact on the Conservation Area. OTRA had engaged a solicitor to advise them and within approximately a week, would know how best to proceed. Jerry had written to the SCC Conservation Officer asking for an urgent combined meeting with other conservation areas as his main concern was the potential erosion of CAs

- b. Graham Linecar highlighted a Planning Application, outside of the Highfield area regarding Horseshoe Bridge, where access to the waterfront was under threat
- c. Martin agreed to speak to Jerry about 61, Highfield Crescent
- d. Broadlands Road was not in Highfield
- e. Peter Loizou spoke about his aim to buy the Blockbusters site and redevelop it, retaining the building. His proposal involved converting and making offices on the first floor and small business units, possibly a restaurant and shops on the ground floor. He was currently working with city planners and hoped to submit a Planning Application soon. He hoped for HRA support but Martin explained that details of the Planning Application were needed before HRA could decide one way or the other

9. **University Liaison** (JW)

Jon Walsh advised that it was cycle-to-work week between 23/29 March. One of the Cycle Planning Consultation meetings was to take place in the SU building at Uni the following evening (10 March). The University had been ranked 5th in the World for Nursing. The Science and Engineering Festival had been postponed due to Coronavirus. The Stoneham Tower student residential block was due for demolition in 2020 but this might be postponed

10. **Reports**

- a. **Finance** (MB) – This year there was the opportunity to move £2000 from the Current Account into the fighting fund (Savings). This was mainly due to increased membership, member donations and advertising. Martin confirmed that HRA was changing bank to the Coop Bank
- b. **Membership** (NM) – Nicolla presented the membership numbers: Database = 498; Paid-up = 435; Rolling = 32. Martin thanked Nicolla for her contribution

11. **Website / Facebook** (NJ)

Nadine reported that the Website was in order. Facebook had 14 new followers and the total was now up to 380. Between Jerry and herself (50/50), £1000 in advertising revenue had been gained recently. Martin praised Nadine, and Jerry in his absence, for this fantastic achievement

There was a new 10% discount on food at Viceroy (previously Gandhi) and the 20% discount at the Café down the Lane would end in March

A brief discussion, raised by Adrian Vinson, then took place about the poor state of the road surface on the 'lane'. This was to be passed onto councillors

12. **Spring Newsletter** (SO)

Steven Ossont had sent apologies to the meeting but the Newsletter was to be published in the agreed timescale. All of the proposed articles had been sent in by contributors

13. **A.O.B.**

- a. AGM - Recommendation by the Executive: Prof. Roger Brown to become Chair – this was loudly applauded
- b. Roger Brown suggested that HRA should purchase a gift for the retiring Chair, Jerry, and that the officers would arrange this and it would be presented at the AGM

There being no further business the meeting closed at **20:53**

The date of the next Committee Meeting is **Monday 11 May at 7.30pm**, Highfield Hotel.

Note: there will be no HRA meeting in August unless for urgent business