



**Highfield Residents' Association**  
**Committee Note in lieu of September 2020 Committee Meeting**

<https://www.highfieldresidents.org.uk/>

[facebook.com/Highfield-Residents-Association](https://www.facebook.com/Highfield-Residents-Association)

### **Acting Chair's Comments**

Once again HRA's honorary officers have been busy on community matters even though the Committee/Association is still unable to meet...

### **COVID-19**

As members will have seen in the media, there is (understandable) concern about the infection risks of large numbers of students returning to university shortly. The Acting Chair has written to the University and the City Council seeking clarification of the steps that are being taken to minimise the risks and deal quickly and effectively with any outbreaks. This was the response from Jon Walsh:

Monday 21<sup>st</sup> September. Any changes to government guidance will need to be responded to and therefore may change some aspects of the Universities Covid response.

1. *Is a purely voluntary/awareness raising/advisory approach sufficient, especially for those living or moving off-campus?*

The testing of students and staff will be voluntary. We are not able to enforce testing but will do all we can to encourage uptake, for example students moving into halls accommodation will be given collection tubules and registration instructions with their keys, clearly establishing our expectation that they will register. We are working with the police and supporting additional hours of overtime so that they can provide support around halls in our welcome week and additional patrols in the Portswood area for the start of term, we are also supporting the production of instructional videos by the police which we will share with student, one of which is specifically addressing house parties in light of the rule of 6 and will focus heavily on the Liverpool student who was issued a £10,000 fine for organising a house party.

We have a new information sharing agreement this year which will allow us to discuss problem house with the police following complaints or concerns a new code of conduct and a new set of letters to be sent to households following concerns. I should stress however that all interventions by the University will be following a complaint, any concerns about house parties currently happening should be directed to the police via the 101 service.

2. *Can you tell us more about the stay safe campaign?*

The web pages with all the information can be found at [www.southampton.ac.uk/staysafe](http://www.southampton.ac.uk/staysafe) It has guidance for staff and students, including an expectation of behaviours for both. We are also working on a code of conduct that will be ready in time for students arriving. Our Student Communications team have sent a series of emails to explain the expectations we have of our students both at University, travelling to and from campus and within our halls of residents and their own homes. We have a variety of messages that will be played on screens across campus and on our UniLink busses. There is also a lot of additional material on campus from additional signage to lamp post banners.



3. Your letter mentions the (very welcome) saliva testing initiative. Are there any plans to roll this out and not just for students and staff who may be showing symptoms?

The tests are not purely designed for those showing symptoms, we will be testing all staff that work in close proximity to other people, students and four schools (staff and students) across Southampton. We will also be limiting the number of people on our campus and accurately recording any visitors in line with the government's test and trace scheme. This combined with the testing should ensure that any chains of transmission will be broken almost immediately by delivering rapid test results. However, this is a mass testing pilot and not a replacement for the government's existing testing approach for those showing symptoms. As the pilot is being supported by government any rolling out to additional groups will have to be supported by them.

4. Could the University work with landlords and perhaps the University could work here with Barry Olson and his colleagues in the City Council? They might also link up with Environmental Health and the Police on the action to be taken where there is a clear breach of the guidelines.

As previously mentioned, we are already working very closely with the Police and SCC and plan to continue with this. We realise that the quick and efficient sharing of information during this time is vital to the safety of our staff, student and the local community. In terms of landlords we do work with them in terms of our housing fairs, and usually the same (very helpful) landlords and companies continue to engage and work with the University.

5. How exactly will the University be monitoring the impact of the reopening on Covid-19 on and off campus (where it concerns students and staff)?

The university will be monitoring the impact of our students returning through the extended saliva testing programme, through regular conversations with the police, local council and NHS, through the national test and trace system.

The University has had to respond and adapt to this changing world very quickly. We will be monitoring every decision we have implemented to make our campuses as COVID secure. Our web page will be constantly evolving with the changing landscape so I would encourage you to please keep checking those pages. Also you are welcome to contact me with any questions you may have.

Best wishes

*Jon Walsh, Head of Public Affairs, University of Southampton*

Similarly, a response to HRA Acting Chair's questions from Councillor Lorna Fielker, Cabinet Member Health and Adult Care.

6 September 2020

Dear Roger,

Thank you for your email and apologies for the delay in responding. I have copied your email below to ensure I respond to each point that requires a Southampton City Council response.

#### 1. **Monitoring the Impact**

Your letter mentions the (very welcome) saliva testing initiative. Are there any plans to roll this out and not just for students and staff who may be showing symptoms?"



The saliva testing is part of a pilot into saliva testing that is being funded by government. It is a weekly test for all University of Southampton students not just those displaying symptoms. It should identify people before they display symptoms or are asymptomatic, who should then isolate. It is also being trialled in 4 schools in the city. It is hopeful that it is successful, and funding provided to enable whole population testing.

## 2. Taking remedial action?

Lorna referred me to the Southampton COVID-19 Outbreak Control Plan which sets out how the Council will work with its partners in the event of an outbreak. These include the various organisations represented on the Health Protection Board, including the two universities. But whilst there are references to the universities and other education sites as 'high risk' settings, I cannot find any information that is specifically about how the Council and the University (and the health authority) will work together if there are problems (this is from the July document which was to be reviewed by 10th August). Is there anything you can tell us about how precisely the partnership will work in the event of an outbreak, or indeed about the form, extent and intensity of routine liaison between the two bodies (and the health authority) on this issue?

The Health Protection Board meets very regularly to discuss controlling infection within the city. A set of actions has been developed by the Public Health Team with the partners that include the university on how they manage any identified hotspots. I am unsure what specific information you are looking for in relation to how the Council and University will work together. If there was an outbreak identified then the meetings and communications would increase to meet the need to ensure a coordinated response. The Outbreak Control Plan sets out the actions that would be taken together to investigate and control an outbreak

We have launched a Community Champion Scheme this week. COVID-19 Community Champions to be the first to receive the latest updates and guidance from our Public Health team about how to stay safe during this coronavirus pandemic and share with our families, friends, communities and workplaces. It would be great if you could join this and encourage others to do so.

<http://www.southampton.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid19/how-to-help/community-champions.aspx>

## 3. Information and communication

Anything you can say about continued regular communication and liaison with bodies like HRA, beyond directing us to websites, would be very helpful.

From a SCC perspective, the best way to keep up to date is by ensuring you are signed up for updates, which I am sure you are, and to contact myself or your ward councillors when you have a specific issue that you are not able to locate information on.

I hope I have answered your questions. Please do let me know if there is anything I have missed.

*Councillor Lorna Fielker, Cabinet Member Health and Adult Care, Member for Swaythling,  
Tel: 07887 772958*

## PLANNING POLICY

HRA will be making a response to the recent Government White Paper 'Planning for the Future'. The deadline for comments is mid-October. Can any member who would like to make an input please contact the Hon Sec by the end of September.

## NEW CYCLEWAYS

HRA's response to the recent Traffic Regulation Orders is elsewhere in this Note. HRA has written about the increased volume and speed of traffic in Westwood Park (Westwood and Winn Roads) and the associated risks to residents and road users. The Council has undertaken to arrange for a speed survey and vehicle count to be made and to share the results with HRA.



## **26 BLENHEIM AVENUE**

HRA supported OTRA (the Oakmount Triangle Residents Association) in alerting the Council to the installation of inappropriate windows at No.26 Blenheim Avenue. As a result, a formal planning application will now be made.

***Roger Brown Acting Chair***

### **Secretary's Update**

Planning issues have been dealt with during August and September. Of particular note is the success of SCC overturning an Appeals Objection to a new build in the garden of 20/20A Furzedown Road. The council was supported by an objection from HRA and this was evidenced and quoted in the appeal summary. Many neighbours, some of whom are HRA members, also submitted excellent detailed reasons why the planning application, which was a 'garden grab', should not be allowed.

HRA also objected to a Planning Application in Grosvenor Road.

A response was made to SCC over Traffic Regulations Orders which concerned notice of works on the permanent cycle scheme on The Avenue. The TRO notice was advertised to HRA members via Social Media

There is no planned return to 'real' Committee Meetings in the near future although HRA Officers will be meeting via Zoom in October.

***Barbara Claridge Secretary***

### **Councillors' Reports for HRA:**

None this month

### **Planning**

The Planning Report for July 2020 is to follow

***Angela Seymour (HRA Planning Rep)***

### **University Liaison**

#### **Groundbreaking work on large scale saliva testing programme to continue**

The University will continue its large-scale saliva testing for COVID-19 this autumn, following a [successful pilot](#) that many members of staff participated in earlier in the summer.

Phase two will evaluate the application of convenient, non-invasive saliva testing within educational settings, including the University. We will be encouraging the following people to take part in the testing programme:



- Staff who work in closer proximity to other people, for example those whose job requires them to be on campus.
- Students as they arrive in Southampton, or shortly after their quarantine period if they are required to self-isolate on arrival
- Over 2,100 pupils and staff across four schools in Southampton

The testing will be done periodically throughout the autumn term and prompts will be sent via text message. By using this cutting-edge testing technology to widely roll out rapid diagnosis, chains of transmission can be broken almost immediately by delivering quick results.

The Programme, led by a partnership of the University of Southampton, Southampton City Council and the NHS, aims to keep the infection risk low in Southampton and give confidence to our staff, students and our local community.

### **The University is doing vital research into COVID-19**

The University of Southampton has been leading on important research during the crisis, from [treatments using inhaled drugs](#), to assisting with clinical trials for a vaccine and helping to [develop rapid testing technology to help with triage in hospitals](#). Click [here](#) to find out more.

### **Staying Safe at Southampton**

The University have put in place a [range of measures](#) to create a COVID-secure environment in which our students and staff can safely learn, research and work during these unusual times.

Our students and staff know that our individual and collective responsibility extends beyond our campuses and residences to the people of Southampton, to ensure we show equal respect and consideration when we use the city's shops, pubs, leisure facilities and transport. We will also be launching a new code of conduct which we will use to encourage responsible behaviours and as the basis for letters to any student households about which we receive complaints, anyone who has complaints about behaviour at a house they believe is rented by students please contact [local2u@soton.ac.uk](mailto:local2u@soton.ac.uk).

We have also been in discussions with the police and are renewing a data sharing agreement which should allow us and the police to work in concert to tackle any problem households.

Together we will:

- Behave responsibly, and treat fellow residents with dignity and respect
- Abide by all University and public COVID-19 guidance
- Self-isolate if showing symptoms or if asked to due to contact with someone infected
- Practice physical distancing
- Wear face coverings where indicated by government guidance.
- Regularly wash hands and use hand sanitiser

If you'd like to find out more, please visit us at [www.southampton.ac.uk/staysafe](http://www.southampton.ac.uk/staysafe)

### **UniLink changes**

The UniLink Bus service has published the steps it is taking to keep the buses safe here:

<https://www.unilinkbus.co.uk/back-on-board> this includes a downloadable phone app which can help you see how busy your bus is.

**Jon Walsh**, Head of Public Affairs, University of Southampton



## **Finance Report:**

On financial matters there is nothing of significance to report since the last report. HRA finances remain in a healthy position. There are few outgoings as we are not hiring meetings rooms etc. Membership renewals are still arriving. The reserve fund stands at its target level.

***Martin Benning Treasurer***

## **Membership Report:**

Database	498	
Paid up members	372	
Rolling	277	January – August.

Please remember to renew your membership when it is due

***Nicolla Martin Membership Secretary***

## **Report on Social Media**

### **Facebook**

We now have 519 followers; an increase of 46 since the July Committee Note.

### **Website**

The WordPress program, which is used for the website, has recently been updated. Flaws in the new program have caused a few problems of lost or misplaced data. This is ongoing but the errors are now decreasing. However, if anyone spots any inconsistencies, please let Nadine know.

For the latest information about the University/Covid etc - <http://www.highfieldresidents.org.uk/useful-links-to-the-university-of-southampton/>

### **Highfield crime information sharing WhatsApp group**

This is now active with over 10 residents/community groups represented. The aim is to raise awareness, increase vigilance, and encourage reporting and greater cooperation across community group boundaries. Terms of Use for the group have now been produced which members are asked to sign up to. We are delighted that Lucy Nagra, a former Police Officer and HRA member, has kindly offered to undertake the day to day running of the group, which has had a good start. Lucy reports to Nadine.

There are still some areas of Highfield unrepresented. Anyone who represents an area and wishes to join the group, please contact Nadine on: [highfieldracomms@gmail.com](mailto:highfieldracomms@gmail.com).

***Nadine Johnson Social Media***



### **Any Other Business**

During Lockdown several HRA members (including Josie Brown and me!) joined in with Southampton NHS Sewists to make facemasks, laundry bags and hats for Southampton General Hospital.



And finally, if anyone else on the committee has any other business, Covid Good News, comments or local news of interest for Committee Members please mail me and it will be included in the next *Committee Notes* planned for October 2020.

***Barbara Claridge Secretary***

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