



Highfield Residents' Association
Committee Note in lieu of October 2020 Committee Meeting

<https://www.highfieldresidents.org.uk/>
facebook.com/Highfield-Residents-Association

Acting Chair's Comments:

HRA's honorary officers continue to work hard on the Association's behalf, as the following note will demonstrate.

Planning policy

Over the past month HRA has submitted lengthy and detailed responses to three current consultations: the Government's proposals for changing the current planning system, the White Paper 'Planning for the Future', and the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee inquiry into the planning system.

In summary, whilst we welcome some aspects of the Government's proposals (such as the apparently greater emphasis on enforcement, long a big concern here), overall there would be a reduction in the ability of community groups like HRA to have even the present level of influence over local developments. We are also questioning why the Government is pushing ahead on such major changes in the midst of a national crisis. As always, we are very grateful to Jerry Gillen for his energy and expertise here.

NORA

Our representative body - the National Organisation of Residents Associations - continues to be very active on these and other matters such as COVID-19.

COVID-19 and the University

The last Committee Note included a fairly full account of the steps the University was taking to reduce the risk of infections amongst students and staff and to deal proactively, with the local public health authorities, when infections arise. A recent briefing note brings the story up to date [see information from Councillor Cooper and Jon Walsh Head of Public Affairs, University of Southampton]. It includes information about a new testing site being established at the Avenue Campus about which local residents will have been informed through a letter from the Interim Director of Public Health, Dr Debbie Chase (any questions should be addressed to customer.services@southampton.gov.uk).

The note also refers to planned demolitions on the Stoneham Tower site. Any comments should be sent to EstateDevelopment@soton.ac.uk.

Roger Brown Acting Chair



Secretary's Update:

Planning issues have again been dealt with during October and the latest HRA Planning Report is attached to this mailing - thanks to Angela Seymour for producing this. Of particular concern has been the arrival of a significant number of white vans at a property in Brookvale Road which has caused a parking and access problem for local residents.

Officers have decided that given the on-going disruption to normal life due to Covid 19 restrictions, there will not be an HRA December Newsletter. Members are invited to keep up to date with any fast changing HRA news and developments via our Website or Facebook pages.

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

Barbara Claridge Secretary

Councillors' Reports for HRA:

From Councillor Cooper (the same also from **Jon Walsh**, Head of Public Affairs, University of Southampton)

Southampton City Council and University of Southampton are working with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to make getting tested for COVID-19 in Southampton easier. As part of this the University has offered the use of its estate and DHSC and Southampton City Council are in the process of surveying and planning a new walk-through testing site at the **University of Southampton, Avenue Campus Car Park**. This site will join Woodley Road in Woolston, Marlborough Road Car Park (South) in Shirley and The Guild Hall in the Centre as the fourth walk-through Covid-19 testing site in Southampton.

The site has been surveyed and the site managers, Mitie, aim to open the site for testing next week, commencing 2 November. This week, we are sharing a letter written by Director of Public Health, Debbie Chase with community residents to reassure them that the site does not compromise public safety. We are working with the contractors to minimise any inconvenience that it may cause. Signage will direct pedestrians requiring a test to a clearly marked, secure area at the site entrance, which will ensure safe access for students and staff at the campus is maintained.

As it is with all the DHSC testing sites, this site will be managed by Mitie on behalf of the DHSC, and tests will be by appointment only. Mitie will be ensuring one-way entrance and exit to the site for all those getting a test. Once the site is operational, appointments will be available for everyone with Covid-19 symptoms, including vulnerable groups and people with disabilities, seven days a week from 8am to 8pm.

For those wanting to park near the site, parking will be available at the University, which will be clearly signposted and shared with those signing up for a test.

We hope we can allay any specific concerns you or residents may have with the below information which addresses some of the questions that have been raised at other sites which are already running smoothly.



The site has detailed standard operating procedures which have been signed off by Public Health England to ensure that procedures have health and safety at the forefront. We have several measures in place, including:

- **Social distancing measures.** Those being tested will be required to follow public health measures, including social distancing, not travelling by taxi or public transport, practising good personal hygiene and wearing a face covering throughout (including travelling to and from the testing site). After booking their tests, test subjects receive the full address and directions to their local testing site.
- **Personal Protective Equipment on site.** Staff who are required to interact with test subjects wear PPE. The on-site operational staff do not wear PPE as this is not required. These staff do not come into direct contact with any test subjects.
- **Cleaning regime.** There is a strict cleaning regime for the whole site which means that facilities are cleaned multiple times a day to ensure very high standards of hygiene. Waste is removed on a regular basis.
- **Designated areas.** The testing area is segregated from all other areas. All efforts have been made to reduce the disturbances to local communities and only operational staff will be in the designated area of the testing site.

If you or your constituents have additional questions this week, please visit southampton.gov.uk/localtestingsites or you can email jazmine.poulter@southampton.gov.uk

Regards,

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Planning:

The Planning Report for September / October 2020 is attached. If any HRA member wishes to search SCC Planning Applications or to make comments here is the link:

<https://www.southampton.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications/>

Angela Seymour (HRA Planning Rep)



University Liaison

Covid19 related activity

We are continuing to take the spread of Covid19 amongst our staff and students very seriously. We are in regular contact with the city council and are taking swift action, along with the police, to tackle any issues as they arise. We have outlined many of the steps we are taking on our [campus life page](#).

Some HRA members have raised the issue of students walking in large groups and not leaving space on pavements to socially distance. We are revising some of our web content and social media content to instruct all students to be more considerate when out and about in the community. We are continuing to liaise closely with the police and support additional policing so that residents can get a swift response from the 101 service should they encounter issues in the Highfield Area.

Members should already have received an update to let them know the University has agreed to host a local testing centre at the Avenue Campus, this site should be active by the end of next week, questions regarding the site should be directed to the city council.

The University is doing vital research into COVID-19

The University is looking to recruit thousands of participants from across the world to take part in a survey on Covid-19 prevention and treatment. We are looking for people from all age groups regardless of whether you have had symptoms or not. Please do share [this link](#) with your contacts if you can.

The University of Southampton has been leading on important research during the crisis click [here](#) to find out more.

Queen's Birthday Honours

I am delighted to share the news that five of our exemplary colleagues have been named in this year's belated Queen's Birthday Honours list.

Please click [here](#) to read about their fantastic achievements.

One of our Honourees Professor Stephen Holgate recently gave a distinguished lecture including sharing his thoughts on the current Pandemic which is [available to view here](#).

Stoneham Tower demolition plans

The University is consulting on plans to demolish the 1960's buildings on its Stoneham Tower site, exhibition materials are available [here](#). Initial feedback from our neighbours has been very supportive.

City Culture

The university was proud to announce its support for the Southampton bid to become the 2025 City of Culture.

The John Hansard Gallery has put safety measures in place to allow it to re-open (for booked places only) from this Saturday 31st October details are [available on their website](#).

The University's Turner Sims Concert hall is running some free online events the next of which is Jazz event with Ivo Neame details of which are [available on their website](#).



Please find below an email for HRA members from the University and City Council Public Health Team regarding a new testing site which the University has agreed to host on our Avenue Campus to support the city's ongoing efforts to combat the pandemic.

Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) contractor Mitie will be operating the sites and we have been working with Southampton City Council to identify suitable locations. If you have any specific questions for the University you can direct members to email local2u@soton.ac.uk all other queries can be sent to jazmine.poulter@southampton.gov.uk

Dear Member of the Highfield Residents Association

Good morning/afternoon.

We are contacting you today to inform you of the work Southampton City Council are doing in partnership with the University of Southampton to support the local community in getting access to Covid-19 Testing and to further support the city's response to the coronavirus pandemic.

You may already be aware of the three other Local Testing Sites (LTS) which have been built across the city: Woodley Road Car Park in Woolston, Marlborough Road Car Park (South) in Shirley and The Guild Hall, situated in the City Centre. We have now received confirmation from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) that a fourth LTS can go ahead at the location of [University of Southampton, Avenue Campus Car Park](#), which will provide local communities within the North of the city with additional testing capacity.

A letter from Southampton's Director of Public Health (Debbie Chase), supported by the University of Southampton, is being posted to residents located close to the specified University Campus and is available on the HRA website. The letter outlines further details of the walk-through testing site's setup and operational procedure information (the latter of which has been signed off by Public Health England).

We trust this letter will allay any specific concerns local residents may have in receiving this communication regarding the fourth testing site. You can find further information regarding Southampton's existing testing sites at <http://www.southampton.gov.uk/localtestingsites>.

However, should you have any further queries please email Customer.Services@southampton.gov.uk

Jon Walsh, Head of Public Affairs, University of Southampton



Finance Report:

All accounts are showing positive balance. Membership fees are still being renewed. Spending has been reduced due to infrequent activity compared to last year.

Martin Benning Treasurer

Membership Report:

Database	498
Paid up members	366
Rolling	304

Please remember to renew your membership when it is due

Nicola Martin Membership Secretary

Social Media Report

1. Website: nothing new to report.

2. Facebook: We currently have 563 followers; an increase of 44 since the September Committee Note.

3. Highfield crime information sharing WhatsApp group:

The WhatsApp group is going well, with 13 community groups / roads represented.

We have been able to follow up on some issues raised within the group:

3.1 Some students walking in groups along the pavement in areas close to the University and not social distancing when passing others

This has been raised with the University and the Student Comms team is looking to include a request for students to allow for social distancing in their next communication to them. (This has been addressed – see page 4 of Jon Walsh report)

3.2 Some other concerns

Councillor Gordon Cooper invited myself and Lucy Nagra (whose role is the day-to-day running of the group) to meet with him recently, to discuss our crime concerns ahead of his regular meeting with Inspector Hayley O'Grady, who is responsible for policing in Southampton North. This area includes Bassett, Portswood and Bitterne North. We raised a number of issues, in particular:



- the continued drug trafficking around the areas of Omdurman, Khartoum and Highfield Roads / the Little Common area;
- reports that CCTV is not always viewed and copied when police are visiting a crime scene;
- reports that police do not always attend a reported crime and that in situations where members of the public could be involved (for example, where they witness someone stealing their vehicle), this could lead to an abusive exchange, an assault or worse.

Cllr Cooper helpfully updated us on his meeting. Here are some of the main points:

- 999 should be used for all emergencies, and 101 or on-line reporting should continue to be used for non-emergencies;
- all information provided helps long-term solutions by piecing together fragments of information **so keep reporting matters**;
- most police resources are concentrated on high harm crime with shop lifting, petty theft and criminal damage having less priority;
- CCTV is welcome in committed crimes, where relevant;
- anti-social behaviour is still high on their list but needs to be reported online unless it is an emergency;
- they hope to increase patrols around the Omdurman, Khartoum and Highfield Roads/Little Common areas.

We welcomed this very helpful feedback from Cllr Cooper, particularly on the possibility of increased patrols in the areas around Omdurman and Khartoum Roads, etc. Additionally, we very much appreciate Cllr Cooper involving us and facilitating our questions/ concerns. While some of our concerns were addressed, some questions remain - see below. It was therefore agreed that Cllr Cooper would kindly forward these to Inspector Hayley O'Grady. We will update you when a response has been received.

- The policy of welcoming CCTV in committed crimes does not appear to square up with what sometimes happens on the ground. CCTV has not always been viewed and stored in some committed crimes that we have been made aware of in the WhatsApp group;
- If the police do not attend all reported crimes, what happens to these reports and any CCTV? If the CCTV is not stored on the police database for future reference, could this be counter-productive if there are investigations into other similar incidents in the future?
- On anti-social behaviour, we are concerned that the police indicated they would not attend an emergency incident where a member of our WhatsApp group was confronted by someone trying to break into their car at 3 am, and there was an abusive exchange. While we do not advise taking matters into your own hands, he was still nonetheless in danger. A response to this 'low level' incident could prevent a more serious crime being carried out.
- We appreciate that budgets are tight and resources limited but if shop lifting, petty theft and criminal damage have less priority, is it not only a matter of time before criminals become aware of this, if they haven't already, and take full advantage?



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.

Nadine Johnson Social Media

Any Other Business

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 November 2020.

Barbara Claridge Secretary

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