

Minutes HRA Committee Meeting
Held on 8 February 2021
Via Zoom 19:00h



Present : Prof. Roger Brown (Chair), Martin Benning, Ken Burtenshaw, Jerry Gillen, Adrian Vinson, Barbara Claridge, Cllr Cooper, Kate Fay (University), Pete Thomas (OTRA), Karen Edwards (PRG), Pete Errington (Uplands Estate)

1. **Welcome :** Roger opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to Zoom.
2. **Declarations of Interest:** none
3. **Apologies :** Steve Connolly, Nicolla Martin, Angela Seymour, Nadine Johnson
4. **Minutes :** The Minutes from the 11 January 2021 meeting had been previously distributed to all Committee Members. No comments had been received.
5. **Matters Arising :** The update on the University Planning Application was to be covered in Item 9. It was surmised that University progress on the Civic Agreement was paused for the present (Confirmed by KF). Malcolm White had agreed to be the Examiner of Accounts after the sad death of the previous Examiner, Olliver Dicker.
6. **Information from Councillors :** Councillor Cooper provided a detailed account of council business and current priorities. Covid numbers were reducing considerably across the city. Information can be found here:

<http://www.southampton.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid19/>

Additional Council support was in place for education, children and adults in Social Care and new bus and cycle lanes (sustainable transport). A local Test and Trace system had been set up to run alongside the national programme. Local businesses had benefitted from grant funding.

Cllr Cooper raised the Transforming Cities project and described how initial questionnaires had been analysed. Further information would be available in coming months.

To learn more about the Portswood Transforming Cities (TCF) - visit:

<https://transport.southampton.gov.uk/transport-projects/portswood-swaythling-corridor/>

There is to be a public consultation soon which will include gathering opinions on Portswood High Street, traffic routes and transport. To make comments about the proposals, please

email roadworks@southampton.gov.uk

To sign up for updates go to: bit.ly/portswood-swaythlingtcf

Cllr Cooper added that the Highfield Crime WhatsApp Group was helpful and Lucy Nagra was providing useful local knowledge.

The City of Culture (CoC) bid was discussed and ideas would be welcome. Celebrating local architecture (e.g. 100 years of Collins Estate) and Heritage of Highfield were suggested. Ken Burtenshaw is the HRA CoC rep (Item 12 Report). Adrian Vinson asked whether the Nuffield Theatre, Above Bar, was still in line to be taken over by the Mayflower Theatre and if it would be included. Cllr Cooper confirmed and also suggested that a local musician, Michael Kiwanuka <https://www.michaelkiwanuka.com/> might be approached, especially with regard to working with young musicians. Pete Thomas works with a local music charity SoCo <http://www.socomusicproject.org.uk/> and he thought that this group would be keen to be involved. Pete was to discuss this directly with Cllr Cooper.

The breach of laws and loss of Licence by Cenos was raised. However this would be a loss as a valuable local facility. Cllr Cooper said they could appeal and /or reapply after a period or reapply under a different licensee and after Covid restrictions are lifted.

Roger thanked Cllr Cooper and summarised, suggesting that Transforming Cities and City of Culture would be items of business on the March Agenda and that he would make renewed contact with the Conservation Officer, Jon Willets as this meeting had been cancelled due to Covid restrictions in March.

Post meeting info Cllr Cooper: the national UK Census will be going ahead on Sunday 21st March (see attached SCC PowerPoint: *Helping everyone take part in Census 2021*)

7. **University Liaison** : Kate Fay described: how the University was working hard to support school children in the city by providing physical resources to support learning from home. This is particularly helpful for children who do not have access to a computer. The University was also supporting a charity that provides laptops to children in the city and aftercare once the laptop has been dropped off. Figures for how many children have been helped will be available soon.

Some international students are arriving to study. They will be self-isolating in University accommodation. If and when government guidance changes on people arriving into the UK from other countries, those arrangements would take precedence.

Government guidance on the return of students was awaited. In the meantime, large mental health and wellbeing campaigns to support our students through these strange times had been organised.

Roger asked if the university Covid numbers remained low. Kate replied that the testing programme had been very successful and would be continued. Southampton Hospital staff were now using the same testing system.

Roger thanked Kate for her input.

8. Reports

- a) **Finance (MB)** : Martin reported that the HRA Accounts for 2019 had now been examined by Malcolm White who would also proceed with the 2020 Accounts. Both sets of accounts would be presented to members as soon as it was possible to hold an AGM. It had proved too difficult to continue with the application to open an HRA Account with the Co-op Bank. Martin was now arranging to be confirmed as HRA Treasurer with Nat West Bank and then will open an online account. Approximately £200 in membership fees has been banked (thanks to Stephen Connolly). An annual membership payment of £25 had been paid to NORA.

b) **Membership** (BC for NM) : Database 498; Paid-Up members 351; Rolling 18.

9. **Planning Report** (AS) : A Planning Report for January / February had been circulated before the meeting.

- **Updates on casework:**

- i. The University Planning Application (demolition) had been approved by SCC.
- ii. 30 Brookvale Road – outbuilding replacement. After a brief discussion, HRA (Jerry) was to liaise with PRG (Karen) to decide on the most appropriate way forward. It seemed best that PRG should take the lead and that HRA would then follow on. It was stressed how in general HRA's policy is to object to an application affecting the character of a Conservation Area (Action JG).
- iii. 18 Grosvenor Road – window enlargement. HRA had again been contacted by a member concerned about this reapplication Amendment. HRA had objected to the previous application (Oct 2020) and would again object (Action BC).
- iv. 3 Shaftesbury Avenue – Planning Application for change of use from HMO to Nursery Day Care (50 children including short time and drop-in care facility). Jerry advised that HRA had previously supported an application for a Nursery at this address (which had not been implemented). HRA again would support as it was felt the local area needed such facilities and local employment opportunities would also be enhanced (Action BC).
- v. The Planning Application for 7, Brookvale Road is still awaiting a judgement.

- NORA – Jerry Gillen reported that membership of this national body is very good value for money at £25 per year. A NORA Newsletter has just been circulated to member associations - available on the HRA website:

[National Organisation of Residents' Associations](#)

Other current NORA priorities include seagull nuisance, short term lets and the Government response to the recent White Paper. Jerry is a member of the National Committee.

10. **Crime information sharing WhatsApp group for Highfield** (NJ) : (Sent by Nadine to be read at the meeting)

The group is progressing well with reports being submitted regularly by community group/road representatives.

A new website sub-page has been created which lists Crime Incidents reported within the group since Christmas. It is part of the WhatsApp group crime information sharing page. It will continue to be updated to enable anyone who is not in the group to find out what has been reported in the areas represented. Here is the link:

<http://www.highfieldresidents.org.uk/crime-incidents/>

Some examples of crime incidents reported since the Committee Meeting of 11 January are as follows:

shed break-ins/attempted garage break-ins

bike thefts

trying of car door handles in the early hours with one theft from an unlocked car door and one where the window was smashed in

thefts from doorsteps of parcel deliveries and other items including some milk and orange juice

a stolen digger from Portswood Road near Waitrose

There have been a couple of electric scooter incidents, both of which have been reported. Lucy Nagra, the group coordinator, has drawn attention to incidents of domestic abuse being on the rise in general due to stress, lack of escape and lack of people to talk to. Details of where people can get help are also listed in the Crime Incidents log.

Pete Errington added that, on behalf of Uplands Estate, he was pleased at the amount of activity that was being reported via the WhatsApp group as there seemed to be an increase in local crime. However, he would like to know how this is going to be escalated and consolidated somehow. Would there be an opportunity for further police engagement in the future? (Action - to be passed to NJ for further comment next meeting).

11. Social Media

Website:

All the out-of-date photos from the Current Photo Gallery on the *About Us* page are in the process of being removed and transferred into either the Past Photo Gallery or retaining them in the website Media Library for future reference. This is ongoing.

Facebook:

We now have 617 followers, an increase of 14 since the January Minutes.

The Committee received this report with thanks.

12. City of Culture (KB) : <https://www.southampton2025.co.uk/>

Ken reported that he had attended an initial online consultation (Roger and Nadine had also attended this session). A SCC PowerPoint presentation about the bid is attached. The bid director for Southampton, Clare Whitaker (OBE), seems very experienced and supported Hull in their successful CoC bid. There is to be a series of meetings and consultations with residents. Themes currently under discussion are cultural diversity, arts, heritage and tourism. Southampton University is conducting market research. Committee members are encouraged to complete a CoC questionnaire (BC also to circulate separately). If appropriate, the link will also be posted on HRA social media. Competing 2025 'cities' may include, Bradford, Medway, Lancashire, Chelmsford, Luton, Northampton and Tees Valley. A view was expressed that even if Southampton did not win the bid, the community energy, driving something creative and forward-looking, would be positive for the residents and the city.

CoC questionnaire

<https://southamptoncitycouncil.researchfeedback.net/s.asp?k=160491164921>

Roger thanked Ken for his input.

13. A.O.B. : There was no further business and the meeting ended at 20:20h

The date of the next meeting is Monday 8 March at 19:00h via Zoom.