

Minutes HRA Committee Meeting
Held on 13 September 2021
Via Zoom 19:00h



Present : Prof. Roger Brown (Acting Chair), Martin Benning, Ken Burtenshaw, Nadine Johnson, Jerry Gillen, Jon Walsh (University), Pete Thomas (OTRA), Karen Edwards (PRG), Peter Errington (Uplands Est), Barbara Claridge.

- 1. Welcome :** Roger opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to Zoom especially partnership organisations. Thanks were expressed to committee members with responsibilities for their continued hard work and keeping the HRA show on the road. It was hoped that this would be the last Committee meeting via Zoom as real meetings had been organised from October. There was a new venue, Highfield Church Hall. Meetings were to be held in future on Tuesdays. This would suit the new venue as well as enabling the Ward Councillors to attend, as Council meetings were held on Mondays. Dates had been set for the AGM and for a Newsletter (paper copy).
- 2. Declarations of Interest:** None
- 3. Apologies :** Nicolla Martin, Steve Connolly, Cllr Savage, Cllr Mitchell, Cllr Cooper. Late Apologies : Adrian Vinson
- 4. Minutes :** The Minutes from the 14 June 2021 meeting had been previously distributed to all Committee Members. No comments had been received. Roger advised that in the last sentence at the end of paragraph 5a, Adrian should replace Jerry.
- 5. Matters Arising :**
 - a. Roger reported that he had not seen any posters on Gorillas' windows recently so maybe his comments and those of Cllr Mitchell had been effective
 - b. There was no further news on enforcement action at 28 Brookvale Road
 - c. There had been a satisfactory resolution to the Planning Application in Westbourne Crescent. Roger congratulated Pete T for his persistence in his handling of the application
 - d. PRG and OTRA had not, as yet, liaised over Jon Willetts' suggestion that they investigate Civic Voice. (*Action: Karen and Peter T*)
- 6. University Liaison :** (JW) The university open days had been held recently with over six thousand attendees (numbers updated since the Cttee Mtg). Recruitment for courses for 2022 had gone well with all courses now reaching their target level. By 25 October all international students were required to be in attendance, whilst there would still be online provision there was no allowance for entirely remote study. Students would be expected to conduct personal Covid testing before they departed their homes and upon arrival and continue this at two days intervals until enrolled in the University testing programme. A version of Freshers Events would take place and students would be welcome providing they were recording negative Covid tests each day. The system would be rigorous. There would be some evening events. Liaison with local Police was organised. The student accommodation at Highfield Hall was not in operation this academic year as it was a fully catered hall and students were not requiring this type of accommodation. Rogers expressed his thanks for this comprehensive report.

BC raised a question on behalf of two HRA members who had complained about the unsightliness and bad design of the new ramp at Highfield Health (once Mulberry Surgery). Jon confirmed that the ramp was intended to remain but might possibly be softened with planting. He would check if planning permission was required. *(Post meeting note: JW confirmed that the ramp did not require Planning Permission as it was a temporary structure but it is intended to be staying and cannot be moved to another entrance)*

JW confirmed that HRA would be added to the University Community Bulletin circulation.

(Post meeting note from the Students' Union): September is an exciting time as we welcome students back to the city, however we can appreciate for local residents that it can also bring concern and here at SUSU we wanted to keep you informed of our additional activities. Over the next 3 weeks from Monday 20th September to Sunday 11th October we will be running a Freshers Programme for our new and returning students. This includes 6 late night music events:

*Friday 24th September
Saturday 25th September
Sunday 26th September
Monday 27th September
Friday 1st October
Saturday 2nd October*

All outside music will be shut off by 11pm and as always we will ask our students to be respectful of our neighbours as they make their way home.

7. **A.G.M.** (BC) : Initial arrangements for the **AGM on 16 Nov** had been organised – the venue was to be Highfield Church Halls, Highfield Lane; start time 7.00pm; refreshments had been organised; the university had been contacted for hire of audio and projector equipment and technician. The October Committee Meeting would need to discuss the recommendation on subscription fees and look at the revised Constitution and the AGM Agenda. The special Committee Meeting on 2 November would finalise all aspects of the AGM to ensure a well organised and smoothly run meeting.

(RB) : Roger reported that he hoped to secure a good speaker for the event. There had to be re-election / ratification of some members of the committee and RB/BC would be writing to those concerned to ask if they wished to continue with a committee role and what they would be willing to offer in that role in future. PT raised the issue of Covid restrictions at the venue. JG reported that he has known up to 80 HRA members attend an AGM. KB asked if there might be empty seats between seats for example. It was decided that BC check Government and Venue guidance on Covid safety arrangements nearer the time.

8. Reports :

- a. **Finance** (MB) : Finance details: Income over last 2 months - £180 from Pearsons for advert in Autumn Newsletter, £413 from subs and donations (£235 subs and £178 donations)

Future costs – the AGM at Highfield Church Hall will cost £240 - this should be compared to Highfield House Hotel who charged £320 in 2018 – but they provided complimentary refreshments.

The cost of hiring the lounge at Highfield Church Hall for committee meetings is approx. £70 but with a 20% discount this reduces to about £56. We were charged £45 per committee meeting at HHH.

Other costs this year will include the Newsletter (approximately £350) and third-party insurance - this latter item will be about £150 unless we start insuring workers on the Little Common, in which case this

would increase. JW added that he knew of some associations that had retained some Zoom meetings in a hybrid approach. PT said he supported that idea. Regarding the Highfield House Hotel JG reported that he had been in contact with the operations manager and was surprised to hear it was no longer operating as an hotel. NJ said she had visited and could confirm it was not. It is believed that there was an on-going contract with the Home Office. JG was to contact the operations manager for clarification (*Action: JG*)

- b. **Membership** (BC for NM) : 472 Database; 362 paid up; 284 Rolling. 43 Households have not renewed membership for two years (Jan 2020 to Aug 2021). Some members had not renewed during the lockdowns – no Newsletters, no AGM etc. KE asked if HRA produced a Welcome Pack for people moving into the area - JG reported there had been at one time. HRA is a much bigger area than OTRA or PRG where it might be easier to keep track on people moving.

9. **Planning** (RB) :

- a. Roger reported that he and JG had held a meeting with Paul Barton (SCC Planning) with a good discussion. The New City-wide Local Plan and possible associated Neighbourhood Plans had been discussed with the recommendation to wait for the New Local Plan before HRA consider this. Timescales for the Local Plan had been put back due to Covid, the election of a new council and Government Planning Legislation. However, there would be a need to take the Local Plan very seriously. RB proposed that HRA set up a working party with other local associations and aim to collaborate and cooperate with other close-by associations. The Committee agreed to this suggestion. Neighbouring associations would be invited to nominate a representative for this working party. JG stated that it was crucial to know what HRA felt was important to add to the New Local Plan. PE stated that due to a conflict of interest he could not be the Uplands Representative (work related) but that he might be able to provide general guidance in future. The following topics had also been raised:
- Overdevelopment in some areas of the city, especially under Government Permitted Development Rights proposals.
 - The lack of liaison between SCC Planning Department and the HMO Department
 - The slow action by SCC Enforcement
 - The need for transparency (e.g. with OTRA when revisions were made to an application within hours of final comments being accepted. PT and RB were to write jointly to Cllr Barton about this. *Action : PT/RB*)

Overall, the meeting had been useful, friendly and positive. The officers, perhaps under the new administration, seemed more 'on-the-ball' , responsive and explaining things.

- b. KE (PRG) reported that there had been a delayed publication of the City Vision. The Planning Inspectorate decision on 12 Russell Place had been published and the appeal had been dismissed. This was another HRA success at the Planning Inspectorate stage, as HRA had contributed to the objection, supporting SCC, and had been mentioned in the Decision Statement.
- c. PT (OTRA) was concerned that part of a wall at 5, Blenheim Ave., had been demolished and shared a photograph of this. MB said that this curved top section of a gate arch had been cracked for ages and that it might have been removed for safety reasons.

- 10. Crime information sharing WhatsApp group for Highfield** (NJ) : Nadine reported that there had been 18 criminal and anti-social behaviour incidents reported since the last meeting. 7 attempted break-ins, including 1 actual, had occurred between 23 / 29 July in the PRG area. It has been quiet since then. RB had sent a note of concern to Insp. Ranjan and received a sympathetic reply. Waitrose had also been broken into that week. There had been several anti-social behaviour reports (dog waste, 1 human waste – {Portswold Rec.}) and a suspicious incident in Shaftesbury Avenue involving a hand in a letter box. Some

problems had been reported getting through to the 101 service. People were encouraged to submit a police complaints form if this was the case at: <https://www.hampshire.police.uk/fo/feedback/tc/thanks-and-complaints/>

- 11. Social Media (NJ)** : Website - preparatory work was in progress for new forms ready for payment of subs by Direct Bank Transfer. There was an update to the Data Protection Policy – a change of name since Brexit.
Facebook: An increase of 18 since the July meeting. The Committee received these reports with thanks.
- 10. City of Culture (KB)** : Ken reported that there had been more bids (20 in total) for CoC 2025 than ever before, so competition was high. However, 100 organisations around Southampton were now backing the application. The change in council administration had had little effect as the original bid had been cross-party. JW added that the applications would be long-listed by the end of September and the short-list announced in December. Roger thanked Ken for his input.
- 11. A.O.B.**
 - a. BC had been in communication with Dave Tyrie (SCC), on behalf of a member enquiry, about the lack of availability of toilets on the Common. Dave reported that the café had not renewed their lease (due for renewal during the lockdown periods) so those toilets were not open. The only toilet open is at the kiosk by the playpark but only when the kiosk is open. Although there had been previous SCC acknowledgement that toilets were needed, there were no current plans or finance .
 - b. PT announced an experimental OTRA event – a Green Trail on 25 September. Pre-loved and jumble items would be put outside people’s houses and The Repair Café would have a presence.
- 12.** Item of Reserved business – Committee members only remained for this item which is Minuted separately.

The meeting ended at 20:30h.

The date of the next meeting is **Tuesday 12 October at Highfield Church (lounge)**