

Minutes HRA Committee Meeting

Held on 12 April 2022

Zoom 19:00



Present: Cttee - Prof. Roger Brown (Chair), Ken Burtenshaw, Barbara Claridge, Nadine Johnson, Steven Ossont

Others – Councillor Gordon Cooper, Councillor John Savage, Pete Errington, Kate Fay (University)

1. Welcome: The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting especially the Councillors and those from associated organisations

2. Apologies: Karen Edwards, Jerry Gillen, Nicolla Martin, Martin Benning, David White, Stephen Connolly, Jon Walsh

3. Declarations of Interest: None

4. Approval of the Minutes: The Minutes from the 8 March 2022 meeting were approved. No comments had been received

5. Matters Arising:

HMO (5e.). Following the last meeting when the accuracy of HMO data had been discussed, Roger, Barbara, Jerry and Nadine had met to discuss the way forward. At this stage there was some nervousness to go forward asking members to report on HMOs in their own streets and that a reminder of the existence of the HMO Register would be publicised in the next HRA e-news. It was felt that this was a policy matter for the Council and would be particularly important for the Local Plan. Roger proposed that NSCF would be the best organisation to write to the Council Leader asking for information on the effectiveness, impact and suitability of the current regulatory regime. This was agreed.

Councillor Cooper said that this was a good idea as a first step to find out the Council response at a strategic level but that there was also opportunity for a well-developed campaign regarding HMOs on a wider basis than HRA. He knew there was dissatisfaction from residents over the range and density of HMOs in some sectors. He felt it was a 'huge stone' and felt that community involvement might move the council on. The situation also involved the responsibility of the university and this should be included in the Civic Agreement discussions. Roger commented that it was very good to have councillor support in this matter.

6. Information from Councillors –

Councillor Cooper reported that Pete Thomas (OTRA) had been given the wrong pre-planning advice and that Councillor Mitchell was following this up.

There had been a report that a property in Upper Shaftesbury Avenue was using the garage as a repair business. Neighbours were keeping a record of comings and goings.

Councillor Cooper reported that there was a new Head of Planning but could not confirm the name. Residents of Roseland Gardens had been concerned that they would not be able to get in or out of their road during the Southampton Marathon and had been granted special dispensation to do so.

Although Brookvale Road was due to be resurfaced later this year, emergency repairs near Waitrose were due to be carried out this week.

Councillor Savage added that as this was during Ramadan, access to the Waitrose carpark would be still available in the evenings for worshippers to the Bashir Ahmed Mosque on Portswood Road.

Councillor Savage reported that he had visited a property in Grosvenor Road (HRA member helped by Councillor Savage last year over a high hedge issue) as the roof of the house next door appeared to have a structural failure. SCC Building Control are now involved.

A safety barrier had now been constructed at the mosque (ref above) which had been long awaited.

Councillor Savage had been called as a witness to the stabbing behind Sprinklers, where in 2021, he had assisted with first aid on the victim.

There was an issue over ownership and hence maintenance regarding the footpath to Highfield Church of England Primary School. Steven Ossont added that the school might become an Academy and before this happened it would be necessary to confirm ownership.

Roger thanked the councillors for their engagement in local issues their continued support of HRA.

7. Civic University Agreement –

Roger had drafted a paper in advance of the meeting. Councillor Savage pointed out that the University was likely to be in the Swaythling Ward after the reorganisation of wards so Swaythling should be included alongside Highfield and Portswood. This was agreed. Roger advised that the CUA would be discussed at the next meeting of NSCF Committee Meeting on 30 April which Roger would attend. Councillor Cooper added that it was a useful summary. Councillor Savage asked if the issue of the impact of so many students living in the area and their relationships with the local community should be included under a heading of Community Cohesion. He added that the University did have a responsibility, for example in this impact of students on housing stock. Students were in ex-council housing (now HMOs) and families on the waiting list were not able to find a house. John concluded that there were wider social issues to consider and should be included in the agreement. Roger commented that this was a well-made point and perhaps the University could think beyond the 7 listed priorities (1. Education, learning and future jobs; 2. Research and Innovation, Enterprise, Business and Economic Growth; 3. Staff, Students and Graduate Support and Retention; 4. Health and Wellbeing; 5. Improving the Quality and Cultural Life of our places; 6. Environment, Sustainability, Decarbonisation and Biodiversity; 7. Social Justice and Equality). The City Council also needed to be involved.

Kate Fay (University) said that the expansion of student numbers would be included but reminded the meeting that Southampton, Eastleigh and Winchester all needed to be covered in the Civic Agreement and there were both similarities and differences in priorities. The University would be happy to set up a forum to develop these initial ideas further.

8. Information from the University –

Kate reported that the University had met with Outer Avenue Residents Association, HRA (Roger) and Southampton City Council to discuss end of year waste (student move out time). A quote had been requested from the council to pay for additional collections, at least two and possibly three extra collections depending upon cost. The response is awaited. Work is on-going between the University Communications Team and SUSU to ensure well communicated messaging about charity shop, charity bin and food bank collection points, alongside extra collection dates. Once the dates were confirmed, they will be passed on to HRA and other residents' groups and could be publicised further. Residents would be able to make use of the extra collections. Roger commented that he had been impressed by the University's serious approach to this issue.

9. Planning update -

- a. 1 Blenheim Gardens (HMO). HRA had objected. Planning Approval was refused. One reason given was 'Over intensive use of the site & concentration of HMOs' (in the immediate area).
- b. 11 Brookvale Road – amended Planning Application pending. Barbara had met with the owners to look at scaled back plans. Four flats are now planned to replace five in the PA that HRA had objected to. The rear

extension is to be shorter and single storey. The owners had taken on board the objections to their original plans. Barbara proposed that once the amended plans were published and considered by RB and JG, HRA should support the application. This was agreed. Councillor Cooper commented that this was an excellent outcome and appreciated Barbara's approach.

- c. 34 Crofton Close – note: Councillor Savage left the meeting at this point due to his position on the Planning Panel. HRA have objected. Councillor Cooper said he had asked that the decision should go to Panel which Councillors have the right to request. Nadine commented that there had been 13 objections from residents and HRA members. She thanked Barbara for the excellent HRA Objection which was appreciated by herself and her husband along with other residents.
- d. 11 Russell Place – two recent Planning Applications – today 22/00534/PLDC 11 Russell Place Southampton SO17 1NU Application for lawful development certificate for 2 x single storey rear extensions. (*Action: BC will look at these applications before the deadline and consult with RB, JG and PRG (Karen Edwards) before deciding how best to respond.*)
- e. Highfield House Hotel – application for a lawful development Certificate. The meeting agreed that this should be supported and if the hotel were to be developed it would be good for the local economy.

10. Reports

- a. **Finance (MB)** – income/expenditure for the last period. Income £1573 and expenditure £432. Balance as of 6 April is £9376.88. 28 households paid online this month.
- b. **Membership (NM)**. Paid up members 350, rolling 61.
Nicolla reported that the newsletters were being delivered although some Street Reps were away until 12th April so delivery for the whole area would take a bit longer.
With such a drop-in paid-up member, possibly the increase in membership / renewal fees might be a reason. Although an excellent newsletter, there was no account for the people who do not have computers. How such members join should be considered.
- c. **Newsletter** – the spring newsletter was printed and in the process of delivery. Roger expressed thanks to Steven and Barbara for design and coordination of articles all of which had been penned by HRA members or people with connections to Highfield along the theme of keeping active in the pandemic. Nadine was thanked for her sponsorship deals. The Street Reps were thanked for their role in the delivery.

11. Social Media and Crime information sharing WhatsApp group for Highfield (NJ)

- a. **Facebook:** HRA now has 777 followers; an increase of 12 since the last meeting on 8th March.
- b. **Website:** Nadine thanked HRA Members, Kim Jones and Ian Morse and also Martin and Barbara who have all provided photos. More photos of Highfield and Portswood in particular, (both present day and historical), are requested. Any local news which might be of interest was also requested.
- c. **HRA Crime information sharing WhatsApp Group for Highfield:**
Nadine reported six incidents: house break-in Abbotts Way at 4 am, Tuesday 5 April - 2 laptops were stolen; vandalism of the Suffragette statue and some plants at Portswood Rec; doorstep thefts of milk and other items in Holyrood Avenue; another attempted break-in of garage in Highfield Lane; dog 'poo' being thrown over the hedge of flats in Blenheim Ave has restarted; a shed door was ripped off hinges in Upper Shaftesbury Avenue with cost to replace £400 - nothing was stolen.
Katherine Barbour and Nadine Johnson co-authored notes of the Crime Prevention Meeting of Monday 28 February 2022 with representatives of the Southampton North Neighbourhood Policing Team, which Katherine organised. The notes are in the link below:

<https://www.highfieldresidents.org.uk/notes-from-crime-prevention-meeting-of-monday-28-february-2022>

HRA Discounts/Adverts: discounts are currently being pursued with Chaiwala and also with Mettricks in Portswood.

Roger thanked Nadine for her reports and commented that he had seen a recent announcement by the Police and Crime Commission of increased police funding. He suggested that he should write to Inspector Ranjan asking if this would result in an increase to local police numbers. This was agreed. *(Action: Roger)*

A.O.B.

- a. Barbara confessed to having made a mistake by advertising the HRA summer social before checking with Portswood Residents' Gardens that the pavilion would be available. Roger commented that a September date might be more suitable than July. Barbara is to investigate a date as soon as possible and discuss with Roger in the first instance. *(Action: Barbara)*
- b. City of Culture. Ken informed the meeting that congratulations were in order as Southampton had made it one step closer to becoming the 2025 City of Culture and had won through to the final four cities along with Bradford, Durham and Wrexham. The final decision would be made in May 2022.

The meeting ended at 19:50

The next Committee Meeting is 10 May 2022.

Committee members will be advised of the format in due course.