

Minutes of HRA Committee Meeting Tuesday 13 December 2022  
Highfield Church Hall 19:00h



**Present Committee:** Roger Brown, Martin Benning, Nadine Johnson, Nicolla Martin, Ken Burtenshaw, Stephen Connolly, Jerry Gillen, Barbara Claridge

**Others:** Councillor Cooper, Karen Edwards (PRG), Malcolm White (OTRA), Sue Swallow (OARA), Rosemary Griffin

1. **Welcome and Opening Remarks:**

Roger Brown welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially Karen Edwards, as this was her first meeting as an HRA Committee member

2. **Apologies:** Jon Walsh (Uni), Kate Fay (Uni), Jayne Tamlyn, Councillor Savage

3. **Declaration of interest:** none

4. **Approval of minutes from the Committee Meeting July 2022:** The Minutes, which had been previously circulated, were approved.

5. **Matters arising not covered elsewhere:** none were raised

6. **AGM Review: Roger asked for comments.** It was agreed that the AGM had been very well attended and organised in great detail. The preceding Portswood Broadway Open Meeting had attracted more people. Some members stayed on for the AGM, some went home before the AGM due to the length of time for both meetings.

Jerry raised the question that, as it had been difficult to hear the questions, it would be a good idea for HRA to have a PA system so that people in the 'audience' could be passed round a hand mic. This was noted. Barbara commented that it would not be too expensive for HRA to purchase a simple system with a speaker and two mics. This would be a cost-effective option over hiring. The difficulty would be in finding a volunteer from the committee to organise this, as none had stepped forward so far. It was also commented that having the open meeting before an AGM would not be a regular arrangement.

7. **Information from Councillors:**

a. Brookvale Road works: Councillor Cooper reported that the first section of repair had been completed and it had been engineered in detail, not just patched. Roger thanked Cllr Cooper for pressing for urgency as the need to repair the road had been ongoing for a number of years. Cllr Cooper noted that the Council was in a poor financial position. It was noted that Cllr Savage had been providing regular updates to HRA especially concerning the Southern Water sewage issues.

b. Portswood Broadway: Councillor Cooper reported that the Portswood councillors had played a key role in securing more public meetings and consultation opportunities that officers were initially planning. Many more comments than had been anticipated were submitted. This included direct emails to councillors which would all be included.

The proposals were next to come before the Overview Scrutiny and Management Committee (Thursday 2 February 2023 at 5:30pm). This would be an open meeting and members of the public could apply to speak. The meeting would also be live streamed. Cllr Cooper stated that HRA had raised useful issues.

Roger confirmed that HRA would be able to speak. The robustness of the scrutiny committee process was questioned. Cllr Cooper explained that the majority on the Scrutiny Committee was held by the opposition; that it could be critical; that issues could be raised formally and formally noted. The result was taken forward to Cabinet and generally the outcome would be respected.

Karen Edwards informed the meeting that she had heard a Councillor that day saying the scheme would go ahead whatever the outcome of the public survey and findings of the Scrutiny Committee. Councillor Cooper responded by saying that there was much inaccurate information circulating, especially by word of mouth. He reminded the meeting that reduction in traffic in central areas of towns and cities was a national initiative from Central Government. Sue Swallow (OARA) asked why that had to be in Portswood and why not simply give the money (grant) back as the scheme was so unpopular with residents who knew the area best. Cllr Cooper replied by saying that Councillors had pressed the traffic officers for better local data but that this was a scheme for the future when the population of the whole city and of the universities was expected to increase significantly. Karen Edwards concluded that from the data gathered from people it was obvious that residents and retailers were against the closure of Portswood Broadway to through traffic.

- c. Portswood Drug Dealing. Barbara raised this issue. There had been recent email exchanges between HRA (Jerry), Sandra Lohead (Portswood Central RA) and Malkeat Singh (Community Engagement Officer) about the ineffective policing of drug dealers in Portswood and how this should be dealt with before any Transforming City scheme was undertaken. An extract of the email exchange was read to the committee. Roger commented that he had written personally to the new Portswood Police Inspector some weeks previously but had not yet had a reply. He asked if Councillors were still meeting regularly with local police. It was agreed that, since HRA now had a direct email address for Inspector Brian Goodall he would try to set up a combined meeting with Cllr Cooper as soon as possible. (Post meeting notes: 1. On 17 December local police raided a cannabis factory in a warehouse next to the Victory Gospel Church on Portswood Broadway. The power supply to the factory was terminated. So far, no arrests had been made. 2. RB was now in direct correspondence with Inspector Goodall and a meeting was being arranged).
- d. River Itchen scrutiny panel. John Savage was unable to give this report update.  
[River Itchen Scrutiny - southampton.gov.uk](https://www.southampton.gov.uk/river-itchen-scrutiny)

8. **University Liaison (JW)** University representatives were unable to attend but sent this report.

**Earthshot Prize win**

A scientist from the University of Southampton had played a key role in helping a UK-Omani company, which eliminates CO<sub>2</sub> by turning it into rock, being named as the winner of the 2022 Earthshot prize in the Fix our Climate category. Juerg Matter was a professor of Geoengineering and Carbon Management at the University of Southampton who sat on the scientific committee of winning company 44.01 (name from the molecular mass of CO<sub>2</sub>).

Prince William, who founded the Earthshot Prize with the Royal Foundation in 2020, announced this year's winners at a ceremony in Boston, USA. Each winning company would receive £1m.

Read more about this [here](#)

**New website to help eczema**

A website developed by the University of Southampton, to help people manage eczema, was reported to have led to a reduction in symptoms and improved outcomes for children and young people. Eczema is very common and can have a substantial impact on quality of life and costs to the NHS. Treatment was complex and many people with eczema have reported that they received insufficient or conflicting advice about how to use eczema treatments.

This [website](#) gives both patients and clinicians evidence-based resources that have been shown to improve symptoms.

**University Estates plans**

Further updates on university estates projects would be available in the new year. Comments on these future estate plans can be made here: <https://www.southampton.ac.uk/community/estate-plans-exhibition.page>

9. **Planning:**

- a. The Local Plan (RB): Roger explained that HRA were compiling a response paper to the draft Local Plan and that this would be submitted to the Council through NSCF. He advised that the Local Plan was very dense. The draft response

paper circulated contained the main points considered at the Forum's AGM in December. Jerry Gillen and Clive Clifford, both representing NSCF along with Roger Brown and Barbara Claridge, representing HRA, were due to attend a meeting with council officers to outline the NSCF response on Thursday 15 December). Roger concluded that unless the final plan was adequately resourced, then it would be a largely waste of time.

- b. 15A Brookvale Road – HRA had objected to the application for a commercial, 'Boozes to Go' business, being operated from a rented (HMO Registered) ground floor maisonette.
- c. 22 Grosvenor Road – HRA had objected to the application to carry out a large loft extension to a family home (Overdevelopment). The property was currently advertised and operated as an Airbnb :

[https://www.airbnb.com/rooms/557272309490204118?check\\_in=2022-12-30&check\\_out=2023-01-06&quests=1&adults=2&s=67&unique\\_share\\_id=3acd365c-fe9b-4acd-b5e7-3aa9ce2d11e4](https://www.airbnb.com/rooms/557272309490204118?check_in=2022-12-30&check_out=2023-01-06&quests=1&adults=2&s=67&unique_share_id=3acd365c-fe9b-4acd-b5e7-3aa9ce2d11e4)

### 10. Reports:

#### a. Finance (prepared by MB)

Income since last meeting: £629. Outgoings since last meeting: £640.

Income this year so far: £5345. Outgoings this year so far: £2582. Net income: £2763

Third party insurance through Zurich paid last week £142.71

The Treasurer then responded to issues that had been raised at the AGM by HRA member, Rosemary Griffin, the principal of which was why HRA did not have a reduced membership fee for single person households. MB thanked Rosemary for raising this and explained that the HRA Committee was always careful about how subscription and other income was accounted for, and that the Accounts were examined every year to ensure due diligence. The subscription rate had been raised to £10 per household at the 2021 AGM as there had been no rise for a number of years. This had been unanimously supported by members. Some members had suggested it be more than £10. There was a need to replenish the Savings Account to a total of £20,000 in case funds were needed for any legal representation.

Nicola Martin, Membership Secretary, commented that there were at least 132 single household members and to offer reduced membership to that number would not be feasible and complicated.

Rosemary also raised the fact that the HRA Newsletter was printed on glossy paper and asked whether recycled paper could be used. The newsletter is not printed on recycled paper but glossy printed paper can be recycled by SCC.

Roger thanked Rosemary for her comments.

#### b. Membership (NM)

Total paid up members 358. Rolling Jan – November 336

In October 16 Renewal letters were sent. 11 renewed. 5 not yet. 4 BACS payments; 7 cheques.

In Nov 54 renewal letters were sent. 26 renewed. 28 not yet. 10 BACS payments; 7 cheques; 8 cash. 1 Honorary member Jerry Gillen.

In Dec. 26 Renewal letters were sent – month not completed.

#### c. Sub-committee review on BACS process.

A sub-committee meeting had recently been held (RB, BC, NM, MB and NJ) to evaluate the system of paying membership subscriptions by Direct Bank Transfer. The overall view was that the process had reduced some workload and it was deemed to be a success so far.

#### d. Digital Communications (NJ)

##### *Facebook/Website:*

HRA now had 942 followers on Facebook, an increase of 24 since the last HRA Committee Meeting on 11 October. We continued to need more local news and local photos. Input was gratefully received from Barbara Claridge and Ken Burtenshaw. Nadine Johnson, Digital Comms.

#### 11. HRA Crime information sharing WhatsApp Group for Highfield:

There had been 33 incident reports since the last HRA Committee Meeting on 11 October where only two incidents were reported. Some of these 33 reports contained multiple incidents. Those representatives in the WhatsApp group whose areas have been impacted were reported as becoming increasingly "fed up" with the number of car/van and

garage/outbuilding crimes that had taken place. It was understood that some people on the Uplands Way Estate, which had been particularly targeted, had noticed their insurance premiums rise, which was ultimately a barrier to reporting.

### Summary:

#### Car and van break-ins - 21 +

At least six of the most recent were on the Uplands Way Estate. The rest involved Brookvale Road, Highfield Close, Ripstone Gardens, Grosvenor Rd, Lower Shaftesbury Ave and Holyrood Avenue. Some cars were accessed but undamaged and it remained a mystery how access was gained to the vehicles. This was particularly evidenced by CCTV footage of one perpetrator on the Uplands Way Estate who went from car to car, seemingly unlocking doors as he went.

#### Vans stolen - 2

#### Items stolen from car bodywork or cars damaged (5+ at least and an indication of a lot more)

These included wing mirrors removed from VWs and BMWs and wing mirror glass (only) removed from Volvos; tyres let down. These had mainly occurred in the Oakmount Triangle.

#### Break-ins/attempted break-ins of garages and outbuildings – 8 + more across the Uplands Way Estate

#### Some other reported crimes:

- House burglary - Oakmount Triangle: patio doors smashed, house turned upside down, small items taken.
- Potential criminal activity: Untaxed high-end vehicles had been parked during the night in Albany Park Court over the last 18 months in the visitors' parking space. They appeared not to belong to any residents and were taken away in the night after 5/6 weeks. Cllr John Savage was contacted by HRA HonSec: responded to say that the police were not able to act as the vehicles can be legitimately stored on private property. However, the advice was to identify the cars by their number plates and report them to the police anyway and see what happened. If there are concerns that an illicit business was taking place with car repairs/servicing/sales, this should be reported to the council planning department if there was evidence.

All incident reports are logged on the HRA website here: <https://www.highfieldresidents.org.uk/crime-incidents/>

Nadine Johnson Digital Comms

### 12. AOB:

The meeting ended at 20:15h

Next Meeting is to be held 17 January 2023, 7pm Highfield Church Hall. Dave Tyrie, SCC Divisional Head of services will make a presentation.