



Minutes of HRA Committee Meeting
Tuesday 9 April 2024 Highfield Church Halls 19:00h

Present Committee: Martin Benning (Chair for this meeting), Nadine Johnson, Christine Rawnsley, Nicolla Martin, Ken Burtenshaw, Karen Edwards, Barbara Claridge

Others: Cllr Savage, Cllr Barbour, Jon Walsh (University), Pete Errington (Uplands Est), Pete Thomas (OTRA)

- 1. Welcome and opening remarks:** Martin gave a brief introduction, explained that Roger was away and welcomed everyone to the meeting. He welcomed PC Adam O'Neill who was attending as a guest to introduce himself and his role as Community Engagement and Liaison Officer, Portswood Swaythling and Bassett.
- 2. Apologies:** Roger Brown, Jerry Gillen, Stephen Connolly, Cllr Fielker, Cllr Finn
- 3. Declaration of interests:** none
- 4. Approval of minutes from the Committee Meeting 12 March 2024**

The minutes were amended to include Martin Benning under apologies, rather than under attending, then approved.
- 5. Matters arising not covered elsewhere:**
 - a. Portswood Broadway update. The trial of the peak-time Bus-gate would commence in January next year. It had been announced that the Council would form a Portswood Project Steering Group, broadly representative of local residents' groups, local business and other local interests. The Steering Group would oversee the implementation and monitor outcomes of the scheme, including co-design workshops, on behalf of the local community. It is expected to have several meetings between May this year and January 2025. Roger had been asked to be the Chair and Barbara had been nominated from HRA.

Christine raised the fact that different geographical locations within Highfield would have different concerns. Barbara arranged to talk to Christine about this. Peter Thomas, who had been nominated for OTRA said that, if selected, he would not be representing OTRA members but the community as a whole. He had particular concerns for those residents in Westridge Road, that side of Portswood Broadway and Swaythling. Barbara commented that she felt the Steering Group would be overseeing the process. No participants had been confirmed as yet.

Martin asked the Councillors present if they had anything to add. Cllrs Savage and Barbour stated that they were not included and it was the Transport Team that were organising.

b. Martin Benning asked if there was any update on the concerns about the scrapping of the U1A unilink bus service to the Central Station, run by Bluestar. Cllr Barbour said that she would continue to press about this. She informed the meeting that a bi-annual Bus Enhanced Partnership Board Meeting on 20 May had been scheduled. This would be a week after the next HRA Cttee Meeting. She suggested that Roger write to Cllr Keogh to have this item on the agenda as Richard Tyldsley was reluctant to engage with the concerns.

Nadine asked Jon Walsh if the university funded unilink and if so, would the university have any influence in deciding bus routes. Jon confirmed the University funded unilink. He was not aware that the U1A bus was no longer had a stop at Central Station. Barbara would update Roger on this important issue.

6. Information from Councillors:

Councillor Savage reported on behalf of Councillors present that there had been flooding in St Denys the previous evening due to high water levels and high spring tide surges. This type of situation would only worsen due to climate change. He reported that the Council was benefiting from training on climate change issues from a company UK 100 Network. Chris Hammond, a recent Leader of Southampton City Council was Chief Executive for this organisation. (Post meeting Note: Google says that UK100 is a network of local leaders who have pledged to lead a rapid transition to Net Zero with Clean Air in their communities ahead of the government's legal target)

Cllr Savage also stressed the highly toxic nature of the water in the Riven Itchen. This is 4 x worse than the Thames. Southampton has three water treatment works run by Southern Water: St Denys, Woolston and Millbrook. Faecal bacteria levels are off the scale. Southern Water have plans (a long way in the future) to invest in UV treatment to clean the water as their plants are within 5 miles of the protected shellfish beds in the Solent. St Denys is slightly beyond 5 miles and would therefore not receive such investment in current future plans. The Council would continue to pressure Southern water. The bathing water application for the Itchen cannot go ahead in current river water conditions as it is not safe.

Karen brought up the fact that, during the summer, dogs and young people do enter the water. She asked whether the Council should publicise the serious problem more openly and post 'Danger Do Not Enter the River' signboards in advance of the summer. Pete Thomas added that there were also problems with high levels of hormones in the water. Cllr Savage stated that further meetings are planned.

Martin thanked Cllrs Savage and Barbour for their continued efforts to clean the river.

Cllr Savage then reported that the traffic delay problems on St Denys Road, at the traffic lights on Thomas Lewis Way, were continuing due to the collapsed road bridge. Additional complications had arisen between Network Rail, who are responsible, and Southern Electric who have a high-power cable running alongside the bridge, as to which company would pay what.

Item 9.f. Cllr Savage confirmed that he had followed up on the lack of information from the Planning Case Officer regarding 112 Upper Shaftsbury Avenue. He had spoken to Stephen Harrison, Head of Planning and Rob Simms, who was the line manager for the case officer, Craig Morrison. Further information was expected in due course.

Cllr Barbour reported that a Walkabout she had conducted in Crofton Close over recently reported crimes had been useful. Residents had been able to talk about their issues as they had not received all of the follow-up they had expected. Cllr Barbour confirmed that she had posted an objection to the Rio's Planning Application on Portswood Broadway for a change in operating hours (as had Cllr Finn and HRA). Recently a Planning Application to which she had objected as a loss of green space, build housing on a playing field site in Midanbury had been rejected by SCC.

Martin thanked the Councillors for their information.

7. University Liaison

Jon Walsh reported that the new Jubilee sports facilities were on target to open in the summer. A car park on the NE Quadrant site was due to close on Monday 15 April as redevelopment work on that site would begin soon.

A question was asked about the expected growth in student numbers and Jon confirmed that it would be over 30,000 students within the next 10 years and that it would be positive to put a group together to discuss bed space and mitigation for HMO housing. It would be important to put the right mix together so that HMO properties did not overtake residential areas. What Solent is doing would also be relevant. The Dolphin Hotel was now student accommodation. Jon felt that a frank conversation now had to be held. (Previously Roger had suggested that North Southampton Community Forum would be the most appropriate group to discuss this).

Karen asked about university plans to increase international students. Ken asked if HMOs were vetted in any way by the university. Jon explained the SASSH (Southampton Accreditation Scheme for Student Housing Scheme: Southampton and Solent Universities). Landlords had to register and meet standards but many of the landlords with large portfolios did not join this scheme. He hoped to have more information in due course.

New re-cycling bags (1000) were now available, especially for student houses, to encourage appropriate Southampton Re-cycling and Jon asked if HRA could help to publicise this. Those at the meeting were offered a free bag.

Martin thanked Jon for the University information

8. HRA Crime WhatsApp group for Highfield

- a. There were no incidents reported in the WhatsApp Group between 19 March and 9 April 2024, compared with 12 incidents reported between 13 February and 19 March. This is the first time no incidents have ever been recorded since setting up the Group in July 2020!
- b. PC Adam O'Neill reported that his was a newly created position – a reorganisation from within the force by the new Chief Constable to better support the community. He covered Portswood, Bassett and Swaythling; a huge area. A main aim was to improve communication. Martin asked if he walked the area and Adam assured Martin that being out and about and being seen was a core purpose. It was not an increase in officers but an increase in the effectiveness of the Neighbourhood Team. PCSOs were also in the Neighbourhood teams. Each force is set up in this model now.

Cllr Savage said it was very important to achieve continuity and a familiar police face.
Martin thanked PC O'Neill for attending the meeting.

Nadine Johnson Digital Comms

9. Planning

- a. 24/00278/FUL. Erection of an outbuilding to create a single-storey annexe following demolition of existing shed. 55 Welbeck Avenue Southampton SO17 1ST (11 April). No planning reasons to object
- b. Yellow Door – outline plans for garage development. HRA had no comments at this stage. Had been passed on to PRG who would send any comments direct to Yellow door.
- c. 24/00296/FUL. Erection of a part single-storey, part two-storey rear extension with roof alterations following demolition of conservatory. 107 Welbeck Avenue Southampton SO17 1SP (11 April). No planning reasons to object
- d. 24/00318/FUL. Erection of a single-storey rear extension. 2 Russell Place Southampton SO17 1NU (18/04) (Passed to PRG for any comment)
- e. 69 Tennyson Road (HMO query. HonSec had written to HMO Dept to check if this property had an HMO Licence. Post meeting note: HMO conformed a new Licence was in process)
- f. 112 Upper Shaftesbury Avenue – (see Item 6. Cllr Savage)

10. Reports

a. **Finance** – This last month out income has been £411 (£326 membership subs and 1 Newsletter advert) outgoings £184.88 (Hall booking and expenses). HRA Current Account balance is £3876.51; High Interest Account is £19063.34; Reserve Account is £1039.84
Martin Benning, Treasurer

b. Membership

Rolling paid up members 2024 = 77: all paid-up members = 357

Martin asked how the membership was going and Nicolla advised that, for March, it was good.

Nicolla Martin, Membership Secretary

c. Digital Communications (NJ)

Facebook/Website

There are now 1079 followers on the HRA Facebook page, an increase of 7 since HRA Committee Meeting of 19 March 2024.

Thank you to Pete and Barbara for their photos/information.

Spring Newsletter 2024

Figures Bookkeeping have taken out a business/credit card size advertisement in the Newsletter for £85.

Nadine Johnson Digital Comms

11. A.O.B.

- a. Newsletter update: the text and photographs should be with Ken the weekend following the meeting. Barbara asked Nicolla to be sure to ask for help should she need any additional Street Reps for delivery. Martin offered to collect the Newsletters and take them to Nicolla when they were ready as she would not be available.
- b. Christine clarified with Jon that the OARA meeting that had been arranged by Laura Graves (of the University) was the first meeting regarding organisation of student end-of-year-waste. Jon confirmed this.
- c. Christine said that, unfortunately, she was no longer available to represent HRA at the final Scrutiny Enquiry into the Rental Sector in Southampton on 18 April at 5:30pm. Barbara thought that the Draft Final Report, Conclusions and Recommendations would be available before the meeting and that this item would be on the May HRA Committee Meeting Agenda for discussion.

Meeting closed at 8.40pm

Next meeting Tuesday 14 May 7pm Highfield Church Halls

Please read the following before the next meeting

[Draft Final Report Scrutiny Private Rented Sector Southampton.pdf](#)

[Draft Recommendations and Conclusions Scrutiny Private Rented Sector Southampton.pdf](#)