

Minutes HRA Committee Meeting
Held on 11 January 2021
Via Zoom 19:00h



Committee members present :

Prof. Roger Brown (Chair), Nadine Johnson, Martin Benning, Ken Burtenshaw, Jerry Gillen, Barbara Claridge

1. **Welcome**, declaration of interests Roger Brown – Roger opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to Zoom. He introduced Jon Walsh, the University as Item 5. was to be taken first.
2. **Apologies** : Steve Connolly, Nicolla Martin. **Late Apologies** : Adrian Vinson.
3. **Committee Notes** from December 2020 (previously distributed to all Committee Members).
4. **Matters Arising** : none.

This item was taken before Item 1.

5. **University Liaison** : Jon Walsh joined the meeting to give information concerning the University Planning Application for the demolition of six houses on University Road and building plans going forward. Jon reminded the committee that the re-development of this section of University Road was part of a long-term plan and had first been notified to HRA in 2018. The overall redevelopment will be part of a Public Consultation in due course. The houses had been owned by the University for at least 20 years and were not used as dwellings but university administration accommodation. The GP Surgery would be relocated to better, bigger premises, including parking, on Highfield Road where Mulberry Surgery was located until it closed last year and the building acquired by the university. If the Planning Permission is approved then it is likely that the demolition works would be undertaken this year. The redevelopment of the cleared site will include buildings to extend the Jubilee Sports Centre which is widely used by the local community and the university for sport and wellbeing.

Barbara informed the meeting that two HRA members had contacted her with concerns over the Planning Application. Roger confirmed that the application would now be considered by the Planning group according to the details laid out in the document (Item 8). Barbara was to advise the two HRA members of this process.

Other university information

Roger expressed the impressive low Covid numbers at the university during the autumn term and asked if this might be due to the asymptomatic testing that had been in place. Jon replied that the testing had gone well and small outbreaks had been quickly contained. Roger also confirmed that HRA stood ready to be part of the university's 2021 consultation on University Civic Agreement (this will be linked to the City of Culture 2025 bid).

University return latest advice can be found here:

<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/welcoming-you-back.page>

University education delivery has now temporarily moved online until least 22 February. This means there will be no in-person, on-campus teaching, until we advise you otherwise - with the exception of Medicine, Health Sciences and PGCE students. These students will be able to continue their placements and/or in person on campus teaching as planned.

Students who do not study these courses should remain where they are, wherever possible, and start their term online.

Roger thanked Jon for his input who then left the meeting.

Item 1.

- Status of Acting Chair : Roger reminded everyone that he took the position as Chair of HRA (still officially Acting Chair as no ratification at an AGM has been possible) on a temporary basis until another Chair was found. However, he emphasised that even if committee desired it, he would not be prepared to do it indefinitely.
- HRA present operations : Roger expressed thanks to the active committee members who had continued in their roles despite the Covid situation – all of the efforts at keeping HRA alive were appreciated especially the open and frequent lines of communication to members and the general public and for the ongoing case work. Roger would write to all committee members after the meeting encouraging them to take part in all future meetings and activities so that the load was shared.
- AGM : the future of the overdue AGM was discussed and would be kept under review. However, we are aiming to hold the AGM as soon as rules permitted. It was agreed that a real AGM, rather than a virtual event, would be preferable so that members could meet up face to face. A brief discussion took place over a suitable venue if the Highfield Hotel was still unavailable.
- Declaration of interests : none recorded.

6. Reports

- **Finance (MB)** : Martin reported that the HRA end of financial year was 31 December 2020 and that these accounts were being drawn up. The association was in a good position financially. December membership fees, currently not banked, were to be added to this total. The completed accounts then needed to be examined. Sadly, the previous HRA appointed examiner had died and Mr Malcolm White who is an HRA member was proposed and appointed by the Committee. This is an exceptional arrangement as the Examiner of Accounts has to be appointed at an AGM and the holding of an AGM is not currently permitted under Government Covid Restrictions.
The HonSec will write to Malcolm and ask if he is willing to be the Examiner of Accounts. The issue of membership fees will be discussed and decided in time for the next AGM.
- **Membership (BC for NM)** : Database 498; Paid-Up members 355; Rolling 2. January and February membership letters have all been delivered thanks to street reps Simon Westley, Monica Parrish and Nicky and John Bradshaw. No banking has been done since 1 December. Roger will write to Nicolla to express appreciation and congratulate her for keeping the street reps going.

7. Information from Councillors :

Councillor Cooper : *Information about an online event regarding Southampton's bid for City of Culture 2025 (see attached)*

Councillor Mitchell : *The council's street cleansing teams are doing a ward wide clean starting 13th of January including Graffiti removal deep cleaning of roads or fly tipping. If the committee can get any suggestions to us by lunchtime tomorrow we can also try and get those added to the list.*

I am having a meeting with the Director of South East Councils which will include a presentation about the government's proposed changes to the planning system which HRA recently gave a consultation response to. This will be at the end of the month if anyone wants me to ask any questions I can, I will also feedback when I have heard more.

Councillor Savage : *I have been seeking clarification regarding works taking place at the top of Blenheim Ave. A number of residents did complain about reduced cycle and pedestrian access to the common. The matter has been raised with contractors as the blockage was carried out without a licence. I am awaiting an update.*

The City of Culture 2025 bid was discussed and Ken Burtenshaw agreed to be the HRA Representative for this initiative.

No particular new examples of fly-tipping were identified except the Westridge Road car park. Drug paraphernalia in Highfield Road and near benches by the Common underpass were raised by Nadine and discussed. Barbara would write to Cllr Mitchell about these general concerns and also request that the Highfield signs (a heritage feature) be cleaned.

8. **New document** (circulated in advance of the meeting) - Consideration of HRA Planning and Licensing applications since April 2020 i.e. without Committee Meetings (see document attached). This short policy document was introduced by Roger and then endorsed by the Committee with no amendments. It will be posted on the HRA website.
9. **Planning Report (AS)** : no report was available at the meeting.

Updates on casework – (BC) : Brookvale Road - Barbara informed the committee that Planning Approval for a two bed-detached house to replace the laundry building at 17, Brookvale Road had now been granted. HRA had not made a comment on this latest Planning application but had consulted all HRA members who lived on Brookvale Road and had liaised with PRG over the application seeking open communication at all stages of the process.

Chamberlain Road - an HRA member had become increasingly concerned and asked for HRA help about imminent renovation work at an HMO property in the attached semi to his family home. The initial query came via the Website passed on by Nadine. HRA (HonSec) had communicated with the member at length and thoroughly investigated all aspects. HRA had written formally to the council Planning and HMO departments seeking clarification to reassure the member. Both departments had replied very quickly to HRA and additionally spoken with the worried HRA member. He now feels reassured but the work is continuing as planned as no building control or planning approval is required for this work. A new HMO licence is likely to be granted when the work is completed. The Chair commended the HonSec for her extensive work in this case.

The Planning Application for 7, Brookvale Road is still awaiting a judgement.

10. **Crime information sharing WhatsApp group (for Highfield)** (NJ) : Nadine gave a brief resumé of the work of this group. She gave an example of a crime in Furzedown Road (Dec 2020) where a man had lifted off a substantial wrought iron front gate in broad daylight then drove off with it in his truck. The WhatsApp group encourages neighbours to report all crimes and also asks them to provide feedback if the police decline to view CCTV footage which could be helpful, as this has been a problem with some in the past. The group has been advised that there is a proper channel for police complaints which the police have urged them to use.

Details of this are on the WhatsApp Crime Info Sharing Group for Highfield which now has a section on the HRA website. Committee members are asked to read this page :

<http://www.highfieldresidents.org.uk/crime-info-whatsapp-group/>

Roger thanked Nadine for this excellent report and also Lucy Nagra for looking after the group on a day-to-day basis. He added that he had recently been in communication with the newly appointed Police Inspector for Southampton North, Sharath Ranjan. Roger felt that he would be an excellent guest speaker when we hold the AGM.

11. **Website and Facebook** (NJ) : The website is updated a bit at a time, the next priority being the photo gallery. There are currently 603 Facebook followers, an increase of 22 since the December Committee Note.

12. **Southampton Common Forum update** (BC) – a revamped website is in progress (Dave Johnston). SCF were consulted on new signage for the Common – in progress. Hill Lane cycle lanes, constructed during emergency powers in the March lockdown, are to be removed as they were little used and the car parking spaces are to be reinstated. Latest cycle works on The Avenue are starting soon.
13. **A.O.B.** : Future HRA Committee Meetings : this item was discussed and it was agreed that monthly full committee meetings would resume in February on Zoom. All committee members would be invited plus councillors and associates (University).

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