

Highfield Residents' Association
Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 11th December 2006 at the University
Staff Bar at 7.30pm

Present Jerry Gillen – Chairman; Julia Brooking- Vice Chairman; Caroline Knight, Secretary; Headley Rossell, Treasurer; Steve Connolly, Website Manager; Peggy Augier, Josie Brown, Gillian Gain, Sue Hartley and Catherine Powell

Apologies Nicolla Martin, David Ely, Bryan Wakely, Phil Banyard, Cllr. Steve Sollitt, Ben Rogers

In Attendance Sophie Evans

Minutes of last meeting Taken as read: proposed by Peggy and seconded by Sue.

Correspondence

23rd Nov Letter from Sainsbury's apologising for delay in sponsorship of the Newsletter
4th Dec Reply from Council to Jerry's letter re local planning decisions
7th Dec Copy of letter to John Denham re. HMO Action plan
7th Dec Planning application re Engineers Square, University
7th Dec North West Bassett RA Newsletter

Finance

Finances are healthy and in credit thanks to sponsorship from Sainsbury's. There was a small surplus from the Christmas party. All expenses to be given to Headley as soon as possible for year end.

There was discussion re the merits of applying for charity status. SVS held a meeting on this subject and it appears that we probably wouldn't qualify. It might be beneficial for us to register as a "Community Interest Company" which might give us some degree of financial protection.

Headley to investigate.

Planning & Licensing

- At the planning meeting re 11 Russell Place the building in the garden was approved but with conditions that it is not to be used for accommodation.
- We are told the building in the garden of 28 Brookvale may not breach planning control even though it is being used for accommodation! Being further looked into by Alan Sayle, SCC .
- 5 Crofton Close- an enforcement notice has been issued. The owner intends to appeal and HRA has agreed to support neighbours in fighting the appeal.

Community Action Forum Feedback

This meeting was very well attended. 2 Cabinet members were present and a formal application is to be made to the Government to push for licensing of all HMO's. At present licensing comes under Housing and permission under Planning- it would make sense to have it all under Planning.

Sophie Evans

Sophie has been appointed as Community Relations Officer and has been tasked with improving relations between the University and local residents. She has visited other Universities who already have a CRO in place to seek information. She has established an email address that people can use to inform her of any difficulties. local2u@soton.ac.uk We will add a link from our website. **SC** Sophie will direct any problems to the relevant department and will liaise with residents and students to help resolve any issues. She would like to instigate a hotline and also information and tips for students.

Pembroke Court

Julia gave a précis of progress to date. A group has been formed to act on behalf of the residents but efforts to meet with senior management from Anchor were unsuccessful. However the Regional Manager was meeting with Alan Whitehead today, 11th December but as yet there was no feedback from that meeting. AW had been briefed by HRA and others. The overall feeling is of pessimism as there are only 25 residents who have yet to sign up for relocation. Thanks were extended to Julia and Sue who have worked hard on behalf of the residents.

Newsletter:

Most of the work has been done. Still waiting for pieces from Waitrose and Ben, SU President. The article on the Common will be saved for a future issue and instead Peter Knight will write an article about the Portswood Timebank. There are still a couple of articles to be written. We have enough adverts.

Web site: Tony, Steve, Jerry and Caroline will meet on Wednesday evening to agree details of accepting adverts on the website.

Change of Venue

The Highfield Hotel has been revamped and have a function room which we could use for our committee meetings pending discussion re terms. This would be following the AGM which is to be held there as we have been offered the use of the room free of charge. It would be a better venue for our meetings as we would have privacy. The hotel is offering members of HRA a 10% discount on production of a membership card.

Any other business:

- The parking in Highfield Ave was raised as it is causing an obstruction- however this will be solved when the yellow lining is done. Post note meeting- this should be in the New Year.
- Additional problem caused by the trees obstructing the lights. Suggest a call to the Council. **PA**
- Concern was expressed about the poor state of repair of the empty and boarded up shops in Highfield Lane. A letter to the Council is to be written. **CK**
- There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.00pm

Date of next meeting is Monday January 8th 2007.