



Highcliffe Residents Association CIC Annual General Meeting

Thursday 28 September 2023 at 7.00pm

**at The Old School, 254 Lymington Road, Highcliffe BH23
5ET**

Minutes

Present

HRA Chair - Joan Rose
HRA Directors - Anne Bassett, Carol MacBean
BCP Councillors - Paul Hilliard, Andy Martin, David Martin.
Parish Cllr – Adam Sofianos.

Apologies for Absence

HRA Director – Ben Lock
Chair of PC and BCP Cllr – Lesley Dedman
HRA members – Richard and Mary Reader, William McNeil, Roger Lounds, Greg Jones, Judie Burman, Malcolm Eastwood.

1. Welcome

The Chair, Joan Rose, welcomed all members to The Old School and to the Annual General Meeting.

She reminded everyone that they may only vote at the meeting if they are a paid-up member of the HRA.

We now have a hearing loop in the Large Hall. To use the loop, members should set their hearing aids to the 'T' loop.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2022

There were no comments on the minutes of the last meeting. They were duly proposed, (Bob M) seconded (Kathryn H) and accepted as a true record of the meeting.

3. Review of 2022/23

The Chair presented the following report:

She paid tribute to Derek Chant, a champion of the community who was taken

prematurely from us. He was tireless in his commitment to Café Scientifique and HRA, as well as other local groups. He is greatly missed.

This year we have worked with the Parish Council (PC) on a number of initiatives, particularly Highcliffe Toddler Group, which was set up under the Warm Spaces project. This has been very successful and will continue for the foreseeable future.

We have worked with the PC to lobby to improve the beach paths and steps and to improve the parking and traffic regulation around Highcliffe. Both are ongoing issues but we are committed to continue to push for action in these areas.

With the increase in petty crime, such as graffiti and shop-lifting, we are trying to get more input from the local Police in the area, together with the Police and Crime Commissioner for Dorset. We are also doing what we can to make residents aware of planning applications which give us concern about the environment of our village.

We maintain close ties with other Residents' Associations in our area, benefitting from sharing information and ideas.

HRA had a successful presence at the Highcliffe Food and Arts Festival, attracting 35 new members.

Hall bookings have been steady throughout the year, with several long-term bookings in place and some interesting one-off events.

Thanks to a very generous donation from a member who wishes to remain anonymous, we now have an excellent sound system and hearing loop in the Large Hall. We are extremely grateful to Stephen Blatchley who sourced and installed this for us on a voluntary basis.

This year we had to carry out repairs to the roof over Men's Shed and over the Parish Council Office. We would like to express our thanks to Men's Shed for their help in repairing and maintaining the building over the past year.

The Chair also expressed her thanks to other members of the Board and Executive Committee for their help in what has been a difficult year for her personally.

4. Financial Review

Copies of the accounts for 22/23 were available at the meeting.

The Chair reported a loss for the year 2022/3 of £1119.14, resulting in a balance of just under £32K being carried forward to 2023/24.

There was no liability for Corporation Tax.

Income was slightly up this year and expenditure slightly down from the last financial year, meaning that our overall loss was slightly lower than last year.

Major expenditures in 2022/23 included repairs to the roof, the ceiling and lighting at

Old School. Capital items purchased included computer equipment, roller blinds and three new notice boards which have been installed around the village. We received grants and contributions for some of these items from the Parish Council and Café Scientifique.

Our forecast for the next five months of this financial year is a surplus of £4738, thanks to a release of monies from the PC in accordance with their lease agreement. This is a contribution to the refurbishment of Old School and roof repairs which have been carried out in previous years.

To date, we have had no major expenses in this financial year.

Our bank accounts show healthy balances today of £28151 in CAF bank and £524 in the NatWest account.

Membership

We currently have 636 members, an increase of 38 since our last quarterly meeting in June of this year.

Receipt of the Accounts was proposed (Peter R) and accepted (John M) by the meeting.

5. Nominations for Officers and Executives

There were no nominations for officers.

The Chair explained that HRA is always in need of people to become Directors and / or to help on the Executive Committee.

She invited anyone to take the opportunity to speak to either her or one of the Directors if they might be able to give us some of their time. We are particularly keen to recruit volunteers with bookkeeping or financial experience and those who are computer literate and able to help with hall bookings.

6. Election of Chairman, Directors and Executive Committee

In line with our Articles, one Director must resign each year, with the option that they can stand again. This year is the Chair's turn, so accordingly she resigned, but confirmed she was willing to stand again.

Carol MacBean thanked Joan for her hard work and leadership this year and ask for a proposer and seconder for her re-election as Director and Chair.

This was proposed, (Peter R) seconded (John M) and Joan Rose was unanimously elected to continue as a Director and Chair of HRA.

7. Appointment of Accountants

Messrs Neville Dean & Co Ltd were proposed (Peter R), seconded (Paula E) and elected as the accountants for the year.

8. Future of Old School

Copies of the Directors Report on the Future of Old School were available on the HRA website and hard copies were also available at the meeting.

Carol MacBean presented a summary of the Report, which can be found on the HRA website.

In response to the invitation by the Chair for questions, the following were asked:

Q. A member expressed the opinion that Old School must be used for educational purposes.

A. The Chair confirmed that this is not the position and that the title includes no such restriction.

Q. What will HRA do for premises and how will we afford them?

A. HRA will hire premises for its 4 quarterly meetings. Negotiations with any prospective body who may take over ownership of OS will include hire of rooms as we need them on an Free Of Charge basis.

Q. Could we dissolve HRA CIC and make it into a charity?

A. This is a possibility, but this will take time and resources to set up and which HRA does not currently have.

Q. What are the running costs of Old School?

A. In 2022/23 these were approximately £13K.

As a result of the discussion the following points were made:

- Directors currently spend a lot of their time maintaining and managing the building, time which they feel could be better spent in developing the HRA to represent residents.
- We estimate it would take hundreds of thousands of pounds to get the building into good shape.
- A member who had been involved in HRA taking on Old School in 2011 expressed the opinion that the building would be allowed to fall into dereliction if handed back to DCC/BCP.
- Old School is a Listed Building, which makes repair and maintenance more expensive. De-listing could be an option to make it more affordable. Concern was raised that as one of the oldest buildings in Highcliffe, it could then lose the protection of Listing. However, other members felt that the fact it was Listed gave little protection in any case.

The Chair wound up the debate by reassuring the meeting that she well understood the efforts that had been expended by numerous residents over the years to save the building for the community and that the HRA is proud that it is now able to take its place at the heart of Highcliffe.

The Board is asking members for permission to explore the options to transfer the building to a body which will keep it for community use but who are more able to access the funding needed.

The Board will keep members informed of progress.

The Special Resolution was then proposed (Alan C) and seconded (Jackie P) and the meeting then moved to a vote. On a show of hands, the resolution was passed by a majority.

9. Date of next meeting

The Chair then closed the meeting, with the date of the next meeting being:

Thursday 12 September 2024 at 7.00 pm