

Highcliffe Residents' Association CIC

Quarterly Members' Meeting

19th March 2018 at 7.10pm at St Mark's Church Hall

MINUTES

1. Present:

- HRA Chairman Rob Austin, other HRA Directors Sue Taylor, Jacqui Waddock, Ian Hartnell and Richard Reader,
- HRA Treasurer Paul Taylor, HRA Communications Officer Mary Reader
- County/Borough Councillor Lesley Dedman,
- Highcliffe Ward Councillors Nick Geary, Trish Jamieson, John Lofts and Sally Derham Wilkes,
- about 65 other HRA members and residents.

2. Apologies for absence

Cllrs Vicki Hallam and Colin Jamieson had sent apologies because of conflicting engagements.

3. Welcome

HRA Chairman Rob Austin welcomed HRA members, local Councillors and other residents, and said that the good attendance showed the value of using tonight's larger venue.

4. Discussion of Community Governance Review

Rob asked Richard Reader to outline the current position. Richard said that this review permits local organisations to propose the creation of Parish Councils covering specific parts of the Borough. The villages of Burton and Hurn already have Parish Councils, but no Parishes exist in the remainder of the Borough. He and Rob had attended a briefing meeting at the end of January, where they learned that if any proposal were to be submitted for a Parish Council in the Highcliffe area, it would have to be done by 23 February.

This left insufficient time for full consultation with residents, but - based on the often-expressed view at HRA meetings that the Highcliffe area does not get proportionate consideration when Borough-wide policies or resource allocations are considered - the HRA Committee decided to propose the creation of a Parish Council for Highcliffe and Walkford, to be called the Highcliffe Community Council. This would keep the option open for full consultation during the next round of the review.

County Councillor Lesley Dedman provided much useful information about the scope of the review, and about the pros and cons of having a local Parish Council. She outlined the various powers that could be delegated to such Councils, and the scope that they would have for raising a precept on the local Council Tax to fund their

activities.

Richard said that he understood that, in view of the recent Government decision to merge Christchurch Borough into a new Unitary Authority with Bournemouth and Poole, other groups were proposing the formation of a Parish Council covering the whole of Christchurch Borough (possibly without Hurn and Burton, as they already have Parish Councils), to be called Christchurch Town Council. If this proposal were accepted, it would preclude the possibility of a separate Parish Council for Highcliffe and Walkford.

After discussion, HRA Chairman Rob Austin said that he would keep the HRA website (www.highclifferesidents.co.uk) updated on this topic, and would provide links on the website to the various documents referred to. He would ensure good consultation with residents on the range of proposals that would be contained in the next document from Christchurch Borough Council.

5. Proposed Development at Jesmond Avenue

Chairman Rob said that, following the refusal of the recent application for a major development of the Jesmond Avenue site, he had learned that the developer was considering an alternative application, comprising 21 chalet-bungalows and without the earlier proposal for a care home for older people. The developer was keen to know the views of local residents before making any further application, so Rob made available to the meeting details of the new possible plan.

In discussion, several members said that they were opposed to any building on this valuable wildlife site, despite its designation as building land as long ago as 1958. Other members raised more detailed questions about trees, garages, and the proposed wildlife corridor. Rob asked everyone to send him their views, so that he could respond appropriately to the developer.

6. Zig-Zag Path

Bob Hutchings, Chairman of the Rothesay Drive Residents Association, updated members on developments since the Council decision to reinstate the Path, and expressed concern that the start of the works had been deferred to the Autumn. He had been advised that planning permission might be required, but thought that these works should have permitted development status. On behalf of HRA members, Rob congratulated Bob and his team of local people for their successful campaign to retain the Path, and promised continuing support as necessary.

7. Other Planning Applications

Rob referred to the current applications for development of the G&T site and the site at 167/169 Lymington Road. The deadlines for comments had passed, and no-one present wished to make any points on these applications.

8. Communications with Members

HRA Communications Officer Mary Reader told members about recent steps to improve communication, including her monthly column in *Highcliffe Eye*, an enhanced HRA website due for launch soon, and a Facebook page. She went on to ask interested members to come forward to support the Executive Committee, which needed additional expertise in several areas.

9. Any other business

One member noted with regret the absence on this occasion of our local Police Officer. Rob said that he would ensure that he would be invited to future meetings.

Another member expressed concern that Virgin Media were not installing fibre optic cable in some cul-de-sacs, apparently on grounds of cost compared with likely return. This would require the residents affected to incur considerable costs to upgrade their TV aerials. Rob asked to be told of details of areas affected by this situation, and undertook to raise the matter at a senior level with Virgin Media.

10. Closure

Closing the meeting at about 8.45pm, Rob Austin thanked all present for their participation, and all the Councillors for their support. He said that the next Members' Meeting would take place at 7.00pm on 11 June, again in St. Mark's Hall.