



# Highcliffe Residents' Association Community Interest Company

## QUARTERLY MEMBERS' MEETING 11<sup>th</sup> March 2019 at 7.00pm at St Mark's Church Hall MINUTES

### 1. Present:

HRA CIC Chairman Ian Hartnell

HRA CIC Directors Rob Austin, Guy Gillett and Richard Reader (minute-taker)

HRA Executive Committee members Willie McNeill (Planning), and Mary Reader (Communications)

Councillors Lesley Dedman, Sally Derham Wilkes, Nick Geary, Colin Jamieson (from Min. 4.1.6), Trish. Jamieson, and John Lofts

About 80 other HRA members and residents.

### 2. Apologies for absence

Councillor Vicki Hallam had sent apologies because of conflicting engagements; as had HRA Directors Sue Taylor and Jacqui Waddock, and HRA Officers Andy Clayton (Website) and Ben Lock (Social Media), as well as several other HRA members.

### 3. Welcome

Ian welcomed everyone, and said it was very encouraging to see so many community initiatives taking place in our area.

HRA subscriptions were due on 1<sup>st</sup> April, and he hoped that members would be encouraged to renew.

### 4. Update on Current Issues and Recent HRA Activities

#### 4.1 Planning

##### *4.1.1 Premier Inn Development Application*

Willie McNeill said that concern had been expressed about:

- Possible loss of right of way - however he was reassured that the footpath would continue underneath the new extension
- Impact on parking – but there would be a loss of only 1 or 2 spaces (and this was their private car park)
- Further impact on local B&B businesses – Mary Reader confirmed that some local B&B businesses had been closing in recent years, possibly because the offer from hotels like the Premier Inn was more attuned to modern requirements. However other establishments had adapted their offer and marketing, and continued to do well.

#### *4.1.2 Jesmond Avenue enforcement notice*

Willie said that the appeals process in Bristol was running 6 to 9 months behind schedule, hence the delay on this application. He was constantly in touch to maintain the sense of urgency

#### *4.1.3 Rothesay Drive planning application*

Granted on 7 January.

#### *4.1.4 The Galleon*

It was understood that an up-market chain of Bistro-style pubs was planning to open on this site, which would be re-christened The Oaks. They have received planning permission for the new signage. Although they do not expect to be open in time for the Highcliffe Food Festival (1<sup>st</sup> -2<sup>nd</sup> June), they hope to take part in the cookery demonstrations.

#### *4.1.5 Trees*

Willie remarked that about 70% of planning applications in the Highcliffe area related to trees in one way or another.

#### *4.1.6 Bramble Lane development*

HRA member David Underhill said that three planning applications had recently been submitted for the Bramble Lane area, and that residents there were feeling under threat. The plans included a new house, significant tree felling, and new dwellings up a small lane with limited access. This is a conservation area, and the residents would appreciate HRA support in opposing the applications. David had mounted a display of plans and photographs for residents' information on this.

Chairman Ian said that HRA could of course investigate the matter: but that all members concerned about this should write in stating their individual views, because each letter is considered on its merits, and a letter from HRA would have no more weight than any one letter from a resident.

#### *4.2 Zig-Zag Path*

HRA member Bob Hutchings said that there was little extra to add to the excellent report in the recent HRA Newsletter. The contractors are making a really solid job of the new path, but it was a shame that for reasons of cost it was to be surfaced in black rather than a golden colour. There would be an official opening ceremony after the Council elections, but the path would be open for walkers some time around Easter, and he hoped that there would be a group walk by residents on Good Friday.

Cllr John Lofts questioned whether residents would be happy for people with mobility scooters to use the path: Chairman Ian pointed out that access to the beach for less mobile people was one of the key reasons for public demands for reinstatement of the path. Cllr Lofts added that he was concerned lest the areas of softer ground or sand near the top or bottom of the path might create problems for some mobility scooters. It was agreed that access to the path should be user-friendly for mobility vehicles and that the matter should be investigated. Members noted that these were among the factors that local residents had sought to raise with Council Officers, but they had not found it easy to engage with them.

#### *4.3 Council taxes following the creation of the BCP Unitary Authority*

Chairman Ian said that most residents would prefer harmonised tax rates from day 1, but

that protests from HRA and many others had had no effect. Several councillors said that they had argued and voted strongly for early harmonisation of council taxes in the Shadow Authority and elsewhere, but had been outvoted. Cllr. Colin Jamieson had checked the legality of having more than one tax rate within a single Council area, but had unfortunately found that this was perfectly legal.

A member asked if residents could withhold part of their Council tax, but was advised that this would probably lead to prosecution, and that the HRA could not recommend such a step as it would be against the law.

HRA member Nigel Brooks noted that a figure of £27.59 had been publicly cited by Bournemouth Councillor Beesley as the initial precept for the Highcliffe and Walkford Neighbourhood Council, presumably consistent with the planned £175,000 budget for that Council. He wondered how that budget had been created, and suspected that it might include some “fat”.

Chairman Ian said that his main concern was that the new Parish had been allocated no capital reserves from the substantial CBC funds.

#### 4.4 Highcliffe Action Team

Mary said that Jane Dean, Communications Officer for H.A.T., had an engagement in Poole that evening, but had provided the following update:

- HAT will be launching their 4-mile walking map next month, which has been beautifully illustrated by local artist Wendy Brown (images attached).
- The map is complimentary and takes in the high street, plus it directs walkers to both of Hoburne's Parks, Highcliffe Castle, along the beach to the Cliffhanger Cafe, back up to Chewton Glen's Kitchen and takes in tourist hotspots and places of interest.
- Stockists of the map will include Chewton Glen Hotel, Hoburne, the Library, Highcliffe Castle and traders/shops/businesses along Lymington Road. Around 4,500 copies will be printed so that the map is also distributed to every householder in Highcliffe.
- HAT is creating #LoveHighcliffe themed merchandise utilising the images, for example tote bags, tea towels, aprons, place mats, coasters, mugs and car stickers. Further details of these will be available shortly and HAT will be selling the first products at this year's Food Festival. Highcliffe Castle are also most interested in stocking the branded merchandise.
- HAT's next meeting is at 3.30pm on Wednesday 27th March at The Cliffhanger Cafe.
- HAT's next initiative is to exhibit 'welcome to Highcliffe' flags in the in-situ flagpole holders along the high street (Lymington Road).
- HAT have been working alongside 'In Bloom' re securing planters. Highcliffe Sports & Social Club generously contacted HAT to donate £1k which was allocated to the in-bloom team.
- The team continues to work with local press and media to ensure a positive continued presence is maintained profiling HAT's initiatives and ideas to benefit Highcliffe's businesses and its residents alike.

Mary said that HAT welcomes the continued support of HRA, and added that people getting involved with HAT activities found them enjoyable and worthwhile.

#### 4.5 Highcliffe and Walkford in Bloom

Susan said that in the 5 months since starting “Bloom”, it had formed a committee and organised 4 Working Parties, and had acquired a bank account and appropriate insurance. The working parties had weeded the High Street, from the Globe in the West to the end of business premises in the East, as well as several side roads. They had been given some planters to refurbish and place appropriately, and had made a start on some gardening at The Old School for the HRA. They had entered the “Parish” section of the Britain in Bloom contest, and will in due course receive a judges' report.

Cllr Lofts warned against strimming banks of daffodils as soon as the flowers are over, as the bulbs do not re-grow well.

#### 4.6 Beach Litter Pick

Chairman Ian said that some 110 people had turned up for the first beach litter pick of the year – a very encouraging and worthwhile experience. The dates of future litter picks are on the HRA website, and everyone is most welcome to take part!

### 5. New Parish – Highcliffe and Walkford Neighbourhood Council

#### 5.1 Elections

HRA member Bob Hutchings said that elections for Parish Councillors will be held on 2<sup>nd</sup> May. The paperwork for those interested in standing is available at Civic Offices.

Cllr Colin Jamieson said that he had been a Parish Councilor in Burton before he was elected to the Borough and County Councils. He urged interested people to stand for election to the new Parish Council, as there would be real opportunities to add value to the community.

Agreeing, Cllr Lesley Dedman said that as the parish Council is a statutory consultee on planning matters, its views carried far more weight than those of individuals acting alone. She encouraged potential Parish Councillors to stand for election, and especially to take an interest in local planning matters.

Cllr Trish Jamieson said that the advert for a Parish Clerk had been published externally, as there were no internal candidates from existing Council staff. There were 15 applicants, of whom 4 were being interviewed: it was hoped to make an appointment shortly.

#### 5.2 South-Western Coastal Path

An HRA member said that the SW Coastal Path was being signposted through Dorset, and there will be a sign near Cliffhanger to announce that this is the start of it. Another member said that many walkers would want to use the Path once it had been signposted, and Highcliffe should capitalise on this additional footfall with appropriate signage to its facilities and businesses. Nigel Brooks noted that there was already £60,000 earmarked for an Information Hub based on the existing shelter near Cliffhanger, and this would be a start. Members offered to help HRA and/or the Parish Council to promote this development.

### 6. Questions to HRA Officers and Borough/County Councillors

#### 6.1 Highcliffe Pavements

An HRA member reported that she had been injured as a result of an uneven pavement in Highcliffe. However, Cllr. Dedman said that she was not aware of the incident as it had not been reported. She urged everyone who encounters a problem to tell her – she would note details of this incident after the meeting. Another HRA member said that in some areas the pavements had not been well reinstated following the roadworks by Virgin Media. Members deplored the situation.

#### 6.2 Dog Bins

Mary Reader said that she had received complaints that the removal of some dog bins on the cliff tops seemed to have coincided with an increase in the number of dog-waste bags being discarded in the vegetation. Cllr Colin Jamieson noted that the larger litter bins are now multi-purpose. Susan Smith said that people must be educated to take all their litter home – this seemed to work well at Hengistbury Head. Mary confirmed that several members wanted the former dog bins to be reinstated.

#### 6.3 Parking in Wharncliffe Road and elsewhere

Mary Reader reported complaints received from members about builders' vans parking in excessive numbers on both sides of Wharncliffe Road, and about bollards being placed in the road overnight. She had pursued these issues with the Council, but officers were uncertain about the legality of the bollards. Cllr. Colin Jamieson said that if there is an obstruction to the road, the police must take it seriously: and if they do not do so, then they should be asked for an incident number, which should be communicated to him. He confirmed that access to building sites needed to be considered as part of any planning application. An HRA member noted that the enforcement of parking restrictions during the summer would pass from DCC to the new BCP Council from 1<sup>st</sup> April.

Cllr Derham Wilkes said that she had received complaints that cars were being parked in certain roads by a commercial business, and that some were not taxed. Cllr Colin Jamieson said that abandoned and untaxed cars can be dealt with – report them to your Councillor, who can arrange for Dorset Waste Partnership to remove them. A government website will enable the tax status of any car to be ascertained.

#### 6.4 Fly-tipping

A member asked to whom fly-tipping should be reported if it is not on Council land. Councillors confirmed that Dorset Waste Partnership must clear up fly-tipping on public land: but on private land it is the responsibility of the landowner. Rob Austin said that fly-tipping can be reported on the Dorset For You website, which will also tell you if it is on private land.

#### 6.5 Road Lighting at Night

Willie McNeill said that the policy of extinguishing many street lights during the early hours of the morning was causing danger to pedestrians. However, Cllr Colin Jamieson said that street lights were provided for vehicular safety, not for pedestrians, who should use a torch if walking in the small hours. However, lighting was maintained on main roads and bus routes (except for the By-pass, as that is a de-restricted road).

### 7. Any other business

Chairman Ian said that the HRA was going from strength to strength, and the Committee was pleased to see so many people at this meeting. There was a lot of work to make HRA as effective as it could be, and the Committee would welcome volunteers to assist with certain tasks – e.g.:

- Company Secretary,
- Officer for roads, traffic, parking;
- Officer for footpaths (one member volunteered);
- Support in the maintenance and use of the HRA's Old School building;
- Asst. Committee secretary (two members came forward).

He thanked all who had already offered to serve as Road Wardens for the distribution of HRA newsletters – this had worked well.

### 8. Closure and Date of next Members' Meeting

Closing the meeting at about 8.50pm, Ian thanked all present for their participation, and all Councillors for their support.

The next Members' Meeting will take place at 7.00pm on 10 June, again in St. Mark's Hall.

RR.27.3.2019