



# Highcliffe Residents' Association Community Interest Company

## QUARTERLY MEMBERS' MEETING

**4 August 2021 at 6.45pm in The Old School, 254 Lymington Road**

## MINUTES

### **Present:**

HRA CIC Chairman Ian Hartnell

HRA CIC Directors Anne Bassett (Finance and Membership) and Joan Rose (secretary and minute taker)

HRA Executive Committee members Tina Butcher (Newsletter Distribution )

Mary and Richard Reader (Communications) (retiring)

BCP Councillors: Paul Hilliard, Lesley Dedman, Nigel Brooks

HWPC Councillor: Andy Martin (Vice Chairman)

Approximately 50 HRA members and residents.

### **1. Welcome:**

Chairman Ian welcomed everyone and thanked everyone for attending the first public meeting of the HRA since March 2020. Ian opened the meeting by imparting the very sad news of the deaths of two key members of the Board and Executive committee, Ian Nichols and Guy Gillett.

Nigel Brooks gave an address informing the meeting of the very great loss to both the Parish Council and the HRA following the passing of Ian Nichols in November of last year. He referred to the various projects with which Ian had been involved, including the public response to the reinstatement of the zig-zag path to Highcliffe Castle, his input in the Neighbourhood Plan and the Revitalise the High Street projects. On behalf of the HRA, Ian was instrumental in designing the new heating system for The Old School, and he worked hard on investigating avenues for grant benefits. He brought his considerable knowledge and practical experience to the good of the community through his tireless efforts on behalf of the people of Highcliffe. Nigel said that he was grateful to Ian's wife Pauline for her patience whilst Ian was devoting himself to these issues, and that he would miss his generosity and enthusiasm. He felt he had lost a dear friend.

Ian Hartnell then spoke of Guy Gillett, who passed away very recently. Guy was a Lt Colonel in the army, and he always approached any project with which he was involved with a thorough but mindful approach. His main concern was the Health and Safety aspect of the running of The Old School, and he was the 'go to' person where questions of maintenance of the fabric of the building was concerned. Ian spoke about Guy's ribald sense of humour, and his determination to be of service despite his underlying health issues. Guy was indomitable in his approach to life, and will be

greatly missed as a colleague and friend.

Chairman Ian then called for a minute's silence in order that all present could remember not only Ian and Guy, but all those who have lost their lives as a result of the COVID epidemic.

Ian went on to extend a welcome to the new Executive Committee member, Debra Ward, who has volunteered to give input as a resident of Walkford. It is important to the HRA that this representation exists, and that the residents of Walkford have an opportunity to contribute.

Two of our most valued Board and Committee members, Mary and Richard Reader have stepped down from their work with the HRA. Chairman Ian related how they were instrumental in recruiting him as Chairman, and in setting up the HRA in the form it exists today. Ian said that Richard was his advisor and support during the difficult initial legal issues in the early days of taking over The Old School, for which Ian was very grateful indeed. Richard kept The Old School running during lockdown, and was the person who implemented the re-opening under COVID restrictions. Mary has been the Communications and Public Affairs Officer and has worked tirelessly for the good of the Highcliffe Community. She wrote the articles for The Highcliffe Eye, the HRA Newsletter, and liaised with the press. Her experience and knowledge will also be greatly missed.

Flowers were presented to Mary, and bottles of wine to Richard as a 'thank you' for their service.

## **2. Apologies for Absence:**

Apologies were received from Bob Hutchings (Chair Highcliffe and Walkford Parish Council), Andy Clayton (HRA executive Committee member, Digital), and Judie Burman (HRA Executive Committee member – Bookings) and Ben Lock (Director).

## **3. Minutes of QMM Meeting of 9 March 2020**

Chairman Ian referenced the minutes of the quarterly members meeting, copies of which were available at the meeting and which were also posted on the HRA website, and invited any comments from the floor. No comments were received and the minutes were declared as final and as a correct record.

## **4. Talk by PCSO Thomas Baker**

Police Community Support Officer Thomas Baker said that a new Sergeant and two Police Constables would shortly be added to the PCSO team, which would help in dealing with issues such as anti-social behaviour. Some extra police patrols for example at the Cliffhanger car park had already taken place. He said that visits are made to the homes of vehicle owners whose licence plates are reported to the police as a result of reckless and inappropriate driving behaviour. He stressed the continuing need to report all problems as soon as possible. These reports are noted down to prioritise the allocation of police resources, so the more problems reported in an area, the more attention that area gets.

He recognised that phone calls to 101 are not answered promptly when there is a high volume of volume of calls, so he urged residents to report problems on-line whenever possible. On-line reports are treated in just the same way as telephone reports in guiding the police to priority problem areas.

(Note: Go to the Police website ([www.dorset.police.uk](http://www.dorset.police.uk)), click on “Contact Us/Do It On-line”, and then click on “I would like to report something”.)

Thomas said that thefts from vans were increasing, so he urged van-owners not to leave any valuables in their vehicles overnight. Thefts of catalytic converters were also rising, and he asked people to report them promptly and include the licence plate of the escape vehicle if known.

In discussion, BCP Cllr Nigel Brooks said that a Speedwatch system operated by volunteers would be starting work shortly in key roads in Highcliffe. Thomas commended Speedwatch volunteers and said that there is evidence that these schemes do make a difference.

There was a question from the floor about the ability of the Police to intervene when people ride jetskis within the yellow buoys off Mudeford beach. Thomas said that the Police can help indirectly by passing on these concerns to the Marine Control Team which has been set up by BCP council. He also told the meeting that vehicles towing jetskis which are obstructing the highways and pavements were being towed away.

Another member raised the issue of a very noisy motor bike which speeds through the streets of Highcliffe late at night causing a disturbance. Thomas said that this individual was known to Police.

In closing, Thomas emphasised that he and his colleagues would attend future Members’ meetings, and urged everyone to keep reporting their concerns.

## **5. HRA CIC update - Repairs and renovations to the Old School building**

For the benefit of any new members present, Chairman Ian explained that The Old School is owned by HRA members, and is the responsibility of HRA to keep in a reasonable condition as far as is possible.

A new sign has been delivered for erection outside of the building, and it is hoped that Men’s Shed will help with that work. Ian thanked the Parish Council for their grant of £200 towards the cost of the sign.

A new central heating system has now been installed, and work to insulate the loft space over the back of the Large Hall is now in hand, and should be completed shortly. A project to improve the lighting of the Old School, both inside and out, and to provide electricity supply to the Lower Hall for Mens Shed was commenced by Guy Gillett, and Directors will be progressing this in the near future. Wifi will also shortly be available to hall users.

There is a cottage which is annexed to The Old School, which is leased to a family, and several jobs have been carried out to improve this for the tenants. Again, this was work which Guy began, and we are currently awaiting the results of Planning permission which is required to renovate the porch to the cottage. The cost of these works is estimated to be around £6000.

## **6. Financial Report**

Chairman Ian read the Financial report. He explained that because the HRA is a commercial ratepayer, it was entitled to claim grants under the government COVID support measures. As a

result, the draft accounts are currently showing a surplus of £28000. These monies will be used on the various projects to improve the Old School. Ian reported that there was a good income from the hire of the Large Hall, thanks to the efforts of Executive Committee member Judie Burman. He explained that admin costs are higher than last year due to legal costs, although due to the closure of The Old School during the COVID lockdown, capital costs were lower than last year. Ian informed the meeting that HRA had moved its major banking business to an on line account with CAF bank, which currently held approximately £29000, with a balance in the original Natwest account of £2500. He also mentioned the loan of £18000 which was arranged through the Charity Bank.

Ian thanked new Director, Anne Bassett for all of her hard work since taking over responsibility for the accounts and membership.

## **7. Update on current issues and recent HRA activities**

### **7a. Zonal Parking Proposals**

HRA member Malcolm Eastwood gave a presentation on the discussions with BCP council on their proposals for Zonal Parking in Highcliffe. He began by explaining that proposals came to light earlier this year to install parking meters in a number of residential streets which could be accessed by a mobile phone app. These proposals were not presented for public consultation by the council. Many of these proposed bays had been sited in dangerous locations, some encroaching on private land. A previous proposal to extend the use of single yellow lines in East Highcliffe to enforce parking restrictions during the summer months had been successfully submitted to a previous BCP administration, which was subsequently reversed by the new authority. Malcolm explained that he was informed that if the ward councillor was against traffic control plans, then they would not take place. Councillor Nigel Brooks is supporting Highcliffe residents over this issue. Unfortunately, no measures at all have been implemented in 2021 to alleviate the pressure on our streets from increased tourist traffic and parking. Malcolm said that he had been advised by BCP council that no action would be taken unless there was an accident.

HRA Chairman Ian Hartnell, Malcom and other residents have been trying to arrange a meeting with Councillor Mike Greene (Transport and Sustainability) to discuss these issues, and it is hoped to meet with him in September. Malcolm expressed his thanks to Nigel Brooks for his help and support, and mentioned the limited degree of trust residents have in the officers and councillors at BCP, citing a complete lack of response from the leader of BCP, Councillor Drew Mellor.

Councillor Lesley Dedman (Mudford, Stanpit and West Highcliffe) explained that the councillors responsible for these issues were unaware of the nature of the locale in which they were trying to implement the proposals. She said that she and Nigel Brooks were working hard to inform them of the special character of the area.

By way of further explanation, Nigel informed the meeting that the proposed plans included some 230 parking bays in 15 street, with 50 bays on Wharncliffe Road. He also mentioned that the Neighbourhood Plan included special arrangements for cyclists, who would be put at great risk if these parking bays were installed. They are also felt to be dangerous for pedestrians and small children in particular as they limit the view of the road. He said that the implications of the council's plans were not thought through, and he and the other local councillors were working to

get a solution.

Chairman Ian thanked Nigel and Lesley for their comments, and for standing beside residents in this matter.

### **7b. Beach Works**

Recent beach works have resulted in a great deal of sand being moved from Highcliffe beach. Ian said that HRA is hoping to engage with the new unit which has been set up by joint councils to look into and manage beach protection in the future.

### **7c. Anti Social Behaviour**

Recent problems with vehicles being driven in a dangerous and disruptive fashion on the Cliffhanger car park were highlighted. Member Andy McErlain and Mary Reader have been working hard on behalf of residents affected, and liaising with the Police. A result of this work is that CCTV cameras, which had been removed from the car park, have now been replaced.

### **7d. Plea for volunteers**

Board member and Secretary Joan Rose drew the attention of the meeting to the activities of the HRA which had been highlighted in the meeting thus far. She stressed the importance of the existence of the HRA, and the high regard it was held within the Community. She said that a great deal of work is undertaken by too few Committee members, particularly in the light of recent retirements, and the loss of Guy. She urged those present to come forward if they felt they could volunteer to help in any way. If new volunteers are not found soon, the Board will need to re-examine the services they are able to provide to members in the future.

## **8. Update from Highcliffe and Walkford Parish Council**

In the absence of the HWPC Chairman Bob Hutchings, Vice Chairman Andy Martin gave a presentation on the activities of the Parish Council. He informed the meeting that two new Parish Councillors have been appointed, and that an assistant Parish Clerk had been employed.

Andy reported that the Neighbourhood Plan had been ratified by the Parish Council, and had been submitted to BCP Council for their examination. He said that the PC expected a response from BCP Council in the next few months. The Plan will then be released for public scrutiny, culminating in a public vote to adopt the Plan. Andy mentioned that BCP council are also preparing a Local Plan, which includes the aim to build 42000 new homes in the future. He warned that the impact of the BCP Council Local Plan could impact on the special character of Lymington Road and the surrounding area. He assured members that the Parish Council would respond vigorously to this plan.

The Revitalising the High Street plan put together by the PC has been submitted to BCP Council, who have accepted some proposals, including more crossings, and the installation of electrical charging points for vehicles. There will be a second round of consultation with local traders on the question of restricting on-street parking.

The ownership of the Recreation Ground and Play area should have been transferred from BCP Council to the Parish Council in April of this year, but this has been held up for legal reasons.

£200,000 have been spent on the refurbishment of the Wingfield Sports Pavilion, which should be completed in a couple of months, after which ex manager of Bournemouth FC, Eddie Howe will open it at a special ceremony.

Andy closed his remarks with a further assurance to members that the Parish Council will hold BCP Council to account for their plans and actions.

The question of the overflow carpark on Wharncliffe Road was raised by Malcolm Eastwood, and Nigel Brooks explained that this had been the subject of legal investigations. It can only be used a limited number of times per year, but as yet BCP have not offered a satisfactory explanation of why it is not being used during peak times.

## **9. Communications with Members**

Joan Rose asked Mary Reader to give a short report on her work recently. Mary explained that she produced a column for the Highcliffe Eye as well as the HRA Newsletter. She emphasised the need for members to provide an email address in order to receive an electronic copy of the newsletter, as the cost of printing is so high. She praised the team of volunteers who deliver the newsletter to those without email addresses. Mary also said that she had acted as contact point for the Highcliffe Action Team and Highcliffe in Bloom, passing on their news via the newsletter to members. Mary also informed the meeting that the Highcliffe Food and Arts Festival which had been cancelled both in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID pandemic, will be held next year on 11 and 12 June.

Joan encouraged members with Facebook accounts to make sure that they 'followed' the HRA page.

## **10. Urgent Business**

Chairman Ian told the meeting that HRA have been approached by a resident of Hinton Wood Avenue, who reported that a Swimming School business was being run from a private house, causing chaos with parking, and nuisance to neighbours. This matter is being monitored, and support offered if it is required by members.

Councillor Lesley Dedman paid tribute to Mary Reader, and all of the work she has contributed over the years to the Highcliffe community. She also mentioned the work of ex-councillor John Lofts, and explained that both he and Lesley had been instrumental in getting The Old School handed over to the HRA. She also wanted to bring to the attention of the meeting a recent Twitter report which had caused a great deal of anxiety to local residents. This maintained that ecoli had been detected in the sea around Mudeford and Highcliffe. She wished to quash these rumours, and said that the waters are perfectly safe to swim in.

Councillor Paul Hilliard mentioned the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management project (see Ian Hartell's comments earlier). The deadline for completing the survey included in the website is 15 August 2021. The link is

<https://haveyoursay.bcpccouncil.gov.uk/christchurchstrategy/maps/fcerm-strategy-map>

There is also a consultation about what the public would like to happen on the beach fronts in the area, and this ends on 26 September 2021

He explained that it was early days for the project, but urged all members to look at the website, and get involved with the proposals. The link for this is:

<https://haveyoursay.bcpccouncil.gov.uk/bcp-seafront-strategy>

A member raised the subject of flooding caused by recent heavy storms, in particular in Seaton Close and Gordon Road. Nigel Brooks said that the matter is being raised with the Environment Agency, and that he was meeting the residents affected.

The topic of the planning permissions for building on Jesmond Road was raised. Chairman Ian explained that the owner of the land in question is legally obligated to apply for planning permission. He confirmed that the woodland is not classed as historic. A member asked if the owner could be asked to remove the metal fencing which surrounds the land, but Ian pointed out that this is erected on private land. Andy Martin raised the Environmental Policies which are included in the Neighbourhood Plan which will help to protect 'green corridors' in the future.

#### **11. Date of the next meeting:**

Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2021 at 6.30pm at The Old School

The meeting was closed at 8.30pm

JR 10.08.21