

THE FRIENDS OF OLD PORTSMOUTH ASSOCIATION

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Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Held Online by Zoom

Wednesday 24 March 2021, 7.00 pm

The meeting was chaired by Gail Baird with attendance from 6 committee members and approximately 30 members. Cllr Rob Wood attended as a guest in his role as Lord Mayor.

Committee Present:

Gail Baird (Chair and Website), Anna Koor (Secretary), Graeme Swinburne (Planning), Alistair Wilson (Membership), Mike Dobson (Traffic), Bob Stewart (Spice Island), Ann Wilson (Social Secretary). In attendance as guests: Lord Mayor Rob Wood, Councillor Chris Attwell.

1. Chair's Opening Remarks

Gail welcomed everyone and briefly re-introduced herself, reviewing the impact of lockdown which brought FOOPA gatherings to abrupt halt with cancellation of the AGM on 24 March 2020. FOOPA did not meet for a couple of months, then picked up the thread in June 2020 with an outdoor meeting. Since then committee meetings have occurred regularly online. Owing to the absence of activities in 2020, members were recently asked if they would like their subscription for 2020 to be donated to local charities or put towards a future social event. Feedback suggested the proceeds should be evenly split, so £500 has been divided between the E C Roberts Centre and Portsmouth Family Welfare Association. When social activities resume after Covid restrictions are eased, FOOPA will review how to use the remaining £500.

2. Conducting AGM Business / Zoom Protocols / Q&A

Gail explained that the purpose of this meeting is AGM business so therefore is restricted to completing those tasks. She invited any members who wish to raise topics for FOOPA to investigate, to please email her and if anyone would like to post updates on local issues that are of interest to members, to send in news and stories that can be broadcast via the website and social media channels. Gail explained that it is necessary to mute everyone to maintain adequate and consistent sound quality. Members would be invited to submit questions via the Chat box at the end of the meeting. She asked that everyone refrain from using the hands up button until asked to, as it can be quite distracting.

3. Apologies

Apologies have so far been received from the following members: Elaine Bevis, David Baird, Mary McDermott, Helga Higgins, John Young, Cheryl Jewitt, Brenda Cook, Carey and Jean Bowker, Robin and Moyra Hedderly. Subsequent apologies from Alan and Jennifer Sturmeay.

4. Approval of Draft Minutes AGM 2019

Apologies, minutes, correspondence and actions of the previous AGM held on 26 March 2019, were agreed by assent. No objections.

5. Matters Arising

Anna requested that if anyone has any comments or concerns arising from the Minutes, to please make use of the Chat facility at the end of the meeting, during Any Other Business. Or send an email. Post-Zoom note: No matters raised.

6. Reports

Anna introduced reports from Alistair, Graeme and Mike.

Alistair (Membership and Acting Treasurer) – At year end 2020 there were 201 members, having lost 9 yet gained 9 new members. Currently, 168 pay by standing order and 33 by cash/cheque. Moving into 2021, 195 members have already paid their subscriptions due in January 2021. Recommendation to post out a Newsletter to all Old Portsmouth in July as a membership drive, to coincide with the lifting of pandemic restrictions and announcement of forthcoming social events. An accounts summary had been emailed to members. A total of £1026 was received in subscription receipts, and owing to little activity due to the pandemic, a surplus of £682.50 was generated to add to the reserves of £8344. Consequently the Committee took the decision to use the subscriptions from 2020 in the way described above. Thank you to those members who paid for social events which had to be cancelled and who asked for their ticket money to go to charity rather than be refunded. A total of £90 will be donated to a local cause. More details to follow.

Alistair thanked the two previous treasurers Laurie Higgins and Janis Loose who had left the accounts in good order. And thanks also were paid to Angus Ross for acting as External Examiner again and giving the accounts a clean bill of health.

Graeme (Planning) – The pandemic consequently made it a quieter year than usual for planning applications. Where there have been applications in Old Portsmouth, FOOPA has done its best to ensure that all adjacent neighbours to those sites were properly notified so those neighbours have the opportunity to express their views. Graeme briefed members regarding the current state of play with the new street lighting programme and the Southsea Coastal Scheme.

Mike (Traffic) — The number of vehicles in Portsmouth increases by 2000 a year and that worsens with the extra housing targets set by central government. What does not rise is the land area of Portsea island. Increasing traffic brings more speeding, noise, congestion, pressure on parking space, pavement parking, air pollution. Four years ago, FOOPA took the lead to engage with PCC to press for a comprehensive, holistic look at traffic issues. Despite Covid delays, PCC has produced the Old Portsmouth Area Traffic Study (OPATS). This has been shared with FOOPA, the Neighbourhood Forum and Spice Island Association and PCC requests comments back to them after Easter.

Although this may lead to some improvements, FOOPA is concerned how determined the Council is, not only to encourage sustainable travel but to discourage unnecessary car use. PCC planners seem to regard street parking as a sponge able to soak up unlimited demand. The short-sighted approach of encouraging private cars as the primary mode of travel in our city, ignores the noise, congestion, pollution and degradation of road safety. FOOPA continues to monitor: traffic congestion queuing for Wightlink, illegal engine idling and pavement parking, lack of PCC action or police enforcement of speeding in 20 mph limit areas, maintenance of bus services, new schemes such as the introduction of E-scooters.

7. Election of Officers and Executive Committee (re-election)

Executive Committee - Members Gail Baird (Chair, Website) and Anna Koor (Secretary) stood down from their positions in order to be re-elected. Mike Dobson proposed both to be re-elected and they were seconded by Terry Henderson and Sonia Banks respectively. Alistair Wilson is stepping down from Membership Secretary and Treasurer. Mike announced that Mary Tollow and Liz Winder have volunteered their services for these roles. Liz was proposed by Anna Koor and seconded by Rob Wood. Mary Tollow was proposed by Alistair Wilson and seconded by Helen Swann.

Other Officers – Gail asked existing officers Mike Dobson (Traffic), Bob Stewart (Spice Island), Graeme Swinburne (Planning), and Ann Wilson (Social Secretary) to step down. All were proposed for re-election by Gail Baird and Anna Koor. The posts were seconded by Diana Hayden, Ken Bailey, Terry Henderson and Margaret Wilson respectively.

8. Any Other Business

Gail expressed a huge thank-you to Alistair for his generosity with time and patience while the Committee sought a new Membership Secretary and Treasurer. No other AGM business was raised but other pertinent community matters were discussed, particularly hazards experienced by residents from use of E-scooters. PCC is trialling a scheme by Voi Scooters, but the public survey has closed. The feedback mechanism to Voi via their website is unresponsive and inadequate.

9. Date of next meeting: To be confirmed by the Chair.

