

THE FRIENDS OF OLD PORTSMOUTH ASSOCIATION, 14 December 2022

Website: foopa.org.uk

Email: foopacontact@gmail.com

Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting held on 14 December 2022

Present

Gail Baird (Chair, Website), Anna Koor (Secretary), Mary Tollow (Membership), Sharon Morris (Heritage & Conservation), Eileen Measey (Environment), Mike Dobson (Traffic), Liz Winder (Treasurer), Graeme Swinburne (Planning), Bob Stewart (Spice Island), Chris Attwell (Ward Councillor). Guest: Sonia Banks, who has kindly offered to step into the role of Social Secretary. There was a discussion about social event planning / budgeting. All agreed to appoint Sonia pending election at the AGM.

1 Apologies - Apologies from Ward Councillors Mark Jeffery and Ian Holder.

2 Declarations of Interest – Anna asked all to confirm their declarations of interest should any matters of that nature arise during the course of FOOPA business, which was agreed.

3 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting on 16 November 2022 were circulated to all via email and approved by the Chair.

4 Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

City Greening – FOOPA's application to PCC for a £5000 grant was not successful. The feedback from Zoe White, PCC Green & Healthy Streets Co-ordinator, was that the application was sound but permissions from landowners were missing. It is PCC's understanding that, although the land behind the Hotwalls Studios and Sallyport is PCC-owned, Historic England (HE) would require approval before anything (even temporary plant boxes) is placed within 'the setting' of the listed monument structures. Gail has emailed HE to clarify this. Adrian Rosier, PCC Service Manager of Parks & Open Spaces has given verbal approval for new planting in the raised beds fronting Nelson's statue. Eileen will seek this in writing and then liaise with Hannah Thompson, PCC's Countryside Officer for Culture, Leisure & Regulatory Services regarding plant species. Flax is not considered suitable.

5 Correspondence and Communications

School Streets Initiative – Richard Johnson wrote to Council Leader Gerald Vernon-Jackson regarding progress with making this work permanent, following the trial last September. The feedback is that a public engagement exercise will take place in January 2023 involving residents. Anna emphasized that this should include Peacock Lane, Penny Street and Farthing Lane.

Car Club – Enterprise Car Hire updated FOOPA regarding the initiative. The tender has been issued and the company will be bidding for it.

Pembroke Gardens Bowls Club – Notice has been given to FOOPA that venue hire fees have been increased, both for committee meetings and social events.

Grand Parade Tree Proposal – A resident has alerted FOOPA to a current survey by PCC to add more trees to Grand Parade and remove those that are not thriving or of different species. The survey appears limited to Grand Parade residents. Some committee members expressed concern that upkeep is poor, therefore adding more trees would not be wise unless there is a committed maintenance programme.

6 Treasurer's Report – The balance at 1 November 2022 was £10,289.82. A payment of £5 was received as well as social event income of £135. There was £24 expenses for website costs, leaving a balance at 30 November of £10,405.82. The Xmas lunch income / costs generated a provisional surplus of £130 to be donated to charity. Liz announced she will be stepping down at the AGM because she has been head-hunted by the Portsmouth Arts Society, which she has a passionate interest in. Everyone thanked Liz for her tireless commitment over the last two years. In January she will hand over the books to Janice Loose, who has kindly offered to be External Examiner again. Gail will advertise a new Treasurer post on the website/facebook and will ask Janice if she is interested.

7 Membership Report – No changes this month. The committee thanked Mary for taking on the extra commitment of Xmas lunch duties, including registering attendees at the event, which proved quite a challenge.

8 Planning

Fontenoy House – The applicant has reapplied for planning permission; the submission is based on the original scheme that was initially refused by PCC, but that decision was overturned by the Planning Inspector.

25 Broad Street – It was agreed that the scheme would be an improvement on what currently exists.

Mary Rose Pub – According to councillors, this case has been called in to Planning Committee. Post-meeting Note: Due to be heard on 18 January 2023.

9 Heritage & Conservation

Local Listings Document – The Committee reminded Cllr Chris that Sharon had yet to receive a PCC response.

Fish Market – Sharon notes that a planning application by the new owners has been validated, however there is no heritage statement.

10 Social Programme – Mary briefed the committee regarding the Christmas Lunch, which was hugely successful again. It was challenging to keep track of numbers and inevitably, there were a few members who cancelled, and a couple who paid but then did not attend. Local author Matt Wingett was proposed as a possible future speaker.

11 Environment

Long Curtain Grassed Embankment – Eileen is trying to get photos of the recent planting exercise with St Jude's pupils. Gail reminded Eileen to retain the receipt for the plants, to be reimbursed.

12 Website – Nothing new to report.

13 Traffic

Deputation to Traffic & Transportation Committee – Mike gave a deputation on 8 December, having circulated a draft to the FOOPA Committee in advance. This updated FOOPA's comments submitted to PCC in March 2022 during the public consultation. PCC's proposal is to narrow the road by the corner of Square Tower to complete the Shipwrights Way. Mike pointed out why this would not slow down motorists or provide safe crossing for pedestrians and cyclists. A road crossing would be safest, but failing this, a better solution would be a raised table. Road 'safety' in Portsmouth has worsened in recent years: 2012-2020 - 2 pedestrians killed by drivers, 2021 - 3 pedestrians killed by drivers, 2022 - 6 pedestrians killed by drivers. A recent national police study concluded that excess speed was most likely a factor in almost half Road Traffic Incidents. Yet PCC's Road Safety Manager Michelle Love stated that Old Portsmouth does not have a problem with speeding. This is contrary to all the evidence gathered by FOOPA over the last decade, together with analysis in the Old Portsmouth Area Traffic Study. In the briefing pack for councillors the lead officer replaced references to 'FOOPA' with 'Resident', giving the impression the objection was from an individual not a community organisation. The response: it was necessary for anonymity. However FOOPA has made numerous deputations and comments over the years and PCC has never removed references to FOOPA. This backfired for PCC because it was reported in The News and on local radio - no anonymity there. Compounding this, another officer questioned Mike's mandate to speak on behalf of FOOPA. The committee agreed this raises important issues regarding PCC's democratic process and their treatment of community organisations, potentially undermining their existence. Gail will be writing to PCC to seek a full explanation and apology. Mike asked Cllr Chris to seek clarification on this issue.

Voi E-scooters – Cllr Chris confirmed that no Voi Scooter racks will be consented to in Old Portsmouth.

14 Ward Councillor Reports – Regarding the two road crossings on Broad Street and High Street, Cllr Chris has not been advised of the final consultation results, but the funding is there and he wants them completed urgently.

15 Committee Admin

FOOPA AGM – It will be held at Cathedral House on Tuesday 21 March 2023, Anna to confirm. New T&Cs: maximum capacity is now 60 people and an hourly fee of £34 has been introduced for non-profit groups. Gail has secured a speaker from the Solent Seagrass project and will check their availability that evening.

Draft FOOPA Health & Safety Policy – All thanked Sharon for drafting a H&S Policy bespoke to FOOPA's situation. Sharon emphasized the need to take this on board as a group responsibility and ensure we demonstrate how the policy is implemented. It was agreed a checklist would be helpful for the event 'owner' to assess the venue prior to each activity and formally record that H&S issues have been checked and remedial action taken.

Draft Safeguarding Policy – Anna briefly liaised with Sandy Davis at Hive and is hoping to arrange a meeting to discuss what sort of policy FOOPA needs to put in place. She will follow up in the new year.

Public Liability Insurance – Following their research, Gail and Liz set up a policy with PolicyBee for £88 per year. The policy document was circulated to members and all agreed this policy seems to cover FOOPA's current needs. There is a query over the maximum number of members a qualifying organization should have - Gail will enquire.

16 AOB

Sea Through Pompey – Mary attended the Police-funded Mutual Gain voting event on 3 December in the Cathedral to distribute £15,000 from Hampshire Constabulary among local groups. The public voted for their favourite bid but the turnout was disappointing.

17 Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday 18 January 2023, 7.30pm, BAR Technologies Building.

