

## THE FRIENDS OF OLD PORTSMOUTH ASSOCIATION, 13 December 2023

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Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting held on 13 December 2023 at Pembroke Gardens Bowls Club.

**Present** - Sharon Morris (Planning, Heritage & Conservation), Bob Stewart (Spice Island), Mary Tollow (Treasurer and Membership), Anna Koor (Secretary), Eileen Measey (Environment), Mike Dobson (Traffic), Cllr Chris Attwell.

**1 Apologies** - Gail Baird (Chair, Website), Cllr Mark Jeffery, Cllr Ian Holder.

**2 Declarations of Interest** – All were reminded to confirm their declarations of interest should any matters of that nature arise during the course of FOOPA business.

### **3 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The Minutes of the meeting on 15 November were circulated to the Committee by email and agreed by the Chair with no further amendments.

### **4 Matters Arising from Previous Minutes**

**Neighbourhood Forum** – Anna asked Cllr Chris to confirm by email the representatives giving presentations at the Forum on 7 February 2024. He agreed to confirm after Christmas.

### **5 Correspondence and Communications**

**BA Technologies Fencing** – New permanent fencing is being erected at the Camber around the BA Technologies apron, which is being used as a carpark. Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson and Cllr Steve Pitt have been asked if the outer carpark can be returned to residents parking. Originally Ben Ainslie Racing made a business case for taking up parking on the Camber. With BAR now having a minimal presence, it is not clear why they need it. FOOPA will engage with Camber residents to obtain unambiguous and transparent clarification from PCC about this and other matters at the Camber.

**6 Treasurer's Report** — The current account holds £3975.80 and there is £5035.25 in the savings account. The annual insurance has been paid.

**7 Social Programme** – It is doubtful whether a January lunch is possible given the Xmas break and commitments the committee already has. The Groundlings Theatre site visit and tea still stands as a February event. Anna will book Cathedral House for the AGM and Talk.

**8 Membership Report** – All agreed that a renewals reminder should be emailed to members. There are still currently 174 households and 255 members.

### **9 Traffic**

**Pedestrian Crossings and Speed Reduction** – Mike, Sharon and former FOOPA committee member Graeme Swinburne attended a meeting with Michelle Love (Road Safety Manager) and Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE. Following Mike's and others' feedback (including that of ward councillors) to Traffic & Transportation, the proposal now includes a raised table across High Street aligned with the zebra crossing. Committee members welcome this change of heart and public consultation notices have been issued. Mike reinforced the rationale: on its own, a crossing may give priority to pedestrians but it will not discourage speeding, particularly early morning or late at night. At the meeting there was opportunity to press the importance of surveying traffic speeds in free-flow conditions. Reference was made to the unsound 85<sup>th</sup> percentile rule when calculating speeds, however it is not clear if PCC fully grasps this. A speeding survey was undertaken outside the Dolphin

Pub in November 2021. It was pointed out to PCC that comparing the results of this survey with those taken at the north end of High Street, to argue that speeding has reduced, is fundamentally flawed. There was also the assurance that the proposed raised table across Peacock Lane would be clear of the listed property, should it be implemented. This amended proposal will be heard at Traffic & Transportation Committee on 30 January 2024.

**E-Scooter Rack, St Nicholas Street** – Cllr Chris confirmed this proposal would not be taken further and should never have been put forward. Nearby residents will receive letters to that effect.

**St Jude's School Streets** – It is understood that the delayed scheme will be implemented during the February 2024 half-term.

**Square Tower road narrowing** – The Committee thanked PCC officers for the work completed in this location. It so far seems to be having the effect of slowing motorists as they approach that corner. The impact should be more apparent when the forthcoming Broad Street raised table is implemented. Cllr Chris raised the matter of historical tram lines uncovered during the works and asked if there is any future use they could be put to. Mike pointed out that the Shipwrights Way route remains incomplete.

## 10 Planning

**Tesco, St George's Road** – Brighter signage is planned.

**69 St Thomas's Street** – An application has been submitted, which includes the removal of the stained glass window (thought to be a Victorian addition), restoring with a Georgian-style one. There was a brief discussion regarding the relative merits of removing traces of recent additions to Georgian and Victorian properties, thereby erasing visible features that form part of Old Portsmouth's evolution.

**Royal Naval Club & Royal Albert Yacht Club** – Chris forwarded Sharon's concerns to Planning. When PCC assess this application, officers should examine the listed building as a whole and ensure its integrity because there have been successive planning applications for various parts of the historical property. The current application for the first floor conversion into a further 3 flats (in addition to those on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor) will increase demand for residents parking and makes no mention of the stately ground floor spaces and their future use. Carving up the high-ceilinged first floor into small units risks creating poorly proportioned spaces. If approved, the concern is that these will be short-term Airbnb lets. A parking survey of Pembroke Road undertaken some years ago for the original application used the outmoded Lambeth method for counting spaces and demand. It also wrongly included the corner shop loading bays.

**29 Broad Street** – An application has been submitted to build an extra storey and roof terrace. Neighbouring properties have already built higher and therefore this is likely to be approved.

**60A High Street** – An application has been submitted to extend higher. This is a contentious site, given the history of Fontenoy House opposite. Sharon will look at this in more detail and submit comments.

## 11 Heritage & Conservation

**Comus and Chief Memorial** – The stone tablet has had a clean, a big improvement. Cllr Chris is working on information boards to be mounted at the associated plinth on Victoria Avenue.

**Long Curtain Information Boards** – Sharon wrote to Councillors and Southsea Coastal Scheme regarding the poorly written content and wrongly dated Battle of Trafalgar. All agreed this is hugely embarrassing to all concerned and was so easily avoided had it been peer reviewed.

**Pembroke House** – The property appears to have been cleared but no indication regarding future use.

## 12 Environment

**Planting** - Eileen met with PCC's Doug Gray (Parks Operations Manager) and Hannah Thompson (Countryside Officer). They will repeat the wildflower planting along the grass banks of Long Curtain, in lozenge shapes as before, but larger. FOOPA can take over the adjoining larger bed at Nelson's Statue if we would like it. Crocus bulbs will be planted on the Long Curtain grass banks shortly.

**Hotwalls Trees** - It is not certain what species of tree will replace those removed. In the meantime anti-weed treatment is being applied and wildflower seeds will be planted in the spring.

**Resurfacing at Grand Parade** – This is thought to be part of the maintenance and upgrading works.

**13 Website** – Nothing new to report. Any items, please pass on to Gail to promote.

**14 Ward Councillor Reports** – Cllr Chris has secured funds to implement more pavement bollards in the vicinity of Nobbs Lane, once again due to PGS parents pavement parking and creating hazards.

**15 Committee Admin** – None.

**16 AOB** – None.

**17 Date of Next Meeting** – Wednesday 17 January 2023, 7.30pm, Pembroke Gardens Bowls Club.