

THE FRIENDS OF OLD PORTSMOUTH ASSOCIATION, 18 September 2024

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Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting held on 18 Sept 2024 at Pembroke Gardens Bowls Club

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

1 Apologies - Ward Councillors Mark Jeffery and Ian Holder.

Guests: Tim Ferrera and Ellie Parker of the H&IOW Wildlife Trust attended to update the committee about their recent underwater camera survey of the Long Curtain moat. Having initially thought that the Moat could be used as a nursery for growing seagrass, they discovered the presence of tassel weed in the moat, a very rare species of seagrass that's not usually seen in the Solent. They will be working with Cllr Chris and PCC Seafront Operations Officer Mark Collings to set up further underwater investigations at the site, possibly next Spring. They plan to erect a public information board at the Moat to inform the public about their studies and the significance of seagrass and its thriving habitats for climate change mitigation. Historic England will need to be consulted.

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

Minutes of the 17 July 2024 meeting were circulated to the Committee and agreed by the Chair.

4 Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

BT Phone Boxes – FOOPA received correspondence from residents regarding upkeep of the listed phone boxes. Sharon reached out to BT to report that the door needed fixing on the Grand Parade box. BT promptly removed all the working parts, reasoning that the phone is not being used, and fixed / locked the door. There may still be the option for the community to take 'ownership' of the boxes, putting them to other uses. The Broad Street phone box is due to house a defibrillator, though it is not known who will be its guardian. Sharon will write a piece for the FOOPA website and take photos.

5 Correspondence and Communications – Two of FOOPA's long-standing members are recovering from hospital and were recently discharged back home. The committee wishes both well and agreed to post a card to each of them. Mary will apply her creativity and all agreed to reimburse her costs.

6 Treasurer's Report – Nil transactions in August except for the website costs of £24. As of 31 August 2024 there was £4190.35 in the current and £5078.23 in savings accounts, a total of £9268.58.

7 Social Programme – There was a discussion regarding planning Xmas lunch. Anna will investigate the Square Tower. Mary will circulate costs from previous years, and obtain menus from other venues.

8 Membership Report – There are currently 166 households who are members, making a total of 246.

9 Traffic

Bicycle Hangar – The second consultation on a proposal to place one outside Seagers Court on the pavement remains defective as again, Seagers Court residents did not receive notification, despite PCC being alerted to this during the first consultation. The committee wholly supports the need for

bicycle secure storage but agree hangars should not be placed on pavements causing nuisance and congestion to pedestrians including those with mobility issues. Mike will submit comments to PCC.

Clarence Pier Transport Hub consultation – PCC is conducting an online consultation, however there do not seem to be any documents setting out the rationale for this idea. With the coastal defences work there is an opportunity to improve the road network around the Hovercraft, however most agree it does not need to be expanded as a hub, i.e. a transport interchange. Cllr Chris confirmed that there have been no discussions at Cabinet level and no proposals yet.

Abuse of High Street Zebra Crossing – Mike took photos of a 4WD jeep on the footway build-out by the new crossing. It is regularly being abused, particularly during the school pick-up hour. Highways enforcement officers need to be patrolling here and in the School Streets vicinity during these times.

10 Planning – Following a FOOPA request to meet in person, Sharon was offered a phone call with conservation officer Ben Cracknell. She responded, suggesting face-to-face is more appropriate. Applications on White Hart Road, Pembroke Road and Boom House are currently being considered.

Fontenoy House – The owner has resubmitted plans (Ref 24/01008/FUL). This has been shared with Terry Halloran of Portsmouth Society.

29 St Thomas's Street – The rear extension application has been refused (Ref 24/00956/HOU).

Pembroke House – No update on the appeal.

Portsmouth Local Plan – The committee gave a vote of thanks to Sharon for taking on the immense workload in order to submit a FOOPA response to the pre-submission public consultation on the Plan's 'soundness'. Her feedback to the 320-page document addressed several issues, including specific points regarding the Old Portsmouth brownfield sites and the draft Statement of Community Involvement. These have both been raised by FOOPA separately with PCC, neither having elicited a response. Little has been addressed by PCC in response to issues raised by FOOPA back in 2017 during the initial consultation. There is plenty on new tree planting (yet offsetting is not a solution), but little about destruction/protection of existing hedgerows and trees, or how to protect garden bird habitats. There is nothing about AirBnBs – their controls, licensing and impact on lack of housing, and Council Tax. Student housing blocks have allegedly freed up other housing, but evidence suggests Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) rents are lower. Housing sectors that are neglected include older single-person households and those with elderly parenting responsibilities. The Heritage Strategy is referred to but no link to it; perhaps because the Strategy is undeveloped? Detail is lacking in some areas, such as provision of integrated transport. See full FOOPA response on the website.

11 Heritage & Conservation – As above.

12 Environment – See above.

13 Website – The glitch has been fixed and the historical information has been restored to the site.

14 Ward Councillor Reports – As above.

15 Committee Admin – None.

16 AOB

Listed Building Criteria - Sharon shared some information from the Defence Heritage Planning, Architecture and Public Participation project formed by writer and campaigner Celia Clarke. She is taking part in a Civic Voice's Expert Forum, which has input to the government's Dept for Culture, Media & Sport. She is hoping to advance, among other things, revision of the Listed Building criteria (currently very limited) to encompass the reuse and repurposing of existing buildings.

Vans on Broad Street – Bob reported the presence of vans, possibly being used to sleep in.

7 Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday 16 October 2024, Pembroke Gardens Bowls Club.