**EAST BASSETT RESIDENTS’ ASSOCIATION**

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**Newsletter No. 69 October 2017**

**Hello everyone**. Apologies for the long gap between newsletters. Several reasons - family problems, ill-health and little movement on the outstanding problems we’ve been suffering. But the everyday work of EBRA has carried on.

**Minutes of 2017 AGM** are attached.

**University News**

**Withdrawal of Revenue Support Grant**

The Government announced the end of this Grant by 2020 (previously awarded to LAs with University populations). It is suggested that the shortfall could be recouped by increases in Council Tax and Business Tax. No student pays Council Tax and no Business Tax is imposed on HMO landlords, even those owning hundreds of properties. The City Council tells us that £7.9m per year is the estimated Tax loss represented by HMOs and taking into account 1000s of student rooms in Purpose Built Student Accommodation across the City a combined figure might be nearer to £10m. Plans for covering the loss of the grant are in place for 2017/18 and 2018/19 but a shortfall of some £8.9m must be found for 2020.

**On-going changes to Main Campus**

Building the Learning Centre in ***Salisbury Road*** has had repercussions. First the University, planning to stop-up the road, refuses residents’ pleas to place it on the definite rights of way map to ensure access into the future. Now the University claims construction machinery has made the use of the ***Service Road*** hazardous and closed that too. Parents and teachers at the Highfield Schools are concerned at the impact on traffic flows but unable (we understand) to get this discussed. Plans are published for a new ***Communications Tower off Broadlands Road*** and at the same time the Licence for ***The Stile Public House*** has been acquired by the University and the pub summarily closed. The fear is that it will follow the fate of the former Crown & Sceptre and The Gatepubs to be demolished to provide replacement parking space - in this case lost to the Tower plans**.**

**New Ploy by HMO owners**

A spate of applications made by HMO owners for Existing Lawful Development Certificates is proving the latest headache. Owners, previously

ignoring all instruction to make application for change of status from C3 (family) to C4 (HMO), have discovered a planning ruse by claiming that the HMO is legal because it has been so occupied for a certain length of years. The process of trying to refute this is long and tedious but it could make a mockery of the 10% limit of HMOs in Bassett should it succeed.

 **Environmental Matters**

**The Rat man**. As we know, the culprit, feeding industrial amounts of food stuffs to rats across the common and elsewhere, is identified and served with a Community Protection Notice. He was taken to Court on 27 September (as reported in The Echo) on a charge of GBH and found not guilty by the Jury. So what happens now? Can we at least see a substantial fine levied for failure to abide by the terms of the Notice?

**Bassett Avenue Bus Shelters**

A private firm supplies the shelters and the Council can’t dictate their style. New shelters have no glass ends to keep out the rain and the Holly Hill site is still waiting for the roof which will curve out from the inner hedge to leave room for pedestrians. The free standing box with the timetable display wiring has to be removed first.

**Road Repairs in Glen Eyre Drive** have at last been done - thanks to Cllr Mrs Beryl Harris for pressing for that.

**Expansion eastwards of Residents’ Parking Schemes in the Flower Roads.** We’re grateful to the Council for getting this through.

**Bassett Neighbourhood Plan**

The Forum meets again this month. The agenda includes: Use of the Plan to date; Bassett’s right to have a share of moneys paid by developers to the Council for local improvements and a say on how this should be spent; progress on upgrading the Sports Centre and Planning Matters. In spite of being this year’s Lord Mayor of Southampton, Cllr Les Harris works tirelessly for the Forum.

**Subscription for 2017/18**

There are a few members yet to pay. If you haven’t got a receipt, please pay now, or, if unsure please contact Bernard. We’ve got a reasonable balance but might need funds for legal fees.