



# Common Ground

Outer Avenue Residents' Association Newsletter

October 2014

## Welcome to our 'Common Ground'



### WELCOME...

to this special edition of the OARA newsletter and to the Outer Avenue if you are new to this part of the city

We would also like to welcome you to the new Common Ground project which is taking off in our area.

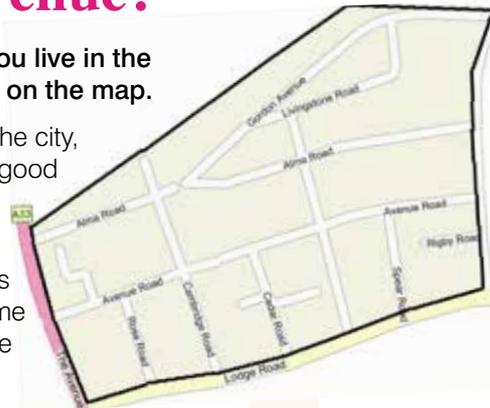
Read on to find out more about OARA, the community you live in, what people are doing to make it even better and how you can be part of it.

### Where is the Outer Avenue?

If this newsletter comes through your door you live in the Outer Avenue area, in one the roads in white on the map.

It is a lively, characterful and interesting part of the city, with a diverse community, many amenities and good schools, attractive Victorian properties and a fascinating history.

There are many long-term residents and families who enjoy living here. The area is now also home to many students and others who choose to live here for a particular period in their lives.



### What is OARA?

OARA, the Outer Avenue Residents' Association, is your local residents' association.

Our aim is to make sure the space we all share is a good place to live, work and invest in, one we can all be proud of and feel safe in. We work with others and take practical actions to aim to achieve this.

### Why common ground?

Why is this special edition of the OARA newsletter called Common Ground? It is because we are launching a Common Ground Charter and we hope you will want to be part of it.

The Outer Avenue is a great place to live. The diverse mix of residents brings a lively energy to the area. That can however sometimes lead to conflicting needs and lack of mutual understanding which can impact on the quality of our lives.

We want the area to be the best it can be for all of us who share it, whether here over time or just passing through. That only happens when people get to know each other and work together. So, in July OARA brought together residents, student

reps, councillors and council officers who cover our area, some landlords, businesses and a local place of worship to discuss what is good about our area and what bugs us, to find important "common ground" and, most importantly, to decide what we can actually do to make it a better place.

**Read on to find out what happened next!**



*Finding common ground*



# Outer Space

News from the Outer Avenue space we share

## Residents launch Common Ground Charter

Calling the Common Ground meeting was a risk. Would community spirit prevail or would differences prove an insurmountable barrier? Happily we found a lot to agree on and a combined will to find ways to work together. There was a lot to like as well as bugbears:

### What people like

- Diversity
- Lively atmosphere
- Attractive houses
- Good neighbours
- Flowers and greening
- Amenities: shops, places to eat
- Customers for businesses
- Near the common
- Thriving residents' association
- Interesting local history



### What bugs them

- Litter, rubbish & flytipping
- Bins & bottle boxes on the pavements
- Loud noise & drinking on the street
- Late, loud parties
- Too many lettings boards
- Parking problems
- Poorly maintained houses
- Neglected/concreted front gardens
- Removal of front walls
- Loss of sense of community



This all led to the Common Ground Charter, which we are delighted to launch in this special edition of the OARA newsletter and which is set out in full on the back page.

**Useful Contacts** Let OARA or someone else know if you are experiencing problems or need help.

**Your councillors Stephen Barnes-Andrews, Derek Burke and Jacqui Raiment, on** 023 8083 2430 or [democraticservices@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@southampton.gov.uk)

**Refuse and recycling issues**  
[actionline@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:actionline@southampton.gov.uk) or 08005 19 19 19  
or use the **Recycle for Southampton App**

**HMO Warden** [barry.olson@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:barry.olson@southampton.gov.uk)  
or 023 8083 2606

**Police and your PCSO - Call them on**  
101 - the non emergency line

**Southampton University Students Union**  
SUSU 023 8059 5200

How can you be part of it  
and make a difference?

Please read it  
and lend your support

Put it in your window to show others you are on board.

Let us know on  
**info@outeravenueresidents.co.uk**  
so we can add your household, group or business  
to the growing number of supporters who want to  
make a difference.

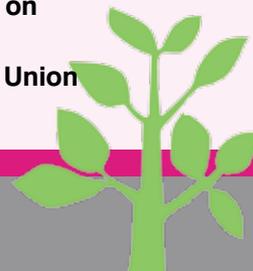
And most importantly  
**do what you can to put the  
principles into practice.**

## Be a good neighbour

Being a good neighbour is an important part of the Common Ground project. Here are some ways we can all do that:

- ✓ Say hello, be welcoming and introduce ourselves
- ✓ Keep the area outside our own houses clean, tidy and free of litter
- ✓ Be a good bin buddy: recycle carefully, only put **loose** paper, card, cans and plastic bottles in our blue bin and especially, if we have space, take our bins off the pavement once they are emptied
- ✓ Enjoy our own music but don't play it so loud that our neighbours have to listen too
- ✓ Park carefully so there is room for all
- ✓ And just be considerate and lend a hand if needed.

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# What does OARA actually DO?!

OARA has blossomed over recent years. Here is a taste of what they have been doing, often in partnership with others who have a stake in the area.

**“Greening”:** planting beds and barrels with flowers and establishing 31 signature cherry trees in front gardens, paid for by residents, some landlords and OARA fundraising.

A recent “raid” on a littered and weedy patch, aided by the donation of compost and plants by Waitrose, produced the satisfying results shown in these before and after pictures.

Thank you to local shopkeepers who have now adopted the patch and are keeping it watered. And to the student who made us a cup of tea at the last planting session in the Gordon Avenue/Westwood Road cut!

Watch out for table top sales to help raise funds and plant swaps to spread the greening effect. Have you got space to adopt a tree - for just £20? Email us and we'll tell you how.

**Keeping the streets clean:** OARA members carry out regular litter picks and street cleans on the first and third Sunday of each month. Meet at 11.00 at the Gordon Avenue/Alma Road planters to lend a hand.

We have also initiated a **Clean Streets Group** which has met with council officers. Recently this resulted in the council organising clearance of fly-tipped items; a two-day September Street Sparkle in Gordon and Alma Roads; a pilot scheme in Livingstone Road aimed at eradicating the costly problem of contaminated bins and reducing the number of bins on the pavements.



**Organising “get to know you” social events** for all the community: long term residents, students and newer members of the community including some of our Polish families, came together in June to enjoy a Big Lunch Street Party and student arrivals enjoyed a Meet Your Neighbour Sunday lunchtime session, complete with live music and free soup, in October.

**Setting up a local history group:** since its formation in 2013 the OARA Bevois Mount History Group has unearthed heaps of fascinating information about our area. Did you know Bevois Mount House, owned by the Earl of Peterborough, stood on the site of the sports club on Lodge Road from 1723 until the 1940s? Most of the houses in Outer Avenue are built on land from that estate.

Find out more on **bevoismounthistory** facebook page or website. Look out for news of the 2015 Bevois Mount History Calendar.



- **Monitoring planning applications** to help keep a balanced community, in an area where 50% of residences are now Houses of Multiple Occupation - HMOs.
- **Working with the students’ union** e.g. to set up a “meet your neighbour event”, produce information for students moving into the area and to tackle the forest of lettings boards.
- **Setting up a pilot bin-buddy scheme** with a student landlord.
- **Liaising with Barry Olson, the HMO warden.** He promotes responsible management by landlords and good citizenship by tenants, investigating complaints of poor conditions and nuisance as well as ensuring letting boards are not left up for excessive periods of time.
- **And now launching the Common Ground project** to work together to improve the place we share.

## Why not come and join us?

OARA membership is open to all Outer Avenue residents and costs just £3.00 a year.

- Meet others in the community and keep in touch with what is going on
- Make your voice heard at 3x yearly meetings

- Enjoy discounts at local cafes shops with your membership card

[info@outeravenueresidents.co.uk](mailto:info@outeravenueresidents.co.uk)  
[www.outeravenueresidents.co.uk](http://www.outeravenueresidents.co.uk)

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# Outer Avenue Community Common Ground Charter

The Outer Avenue is a thriving, diverse and historical area of Southampton. We want to make sure it is an attractive, clean, well looked-after and safe area of the city, where there is a good sense of community, where residents, old and new, feel welcome and where those who have a stake in the area work together to make it a good place to live in and share.

## To play our part in this we will:

**Be considerate and respectful members of our community, who take responsibility for making it a decent place to live**

**Take steps to welcome and get to know others in the community and be a good neighbour to them**

**Look after and take pride in the homes we live in and/or own**

**Look after the physical environment, including keeping our streets and pavements free from litter, rubbish and bins, recycling all we can and caring for and improving our green spaces**

**Find ways to communicate and share information with each other so we understand what is going on and what we need to do**

**Let each other know when problems arise and try to find constructive ways to solve them**

**Acknowledge, share (and even reward) the good things that people do to make the area a better place to live in**

This charter came about as a result of a number of groups and individuals coming together with OARA, the Outer Avenue Residents' Association, to find "common ground", with the aim of improving the area we have a common interest in. Those represented so far include; Residents' Association members, landlords, Southampton City Council, students, local places of worship and businesses.



**Will you join with us and support the charter?**

Email us at [info@outeravenueresidents.co.uk](mailto:info@outeravenueresidents.co.uk) to let us know.

Outer Avenue Residents' Association [www.outeravenueresidents.co.uk](http://www.outeravenueresidents.co.uk)

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