



## **COMMON GROUND PROGRESS REPORT**

### **October 2016**

Below is a brief report on the progress made since our OGM in May with the Common Ground Plans approved at the AGM/OGM in January 2016 and any other new activities since that date.

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

There are currently around 130 people on our mailing list, with about 100 of these being paid up members. The membership secretary aims to visit new and renewing members each month and to keep the list up to date. This is also an opportunity to meet and listen to residents about any ideas or problems. Fees are paid in monthly to the Treasurer for checking and banking.

#### **GREENING**

- Carried on maintaining existing plots, planters and barrels. Regular greening sessions on the first Monday and third Friday of each month have started to become more established. Plant Swap took place on 10th June. The two cherry trees in the Avenue Rd planters have been ailing as not ideal conditions. They have been removed to nurse back to health and then replant in more suitable location. They have been replaced with a smaller ornamental cherry.
- 5 window boxes and 4 barrels were installed at properties at the lower end of Gordon Avenue as part of the Bloomin' Concrete Project and with the support of some landlords and tenants. Almost all survived intact, although two window boxes disappeared at the end of September. Replacement ones will have an OARA notice on them to act as deterrent. We also tackled some of the street weeds which seem to flourish at a greater rate than any organised greening!
- Table Top Sale took place on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> October, in new location on ex- Blockbusters forecourt, and raised £130 for future greening activities.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS**

- Two newsletters have been circulated to the mailing list since the OGM, one in July and one in October.
- New notice board at the Alma Road planters is now installed and in regular use. Several people have made contact as a result of seeing items on the notice board.
- OARA now has dedicated mobile phone to help members make contact, particularly those who do not have internet/email. The number is 07501 176922
- New leaflet circulated to all households at the start of October, inviting residents to the Meet Your Neighbour Party and encouraging good neighbourliness, including good bin habits.

#### **COMMUNITY**

- Two Street Parties have taken place, the Big Lunch Street Party on 12th June and the Meet Your Neighbour Party on 9<sup>th</sup> October. Both well attended, including by council reps and the police. Also well supported by the Uni Students' Union who helped with organisation and entertainment. Good contact made with a number of students in the area, some of whom have volunteered to help with litter-picking and greening.
- Attended and reported back on PACT meetings. Circulated police reports. Next one due 27<sup>th</sup> October.
- Provided support for residents affected by party noise and music, liaising with Police and Council.

- Meeting held with Practice Manager at Alma Road Surgery to discuss issues including impact of closure of Nicholstown Branch and parking. OARA committee member is now chairing the Patient Participation Group and helping organise patient survey.
- Representatives attended the Southampton Common Forum meetings and are due to attend North Southampton Community Forum.
- £550 was raised towards the Mural Project as a result of the Art Show in April and following that success a mid-winter Art Fair is now planned for the 25-27 November.

### **SMART STREETS**

- Twice monthly Street Cleans have continued, with 10 sessions since the last OGM. There about a dozen regular volunteers but we do need more. Extra pairs of hands very welcome. Follow-up reports now sent to the Council who arrange a prompt pick up of dumped items using the Community Payback Team
- Street Blitzes planned but suitable time not yet found. Spear Road likely to be first one in the autumn.
- The bins in Alma Rd have been numbered and more numbers due from the council to do at least one more road.
- OARA members assisted the Council at the end of September in relabelling all the recycling bins and the Council has provided us with some spare grey bottle boxes for houses whose boxes have gone walkabout.
- The Uni "Shift your Stuff" campaign took place again in June/July this year, providing a recycling scheme for students moving out at the end of term. There seemed to be less uptake on our patch this year with many students unaware. Those we informed and gave red bags to were very keen. We will volunteer to distribute leaflets and red bags to all student households next year to increase uptake.

### **HISTORY**

- The magnificent Mural has been started and finished since the last OGM and has already become a local landmark. There was a large piece about it in the Echo on October 14<sup>th</sup>.
- The 2017 Bevois Mount Calendar, in colour this year, is already on sale.
- A local history walk took place on 4<sup>th</sup> September and attracted over 20 participants.
- Bevois Mount History Facebook Page and website frequently updated with new finds.

### **PLANNING**

- Continued monitoring of and response to house sales and planning applications.
- Responded to planning appeals both in person and in writing.
- Took action re the concreting over of garden frontages, including
- contact with the council over what is/is not permitted, and offered to advise on more attractive and manageable solutions.

### **TRAFFIC PROJECT**

We have initiated a project to research the traffic and parking issues which affect local residents and which encompasses several of our Common Ground areas above. Views are being collected and a preliminary meeting has been held with one of our Councillors to seek further factual information. Once all the information has been collated a dedicated meeting will be organised to share information and progress with residents.