



# Highfield Residents' Association

Spring  
2020



[www.highfieldresidents.org.uk](http://www.highfieldresidents.org.uk)

[www.facebook.com/HRASouthampton](https://www.facebook.com/HRASouthampton)  
[highfieldracomms@gmail.com](mailto:highfieldracomms@gmail.com)

## Residents, Members and Friends,

This is my last article as Chair of HRA and it is with some pride that I leave HRA in a far healthier state than when I joined some 25 years ago. Then HRA only had 100 or so members with about £150 in the bank; we now have almost 500 member-households and a healthy financial balance. I believe we are influential and well regarded, both locally and indeed farther afield.

I would like to highlight the capable work of three dedicated committee members which has resulted in increased HRA activities and participation between 2019-2020. Our Website and Facebook page, both administered by Nadine Johnson, have grown substantially with almost 220 Facebook followers and 2000 more Website visits in the past year. Nicolla Martin, HRA Membership Secretary, efficiently co-ordinates applications and renewals and her street rep organisation now delivers 4000 Newsletters. Steven Ossont edits the Newsletter and also organised the Summer BBQ in July 2019 with 100 tickets sold; a fantastic revival event held jointly with PRG.

During the year HRA has supported members with issues including HMO Licensing, bins on the street, anti-social behaviour (students and others), parking problems, lorries parking on pavements and the new entrance to the Little Common, planning advice generally, liaison with Southampton Common Forum, Southampton University and enables volunteering opportunities on the Little Common. These achievements, rooted in community, illustrate the need for a strong, active Residents' Association.

Our main Constitutional 'raison d'être' is to preserve and improve the quality of our environment. This sometimes means challenging the Council and its Planning Dept. Unfortunately, recently, Planning Officers unanimously approved an inappropriate development in a Conservation Area, with no obvious consideration or discussion of the many objections.

## Expressions of interest are sought by the Committee of HRA for: Vice-Chair

Do you have the skills and interest in your local community to join HRA as Vice-chair and assume the role of Chair ?

For further information and expressions of interest please email [HRAHonSec@gmail.com](mailto:HRAHonSec@gmail.com)

Beyond individual issues, there is a wider principle at stake in trying to preserve our Highfield identity as without a firm stance on planning matters over the years, Highfield would be a far less desirable place in which to live. Perhaps I can do no better than to bow out stressing the importance for "community cohesion".

With some satisfaction for what we have achieved, I thank all my fellow committee colleagues, street and newsletter reps. I would like to express an immense sense of gratitude for their valued support which is highly appreciated and for the many friendships I have made during this time, not least from our next HRA Chair, Prof. Roger Brown.

Finally, can I say how honoured I feel to have been able to serve our community during my time in Highfield. It is indeed a wonderful place to live and work; thank you all and goodbye, for the moment at least!

— Jerry Gillen

The Committee has agreed to the appointment of Professor Roger Brown as Acting Chair until the AGM when his appointment will be ratified. Professor Brown is a former Chair of HRA and OTRA and was previously Vice Chancellor of Solent University. Professor Brown lives in Highfield and has been involved in a number of City-wide activities and initiatives since 1998 including Southampton Common Forum. He is looking forward to rejoining the HRA

## Join the HRA

- \* We represent your interests and campaign on local issues
- \* We check local planning and licensing applications
- \* It is only £5 a year per household
- \* You get access to lots of local discounts
- \* Membership is open to all (form on back page)

### Boboo Ji

10% discount off food (excludes bookings between 18:45—21:15)

### Bayleaf Kitchen

15% discount off food

### Ceno Restaurant & Wine Bar

10% discount off food and drinks (when taken with food)

### Elizabeth House Hotel

10% off hotel rates (except those published by booking agents)

10% off food and drink (with meals only).

### Garden Restaurant

10% discount

### T. Greenslade Fresh Fish Ltd

10% discount on locally caught fish, Fridays 9am – 1pm, opposite Waitrose

### Highfield House Hotel

10% off the best available rate

### Innervision Hair and Beauty

10% discount on Tuesdays

### La Baronia

Sunday to Thursday inclusive, 10% off food

### Made in: Here

Free online delivery and handmade chocolate gift (minimum £20).

### Mango Thai Tapas Bar & Restaurant

10% discount off food

### MGB Fitness – It's Personal

One free week local fitness studio training— Inc. 3 training sessions

### Noodle 8

10% discount off food

### Nuffield Southampton City and Campus Theatres

10% discount off all main house productions; Studio Theatre programme; film/live screenings

### Pho Vietnam

10% discount off food

### Portswood Cycles

5% discount off bike purchases ; 10% off servicing & parts

### Trago Lounge

10% off hot drinks and cakes , weekdays 9:00 — 16:00

### Vibe Unisex Hairdressers

10% discount

### Viceroy

10% discount off food

... More benefits online

\*Terms and conditions apply; Subject to change without notice;

\*Members must present a valid HRA membership card.

Committee and thanks Jerry for his contributions over many years. It is hoped to set a new date for the AGM and Summer Barbecue as soon as circumstances permit. —Barbara Claridge

## Francis Benali MBE

When I first met Franny, as he is affectionately known, in 2019, it was through our two dogs. Sadly Ben, his 15 year old black Labrador, died in October.

Born in St Marys, Southampton in 1968, Franny is a true 'Sotonian'. Good at sports as a child, it was at Bellemoor school for boys that he discovered his footballing ability. At 14 he signed for Southampton and spent much of his 20 year football career as a left back defender at the Club, with only a brief spell out at Nottingham Forest in 2001.

He moved with his family to Highfield in 2013. He loves the convenience of this "really green suburb", within walking distance of local shops, the city centre, Portswood Residents' Gardens and The Common. He says "this is the happiest that we have been, living here".

Franny has always been intrigued by ultra-endurance challenges and wanted to push himself to the limit. After several cancer deaths in the family, in 2014, he set himself the target of raising £1 million for Cancer Research UK, undertaking a 3 week 1000 mile challenge, running to all 20 Premier League grounds. He raised £265k. In 2016, he completed a second challenge, running and cycling to all 44 premier league and championship stadiums in 2 weeks, bringing the total to £675k. Following this, he was awarded the 'Freedom of the City' for which he was "deeply humbled" and, in the same year, an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Sport from Solent University.

Having profoundly under-estimated the difficulties of fund raising, in May 2019, he undertook his third and most gruelling challenge to date, 7 Iron Man triathlons in 7 days. This demanded months of training and preparation. He completed an incredible 5 Iron Man triathlons in 7 days, thought to be a first for someone of his age, swimming 12 miles, running 5 marathons and cycling 560 miles in total on his journey from Manchester to Southampton. Bitterly disappointed at having to withdraw temporarily for health reasons on Day 4; he went on to complete Day 7. Nine months on, he has raised £1.03 million and counting! Looking back, he now sits comfortably with his achievement and admits he had reached his own "breaking point". He hopes his achievements will inspire others to take on relevant challenges in their own lives.

In addition to being a regular sports pundit, in 2019 Franny was made a Club Ambassador for Southampton FC, and was awarded an MBE for services to charity in the 2020 New Year's Honours List for which he is "deeply honoured". He says it is "in recognition of so many people" for their overwhelming generosity and support.

When I asked what he planned to do next, his response was typically self-effacing: "having seen the family go through the trauma of these challenges, it would be selfish to put them through it again in the near future. I lumped a lot on them". Indeed, he seriously questions whether he could have completed it without them. — Nadine Johnson



## Highfield's corner shop

Raj Patel and his wife Nita purchased Highfield News from the Price family in May 1992. It had been trading for around 50 years. The first owners were two sisters. Raj and Nita's three children were raised in the shop.

Highfield News is the archetypal corner shop. The shop front is unusually curved around a corner! Through his customers, Raj has learned that the original building was bigger but the forecourt was reduced when a bomb fell in the middle of Highfield during WWII, destroying the pub and Highfield Lane.

As well as stocking convenience groceries and being an off licence, they also sell lottery tickets, newspapers, are agents for United Parcel Service and also keep the HRA mailbox.

Raj and Nita run the shop in shifts. Stock is purchased weekly from their wholesaler in Eastleigh. They take a loss on unsold products. Cash-flow is a big problem with money tied up in newspapers until month end. They have had to move with the times. For example, people eat less chocolate now and online deliveries have changed the flow of people into the shop and decreased the number of newspapers they sell. There used to be more elderly people popping in for a chat and Raj and Nita dropped items round and kept an eye on them, but many have passed away or are not mobile anymore.



Newspaper deliveries are time-consuming. Delivery people are difficult to recruit so now they just have one paper boy on Sundays. They deliver around 350 newspapers a week and their largely self-built rounds extend to Bassett. Raj gets up at 3.30am daily to insert magazines and other separate supplements into the newspapers; up to nine per newspaper on Sundays! He delivers those furthest afield from 4:30am. Priya, their eldest daughter, and Nita do the local rounds between 7:00—8.30am.

All this adds up to a hugely, physically demanding business. No wonder they have not had a holiday in 3 years and their children do not want to take up the family business!

As I leave, lots of children arrive to buy sweets! As for the HRA mailbox, there are regular pickups by our Membership Secretary and drop-offs from members and non-members alike.

— Nadine Johnson

## Book Review

A-Z of Southampton, Places-People-History, Amberley Publishing, £14.99 by a local author Martin Brisland.

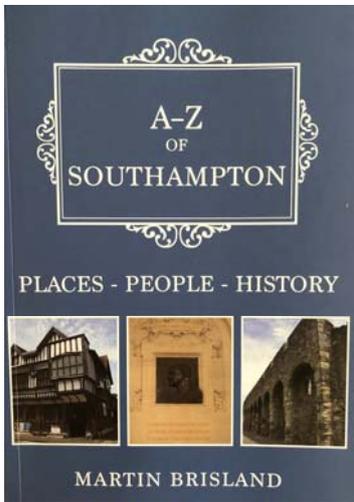
Who knew that puritan Ann Bradstreet stayed at the Star Hotel in 1630 before she embarked for the North American colonies where she became the first published writer in the New World? Or where the Mary Magdalene Leprosy Hospital stood in the city until 1420. Or that Coldplay's drummer grew up in Highfield?

Martin Brisland details these and many other well-known, and not

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so well-known, facts about the history of Southampton from Saxon times, when the city was known as Hamwic, to the present. Open this book at any page and you will read a story new to you or one that adds new information to events or places you may have been only dimly aware of. The book glories in mixing the famous with the near unknown as it pursues the odd, interesting or forgotten; the Titanic story described in a page and a half whilst Henri de Portal (a French Huguenot

smuggled into Southampton in a wine barrel) merits three quarters of a page.

Brisland is a SEE Southampton Tour Guide, this book conveys his enthusiasm for his native city and the book is illustrated throughout with photographs of familiar and not so familiar places. A location map would have been a useful addition, I had to look up where to see the relocated arch from St. Denys priory for example. Otherwise this is a book that can be easily read from A to Z or dipped into at leisure.

Available from local retailers through [www.hive.co.uk](http://www.hive.co.uk) and October Books in Portswood. Hive.co.uk saves on packaging, fuel and supports a local bookshop in our community. — Tim Claridge

## Let's Make a Poem Group

Everyone has a poem in them – that's the assumption of this poetry-writing workshop. Everyone has a poem in them even though they may be unaware of it and have never tried writing before. Language belongs to everybody. Poems get made because they are potentially there in the language all around us – in a word that strikes you or in a joke or a double meaning. The group works together to harness this power, so that while we work collectively, each person in the group finds a unique voice.

The group began last year, meeting on the last Friday of September, October and November. The sessions always begin with a shared project, generating what I have come to think of as a word cascade around a particular idea or theme. The first session each of us simply named a word that fascinated us (it could not be the name of a person or a place). Everyone in the group found associations for that word, and soon we had a waterfall of words – another way of putting it would be the creation of a kind of family tree of words. Out of this each person contributed a line and so we created a poem together that we could discuss and change. Then everyone set to work to make their own poem out of our word tree or word cascade, so that out of our collective work came individual poems.

This way of working, I think, reverses our usual assumptions about how we create. Often people think of a poem coming from the inside of themselves outwards – and sometimes it is a strain to have the duty of coming up with something uniquely original! But our group works from the outside in, moving from the group to



the individual rather than from the individual to the group.

Last year we created word cascades by looking together at images and drawings. Then we looked at tiny poems, from haikus to Instagram poetry. This year we began with the themes of youth and age, looking at Blake and Hardy as examples. We will go on to play with rhyme next session and end the final session with found poems.

I conclude by thanking Portswood Library for enabling us to discover together the joy of words. — Isobel Armstrong

## Our community in lockdown

Through our facebook page and website, Highfield Residents' Association has been providing local news, interspersed with relevant city-wide news, information on live streaming events plus glimpses into our local history throughout this lockdown period.



On our silent High Street with most shops closed, Portswood Cycles, Portswood Hardware and Roebridge Farm Shop are open.

A few independents have shifted online and are providing home deliveries. October Books is home delivering tinned, dried foods, toiletries, cleaning products, as well as books, cards, board games and gifts - all by bike! They will also take your earmarked items to the local Food Bank. Uptons of Bassett, the butcher, is now making twice weekly home deliveries of their full range. 'Made in: Here' has developed Portswood Online which combines home deliveries from Healthy Nuts, October Books and Portswood Hardware together with their very own locally made products and edibles. Out of area independents like Hoxton Bakehouse and J.S. Fresh Fish at Shamrock Quay have also joined the home deliveries sector, which is thriving. Behind the scenes, Portswood Computers has been providing telephone advice and support - leave a message for them to call back. Additionally, our area has a developing evening-time economy with the Portswood Dementia Friendly Action Group holding weekly Zoom soirees on Tuesday evenings at 18:00, featuring local musicians; the long-standing Crown Inn Sunday quiz now taking place online at 19:15; October Books livestreaming regular author events on Zoom, usually on Thursday evenings; and Kohinoor of Kerala and The Handle Bar doing takeaways.

If you know of any others, do please email us. Supporting all these necessary adaptations to life in lockdown, is an extraordinary and enthusiastic group of volunteers who are doing a brilliant job of attending to those in self isolation or who have been affected by the coronavirus. Their Whatsapp group is busy shopping, picking up prescriptions, running errands and fixing things for others. Portswood Mutual Aid is one of a number of Mutual Aid groups across the city based around Council Wards. They come under the umbrella of the City Council's Community Support Hub, which

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brings together support from across the city, including the NHS, Southampton CCG, Southampton Voluntary Services and other voluntary and faith groups. Highfield Church also has a 'Love thy neighbour' appeal for Basics Bank volunteers and volunteers to help those lonely and isolated people using the Communicare service. The best way to keep yourself updated is via:

[www.facebook.com/HRASouthampton](http://www.facebook.com/HRASouthampton)

[www.highfieldresidents.org.uk](http://www.highfieldresidents.org.uk)

— Nadine Johnson

(For security reasons, those using Zoom; ensure you update to version 5.0 or above)

## Local restaurants, shops & organisations

They need you and we need them! See HRA website for updates or submit any that are missing. (subject to change)

**Beards and Boards** menu updated often

[www.instagram.com/beardsandboardsuk](http://www.instagram.com/beardsandboardsuk)

[beardsandboardsuk@gmail.com](mailto:beardsandboardsuk@gmail.com)

**The Bookshop Alehouse** beers, growlers and cans

[www.facebook.com/BookshopAlehouse](http://www.facebook.com/BookshopAlehouse)

**Charcoal Grill** Kebab and takeaway shop, delivery via Deliveroo

**Crown Inn Quiz** Sunday [Online@7:15](https://www.facebook.com/CrownInnQuiz)

**Community Support Hub** 023 8083 4800

**Dancing Man Brewery** [www.facebook.com/DancingManBrewery](http://www.facebook.com/DancingManBrewery)

**The Dolphin Pub:** Pub menu delivery; available from 4-8 pm weekdays and 10 am – 8 pm weekends. Pre orders from 11:00 am. Menu on [www.facebook.com/dolphinstdenys](http://www.facebook.com/dolphinstdenys)

**The Handle Bar** Take out menu. Text, Call 07754 769620 or pass

by between 4-8 pm. Contactless Payments only, menu on Instagram [www.instagram.com/thehandlebarale](http://www.instagram.com/thehandlebarale)

**Healthy Nuts** [www.healthynuts.co.uk](http://www.healthynuts.co.uk)

**Highfield Church** [www.highfield.church](http://www.highfield.church)

**Hoxton Bakehouse** (within 6 miles of Southampton, Winchester or Lymington) breads, pastries and larder [www.hoxtonbakehouse.com](http://www.hoxtonbakehouse.com)

**J.S. Fresh Fish** [www.jsfresh.fish](http://www.jsfresh.fish) [sales@jsfresh.fish](mailto:sales@jsfresh.fish)

**Kohinoor of Kerala** [www.kohinoorofkerala.co.uk](http://www.kohinoorofkerala.co.uk)

**Made in: Here** [madeinheresouthampton.com](http://madeinheresouthampton.com)

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**Portswood Computers** [www.portswoodpc.co.uk](http://www.portswoodpc.co.uk) [portswoodpc@gmail.com](mailto:portswoodpc@gmail.com)

**Portswood Cycles** [www.portswood-cycles.co.uk](http://www.portswood-cycles.co.uk)

**Portswood Dementia Friendly Action Group** [kjbm37@gmail.com](mailto:kjbm37@gmail.com)  
[www.facebook.com/PortswoodDementiaFriendlyActionGroup](http://www.facebook.com/PortswoodDementiaFriendlyActionGroup)

**Portswood Hardware** 023 8055 1655

**Portswood Mutual Aid** 07923 353 365

**Roebridge Farm Shop** 023 8055 5537

**Unity Brewing** online orders and delivery [unitybrewingco.com](http://unitybrewingco.com)

**Uptons of Bassett** [www.uptonsbutchers.co.uk](http://www.uptonsbutchers.co.uk) [simon@uptonsbutchers.co.uk](mailto:simon@uptonsbutchers.co.uk)



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## Highfield Residents' Association membership application form

I / We would like to join / renew membership of the HRA

Name(s) of adults \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_ Tel No. \_\_\_\_\_

I give my positive consent for the HRA to use and store my personal data & to send me newsletters & other communications: **YES / NO**

I enclose my membership fee of £ \_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_ ( £5:00/ household) and a voluntary donation of £ \_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_ Thank you.

The signatory of this form is responsible for signing on behalf of all individuals in the household who live at the above address.

Send to: Membership Secretary, 5 Marlborough House, 2A Oakmount Ave, SO17 1BX; or can be dropped into Highfield News.

Cheques should be made payable to **Highfield Residents' Association**.

Please do not send cash through the post.

HRA's Data Protection Policy: <http://highfieldresidents.org.uk/dpp19.pdf>

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_