



Minutes of HRA Committee Meeting Tuesday 17 January 2023
Highfield Church Hall 19:00h

Present Committee: Roger Brown, Martin Benning, Nadine Johnson, Nicolla Martin, Ken Burtenshaw, Stephen Connolly, Jerry Gillen, Barbara Claridge

Others: Councillor Cooper, Kate Fay (Uni), Pete Errington (Uplands), John Hayward (OARA)

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks:

Roger Brown welcomed everyone to the meeting,

2. Apologies: Councillor Savage, Jayne Tamlyn, David White, Sandra Lochhead, Karen Edwards, Sue Swallow

3. Declaration of interest: none

4. Approval of minutes from the Committee Meeting July 2022: The Minutes, which had been previously circulated, were approved.

5. Matters arising not covered elsewhere:

A Police Liaison meeting with Inspector Brian Goodall had now been arranged for Monday 6 February. HRA officer representatives, Ward Councillors, two representatives of the HRA WhatsApp Crime Group and Community Liaison Officers are to attend along with Inspector Goodall and his associates.

6. Presentation by David Tyrie, Divisional Head of Services, Southampton City Council

Southampton Common Update – report below:

Ranger Team

In spring 2022 the engagement and ecology team were withdrawn, and a new Ranger Team was created into the Council's structure. This new team was not yet fully in place.

The team's main objectives are to:

- Enrich and safeguard the natural environment
- Support existing and new friends and volunteer groups with projects, skills and equipment
- Engage with those who do not currently have an interest or appreciation of the natural environment and find ways to get them interested and create a culture change.

The team would be headed by a Lead Ranger, based at Southampton Common / Holly Lodge depot. The Lead Ranger would be responsible for managing the Common and associated management plans.

The Senior Rangers would be accountable for the natural environment areas on the East and West Operating Districts. They will also have a slice of the Central District areas, excluding the Common.

The remaining three Rangers will be visible in the East, West and Central green spaces and would have designated patches to patrol and maintain. They would 'buddy up' with the district operating teams and landscape teams to pool resources on maintenance and landscaping.

Recruitment Progress

Lead Ranger

Disappointingly, the candidate who had accepted the Lead Ranger post had withdrawn his application after accepting a promotion with his current employer. The job had been readvertised and the closing date was 29/01/2023. Interviews and an appointment could take up to 3-6 months, dependent on whether a suitable candidate was found and notice periods etc.

Rangers

A new Ranger started work at the beginning of the month and was learning new sites, particularly the Common. The two remaining ranger posts would be interviewed in the w/c 30th Jan 2023

Senior Ranger

A new senior ranger started at the beginning of the month and was learning her area, which was the west of the city.

Holly Lodge Depot was having welfare upgrades etc. to make it an effective work base.

Common management

The Boating Lake was emptied in December. Weed in the bottom had rotted down so the lake had been refilled and would then be re-emptied to flush out the dead plant material and remove any nutrients that had been released to minimise the risk of algal blooms in the warm weather next summer. The water would be let out again this week but as the adjoining ditches were all full after the rain over the weekend and emptying would be delayed a further week.

Hawthorns

Work to replace the footpath in the Urban Wildlife Centre grounds had been started by clearing back the vegetation from the existing footpath (which was tarmac over a wooden boardwalk). A design for a new metal structure, which can be installed over the existing without causing too much disturbance, had been made. This would maintain the habitat for the great crested newt. It was not possible to begin the boardwalk works until the newts were out of torpor, so this had been booked for an end of February 2023 installation. The grounds should be open again in time for summer but this would depend on Ranger capacity and Volunteer availability.

The Common

The area known as The Flats on the Common had suffered badly due to heavy wear when events, like the Fair or Music Festival had been held on the Common. A gravel track across the Flats required maintenance. To make this path stable, a supply of Romsey Red path gravel hogging was necessary. The company that provided this specific product, had been late applying for permission to extract, and their planning application saw some objections. It is believed that they had now been given permission. Extraction was expected to begin again in May 2023 but SCC suspects the gravel extraction company would have a long waiting list as they were the sole supplier of this particular material.

City Services – structure update

Following a restructure of the Executive Team and senior management positions, City Services returned to the Place Directorate. Executive Director (Interim) was Adam Wilkinson, the Environment Director (permanent) was Ian Collins. David Tyrie remained as Head of City Services. Cabinet member, Lisa Mitchel, held responsibility for all aspects of City Services except waste. Cllr Leggett's held the Waste portfolio. Nick Yeats continued to lead the division's commercial services along with the Ecology Ops Manager and the Ranger Team.

David Tyrie
Head of City Services
Place Directorate
Southampton City Council

Roger thanked David for his report and welcomed the fact that progress was being made with regard to the Common.

7. Information from Councillors:

- a. Portswood Broadway: Councillor Cooper reported that there had been no further news. The Report of the whole consultation for Portswood Corridor Phase 1 would be considered by the Scrutiny and Management Committee on Thursday 2 February at 5:30pm. This would be a public meeting. The report would be published before the meeting.
- b. The severe weather protocol had been initiated to help street sleepers. Old male clothes, particularly coats, could be donated to 30, Cranberry Avenue, The Homeless Healthcare Team.
- c. River Itchen Scrutiny: River Itchen scrutiny panel. John Savage was unable to give this report update.
[River Itchen Scrutiny - southampton.gov.uk](https://www.southampton.gov.uk/scrutiny/river-itchen)

Roger thanked Councillor Cooper for his input.

8. University Liaison (KF) University representatives were unable to attend but sent this report.
University of Southampton update

Jubilee Extension

The works had continued on this project. Groundworks began ahead of foundations for the new building. The contractor had confirmed the target to completion by summer 2024.

Planning applications

Two applications with the Planning Department for demolition had been made.

Firstly, demolition of two university owned properties on Granby Grove. Due to the condition of the properties, it had not been possible to renovate them. Plans for any replacement buildings would be subject to public consultation prior to submission of Planning Approval.

A second Planning Application for demolition of university owned properties on Burgess Road had also been submitted. The properties (houses) had been vacant for some time and similarly to Granby Grove, were not suitable for renovation.

This area had been outlined in the Estates Future Plans presentation which HRA representatives attended in October. Again, plans for any new build, drawn up for this area, would be subject to public consultation prior to submission with the council.

New Civic Lead

Professor Jane Falkingham CBE is the new Civic Lead at the University.

Professor Falkingham had recently been awarded her CBE as part of the King's New Year Honour's. More about this [here](#)

Kate handed round copies of the University Research and Enterprise Magazine, RE:ACTION

Kate Fay

9. Planning:

- a. The Local Plan – NSCF Response had been circulated with the Agenda. Roger reported that further consultation would not be likely until Spring 2024 as there had been a great deal of material to process. Councillor Cooper acknowledged the excellent response to the Local Plan from NSCF and for the fact that more interest had been generated due to NSCF involvement. He noted there was a need to engage fully with the university over student expansion plans. More self-contained accommodation was needed at the university rather than expanding into HMOs.
- b. 22 Grosvenor Road (application withdrawn)
- c. Planning Application Brewhouse and Kitchen 22/01668/FUL | Erection of a single storey side extension with associated works including relocation of smoking shelter and new paved seating area to provide a function room. (Resubmission) 47 Highfield Lane Southampton SO17 1QD
23/00007/FUL | Installation of three electric vehicle charging points and associated equipment. 47 Highfield Lane Southampton SO17 1QD
HRA will not object
- d. HRA member concern over Disabled Parking space, Upper Shaftesbury Avenue – BC to continue case work on this and would contact Cllr Savage as he had prior knowledge
- e. 6, Crofton Close. The Planning Officer recommendation (Approve with Conditions) would be considered by the Planning Panel on Tuesday 24 January
- f. The Secretary informed the meeting that the consultation on the 20mph scheme in Highfield would likely take place after the Council elections in May

10. Reports:

a. Finance (prepared by MB)

This last month our income had been £414.00 and outgoings £150.00. The current account balance was £11,047. The Treasurer informed the meeting that over the next few weeks he would be working on the accounts for 2022 ready for submitting to Malcolm White, the Accounts Examiner, for checking. The 2022 financial year ended on 31 December

Martin Benning Treasurer

b. Membership (NM)

Paid up members as of 15 January for the Committee Meeting Tuesday 17 January 2023.

December: 2022 – 359, Rolling: January – December 2022 - 359

Rolling members January 2023: 0

2022 analysis:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
25	14	52	87	31	27	28	16	8	16	35	20

In December, 26 renewal letters had been sent out; 19 had renewed, 7 not as yet

Nicola Martin, Membership Secretary.

c. Digital Communications (NJ)

Facebook/Website:

There were 956 followers on Facebook, an increase of 14 since the last HRA Committee Meeting on 13 December 2022. Committee members and attendees were encouraged to check the website for news, in particular, the 'News/Events', 'Hot Topics', 'Crime Incidents' and 'Planning' pages. All Facebook posts were also on the HRA Website, sometimes with daily updates for those members not subscribed to Facebook.

A new folder on the 'Our Documents' page would be created. This would contain HRA official letters and statements. For example, the official HRA response to the Portswood Broadway consultation in November 2022 would be included here.

The need for local news and local photos continued and these should be sent to Comms (Nadine). Local history would also be useful.

Nadine Johnson, Digital Comms

11. HRA Crime information sharing WhatsApp Group for Highfield:

There had been 30+ incident reports since the last HRA Committee on 13 December 2022, compared with 33 reported over 2 months from 11/10/22 to 13/12/22. Some of these reports contained multiple incidents. Those representatives in the WA group whose areas had been impacted, were becoming increasingly "fed up" with the amount of petty thieving and damage to property and cars. It was recognised that part of this was possibly due to better communication systems and improved reporting. However, it was worse now. For the same period 2 years ago, from 13/12/20 to 17/1/21, there had been a maximum of 12 incident reports (NB Covid effect).

Summary of the main WhatsApp group reports:

Car break-ins / attempted car break-ins (total 13 +)

There had been incidents in Highfield Close, Welbeck Avenue, Ripstone Gardens, Crofton Close, Glebe Court, Orchards Way, Donnington Grove, Highfield Lane and Russell Place. Small items had sometimes been taken; often cars had been rummaged through; one car had been unlocked; one involved an owner's climbing gear and car key which had been strewn over another driveway; some had been just door handle tries; one break-in had been at 7 pm.

Items stolen from car bodywork or cars damaged (total 1)

Volvo mirror removed - Highfield Lane

Break-ins / attempted break-ins of garages, sheds and other outbuildings (total 2)

Highfield Crescent and Holyrood Avenue. **There had been** an attempt to break the gate off its hinges at Holyrood Avenue.

Other reported crimes: (total 14+)

- 1 attempted house break-in - PRG area. Nothing had been taken
- 2 cold caller incidents - one in Brookvale Road: the caller did not react well when items were not bought on the doorstep. Also reported in Abbotts Way
- 1 suspicious incident in Orchards Way: someone repeatedly banged on a door at midnight and asked for a cigarette light
- At least 8 reports of traffic violations which included speeding e-scooters and cyclists on pavements in Highfield Lane and Portswood Road
- Speeding vehicles along Shaftesbury Avenue and Portswood Road; parking on pavements - one obscured the junction at Sainsburys traffic lights; one drove the wrong way round a Highfield Lane traffic island
- A cannabis factory had been found in Portswood Road, in between Victory Gospel Church and Admiral Casino (Daily Echo 17/12/22)
- A large, deep and dangerous pothole for cyclists and cars appeared suddenly in lower Brookvale Road. This had been reported on WA Group 2/1/23 and re-filled by 4/1/23, thanks to the speedy efforts of Cllr Savage and Balfour Beatty.

All incident reports are logged on the HRA website here: <https://www.highfieldresidents.org.uk/crime-incidents/>

Nadine Johnson, Digital Comms

Roger thanked everyone for their reports

1. Nicolla Martin reported that a large red, water-filled drum had been on the pavement in Oakmount Avenue for some considerable time. The base had almost rusted through. David Tyrie took a note of this and actioned its immediate removal. The Secretary reminded everyone that there was a form on the Southampton City Council Website where such problems could be reported and dealt with quickly.

Report environmental issues: <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/environmental-issues/report-an-issue/>

Report fly tipping: <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/environmental-issues/street-cleaning/fly-tipping/>

These links and others were available on the HRA Website

2. Nadine Johnson reported that Superdrug would be closing its Portswood store on 28 January due to rising rents. Mettricks in Portswood had closed due to a leaking roof
3. Barbara informed the meeting that a spring printed Newsletter was in the planning stage. Ken Burtenshaw was setting up the document template. It was hoped to include some historical articles as well as focus on membership benefits.
4. John Hayward from Outer Avenue Residents' association handed round some AORA leaflets.

Roger thanked him for attending and for the information leaflets

The meeting ended at 20:15

Next Meeting is to be held 14 February 2023, 7pm Highfield Church Hall.