

Police and HRA Liaison Meeting 6th February 2023 Highfield Church Hall

Present: Inspector Brian Goodall, PS Dean Marsh-Clasby, PCSO Ollie Bull, PCSO Collette Craddock, (Portswood Police), Prof. Roger Brown, Barbara Claridge, Nadine Johnson (HRA), Councillor Cooper, Councillor Savage, Karen Edwards (PRG), Sandra Lochhead (Portswood Central RA), Malcolm White (OTRA), Lucy Nagra (HRA WhatsApp Crime Reporting Group), Malkeat Singh, Francesca Prior (SCC Community Engagement Officers)

1. Roger Brown opened the session and thanked Inspector Goodall for meeting with HRA. He said that local crime had steadily risen up HRA's agenda, leading to the creation of the WhatsApp Crime Information Sharing Group, whose report was before the meeting. Inspector Goodall had received an advance copy and said he would respond to all the questions within it during the course of the meeting. For details see annex i.
2. Inspector Goodall gave an update on recent reported crimes in the northern part of the City. No clear trends were evident and some crimes, such as house burglary, were partly seasonal. Police data was collated monthly in arrears and reported within upper and lower limits. Data did not show particular hotspots. For example, vehicle crime was currently at the upper limit. This was not theft of vehicles but 'smash and grab' of contents on view.
3. Prompt reporting was essential using 101 and 999 (for serious matters). All reported incidents are logged and given a crime number. Once an incident was reported, a risk assessment was made by a triage team according to the following criteria: Threat, Harm, Risk, Opportunity. An investigation would then proceed when appropriate.
4. There was also a Community Partnership Information Sharing Form (CPI) where matters of intelligence, particularly relating to children or vulnerable adults, could be safely reported directly to the police.
5. Inspector Goodall said he was strongly committed to working in partnership with residents' groups, not least because of the local information and knowledge they could provide. The normal front line Community Support Officers provided direct interface with the public. There were currently only two working out of Portswood but there should be a total of five after April.
6. There were currently 8 Police Constables in the Portswood area and 8 also in Bitterne North. Some were tactically trained cyclists who sometimes work in plain clothes, often acting 'undercover' on intelligence. A new Sergeant had recently begun work at Portswood.
7. He would be very happy to provide monthly updates through the re-establishment of the 'beat letter' which PCSO Bull for would be responsible.

8. In answer to a question, Inspector Goodall said that CCTV footage was only valuable if it clearly enabled the identification of the individuals involved and a high-risk crime was involved. Because of the need to balance the deployment of resources, it was necessary to focus on the more high-level incidents. If the assessment of the situation was low risk and not aggravated, the police would not investigate and not review CCTV. He said crimes such as bike theft, where the risk of harm is low, would not be investigated, even if there was good CCTV, due to resource prioritisation by risk factor.
9. A number of specific issues were then raised through the WhatsApp Crime Reporting Group (Annex i). They included drug dealing in Khartoum / Omdurman / The Little Common and Portswood Broadway near Muse; anti-social behaviour in Portswood Broadway; children being approached near the Gregg School in Winn Road; and suspicious behaviour in the 'cut' between Highfield Crescent and Church Lane. In answer to a question, Inspector Goodall noted the risk from pavement drinkers and ne'er-do-wells in Portswood but emphasised that police powers were limited. Ward Councillors would explore the scope for enhancing the CCTV coverage in Portswood Broadway and nearby streets. Councillor Savage reminded the meeting that a PSPO (Public Space Protection Order) existed on Portswood Broadway and police had powers to exercise this local order to confiscate alcohol from people seen or suspected of drinking alcohol on the street.
10. Concern was expressed about residents without on-line access to police and crime information. It was agreed that physical events, such as a monthly Pop-up Portswood Beat 'Surgery' outside the Library or the Church would be welcome. HRA would be very happy to publicise these. (Post-meeting update: PCSO bull and Craddock had commenced plans for the beat-surgeries. It was hoped that partners from the SCC Engagement Team would join them).

Peer-to-peer support was another approach and the engagement officers agreed to see if the 'community navigators' scheme could be relevant. Inspector Goodall said he would like to introduce a monthly 'Beat Letter' and perhaps set up a monthly communication system with 'Community Navigators' to make the regular flow of information easier.

Closing the meeting, Roger Brown said that HRA would circulate a note to the groups invited and suggested that it might be helpful to have another such meeting in due course.

Prof. Roger Brown
Chair, HRA
11 February 2023

Annex i.

WhatsApp Crime Group for Highfield: Specific Questions and more detailed response

4.1. How are the police dealing with theft / robbery, damage to cars and property and break-ins

- What is police policy with regard to these recurrent crimes? (See 2 above.)
- What measures can be taken by the police to prevent them? (See 3 above.)
- Can we have more beat officers on our streets? (See 6 above.)

There had been 29 incident reports from 13 December 2022 to now. These formed 57% of current crimes reported within the WhatsApp Group. In the lead up to Christmas, the police arrested six different people who were targeting our area and the whole of the city. The number of incidents had dropped since then.

4.2. What is the police policy on use and retention of good ID CCTV?

- What is police policy on the use and retention of good ID CCTV when items such as bikes are stolen? (See 8 above.)
- What is the policy on retention of CCTV in general? (See 8 above.)

4.3. How are the police dealing with Recurrent incidents of anti-social behaviour on The Little Common and at the end of Khartoum Road?

This had been on-going for a number of years and Ward Councillors were regularly flagging it up. The police were aware of the drug dealing and were continuing to pursue this.

4.4. Are the police aware there have been approaches to young children outside a local school?

It had been reported that there had been offers of a lift to young children by a man in a van and a woman in a car outside the Gregg School, Winn Road. (Post-meeting update: The local team had followed this up and would continue to patrol at relevant times to reassure the community and identify persons involved.)

The police did not know anything about this, but incidents involving children should all be reported as a matter of high risk. He would encourage the parents of the children involved to contact him. The matter had then been taken up with Inspector Goodall by the representative from Portswood Residents' Gardens Group as the incident was reported by them.

4.5. What is being done to tackle recent and increased activity in the Church Lane dip and in / around the cut as reported in the WhatsApp Group?

- Are the police aware of reports of youths loitering in the 'Cut' and around the entrances to it, and also of cars pulling up at the junction of Highfield Crescent / Shaftesbury Avenue waiting to pick up adults / youths coming out of the 'Cut' and then speeding off in the cars.

The importance of taking the registration numbers and reporting any cars involved in such activity was stressed. It would then be possible to search on car registration numbers to ascertain who the cars were

linked to, whether the cars are known vehicles and whether they had been involved in other, possibly criminal, activities. However, especially if children were involved it is important to telephone 999.

Details of these incidents were passed to one of the PCs present after the meeting. Once the PC had the details, he committed to doing some patrols in the area and would talk to residents.

4.6. Are the police dealing with the anti-social behaviour, drinking and drug dealing on Portswood Broadway?

- Is there CCTV in Portswood Broadway?
- Is it sufficient?

CCTV on the Broadway was the responsibility of Southampton City Council. There was one CCTV camera along Portswood Broadway which turns one way and then the other. Ward Councillors had continued to push for more resources. It was reported that new CCTV had been recently installed in the Westridge Road car park which had helped reduce fly-tipping in the area. Some shops would have their own CCTV.

- What is being done to combat crime and anti-social behaviour in Portswood Broadway?

Before Christmas, the police had closed in on a County Lines male who had been dealing around The Muse and found evidence of crack and heroin. Inspector Goodall emphasised the importance of reporting to the police any sightings of drug dealing in public and he stressed the need to report this formally.

The number of shops / cafés in Portswood with broken / boarded up windows, which might have been broken into or the result of attempted break-ins was noticeable.

Councillor Savage reminded the meeting that a PSPO (Public Space Protection Order) existed on Portswood Road and police had powers to exercise this local order to confiscate alcohol from people seen or suspected of drinking alcohol on the street. It was suggested that this action might discourage some of the anti-social behaviour in Portswood Broadway. Inspector Goodall said that he would remind officers of this sanction as it had not been used in recent years.

4.7. Is it possible to clone modern car keys from outside the home if within range of a programming device?

- Can you confirm this, or otherwise?

Inspector Goodall did not comment on this but it was recommended by several meeting attendees that a blocker could be purchased i.e. a small case that car keys could be kept in which blocked signals to the key fob.