

Minutes of HRA Committee Meeting Tuesday 13 June 2023
Highfield Church Hall 19:00h



Present Committee: Prof Roger Brown (Chair), Nadine Johnson, Nicolla Martin, Martin Benning, Jerry Gillen, Ken Burtenshaw, Stephen Connolly, Christine Rawnsley

Others: Councillor Katherine Barbour, Councillor Marie Finn, Councillor Lorna Fielker, Councillor Matt Bundy, Councillor Sharon Mintoff, Pete Errington

1. **Welcome:** Roger welcomed everyone to the meeting in particular the Councillors from Swaything.

2. **Chair's Report:** He reported that HRA's response to the Government consultations on the future control of short-term lets had supported both the proposed creation of a new Use Class for such properties and the enablement of Local Registration Schemes. The City Council's response had been on similar lines although there had been more emphasis on the practicalities of enforcement.

The National Audit Office had very recently issued a report critical of the Government's approach to Active Travel in England. Whilst not critical of the objective, the Office considered that the Department of Transport had, as yet no methodology for assessing value for money.

Looking forward, the Hon Sec and he would be meeting the new Chief Ranger on the Common at their meeting on 28 June for an initial discussion. He would report back in due course. He reminded the Committee that we did not yet have a volunteer to take over Common Sense.

Roger thanked Martin for offering to take the minutes at this meeting.

3. **Apologies:** Barbara Claridge, Jayne Tamlyn, Malcolm White (who reported no issues from OTRA), University Reps, Councillor John Savage, Karen Edwards

4. **Declaration of interest:** none

5. **Approval of minutes from the Committee Meeting 9 May 2023:**
The minutes were approved

6. **Matters arising not covered elsewhere:**

a. Disabled Parking Bay, Upper Shaftesbury Avenue – this issue had now been resolved without the need for the Complaints Procedure. The disabled bay had been marked out exactly where the residents had wanted all along. The application process had begun on 1 July 2022. The HRA members thanked the HRA HonSec for the huge support given to their cause.



b. Fly tipping Grosvenor Road (Cllr Savage): Cllr Savage was not present

7. Information from Councillors: The Councillors were asked about the progress of the Peoples' Assembly on Climate. It was reported that there would be announcements from August onwards advertising road shows in each ward across the city. The Assembly would begin deliberating towards the end of the year. The Council was committed to implementing the action points from the Assembly.

Cllr Barbour spoke about the Scrutiny Inquiry Panel, *Protecting, Preserving and Promoting the River Itchen*. It has been forwarded to the Executive for consideration and further action. Cllr Savage had chaired this Committee and he would be invited to give an update at a future HRA Committee Meeting

Cllr Barbour also spoke about the draft Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Strategies which were being considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee. [To see all these reports, go to this [link](#). and [Making Social Care Work \(southampton.gov.uk\)](#) and [Appendix 2 - Draft Biodiversity Strategy.docx.pdf \(southampton.gov.uk\)](#)]

Cllr Barbour also mentioned that residents backing on to the unmade road behind Boots were very concerned about the presence and spread of Japanese Knotweed. Cllr Savage was trying to find out who owned the road.

(Post meeting note: Councillor Savage confirmed to the HonSec that the lane is unadopted. It is not owned by anyone. The responsibility for maintenance is whichever business or landowner fronts onto the lane at each individual location. For this reason, much of the responsibility for maintenance falls onto Mr Ahmed who is a major landowner of Portswood Road properties)

Councillors were asked about the timescale for resurfacing the rest of Brookvale Road – as yet unclear.

8. University Liaison: The University has been working with residents' groups to finalise the end of year student waste collections. These details have already been publicised on the HRA website and Facebook and there will be a reminder before 1 July. See attachments for the other University updates.

9. Planning:

a. Planning 10 Holyrood Avenue, Planning and Rights of Way Panel 6 June 2023 – HRA had objected: SCC Planning Officers recommended approval - [Delegated Report.pdf](#)

(The Planning Panel had approved the application on 6 June). This was a registered 6-bed HMO but the large expansion in the roof could become a double to increase HMO numbers. The Planning Officer said this would have to be dealt with separately

b. Planning Appeal 201 Portswood Road was against a SCC Planning Refusal to build an extension for ground floor shop storage and first floor residential use at the back of a shop – The HRA objection was available on the HRA website: [HRA Appeal objection 201 Portswood Road/](#) Nadine Johnson was thanked for her photographic research which supported the objection.

c. Planning Application 158 Portswood Road (Jay's Hairdresser building). HRA Planning Sub had not found any planning reasons to objection but some HRA members had concerns regarding another late-night venue which would offer take-away as well as inside service

d. Planning Applications 112 Upper Shaftesbury Avenue – 23/00617/FUL and 23/00619/FUL HRA had objected. The objection was available on the HRA website: [HRA Planning objection 112 Upper Shaftesbury Avenue](#) . Jerry Gillen praised Barbara Claridge for her response to the application. JG also expressed his disappointment that the council was not always implementing its own HMO policies.

Cllr Barbour made a general point about the concreting over of front gardens and the impact it had on wildlife and flood management. There was legislation on this issue but rarely implemented by SCC. She has raised it with the Planning Department but had been told that there were not sufficient resources to tackle the issue.

8. Reports:

a. Finance

Income for the month - £522. Outgoings - £140. Balance in current account - £12,849.

Martin Benning Treasurer

a. Membership Total paid up members: 338. Rolling: 188

Martin commented that he had contacted anyone who had completed a Jotform but their payments had not then appeared on the bank statements. Most were sorted. When contacted, it appeared that having filled in their Jotform, they reported not to have received HRA banking details. Most people's forms were completed fully so the problem was most likely to be with individuals rather than with the system

Nicolla Martin Membership Secretary

c. Digital Communications

i. Facebook and Website

HRA now had 1,000 followers on Facebook, an increase of 6 since the last HRA Committee Meeting on 9 May 2023. A major milestone! Since taking over the HRA Facebook page in March 2019 (4.3 years' ago), there had been a fivefold increase in the number of followers from approximately 200 to 1,000! Committee Members are reminded to check the HRA website regularly for updates especially if they do not follow HRA on Facebook.

Thank you to Pete Errington, Nicolla and Ken for their photos and also to Barbara for some ad hoc news updates. As always, there was a need for need more local news, local photos and local history

Discounts

HRA now had a discount with Mettricks Portswood - 10% off all food between 9 am and 4 pm, Monday to Friday. The discount with La Baronia, Mexican Restaurant, was currently being reviewed as the restaurant was under new ownership.

ii. E-news to HRA members

It was hoped that an e-news would be sent to HRA members before the summer break

It was mentioned that the map of the HRA area on the website was not clear, particularly on the Highfield/Swaythling border. The previous map had been much clearer. It was thought a new map could also show ward boundaries.

(Post meeting note: There was only one map of the Highfield area and this had been on the website for a number of years. It would not be possible to add additional details to this map as it was a pdf. This is a link to SCC new Ward Boundaries [SCC new Ward Boundaries Map](#) The Highfield Residents' area will not change in any way following the changes to the Ward boundaries. This fact would be included in the e-news.)

Committee members were reminded to send any outstanding Data Protection Agreement forms to Nadine.

Nadine Johnson Digital Comms

11. HRA Crime WhatsApp group for Highfield

Reported Incidents between 9 May and 13 June 2023

Since the last meeting report on 9 May 2023, the number of reported incidents had increased from 3 to 12. Full details are in the Annex.

Report to PCSO (Police Community Support Officer) designated as our contact by Inspector Brian Goodall. The three reported incidents to the HRA Committee of 9 May 2023 had been emailed to the PCSO. He responded that he had been patrolling the Highfield area on a daily basis and one of his PC colleagues had also been doing the same. They would look to target Highfield more. However, they had recently been tasked to help the other PCSO team in Bitterne to tackle many ASB problems there.

Changes to Portswood Ward Councillor representation in the Group following the Local Elections on May 4th, and the addition of two Councillors from Swaythling Ward

The change in local Councillor representation in the WhatsApp Group following the Local Elections on May 4th has been completed. The following Councillors had been added to the Group:

For Portswood Ward:

Cllr Katherine Barbour, Cllr Marie Finn, Cllr John Savage

For Swaythling Ward: Cllr Lorna Fielker, Cllr Sharon Mintoff

Note: There was now a new representative for Grosvenor Road who had replaced Cllr Barbour in this role.

Nadine Johnson Digital Comms

12. AOB:

- a. Cllr Barbour advertised the Friends of Portswood Rec about a free Pirate event at the weekend.
- b. Ken Burtenshaw expressed his concern about the amount of litter on the Common and the use of BBQs. RB would mention these points at the with the Chief Ranger on the 28 June.

(Post meeting note: RB emailed SCC Head of Services with the two comments and DT had replied immediately:

1. Refuse bins overflowing – result of a breakdown and not communicated to the district team quickly enough. The bin emptying is moving to the central district team from Monday 19th using the 7.5t compactor vehicle they operate for the solar compactor bin emptying so

we're not reliant on the commercial waste team. We are also 1 step closer to receiving a delivery of 6 x 3.5t compactors after a 2-year delay on chassis! This will really help whizz around the other bin routes and free the compactor to concentrate on the parks. I'll be looking to get some solar bins on the common in the next delivery too.

2. All district managers have been asked to erect the attached signage re BBQs [not attached] in all parks that have long grass / wildlife areas and rangers have been briefed. We have no enforcement powers to manage this but are working with the community safety team and city welfare wardens to link with police patrols and get consistent advice out if we get reports or see people ignoring the advice

David Tyrie [Head of City Services, Place Directorate, Southampton City Council](#)

The meeting ended at 19:46h

The next HRA Committee Meeting will be held on 11 July

There is no meeting in August

Annex to the Minutes 13 June 2023
Full HRA Crime WhatsApp group for Highfield

1. Reported Incidents between 9 May and 13 June 2023

Since the last meeting report on 9 May 2023, the number of reported incidents has increased from 3 to 12. These included:

Attempted or car break-ins (total 5): Mainly Brookvale Road with one in Orchards Way and Highfield Lane where a sat nav was taken

Fence break-in (total 1): Brookvale Road; access via back of Residents' Gardens. Nothing taken

Abandoned vehicle and abandoned bike (total 2): De Grouchy Lane and Crofton Close respectively. The vehicle was on private DGL land. Cllr JS advised this was a difficult situation as the Police would likely do nothing and the local authority could do little re MOT or tax as it was not on the public highway. He advised reading the following from RAC Drive: 'Is it illegal for someone else to park on your driveway'

<https://www.rac.co.uk/drive/advice/legal/parking-on-someone-elses-driveway/>

He said he would, 'ask questions at the Council'

Other incidents:

(total 1): a child was put at risk by a stranger at around 3.30 pm while walking home from a local school. Fortunately, it was a failed attempt. The importance of 'Stranger Danger' was highlighted

(total 1): someone had been riding a scrambler bike around The Common most mornings around 4 am. The loud noise woke up the person who reported the incident every time (reported to HRA via Facebook messenger)

(total 2): Portswood High Street: message received from the Portswood Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) about an incident involving the homeless drinkers in Portswood where one male sustained a severe head injury. Also, approximately 8 homeless drinkers were reported as taking over the last two outside tables at Coffee#1 at around 9 am one morning in May

Note: On 19/05/23 Southampton Cops Facebook page reported that the Portswood NPT would be working with Southampton City Council over the coming days to clamp down on anti-social behaviour (ASB) in Portswood. To target ASB, there was a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) in place to ensure that public spaces could be enjoyed free from anti-social behaviour. The Portswood NPT and Southampton City Council would be out in the Portswood area targeting street drinking among other anti-social behaviours

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

2. Report to PCSO (Police Community Support Officer) designated as our contact by Inspector Brian Goodall

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3. Changes to Portswood Ward Councillor representation in the Group following the Local Elections on May 4th, and the addition of two Councillors from Swaythling Ward

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