



## **Minutes of HRA Committee Meeting**

**Tuesday 9 January 2024 Highfield Church Halls 19:00h**

**Present Committee:** Prof Roger Brown (Chair), Nadine Johnson, Martin Benning, Ken Burtenshaw, Stephen Connolly, Dave White, Karen Edwards.

**Others:** Councillor John Savage, Councillor Marie Finn, Laura Graves (University), Malcolm White (OTRA), Pete Errington (Uplands Estate), Sue Swallow (OARA), Ron Meldrum.

**1. Welcome and opening remarks:** Roger welcomed everyone to the meeting. He reported that due to the stepping down of Satvir Kaur as Leader of the Council, the new Leader was Councillor Lorna Fielker. He had written to congratulate her. The two Councillors present had now joined the Cabinet – John Savage was remaining as Chair of Planning. Roger reported on a national survey that Southampton was one of the best authorities nationally for the proportion of roads not needing maintenance. The new National Planning Policy Framework was intended to increase the supply of housing but in the last quarter only 20,680 new homes had been registered against a Government annual target of 300,000. An organisation called Wilder Southampton had invited HRA to attend a Winter Workshop at Challis Court Community Room, Challis Court, SO14 3DQ. He asked any member of the Committee to contact him direct if they were interested in going. Similarly, he had established that the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee would welcome a submission from the Association to their review of the private rented sector. Normally he would do this but he was just too pressed to be able to give it the necessary attention. Again, if anyone wanted to take this on, he would be happy to be the contact.

**2. Apologies:** Barbara Claridge, Jerry Gillen, Nicolla Martin, Christine Rawnsley, Jane Tamlyn, Cllr Barbour, Cllr Bungay, Cllr Fielker.

**3. Declaration of interests:** none

**4. Approval of minutes from the committee meeting 9 May 2023:**

The minutes were approved but it had been pointed out that paragraph 7 should be 6 and para 8, 7. Christine Rawnsley had clarified that the issue in paragraph 5 was not that letters were missing from the Nuffield Theatre signage but that previously members of the Youth Theatre would have attended to it.

## **5. Matters arising not covered elsewhere:**

- a. Letter to the Council Leader re SCC consultation process – no response yet.
- b. Additional CCTV cameras in Portswood – Cllr Finn reported that two new cameras were being installed and with one being repaired there would be four in operation.
- c. Closer Liaison with Community Groups and local businesses – not a full committee so held over.
- d. Report on OMSC – see item 6.
- e. The Council Leader's response to pavements needing repair – in hand.
- f. Gorillas – John Savage reported that two young people were squatting in the former Gorillas' premises. He had been invited in and found that a water leak had been fixed. The police were aware of their presence but had taken no action. The pair were in the process of finding new premises. It appeared that they could be politically motivated objecting to the non-use of vacant property. John also spoke to the letting agency who had had some interest shown towards renting the shop.
- g. Odour from Southern Water waste-water treatment plant – on hold at the moment but Roger would be attending a future meeting in St Denys– see below.

## **6. Portswood Corridor Scheme**

Roger had attended and spoken at the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee meeting on behalf of HRA before Christmas and would also be attending the Cabinet meeting on Tuesday 16 January when a decision would be made about the scheme. The HRA response to the latest proposals had been taken on board by the Council and it could be that a phased approach to implementing the scheme would happen. There was a short discussion which highlighted the range of opinions within the committee. John Savage appealed to everyone to pull together and respect the decisions made. Roger stated that HRA would continue to work positively with the Council once the Cabinet decision had been made.

## **7. Information from Councillors:**

Cllr Savage – a meeting had been set up between Southern Water, community groups and users of the River Itchen on 16 January which would be chaired by Roger. Cllr Savage would report back at the next committee meeting. He intended to maintain the pressure on Southern Water to be more transparent about their operations.

Cllr Finn – the three Portswood Councillors had had a meeting with the new Community Engagement Officer about antisocial behaviour. The police were undertaking a series of undercover operations to tackle antisocial behaviour in the area. Feedback from this operation would be on next month's agenda.

## **8. University Liaison –**

- a. Laura confirmed that the U1A service would not be stopping at the Central Station. Laura said that she would supply Roger with a name to whom he can write to object to this decision. In the meantime Roger would write to the Cabinet member.

- b. The extended Jubilee Sports Centre would be opening this summer.
- c. Rubbish bags would be distributed to relevant properties in Highfield in preparation to students leaving at the end of the academic year.
- d. The Faraday Tower was being demolished.
- e. Laura agreed to send Nadine information about university events so they can be included in the HRA Newsletter.

## **9. HRA Crime WhatsApp group for Highfield**

4 incidents had been reported in the WhatsApp Group between 12 December 2023 and 9 January 2024. This was a decrease of 9 in comparison to the previous report of 10 October, although the previous period was for 2 months not one (i.e. 10 October to 12 December 2023).

### **a. Reported incidents by representatives in the WhatsApp Group (total: 4 incidents):**

- A WhatsApp Group representative had their phone and purse stolen after a fall on the pavement while getting out of her car on Highfield Lane. However, the police regarded these items as lost and not stolen so there was no crime number. Another representative suggested installing 'Life 360' or 'Find my Phone' on her phone. She installed the latter which indicated that her phone was in Shirley, but she never found it. However, this enabled her to report the items as stolen to the police and get a crime number.
- Reports of apparent drug dealing in front of homes at both ends of Oakhurst Road and in Furzedown Road. These occur during the day and early evenings, on the street and out of cars parked on the road. Cllr Barbour indicated that Councillors would raise this at their meeting with the police on 8 January 2024 and report back to committee.
- Two suspicious incidents in Brookvale Road and Highfield Lane: a resident's CCTV camera in Brookvale Road captured two people at 2am walking around the drive/front garden and then crouching to avoid the security lights. A similar incident was reported and captured in Highfield Lane.

All incidents were logged here: <https://www.highfieldresidents.org.uk/crime-incidents/>

### **b. Police Community Support Officer's response to the above report**

To her knowledge, the PCSO had not seen many reports of drug dealing in Furzedown and Oakhurst Roads, but PCSOs made regular patrols there and she would ensure the Team was aware. However, she emphasised that people must keep reporting incidents, otherwise the police would not know what was going on. They would target areas if they were aware that there was a problem.

### **c. Police to increase patrols in Portswood High Street in order to deter retail theft (Southampton Police on Facebook, 28/12/23)**

A representative in the WhatsApp Group, and former police officer, said that in order to keep the patrols in Portswood, everyone should be encouraged to continue reporting incidents and not assume it's been/will be reported. If the reporting drops, the patrols will be re-allocated elsewhere.

**d. The WhatsApp Group** now has a replacement representative for Furzedown Road and parts of Hawthorn and Oakhurst Roads.

**e. Two extra CCTV cameras to be installed on Portswood High Street** to combat ASB, theft, street robbery and other offences

Following my query at the last HRA Committee Meeting, that the Hampshire Police and Crime Commissioner had secured funding from the Government's Safer Streets for two extra CCTV cameras in Portswood High Street (Daily Echo 9 November 2023), Cllr Marie Finn confirmed that the locations for the two new CCTV cameras would be outside Roebridge Farm Shop facing Westridge Rd, and outside the library opposite St Denys Road. The Council were currently looking for suitable lampposts where they could be mounted.

Cllr Finn mentioned that there were currently two existing CCTV cameras in Portswood High Street, one outside Coffee#1 and the other outside Sainsburys. The one outside Sainsburys needs to be recommissioned and it would be useful to know when this recommissioning was likely.

Nadine urged people to report crimes – if crimes were not reported, the police would direct resources away from our area to others areas where more crime was being reported.

Jon Savage made the point that for occurrences that are suspicious, the CPI form (Community Partnership Information) should be filled in. It can be found at [safe4me.co.uk](https://safe4me.co.uk)

Nadine Johnson Digital Comms

## 10. Planning

a. Planning Inspectorate Appeal dismissed – 201 Portswood Road, Southampton SO17 2NF. HRA had supported SCC Planning Department in objecting to this Appeal. The original Planning Application had been made on 6 June 2022 and refused by Planning Officers in August 2022. An Inspectorate site visit had been made on 13 November 2023 with the Inspectorate decision being confirmed by 6 December 2023. Thanks to Nadine for supplying photographs to support the HRA objection submitted by the HonSec.

b. HRA was seeking clarification of the need for a planning application at 112 Upper Shaftesbury Avenue (an HMO change of plan for 7 bedrooms instead of 6) (Action RB)

## 11. Reports

a. Finance (MB)

Income for the month - £176. Outgoings - £150. Balance in Current Account - £3581.

This reduction in the amount in the current account was due to transferring money into the Reserve Account. HRA now had £20,000 in this account. A discussion would take place amongst the HRA Officers about the possibility of moving funds in the Reserve Account into an Account with higher interest. All accounts with NatWest Bank

It was noted that two new members had donated £100 to HRA with their membership subscription. Martin would write a letter of thanks.

b. Membership (BC for NM)

It was reported that since 3 December, 6 new and 3 renewing members had used BACS. 2 Renewing Member cheques had also been paid into the bank in December Thanks to Barbara and Nadine for covering this in Nicolla's absence.

c. Digital Communications

- Facebook/Website

There were now 1050 followers on the HRA Facebook page, an increase of 10 since HRA Committee Meeting of 12 December 2023.

Thank you to Ken, Pete Errington and several other HRA Members for their recent photos, and to Barbara for some news posts.

All Committee Members were listed on the website on the 'About Us' page, together with photos which are optional. Any new committee members who wished to have their photo included, please email them to me. Thank you!

- Discounts and local business update

Unfortunately, Rija's Fish and Chip Shop in Portswood High Street has closed so HRA no longer has a discount there.

Portswood Mettricks is closed until further notice while they "brew up some exciting internal changes".

Nadine Johnson Digital Comms

**12. A.O.B.**

- a. Ken Burtenshaw reported that a bench on the Common needed repairing. Ken to send information to Roger.
- b. Cllr Savage reported that Mike Harris had resigned from being Council Chief Executive.

**~~ Next meeting Tuesday 13th February ~~**