

Minutes of HRA Committee Meeting Tuesday 15 October 2024
Highfield Church Halls 19:00h



Committee Present: Prof Roger Brown (Chair), Barbara Claridge, Martin Benning, Ken Burtenshaw, Nicolla Martin, Jerry Gillen, Stephen Connolly, Dave White, Christine Rawnsley

Others: Councillor John Savage, Councillor Katherine Barbour, Councillor Thomas Gravatt, Pete Thomas (OTRA), Paul Beard, Kate Fay (University),

1. **Welcome and opening remarks:** Roger welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked all for attending. He especially welcomed Paul Bear, a prospective Committee member. Roger said the meeting would be in two parts, the first being normal business and the second for Committee members only so that the arrangements for the AGM could be discussed
2. **Apologies:** Councillor Fielker, Councillor Bunday, Councillor Finn, Nadine Johnson, Karen Edwards
3. **Declaration of interests:** none
4. **Approval of minutes:** the Minutes of the previous meeting were not yet available and would be approved at a later date
5. **Matters arising**
 - a. Letter 2 to Councillor Lorna Fielker from RB concerning Portswood Broadway (see Agenda Annex. i.). The text of the letter had been circulated before the meeting. Dave White commented that he thought the content was exactly right and that it would be a good prompt for the Council Leader address at the AGM. Roger said he had not expected an immediate reply because he would be arranging a meeting with Councillor Fielker before the AGM. He was certain that the Portswood Broadway scheme would be raised. He said that Councillor Keogh had also expressed an interest in attending the AGM and would receive an invitation.
 - b. Roger confirmed that the next PB Steering Group meeting would be held on Monday 21 October. The progress on measuring Key Performance Indicators would be discussed along with the timetable for upcoming associated activities including the consultation on Traffic Regulation Orders and Experimental TROs. He stressed that a public statement to inform residents on the upcoming changes would be important and that he would be asking the project team for this. HRA would need to take a view on the TROs/ETROs in due course during the consultation period.

Martin commented that he had had a questionnaire about Portswood through the door which had had no reference to the Broadway project and it had been difficult to work out if it was a scam or genuine. Paul B also commented that someone had called with the survey direct to his front door. Others present reported no survey or questioned how people had been chosen for the survey. Roger concluded that it was agreed that this method of base-data collection had been poorly thought out.

6. Information from Councillors

Councillor Savage had made Portswood parking fine data available to the Secretary before the meeting. This would be included with the Minutes (Annex. ii.). He commented that compared with Shirley High Street (which was slightly different in nature) more fines had been issued in Portswood.

He also reported that he had attended a useful recent Beat Surgery at Sainsbury's with Councillor Barbour and had been pleased to speak with members of the public mainly about planning issues.

Item 9a. Portswood Shopping Centre redevelopment was discussed at this point. Although RB and BC had met with the developers during the week, Councillors had not yet seen any details of the Portswood Shopping Centre outline plans. Councillor Savage had held discussions with SCC planners to emphasise that retail users must be retained and that the retail offer should be carefully considered.

Roger commented that this further emphasised the need for a Council strategy for the future of Portswood District Centre and that had been the essence of his letter to the Council Leader in advance of the AGM (see Agenda Annex. i.). The proposed rebuilding of the Shopping Centre only added to the need for a proper strategy. There were issues about the Broadway including parking and more students. The meeting agreed that it would be a good idea for RB to add additional comments in a second note to Cllr Fielker (see Minutes Annex. i.)

Councillor Savage then reported on new action by Southern Water to reduce ammonia in sewage as it entered the waste water treatment plant by the addition of ferric chloride solution. This should also reduce the smell. The situation was being monitored. He also had a meeting with the Environment Agency arranged for 30 October.

Councillor Barbour made reference to the 10-Year City Plan. Unfortunately many of the performance targets had been missed. RB said that the City Plan should be on the Agenda for the next Committee Meeting. Councillor Barbour had helped with a problem of fly-tipping and the tidying up of an area at the Garages in Spring Crescent and the situation for residents was now much improved. She had also been working with property owners to enlist support for each to pay towards the cost of paving the unadopted alleyway behind the shops on the northside of Portswood Broadway. About half had responded positively so far.

'Blockbusters' was discussed next as it remained an eyesore. Pete Thomas said it would be very difficult to get it listed due to its current state.

Councillor Thomas Gravatt introduced himself and said he was working closely with Portswood Rec. where there had been some recent vandalism.

Steven Connolly commented on large bins blocking the pavement in Westridge Road and asked Councillors if something could be done.

7. University Liaison

Kate Fay reported the following:

a. Recycling bags update

The Students Union had delivered 150 recycling bags and leaflets on the afternoon of the 4th of October to student properties in Holyrood Ave, Welbeck Ave, Upper Shaftesbury, Broadlands Rd, Woodcote Rd and half of Mayfield Rd. It was a good time to door knock as quite a few students were in (c.60-70% of houses), and everyone that answered the door seemed pretty happy to receive a free bag! Where no one was home, bags had been left in porches, on doorsteps etc. They would be going back out again to the rest of the Swaythling roads and then moving onto Highfield in the next few weeks.

b. Start of term

Thank you for your support while we welcomed back our students to the city. We continue to support second- and third-year students living off campus and encourage them to be good neighbours.

Anyone experiencing any issues you could get in touch and gain support by emailing: local2u@soton.ac.uk.

More about our university expectations for students and the support offered see: [Community Living](#) and [Community Complaints Procedure](#) pages on the website.

c. Southampton gains University of Sanctuary status

The University of Southampton was proud to announce its official recognition as a University of Sanctuary, joining a growing network of universities committed to creating a culture of safety, inclusion, and support for those seeking sanctuary. University of Sanctuary status is awarded by the City of Sanctuary national charity.

As a University of Sanctuary, we have committed to several initiatives, including:

- Sanctuary Scholarships: Offering scholarships to support students who are seeking sanctuary in the UK.
- Academic Research and Teaching: The University is home to research focused on the

experiences of those seeking sanctuary, exploring global migration and social justice. The University teaches courses and modules across various disciplines offering students the opportunity to engage with these critical issues, developing global awareness.

- Community Engagement: The University is deeply committed to working with local and national communities such as SWVG and CLEAR. This also forms part of our work on being a Civic University.
- CARA (Council for At-Risk Academics): the University is proud to partner with CARA. Through this partnership, we provide a safe environment for scholars to continue their research and academic work, preserving and promoting academic freedom.
- Southampton Sanctuary Network: the University has recently partnered with Solent University, City Life Church and Southampton City Council in the Southampton Sanctuary Network. This network offers organisations a place to come together to support those seeking sanctuary in the city.

d. Jubilee Sport and Recreation Centre Grand Opening

The University of Southampton had celebrated the opening of its new Jubilee Sport and Recreation Centre extension. Attendees heard from Adam Knott, a Paralympian and University of Southampton alumnus who represented Great Britain in the 2012 Paralympic Games.

Following Kate's report, Councillor Barbour raised the fact that there had been large increases in admission fees and memberships. She gave a particular example of swimming entry. Barbara added that the cost of a swimming pass (pay for 8 swims and get 10) had risen by 33% since March. A £20 joining fee was added to any community purchased a monthly membership. If a monthly membership fee was missed, for example due to a holiday, then the £20 joining fee would be required again. This didn't make sense. Kate was asked if the £20 joining fee could be an annual charge for any monthly membership taken out. She was also asked to take back the issue of whether there could be a civic discount for HRA members, given that Southampton was a Civic University.

Councillor Barbour raised the issue of University marked vehicles travelling past the primary school. She had contacted Jon Walsh but not yet received a reply.

Stephen Connolly raised the issue of whether the University could remove the graffiti on an EV charging box in Highfield Road.

Christine Rawnsley raised the issue of whether bin stickers and leaflets to inform students in HMOs how to use the refuse and recycling services could be provided by the University for Highfield HMO properties.

Kate confirmed that she would take these comments back to the University. *(Post meeting additional information and response see Annex. v.)*

8. HRA Crime WhatsApp group for Highfield Report NJ (Annex. iii.)

Roger asked that thanks to Nadine could be recorded. It was noted that it was useful to have these reports available with the Agenda so that committee members could read in preparation for the meeting (BC noted). The drop in reported incidents was welcome.

9. Planning

a. Portswood Shopping Centre Development - verbal report of meeting between RB, BC and Fusion/Redwood Consulting (Monday 14 October)

This item had been discussed in Agenda Item 6. Barbara gave additional information that the company had argued that such student accommodation would help to take the pressure of HMO expansion in Highfield and Portswood.

The meeting then discussed the local HMO situation at some length concluding that at the present time there was only extension of HMOs locally as landlords used permitted development rights to extend into roof spaces. Even if numbers of beds were then extended into properties requiring Sui Generis Planning Approval, SCC HMO officers were granting licences with or without planning approval. Jerry asked the Councillors to look into this anomaly.

Christine commented that domestic housing for HMOs would remain under great pressure as this option was less expensive to students than purpose-built student housing.

Jerry commented that the Council's own Supplementary Planning Guidance was not being followed by Planning or HMO Officers. Roger commented that without the expected further expansion of Southampton University (10,000 more students within the next 10 years) Southampton already had the highest density of students of any city on the south coast. Jerry commented that at one time the university was not allowed to expand without supplying appropriate student accommodation. He also added that SCC Planning allowed all applications for LDC to be approved. He commented that the Council had the powers to prevent this in the Local Plan and that every area of HMO exceeded the Council's own threshold.

Councillor Savage concluded that by 2030 every private landlord would have to upgrade properties to a 'C' Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). He thought that this might cause landlords to move out of the HMO market.

b. Pete Thomas raised two planning applications in the Oakmount Triangle. He would advise HRA if OTRA had any objections and then HRA would support.

10. Reports

- a. Finance (MB) – income/expenditure for the last period

Income: £366 Outgoings: £158

35-day savings account: £22,439; Current account: £3176. Business Reserve Account: £0.55 following a balance transfer into the savings account as it was not necessary to have three accounts.

- b. Membership (NM) - 364 members on the database; 262 paid up so far this year. 2 new members in September; 6 did not renew in September (BC to follow up)

- c. Digital Communications (NJ) Report (Annex. iv.)

Roger again asked that thanks to Nadine could be recorded. It was noted that it was useful to have these reports available with the Agenda so that committee members could read in preparation for the committee meeting (BC noted).

11. A.O.B.

- a. Next meeting would be the AGM on Wednesday 13 November 2024. Note that a change of start time to 7:30pm was agreed to allow time to set up the PA without haste.
- b. The Autumn Newsletter was in preparation. Ken had kindly agreed to produce the artwork and proof for the printers. Barbara hoped to have the text with him by the middle of next week. All of the Street Reps (except one who was likely to be away) had agreed to continue. Barbara hoped that delivery could begin by 6 November at the latest if everything came together.

The first part of the meeting closed at 8.05pm

Annex. i. Text of 2nd Letter to Councillor Lorna Fielker HRA AGM

18th October 2024

Portswood Broadway

Further to my letter of 1st October, the concerns expressed there have been highlighted and indeed reinforced by what we learned this week about the intentions of the developer for the regeneration of the Portswood Shopping Centre site at the southern end of the Broadway, between the existing Victory Temple and Portswood Churches and which includes the now vacant former Iceland store. We understand that the plan is to create 500 bed-space student accommodation in two blocks to a height of up to five storeys with retail, commercial or amenity uses on the ground floor facing the road.

At an informal meeting this week between HRA representatives and the developer (Fusion) it was confirmed that a planning application was anticipated by the end of the year. Clearly, HRA cannot express a formal view on the plans until an application is made. But such a short timescale underscores not only the need but the urgency of a strategy for the whole of the district centre to bring together north and south: the trial bus gate and the proposed redevelopment of PSC. Until we have such a strategy, the future commercial district could become an ill-matched street scene predominated by fast food outlets and with no local services or independent retail (like Burgess Road east of the Southampton University Highfield Campus).

Such a strategy would help to resolve such issues as:

Should the accommodation for the expanded numbers of University students not be located on University premises, as provided for in a previous Local Plan?

Should there not be restrictions on the retail, commercial or amenity uses permitted in future developments?

Should there not be encouragement for independent local businesses offering non-food – such as the dry cleaners and locksmiths currently operating from PSC – to relocate within the district centre?

The direction of traffic movements, commercial deliveries and parking spaces and behaviour.

The HRA Committee discussed these issues at their meeting this week. On behalf of the Association, I am asking the Council to defer any consideration of the PSC redevelopment until these matters have been resolved in the context of a proper strategy for the Broadway. It should be noted that the proposed redevelopment actually provides both a justification for such an approach and an opportunity to begin to remedy some of the ills that I outlined previously, and that will get even more serious without it.

I would welcome your comments.

Roger Brown (Professor)
Chair, Highfield Residents Association

Annex. ii. Parking enforcement data for Portswood Road 23/24 (Cllr J Savage)

Total number of logged visits	1,038
Total number of PCNs issued	681
01 – Parked in a restricted street during prescribed hours (Yellow Lines)	142
02 – Parked or loading /unloading in a restricted street where waiting and loading/unloading restrictions are in force	65
12 - Parked in a residents' or shared use parking place or zone without either clearly displaying a valid permit or voucher or pay and display ticket issued for that place, or without payment of the parking charge	10
24 - Not parked correctly within the markings of the bay or space	3
26 - Not parked correctly within the markings of the bay or space	2
27 - Parked in a special enforcement area adjacent to a footway, cycle track or verge lowered to meet the level of the carriageway	3
30 - Parked for longer than permitted	62
40 - Parked in a designated disabled persons parking place without displaying a valid disabled person's badge in the prescribed manner	212
45 - Parked on a taxi rank	20
47 - Stopped on a restricted bus stop or stand	118
47j - Stopped on a restricted bus stop or stand (Camera Car)	23
49 - Parked wholly or partly on a cycle track or lane	19
99 - Stopped on a pedestrian crossing or crossing area marked by zigzags	2

Green text = more likely to have occurred on Portswood Road

15/10/24 HRA Cttee Meeting

Annex. iii. 8. HRA Crime information sharing WhatsApp Group Report

8a. Reported incidents since the last HRA Committee Meeting of 10 September: 4

This is a decrease of 15 incidents since the last meeting, although the latter covered two months not one.

The number of incidents is shown brackets:

Low level Crime/ASB incidents, all reported to the police (3):

Garage door forced and damaged - Brookvale Road

Driver drove over pavement by Sainsbury's Portswood to turn into St Denys Road

Suspicious incident - a low loader car transporter stopped at approximately 11 pm in Brookvale Road. Two men in black got out and walked to Abbots Way. Noticing they were being watched, they returned to their vehicle and drove off.

Anti-social behaviour incidents in Portswood Broadway (1):

4 or 5 men were sitting on the steps next door to October Books bookshop, drinking and messing around. Open cans of drink were seen. This was reported to Community Safety who responded saying that they would follow it up.

All crime and antisocial behaviour incidents are listed here:

<https://www.highfieldresidents.org.uk/crime-incidents/>

8b. Sainsbury's and other CCTV in Portswood

I understand from Cllr Finn that the CCTV at Sainsbury's has been fixed and has been up and running for over one month now, which is very good news. Thank you to Cllr Finn for all her efforts in this and to the City Council team who managed to get the CCTV working again. By way of background, the Section 106 Agreement wording did not secure ongoing maintenance/operation of the Sainsbury's CCTV cameras by Sainsbury's, only that they were provided prior to occupation.

The situation regarding other CCTVs in Portswood is below and should be kept under review:

There is currently one CCTV camera in use outside Coffee#1. This turns both ways.

Community Safety have confirmed to Cllr Finn that they have *"two permanent cameras on order that will be installed outside the Library on the west side of the Broadway and outside Roebridge*

Farm Shop (greengrocer), opposite Westridge Road. These have already been identified as locations by the Portswood Corridor scheme after research and consultation. The orders for works with Balfour Beatty are being scoped, but funding is secure."

There is a temporary solar camera installed as a stop gap measure opposite Poundland, pending those two permanent cameras being installed.

8c. Future dates for Portswood PACT meetings

Monday 2 December, 6.30-8pm 2024

Monday 24 March, 6.30-8pm 2025

Monday 16 June, 6.30-8pm 2025

Monday 8 September, 6.30-8pm 2025.

Nadine Johnson Digital Communications

Annex. iv. 10c. Digital Communications

Facebook/Website

There are now 1116 followers on the HRA Facebook page, an increase of 5 since HRA Committee Meeting 10 September 2024.

Thank you to Nicolla, Ken and Barbara for their photos.

Sponsorship of HRA website

Pearsons have renewed their advertising sponsorship of our website for one year from 14 October 2024 to 13 October 2025, for £250.

HRA Autumn 2024 Newsletter

We now have three advertisements in the Newsletter: Pearsons for £190; Figures Book-keeping for £85; and SO EnergyWise by Testlands for £85. This represents a total income of £360. Invoices have been raised.

September 2024 Edition of e-news

This was emailed to members on 27 September 2024. Thank you to all those whose photos we were able to use.

Local news

Roebridge Farm Shop (greengrocers)

I understand that Roebridge Farm Shop will be closing by Christmas. I had a recent conversation with the Manager and he has told me that they did not want to close but the landlord had increased the rent and they could no longer afford to stay.

Portswood Shopping Centre (the shopping centre which previously included Iceland)

The retail group redeveloping Portswood Shopping Centre into student housing and retail are holding two Public Consultations/Exhibitions at October Books on the dates and times listed below. I understand from October Books that these are drop-in sessions:

Saturday 19 October: from 10am to 4pm

Thursday 24 October: from 5.30pm to 9pm.

I also understand from October Books that if anyone wishes to contact them directly, they can email them on: portswood@redwoodconsulting.co.uk

Nadine Johnson. Digital Communications

Annex. v. University Post Meeting Update (Kate Fay)

Thank you to **Kate Fay** for this swift response to matters raised in the Committee meeting

1. I've flagged the email response request with Jon, he did mention that he had spoken to Councillor Barbour in person at the Jubilee opening but he will reply by email too
2. I have sent your request to the manager of the sports centre to ask about the increase in the 8 for 10 swimming session prices, £20 joining fee & request for local resident discount
3. I have passed on information about the graffiti on Highfield Road. The charging box is owned by the Electric Vehicle Power Point provider. We have to request permission to alter the box in any way, including cleaning. The Estates Team have done this so I hope this will be cleaned shortly
4. Bin stickers and leaflets. I double checked with Jon and he also confirmed that this is not something the University has ever provided. Southampton City Council provided bin number stickers and leaflets to OARA a few years ago & they delivered leaflets and added bin numbers to some student houses without them. We invite Kirsty Bobbett (kirsty.bobbett@southampton.gov.uk) & Julia Lovett (julia.lovett@southampton.gov.uk) to our end of year waste planning meetings so it would be worth raising with the Council directly. Alternatively my colleague Laura has invited you to the next meeting on 4th November, so it could be raised there.