

## **PACT Meeting 8 September 2025 – Informal Notes**

On the panel:

Francesca Prior (FP) (SCC Community Engagement Manager), PC Adam O'Neill (AO), (Dedicated Neighbourhood Officer serving Portswood, Swaythling and Bassett), PCSO Ollie Bull, Malkeat Singh (SCC Community Engagement Officer)

The meeting was well attended, including:

Councillor Finn; at least 7 HRA Crime information sharing WhatsApp Group members

Apologies from 2 members from HRA Crime information sharing WhatsApp Group.

***These informal notes do not include all items raised and my apologies in advance for any errors.***

### **Crime statistics**

PC Adam O'Neill (AO) said that there had been a 6% decrease in crime rates since the previous PACT meeting in June 2025. The top three crimes in Portswood were currently: 1 Violent offences, 2 ASB, 3 Public Order offences. He said that the protests at Highfield House Hotel had taken up a lot of police time and this had meant that other areas had been neglected a little.

### **Matters arising from Minutes of 16 June 2025 Meeting**

FP passed the issue of misinformation/abuse in some comments on The Echo's Facebook page to SCC's Coms Team, asking for their Echo contact to be informed and not allow inappropriate comments.

### **Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)**

FP said the Consultation had finished. The PSPO was not yet implemented but was going through. FP had presented it to the Cabinet Member last month who was 100% in favour. The police had asked if the process could be speeded up rather than go to a full meeting of Cabinet/Council (?). FP will present it to the Leader of the Council and then to Legal. While it is going through the legal process, she will organise for the signs to be made ready. The PSPO will cover alcohol use but there will also be additional measures to curb drug misuse and aggressive begging behaviour. There will be no fixed penalty notices as it will be mainly used with people who cannot pay. It's about education and being able to move people on. The police have the power to remove alcohol. With persistent offending, the Council and the police will ensure that they have each other's data should a case go to court. FP was unsure how long the legal process would take as she was new to the position, but implementation was probably unlikely before Christmas.

A MOP (Member of the Public) asked what area the Portswood PSPO covered. See map on SCC website: <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/media/2pil3mdd/pspo-portswood.pdf>

Once enforced, the PSPO gives the police an extra tool which has been seen to act as a deterrent. Since it elapsed, some incidents have restarted. However, members of the public should continue to report street drinking and ASB so the police can act, as there is other legislation under the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act (2014?) which can be used. Community Protection Notices or Warnings can be issued. It is a criminal offence to breach a Community Protection Notice or Warning and one persistent offender had already been moved out of area with two others given warnings.

### **Anti-immigration protests**

When asked by a MOP about tackling ASB incidents during the protests, AO responded that the strategy for managing protests was decided at a higher level. A decision was taken not to generally respond to jeering/aggression, alcohol consumption and other ASB incidents during the protests in

order to keep control, keep people safe and not elevate the risk. There were investigating officers wearing body cameras during the protests who follow up any incidents afterwards.

Cllr Finn asked what she should say to people who felt intimidated but no crime had been committed. AO said that this could be reported through the normal channels. He said a lot of after care is taking place in the background. For example, speaking to local residents, including those neighbouring the Highfield House Hotel, to give them reassurance, a sense of safety, and to let them know how they can report incidents. He emphasised the importance of reporting and that this data was really important to them. FP added that reports to 101 also go to Community Safety.

Cllr Finn asked about designating other areas for the protest, for example the City Centre, as Highfield was a residential area and the protest noise was impinging on people's rights.

The local police were geared up to attend anti-immigration protests every week for the foreseeable future. Possibly when it is cold and dark, things might slow down....?

#### **Local businesses who continually supply alcohol to 'known offenders'**

A MOP raised this question. AO responded that alcohol for money is not illegal but there was, however, work to be done in working with local businesses on this. A Community Protection Notice/Warning had been used with one persistent offender who is not allowed into Portswood High Street during business hours.

#### **Voi (orange) e-scooters, parking on double yellow lines, noisy vehicles, speeding, etc**

***This section of the meeting was a bit confusing, with questions by MOPs woven in and out of answers, but I have made an attempt to include some responses to some questions.***

All Voi e-scooters and Voi e-bikes were mechanically propelled vehicles and should be ridden on the road not on the pavement. If they are ridden on the pavement, this is classified as dangerous driving and should be reported to Voi with a place, date, time and the number on the front if possible. Photos were very useful. Report online: <https://report.voi.com/> or email: [support@voi.com](mailto:support@voi.com). One MOP mentioned that while students were not here, the situation with e-scooters and e-bikes was relatively quiet. They asked if it was possible to inform the University and/or invite them to attend one of these meetings so that students could be made aware of their responsibilities. FP undertook to contact the University Community Engagement Team and go from there (this task was later passed to Malkeat Singh to invite a University representative to the next PACT Meeting).

Parking illegally on double yellow lines was particularly bad during out of hours, especially in the International Foods area. The police don't enforce illegal parking of unattended vehicles, this is carried out by the Council. Responding to a MOP, taking photos of parked vehicles is not illegal and might provide supplementary evidence if a date, time and location were included. However, traffic wardens always need to physically see the infringements for themselves. Report these to the Council: <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/travel-transport/report-issue/parking-offence/>

At night in Portswood High Street most delivery bikes appear to be parked on the pavement instead of the road and some of the drivers might not have the right to work. Who is investigating this? All mechanically propelled vehicles should be on the road. It is the Road Policing Team who specialise in this field. Reports on this can be sent through the normal channels.

Infringement of mechanically propelled vehicles is a recurring problem. Enforcement activity should be occurring all the time when resourcing allows. The police, including AO, have removed plenty of illegal e-scooters from Portswood and education by the police is important. However, they are pretty stretched with the anti-immigration protests at the moment, but enforcement does go on.

When asked by a MOP if the police were able to release any data, AO said 'no', but he would come back on this at the next meeting.

There was a lot of speeding along Highfield Lane with the new 20mph/30mph speed limits, and some vehicles with noisy exhausts roared up the road at night between 11pm and 2am, mainly on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. There was speeding in Portswood Road which had recently become 20mph and no enforcement was apparent. The signs were too high for some cars to pick them up. The mph needed to be painted on the road. AO said that crime reports applied equally to road speeding as to ASB. He also suggested the Community Speed Watch programme.

#### **Ventnor Court**

One MOP asked if the community lounge at Ventnor Court could please be opened up so that people did not sit outside in the cold. One person died last year. Cllr Finn will take this up.

#### **Drug dealing in St Denys**

Cllr Finn reported that a MOP was seeing drug dealing on the road close to the Primary School. They just wanted some reassurance that the police were keeping an eye on this. AO said he had had some communication on this in the past and would follow it up with Cllr Finn.

#### **Homeless people in Richmond Gardens**

A MOP said there was drug and alcohol use, drug dealing, milk disappearing and, last week, one of the homeless entered the building and opened a package. They asked about the best way to raise a police presence. AO was already fully aware. He said the police will do more patrols in the area. The homeless have been displaced from a different area. If it persists, report it as ASB.

#### **Future PACT meetings**

Malkeat Singh explained that in order to also accommodate PACT meetings at St Denys, future meetings will be located as follows: one every 6 months in Highfield and one every six months in St Denys. People were welcome to travel to both.

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