

Minutes HRA Committee Meeting Tuesday 16 September 2025

Highfield Church Halls 19:00h



Committee members present: Roger Brown, Paul Beard, Ken Burtenshaw, Stephen Connolly, Karen Edwards, Jerry Gillen, Nadine Johnson, Nicolla Martin, Christine Rawnsley, David White

Non-committee members present: Cllr Katherine Barbour, Cllr Matt Bunday, Cllr Marie Finn, Cllr John Savage, Malcolm White (Oakmount Triangle RA), Katherine Holmes, (Brookvale Road RA)

1. **Welcome.** Prof. Roger Brown welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked those who had prepared reports which had been included with Agenda as this helped members to prepare in advance.
2. **Apologies** - Martin Benning, Barbara Claridge, Cllr Fielker, Pete Thomas
3. **Declarations of interest** - none
4. **Minutes 1 July 2025** – these were accepted
Item 6 was brought forward as Cllrs Finn and Savage had to leave early. The Agenda then resumed with new Item 5.

5. **(6.) Information from Councillors**

Cllr Marie Finn 11/9/25 Highfield specific issues:

1. The protests at the hotel have dominated conversations and emails this month. Many residents have reported feeling intimidated by them and object to the noise. Others have complained about flags being put up in unwelcome places including covering 20mph signs. My personal view is that protests right by somewhere people live is intimidating for them and for their neighbours and protests should be held elsewhere. I have raised this with the police. The flare being thrown into the hotel has amplified the risks and concerns and the Cabinet member for Safer Communities is trying to arrange another police meeting. I may have more to update at the meeting on this subject.
2. I had a site meeting with traffic officers and met with the new cabinet member for transport to discuss next steps in the TCF projects. There is money to be spent on traffic calming along the bus corridors. I am very keen that a lot of this is spent in Portswood. Cllr Lambert is due to make a statement about next steps in the next week to ten days.
3. Waste- bin collections have been delayed in recent weeks. We are getting daily updates about roads missed and when they will be picked up, usually the following day if its recycling or domestic waste. I will leave John Savage to brief you about when the new vehicles are arriving but I would welcome a view as to whether you want info from waste about Highfield roads passed on to you for distribution or not.

General Issues:

1. Local Government Review is being talked about and there will be a big debate at the Full Council meeting prior to submission deadline day on 26/9.
2. The Health and Wellbeing Strategy is out for consultation and closes on 26 October. This sets out the priorities for where we want to put our efforts as a system in the next few years, to maximise impact. I would be grateful if as many residents as possible would complete it to have their say.

Link: [Draft Health Wellbeing Strategy Consultation](#)

3. Fostering – I sit on the Corporate Parenting Panel and we look at how we are supporting our young people in care. I am also a fostering advocate. We have a desperate shortage of foster carers. If anyone has a spare room and can think about offering a home, even as respite, to a local child, the foster team would love to hear from you. Planning permission was recently given for a new children's home in Winn Rd for four children so that may help but it cannot replace the advantages of a family environment.
4. The carers strategy is due for review next year. The strategy will be co-produced and we are looking for more carers to be involved so we increase the diversity of carers represented. Any carers in Highfield would be very welcome so please contact the Unpaid carers Service or myself for more details. We are having an initial workshop in October.

Cllr John Savage Sept 2025

1. I have been attending most of the weekly counter-demonstrations at the Highfield House Hotel. After contacting the owners, The Abbotts Hotel Group, they made it clear that they did not want the protesters to be permitted on their property. However, there exists a legal right for customers of Ceno Wine Bar to park on the property. I have had numerous conversations and emails with senior police officers, and I have maintained that the Hotel owner's wish is that the police should prevent the demonstrators from trespassing on the Hotel and. The police have maintained that it would be difficult operationally to remove the protesters and that their preference is to use their discretion over the matter to ensure no one is put at risk of injury, while allowing peaceful protest to take place.

Since the reported arson attack, the Hotel has become fenced off, with security guards in attendance. I have argued since the start, that a public address system is in breach of current legislation on protesting, and that the police should request that the protesters remove the PA system or risk its confiscation. Police acknowledge this is in their power. With the latest fencing off of the land, this becomes a distinct possibility.

Our cabinet member for safer cities is now having weekly meetings with senior officers. We will report back on developments.

2. I have been working with officers to resolve drought issues in local ponds and lakes with particular risks to fish in the ornamental lake. There is an embargo on moving the Carp elsewhere, adding water from mains is very dangerous because of chlorine in the water. Even agricultural water puts extreme stress on fish stirring up the silt and depriving stressed fish of oxygen. Fortunately, recent heavy rain has largely replenished water levels and funding for future risk management is being sought.
3. I have been working with the Ministry of Justice and our Energy Manager to bring the Law Courts into the city Centre district heating network. It is a complex issue requiring some advanced installation of connected pipework. This is an important development as the MoJ are able to provide leverage with the further development of Southampton's Geothermal project which will help SCC to achieve its Net-Zero targets.
4. I successfully supported the application for change of use of the residential property at 8 Winn Rd to a children's home. I was unsuccessful in my opposition for the property at 50 Shaftsbury Ave. to be made an 8 bedroom HMO.
5. I continue to work with officers on the Rights of the Rivers. The plans to develop a Rights of the Rivers Charter and to create a body holding guardianship/stewardship of our rivers is being developed in line with other practice in the UK and around the world.
6. I have been working with planning officers and the conservation officer to develop consistency over approaches for changes to regulations within conservation areas and approaches to solar panels. My intention is to convene a meeting with residents and to arrange site visits for HRA, OTRA and PRG to develop an appropriate updated policy.

RB commented to this that the residents groups for all the city's Listed/Conservation area estates should be involved. They might wish to consider a united approach and/or representation at any meetings with officers. The meeting noted a/different estates might have very particular issues relating to local geography, orientation or design. And b/ Cllr Savage's concern about apparent inconsistency in how Conservation area rules were applied.

7. Along with other Ward Councillors I helped organise and took part in the litter pick in the Lawn area of the Ward 30 August.
8. As many of you know, I have experience in organising a PA. This weekend I supported music in the City with a day-long event at the HMV store in the City Centre with performances from lots of bands and performers.
9. In waste services, we have a new exec director and a new service manager started last week. I have been working with officers to secure finance to purchase replacement fleet vehicles and recruit additional waste services staff to improve service reliability.
10. Together with Marie, working with officers over the planned sale of St Denys station carpark on Osborne Rd S. The land is rarely used for parking and frequently attracts ASB, fly tipping and drug dealing. I/we gave our recommendation to seek use of the land for affordable family housing.

RB sought, for general interest, information on progress and current status of proposals for local government re-organisation.

Cllr Katherine Barbour

1. Noted Devolution Report is now a public document. The SCC response is here.
<https://www.southampton.gov.uk/council-democracy/council-plans/local-government-reorganisation/>
2. Has been lobbying for Highfield to be included in Harefield/Bitterne/Shirley bus route re-organisation
3. HMO landlords. Has approached them to support tenants waste management with appropriate equipment and signage.
4. All councillors participating in and promoting litter picks around the area.
5. Working with James Hewin (Zest Art Collective) promoting Urban Wildflower meadows work.
6. Complaints about bin issues were continuing

5. Matters Arising from the Cttee Meeting 1 July

- a. Councillor Lambert had been contacted again by the Chair but had not responded. AS new Cabinet member for Transport, Cllr Lambert had also been formally invited to this Committee Meeting but had not replied.
- b. University Research, Dr Carys Coleman – no report as yet
- c. Buildouts on Brookvale Road – no information
- d. End of Year Waste Report (CR) There had been only 2 complaints after the End of Term waste round and neither of them were directly related to the process. It seemed to go well. HRA volunteers offered help with the new term UoS Student Waste bag distribution. Additional supplies of bags have now been made available, and extra leaflets to explain their use should be delivered this week. Can also have them at the AGM. Cllrs Finn and Barbour have also identified students to help. Numbers reached will be tracked

7. Portswood Broadway

- a. Steering Group news - None, as there had been no meetings. RB had written to Cllr Lambert expressing concern at lack of meetings, progress and information. As yet, no response. Will raise this at Scrutiny panel. See below.
- b. RB and JG would attend the SCC Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on Thursday 18 September. HRA Written submission (Annex.i.)
- c. What next? RB would be expressing concern about the process lack of clarity on about next steps at the Scrutiny Panel.

8. University Liaison

Jon Walsh, Kate Fay and Laura Graves have all left the University. HRA is waiting for further information concerning future University contacts. RB is to meet with Gagandeep Bedi, the recently appointed Associate Director for Corporate Engagement on 22 September. He had arranged for more student waste management bags to be supplied to HRA. See 5d.

9. HRA Crime WhatsApp group for Highfield (NJ)

- a. Report (Agenda Annex.i.). it was noted in particular an increased number of issues with street drinkers
- b. Terms of Use (Agenda Annex.ii.). Vote taken, all in favour of amended Terms of Use.
- c. PACT Meeting Report (NJ Notes) (Agenda Annex.iii.). Concern expressed about the Public Space Protection Order gap in coverage (should be in place in the New Year), the misuse of seating outside Flagship, and patchy enforcement of existing legislation to control antisocial behaviour. RB to write to the Cabinet Member Councillor Allen to request removal of the seat outside Flagship Coffee. This may be an item for discussion at the AGM. Noted that police had objected to public realm provision outside the proposed student housing on the Portswood Shopping Centre site

10. Planning

- a. 25/00687/FUL Demolition of existing buildings and construction of purpose-built student accommodation within blocks up to 6-storeys in scale containing 519 bed spaces (within up to 409 units) and flexible commercial floorspace (Use Class E), internal and external amenity spaces, public realm, vehicle access and servicing, cycle stores, plant, boundary treatments and other associated works. Portswood Centre 128 - 150 Portswood Road Southampton SO17 2NH. HRA objected (See Annex iv.). 34 Objections in total.
Meeting noted that there was an absence of Council strategy to address the ad hoc applications to develop PBSA units and their impact on local communities and a lack of clarity on UoS estimates of future student numbers. Given the increasing numbers of applications coming forward, in particular in Portswood and Highfield, this needed to be addressed
- b. 25/00841/FUL Erection of a two-storey, 2-bedroom dwelling at rear of the property with associated amenities. 33 Ripstone Gardens Southampton SO17 3RA. HRA objected (See Annex v.). 18 Objections in total
- c. 25/00552/FUL Change of use to an 8-bed house in multiple occupation (HMO, class Sui-generis) and roof extension to facilitate loft conversion. (amended after validation to remove existing use) 50 Shaftesbury Avenue Southampton SO17 1SD. HRA Objected (See Annex vi.) Approved at Planning Panel
- d. 25/00833/R3CFL Change of use from a dwelling house (Class C3) to a children's home (Class C2). 8 Winn Road Southampton SO17 1EN. HRA supported with conditions to the landscape plans retention of heritage brick walls. (See Annex vii.) Approved at Planning Panel

- e. The HonSec had submitted an objection to the appeal to the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of North Southampton Community Forum (NSCF) for the Planning Application: 24/00394/FUL Erection of a single-storey annex at rear of property to facilitate conversion from C4 (Housing in Multiple Occupation) to Sui-Generis (7-bedroom HMO). 117 Harrison Road Southampton SO17 3TL which had been refused by SCC. (See Annex viii.)
- f. 25/01073/FUL Loft conversion with roof alterations comprising dormer on side elevation and conservation roof lights and replacement windows on front elevation. 26 Oakmount Avenue Southampton SO17 1DR – new application
- g. 25/01062/FUL Erection of a single-storey rear/side infill extension (retrospective). 11 Russell Place Southampton SO17 1NU – new application
- h. Local Plan – call for sites consultation. Noted that the Shared Prosperity Fund is searching potential building sites. RB keen to understand the spend per area/ward of the available resources. Councillor Finn agreed to provide further information on local allocations

10. Reports

- a. Finance (MB) – income/expenditure for the last period
Income £128; Outgoings £71.99; Balance £223; 5 Savings £26004
- b. Membership (NM) - renewals; new members 3 new members in August; not renewed 5 non renewals in August. Total Paid-up members in 2025 = 337; Paid up Jan-July = 228
- c. Digital Communications Report (Agenda Annex ix.)
Summary. 1180 followers to date. Ceno has ceased its discount offer. Blockbusters may become an employee owned Cash and Carry. Brides, which has been in Portswood since 1976 moves to new premises on 28th September. Owner says biggest unit has been let, smaller unit has had lots of interest. The owner refused all bids from fast food businesses out of consideration for the tenants in flats above. Kate's Cafe has received a donation enabling them to continue. Flagship Coffee has closed.

11. A.O.B.

- a. Next meeting Tuesday 7 October (note change of date). The meeting would be in two parts: Part 1 full meeting, Part 2 committee only to prepare for the AGM
- b. HRA Autumn Newsletter – a variety local sources articles had been contacted for articles. Nadine is seeking adverts.

Highfield Residents Association would like to take this opportunity to provide input to the OSMC. Whilst the Officer Report is factual, HRA considers some important details have not been included and need to be taken into account.

Background

HRA has been engaged in the Portswood Broadway Project since its inception; hosting information meetings for Members, SCC Display and Consultation meetings for the public and regularly updating members via Newsletters and e-news correspondence. HRA contributed 7 members to the Steering Group (SG). Despite being sceptical of the scheme from the outset, HRA stated its commitment to engage constructively with the Council process, from the release of the initial plans until the pause in the Trial.

HRA Chair, Prof. Roger Brown, took up the role of the Independent Chair of the SG and stepped back from HRA committee discussions during the live Trial. HRA amassed a huge amount of data and on the ground experience from the consultation processes and during the Trial period. HRA would like to make this available to the OSMC to ensure an unbiased and fair scrutinisation of the Broadway Pilot.

HRA also believes that the OSMC should hold a meeting with Steering Group Members for the same purpose. If, for procedural reasons, it is not possible for the Committee to meet with outside groups, then HRA requests that an Independent Inquiry, with wider remit than the Council Scrutiny Procedure, is set up extraordinarily by the Chair of OSMC. This is in consideration of the significant amount of public money spent on the scheme with little such result and the consequent serious loss of local trust and confidence on the part of residents, businesses and students.

HRA signposts the following areas, outside of the Officer's Report, which should also be scrutinised as they have had significant impact on the scheme:

- Traffic Modelling / measuring
 - No traffic modelling of a part-time Bus-Gate
 - The non-use of TLW as an expected through route during the Trial
 - The Brookvale Road traffic surge which was not anticipated in the modelling or measured in real time data by the Project Team
- The reliability of pre-scheme Impact Assessments and WSP Baseline Data
 - The Independent Economic Impact Assessment which proved to be widely off the mark (Rise Associates February 2023) [Independent-economic-impact-assessment_portswood.pdf](#)
 - WSP Baseline Data Report which had 81 errors/unresolved queries, acknowledged at SG, but not corrected (Baseline Data was crucial for the monitoring of Key Performance Indicators which are not mentioned in the Officer Report) [WSP Baseline Data](#)

- Consultation processes
 - The 2 Public Consultations that were carried out are not referenced in the Officer Report. There was concern over these at the time
 - Resident and SG concerns regarding the consistency in record keeping in Co-Design Workshop processes
 - Implementation of elements into the ATZ design that were not supported in the Co-design Workshops
- Weaknesses and ongoing safety concerns in the Implementation of the TRO/ETROs
 - The 20 mph zone
 - Impact on cycling provision
 - Ongoing safety concerns, particularly on Brookvale Road and outside Highfield Primary School

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