

Minutes HRA Committee Meeting Tuesday 9 December 2025

Highfield Church Halls 19:00h



Committee members present: Roger Brown, Paul Beard, Karen Edwards, Ken Burtenshaw, Nadine Johnson, Stephen Connolly, Jerry Gillen, Nadine Johnson, Nicolla Martin, Ed Hill, Barbara Claridge

Non-committee members present: Councillor Katherine Barbour, Councillor Matt Bunday, Councillor John Savage, Paddy Bedi (Associate Director Corporate Engagement. University of Southampton), Katherine Holmes (Brookvale RA), Graham Linecar, Councillor Matt Bunday, Liz McCallum

Part 1

1. Prof. Roger Brown welcomed all to the meeting and introduced a new committee member, Ed Hill
2. **Apologies:** - Sonia Cottrell, Councillor Fielker, Councillor Finn, Christine Rawnsley, Martin Benning,
3. **Declarations of interest** – none recorded
4. **Minutes** - 7 October 2025 Committee Meeting – previously circulated were agreed
5. **Matters Arising, not covered elsewhere**
 - a. **Debrief and discussion about the AGM (RB).** Nicolla said that entry to the AGM had been much more efficient with two lines where Karen and Paul checked membership cards in the speedy line. Paul also used a number clicker which had kept a track of numbers attending. Nicolla and Nadine had checked members without their cards or the very few who wished to join on the night. Jerry said the longer time for a social after the business of the meeting had been an improvement on previous years as many people seemed happy to stay longer and socialise. Councillor Savage was thanked for providing the Audio set up. He advised that speakers needed to speak into the microphone for best effect. There had been no outside speaker and maybe this improved the event. This was noted for future years. Roger thanked Barbara in particular for organising everything.
 - b. **Portswood Broadway / ATZ update (RB)** Roger asked if anyone had any update. Cllr Savage informed the meeting that Cllr Christie was now the Cabinet Lead for the Broadway Project and that he and Cllr Finn had met with Brookvale Residents Association reps recently. Paul Beard commented that Abbotts Way had not been mentioned as being part of the ATZ when it should have been. He felt the best general advice would be to wait for the Council to come forward with new ideas. Cllr Savage reported that there had been a significant increase in traffic on Brookvale Road, 50% worse than the Council had predicted. Karen Edwards commented that it was obvious that Brookvale RA was lobbying for a Modal Filter which was not popular to the wider ATZ. Katherine Holmes commented that the current restrictions did not work and that BV RA plans had been shared with HRA HonSec, OTRA and PRG (Liz O'Connor) RB said that HRA's draft outline ideas for the Portswood Project going forwards, based on principles previously agreed, would be discussed with the Committee in Part 2 of the Meeting and then shared with the Project Team and other Ras.

Paul added that whatever solution it should not compromise other parts of the ATZ.

Cllr Savage said that he and Cllr Finn had met BVRA reps and a new wider consultation would be scheduled for January as there was an urgent safety issue. A trial of Modal Filters had been actively discussed. This had been a recent matter for discussion at Cabinet. It could be a temporary arrangement and comments sought whilst it was in place.

RB felt that it should be made clear that the consultation should come first followed up by new measures. He felt it would be unwise to proceed in advance of any consultation.

BC commented that Brookvale Road calming measures had been dangerous since before the Trial was paused, that safety had been discussed at HRA Cttee several times already and that Councillors had not wanted to make any changes then.

Ed Hill asked if whatever was implemented could be looked at from a safety perspective especially for children.

Nadine commented that she was concerned that a decision could be taken which would affect the wider ATZ without consultation. She asked how this approach could be equitable.

Katherine H said BV was pushing hard on safety and that BV was just suggesting a solution, it would be for the Council to decide.

RB stressed there should be no decision before consultation.

- c. **Enhanced Bus Partnership Meeting Report (17 November).** BC had attended the meeting along with HRA member Graham Cole. It had been a positive meeting. It had been reported that traffic lights were using a technological solution so that buses were not being held up. BC said that Cllr Lambert had confirmed that traffic light sequencing was being adjusted. BC reported that it wasn't working properly yet, with long queues on Brookvale Road and Portwood Road. The sketch map (Annex.i.) was not in response to anything in particular just an idea to allow buses to have priority between Brookvale Road and Winn Road.

Cllr Barbour had also attended and reported a problem with transport to and from the hospital and that more data was needed.

Cllr Finn had also reported on the Enhanced Bus Partnership Meeting (See Annex.i.). She had been working on the reinstatement of a bus along Westwood Road, which had many care home residents and elderly residents who relied on buses, but found the current bus stops a distance away since the Wheeler Bus stopped.

There had been no discussion on the effect of the Bus-gate pause on bus times.

- d. **ASB Letter** Francesca Prior (RB) This item was recorded in Item 9.

- e. **Highfield House Hotel** - information from Councillors

Cllr Savage reported that the demonstrations had been ongoing for 22 weeks and Ward Councillors were not convinced the current approach by the police was as strong as it could be. Cllr Savage said that the situation was intolerable for those residents near the hotel and for Cenos business. 3 or 4 meetings had been held with leadership from the Council and the Police had responded. The Police had been viewing the protests as peaceful and that everyone had a right to protest. The Council view was that feedback received highlighted that the noise and general harassment did not align with the right to peaceful protest. The siren pump noise had been extremely disturbing but the Police view was that this was

completely legal. Cllr Savage expressed the view that the protests were not being managed well. Cllr Barbour said there were indications that there would be no further protests until 4 January. Cllr Bunday said the protests should be moved away from the hotel.

The issue had been scheduled to be an item on the Council Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee Agenda. The protesters had been given an invitation to explain why they are protesting. The Home Office had been invited to send a representative to that meeting.

Councillor Barbour said that not enough weight had been given to the fact that the hotel was in a residential area.

Paul said that trying to get both sides together was causing a lot of hate and that there were many vulnerable people very close by. He had talked with elderly residents who felt there was no effective security. It was a time bomb.

Nadine said that the noise was terrible.

Having been present at almost every protest so far, Cllr Savage expressed his frustration about the situation and that the Council had to be led by the police who held the view that the protests were legal and that they technically accepted that they were covered by free speech laws. The Council were now looking at other avenues to reduce the effect of any protest e.g. noise abatement

RB closed the item by saying this approach was noted and endorsed.

Nadine added that all information received from the Police was posted on the HRA Website News Page

6. Avenue Campus update and strategy.

Roger reported that there had been no further information to date. Ed reported that a Sub-cttee had been formed (Ed, Dave White and Barbara with Roger also involved). It was likely, that should the application be submitted for planning approval, then HRA would need to pay for professional advice. Ed had found a suitable source for this on a 'critical friend' basis. Barbara would inform the Treasurer. Paddy said there was nothing to add until the application was made.

Councillor Savage reported that Councillor Barbour had arranged a community meeting over the outline plans. The Labour Councillors would have attended if they had not been involved in another meeting; they were happy to work cross-party on this issue. Likely objections would include the character of the existing Taunton's building, interference with the heritage of the site, proximity to the Orchards Way Conservation Area and overlooking and serious impact on the immediate location. He added that the Local Nature Recovery Strategy would be relevant. 500 students and their various activities, comings and goings etc would make a massive impact. The area was pivotal for nature being so close to both Commons.

Councillor Barbour reported that the Green Party was very concerned with the proposals and was happy to take the lead on the objection. She had held a meeting with Prof. Jane Falkingham who was the University lead on the proposals. Cllr Barbour had amassed 60 local people on her mailing list. She had also contacted Jenna Turner (SCC Regeneration Planning Manager) and also Amber Trueman (SCC Strategic Planning Manager) and was waiting for a response from her PA. Her opinion was that this was a crucial period.

Graham Linecar reminded the meeting that he represented SCAPPS (Southampton Commons and Parks Protection Society) and that he (SCAPPS) was concerned that Jenna Turner did not seem to be taking account of the significant impact the proposals would have on the Common and how important the Avenue Campus site played in the 'green grid' linking through the city. He said we were supposed to

protect this. He asked if Paddy would alert HRA to any timetable dates for the planning application. Paddy agreed.

7. Information from Councillors

- a. Councillor Finn: Air Quality; Bus Partnership Meeting (Minutes Annex.i.)
- b. Councillor Barbour: Mobilising opposition for Avenue Campus proposed development (see Item 6.) Casework with residents in H Collins flats had increased 100%. Some residents were refusing to pay. Student safety on and around the campus was a concern – there had been a murder of a student very recently which had been unsettling.
- c. Councillor Savage reported on flood risks in Southampton and salmon poaching on the River Itchen near Riverside Park. His position on the Fusion PBSA Planning Application remained with regard to the small retail offer and the proposed heights of the buildings. He had visited a Fusion PBSA in Liverpool and had focussed on Student Behaviour Management. He would be writing a report for the Planning Panel, due to be held on 16 December. (Post meeting note: Conditional Approval had been given on a narrow (Chair’s casting vote) majority at this meeting).
Solar panels were to be fitted on SCC social housing and had been fitted on St Mary’s Stadium.

8. University

- a. Report from Sonia Cottrell: “Clarification - while Paddy is the right point of contact for general concerns about student behaviour, if the students in question are part of a club or society (generally identifiable by hoodies etc), I am very happy to be contacted directly. Clubs and societies are affiliated to SUSU and we will always follow up on any complaints.
If any of your members would like to know more about any aspect of what the Students’ Union does or would like to have a look around our spaces, please do encourage them to contact me (especially perhaps anyone who still associates us with the times of weekly club nights - which are very much a thing of the past now). Finally, could I wish you and all the committee a very happy Christmas. Thank you for the opportunities to engage in 2025 and I look forward to further developing our relationship in 2026.”
- b. Paddy reiterated that there was no update on the progress of the planning application for Avenue Campus. He also said that the news of the murder of a first year student in Portswood had shocked everyone. Student engagement teams were supporting students, giving safety advice and also liaising with families. Any students affected were being offered immediate support. HRA had sent condolences to the University.

9. HRA Crime WhatsApp group for Highfield and PACT Report

Nadine read through her report (Agenda Annex.ii) and highlighted the increase in incidents. Roger reported that Cllr Allen had briefly had Cabinet Responsibility for Communities but he had been replaced by Councillor Toqeer Kataria. He added that it would be important to monitor the effect of the new PSPO when that came in and he expected that Francesca Prior would be doing that.

10. Planning

- a. ‘Property to Let’ sign boards. Barbara reported that a member had asked how long stay ‘For sale / To Let’ boards were allowed and could they be removed as these were unsightly. Barbara had contacted Planning Enforcement and had been advised that reports of long stay boards should be made to that department. However due to lack of staff, Enforcement could only inspect for this issue twice per year.

- b. 25/00687/FUL/22249 Portswood Shopping Centre Development Planning Panel and further re-submission of Planning Application. This would be an item on the Planning Panel Agenda, 16 December. (See also Item 7b.) Graham said he thought that the application would be approved this time as a small increase in commercial space had been proposed by the developer. The developer had indicated that they were keen to work with the community regarding the retail offer. BC would contact Fusion in the new year.
- c. Roger said it was ironic that the latest version of Leader's Corner (SCC weekly online bulletin) had focussed on small business when these were being driven out of Portswood. He would write to the Council Leader. Councillor Savage said the depth of retail rear loading space was a mockery yet what was now offered had been matched to other businesses on the High Street. Paul said to remember that a Shopping Centre was being lost. Roger concluded by re-emphasising there was no Council Local Plan or Policy on either the future of District Centres or the growth in PBSA
- d. A Planning decision for a new house to be built in a garden plot at 33 Ripstone Gardens had been approved at Panel

11. Reports

- a. Finance (MB) – December Statement - Business Current Account £2,907.77: Savings Account £26,191.46
- b. Membership (NM) - Nicolla reported 333 paid up members by the end of 2025. The annual number of members not renewing roughly balanced the number of new members joining. However in November, 29 members had not renewed and only 12 new members joined, a net loss of 17. Barbara would contact those members with an accessible email address.
- c. Digital Communications (NJ) Report (Agenda Annex.iii). Roger thanked Nadine for her reports

12. A.O.B.

- a. University End of Year Waste 2026 update – this item was deferred due to Christine's absence
- b. New trees in Westwood and Winn Road. Barbara reported that 20 new trees had recently been planted on Westwood Road to replace trees that had died. A similar replacement scheme was planned for Winn Road.

End of General Committee Meeting Part 1

Annex.i. Councillor Finn HRA December Report

1. Cllr Fielker and I have been working on concerns from parents about Portswood school, idling and poor parking. They have met with air quality and school streets officers but have a very high travel to school by car rate.

2. Air quality problems from wood burners - There are St Denys residents who are suffering as people have started to use their wood burners for the winter but are not using smokeless fuel. It is a smoke free zone. I have put out local comms in St Denys about risks to health and looking after your neighbours, assisted with materials from the air quality officer. The Environment Centre is offering people advice or help if they are burning smoking fuel due to poverty. I can send HRA some of the photos and Comms if it is an issue here as well.

3. I attended the Bus Improvement Partnership meeting and had another attempt to get a bus reinstated where the old Wheeler bus used to go. I had a lot of comments from residents on Westwood Rd. The new Bus Services Act may help but we had not heard what our settlement would be at the time of the meeting. This Act allows Councils to use money to subsidise non profitable routes that are socially necessary. We are already subsidising Hill Lane and the 19A. We have follow-ups planned with Westwood Rd residents to keep up the pressure.

4. John and I met with representatives from the Brookvale Residents association about Brookvale Rd. The consultation for the ATZ in Highfield, is scheduled for January but there are concerns about the safety for children crossing on Brookvale Rd. Residents are keen to trial a modal filter there as soon as possible so that safety can be improved. The wider community can then comment on it in the consultation. This is being discussed currently by the Cabinet member for Transport and officers.

5. PBSAs and planning – being discussed elsewhere in meeting .