

## Minutes HRA Committee Meeting Tuesday 7 April 2026

### Highfield Church Halls 19:00h



Annex.i. Chair's letter to The Vice Chancellor

Annex.ii. The Chair's Letter to Councillor Kataria and Inspector Charge

1. Welcome: Prof. Roger Brown welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked those who had prepared reports in advance as this always enabled those attending to be familiar with the Agenda items.

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

Attendees: Councillor Finn, Councillor Bunday, Malcolm White (OTRA)

2. Apologies: Councillor Barbour, Councillor Savage, Karen Edwards, Dave White, Sonia Cottrell (SUSU), Gareth Giles and Paddy Bedi (University)
3. Declarations of interest: None were declared
4. Minutes, 10 March 2026 Committee Meeting: The HonSec said these would be available at a later date due to other administrative priorities
5. Matters Arising, not covered elsewhere
  - a. Brookvale ATZ Survey has closed – no further information
  - b. Bus Service Improvement Plan Stakeholder Update – attached as .pdf. This is the first example of this type of communication. It was agreed that the HonSec would contact David Garney and thank him. The communication would be publicised on HRA Social Media
  - c. Highfield House Hotel update – Community Key Information Network (KINS) updates from Portswood Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) on the anti-immigration protests outside the Highfield House Hotel were received once a week, sometimes pre but mostly post the events. They continued to be posted as official information on the News page of the HRA website:  
<https://www.highfieldresidents.org.uk/news/> (NJ)
6. Information Reports from Councillors
  - a. Councillor Finn: (Report Agenda Annex.i.). Councillor Finn gave a verbal update to her report which was submitted with the Agenda. Roger thanked her for the advance report. The Planning Application for an ELDC at 3 Brookvale Road would be discussed in more detail under Item 9. Planning
  - b. Councillor Bunday made several points: One concerning HMOs. He had received a few HMO applications in the north of Swaythling recently and was in the process of finding out if they were 'new' applications or already existing premises that were 'registering', the latter meaning there was not an actual increase in HMOs. Officers have since clarified and said that they were just registering and had been HMOs for a number of years, so there was no 'net' increase.  
That he had recently written to VOI to express concerns over how some of their users were 'double riding' (two to a Voi) as this was obviously dangerous and had reminded VOI about their commitment to doing what they could to keep everyone safe and to take enforcement action when people rode recklessly (two previous examples of double riding had been supplied). No reply as yet.  
He had received some concerns about some large pot holes further down Portswood Road (so not in Highfield, but along roads that Highfield residents were likely use) and had reported these.
  - c. Councillor Barbour: Apologies sent (Report Agenda Annex.i.)
  - d. Councillor Savage: Apologies sent

## 7. University

- a. Sonia Cottrell Students Union Chief Executive Officer: apologies sent
- b. Paddy Bedi: Apologies sent. Agenda Annex.ii had been the University press release announcing that the development of student accommodation at Avenue Campus would not be pursued at the present time. There was great relief at the meeting over this announcement and it was acknowledged that it was an excellent example of Ward Councillors and the whole community working together. Ed agreed to write to the Solicitor that HRA had engaged in case the scheme had gone to full Planning Application, to inform them the scheme had been paused and to thank them again for the advice given so far
- c. Graham Linecar suggested that this might be the right moment to contact the University formally about the future use of the site and how it was an opportunity for the University to be recognised as a positive partner in preserving and enhancing the Green Grid with upgraded boundary screening and a proper succession plan for planting. Roger agreed to pursue this idea and thanked Graham. (RB's letter Annex.i.)

8. HRA Crime WhatsApp group for Highfield - NJ (Agenda Annex.iii.). Roger thanked Nadine for her detailed report. A general discussion then took place over the increase in Anti-social behaviour on Portswood Broadway in particular street drinking and street furniture. The question of which organisation holds responsibility for the enforcement of the Public Space Protection Order would be followed up. RB agreed to contact the Police and Councillor Kataria, Cabinet Member for Communities (see RB's letter Annex.ii.)

## 9. Planning

- a. Enforcement enquiry follow up BC - 24/00790/FUL - 197 Portswood Road (ex-Portswood Hardware premises). The HonSec had contacted Planning but had been advised that no update would be available in time for the meeting. BC to pursue this issue for the next meeting
- b. 54 Shaftesbury Avenue - 26/00295/FUL Erection of a single-storey rear extension with patio, and single-storey side extension (not an HMO) – no objection
- c. 3/3A Brookvale Road 26/00294/ELDC Application for a lawful development certificate for the existing use as a 17-person house in multiple occupation. Comments by 16 April (HMO, Class Sui Generis). The HonSec was in communication with both the Planning and HMO departments about this and would update as soon as further information came to light.

## 10. Reports

- a. Finance (MB) – income/expenditure for the last period. Income £839; Expenditure: £136; Current Account Balance £3647; Savings account £26,322
- b. Membership (NM) - Membership (NM) - 346. Rolling (paid up) Jan 29: Feb 8: Mar 41:  
YTD 78  
Not paid in Jan=10: Not paid in Feb=8: Not renewed in March=15. New member =1
- c. Digital Communications Report – NJ (Agenda Annex.iv.). Roger thanked Nadine for her report sent in advance

## 11. A.O.B.

- a. The NORA Spring eNews had been posted to all NORA member associations (Agenda Annex.vii.). NORA currently had no Secretary. BC had helped with the Newsletter and Councillor Sam Chapman had circulated this to the NORA membership.

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17<sup>th</sup> April 2026

**AVENUE CAMPUS**

One of the issues thrown up by the University's recent decision not to proceed with the planning application for the Campus has been how to give greater weight to the role of the Campus, and particularly its green boundaries, in aligning with the City's plans for improved nature conservation through the Green Grid, as well as contributing to the environment and amenity of Highfield. The decision is also a chance to reset relationships with neighbouring residents and find ways of interacting positively to benefit both the Campus and the local environment.

So I am writing on behalf of both Highfield Residents Association and Oakmount Triangle Residents Association to invite the University to nominate a representative or contact with whom we could work on such things as perimeter screening, succession planting and other related landscaping. Whether this would be a one off discussion or a continuing dialogue would depend on that conversation which could be reported back to the University and the two associations.

As you know, local residents remain keen to work positively with the University to enhance our local environment. This is an opportunity to build on that to the general advantage.



Roger Brown (Professor)  
Chair, HRA

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9<sup>th</sup> April 2026

**ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN PORTSWOOD**

**This letter is addressed to:**

**Councillor Toqeer Kataria and Superintendent Alex Charge**

As Chair of Highfield Residents Association (HRA), I am writing to ask your two organisations to give greater priority to combating the various forms of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in Portswood Broadway and neighbouring streets that are currently blighting our community. I am writing in similar terms to the Council and the police because it is not clear to us which organisation has the primary responsibility for enforcing the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) and seeing that it is achieving its purposes.

As you may know, HRA is one of the largest and most active residents groups in the city with 346 paid-up member households in Highfield, Portswood and Swaythling. As an indicator of how seriously HRA takes the issue of local crime, we sponsor a Crime Information Sharing WhatsApp Group for our area, the results of which are regularly shared with both sets of authorities. At our Committee meeting on Tuesday it was reported that between 11<sup>th</sup> March and 7<sup>th</sup> April, there were 30 ASB incidents of street drinking, abandoned street furniture and duvets (some quite large) as well as periodic rough sleeping in and around the street (this is almost certainly an underestimate because the reports were not made every day).

Such behaviour has long been a problem in the Broadway but it has recently become much worse, perhaps due to the better weather. As has been copiously reported both to the Council and the police, there are groups of street drinkers who move up and down the street but who tend to be found between the former Flagship Coffee and Boots on one side, and in or near the former Portswood Shopping Centre and the old Iceland building, on the other. They also occupy the bench opposite the new Al Barakah supermarket in the old Blockbuster building at the foot of Brookvale Road as well as the forecourt of the Victory Church. In terms of the perceived safety of the local community, this has to be seen against the background of the student murder on 3<sup>rd</sup> December and a violent burglary in Highfield Lane on 3<sup>rd</sup> January, not to mention the continuing demonstrations outside the Highfield House Hotel.

HRA welcomes the Council's plans for reviving and refreshing the District Centres. But nothing could be more detrimental to the success of these plans than this continuing activity which makes residents (including not least students) reluctant to traverse the streets and local business reluctant to invest (hence the number of empty shops). Yet we know from recent University research how much people value their local environment and high street. Only in February the Council announced that improving community safety was one of its key priorities, 'investing on what matters to our residents and communities'. Reference was also made to a new Community Safety Fund, details of which are still awaited (we have asked). As part of this policy, the PSPO for the area was reintroduced at the start of the year. HRA welcomed this whilst observing that it would be nugatory unless the resources and will for effective enforcement were available. Regrettably, this now appears to be the case.

I am therefore writing to ask both sets of authorities to give tackling this problem a much higher priority. As an immediate step, I am asking the Council to authorise the removal of the bench outside the old Flagship Coffee and its replacement by planters. This is a main concentration point for the drinkers (it shouldn't cost much, all that would be required would be a large Phillips screwdriver and a small van). The bench could be reinstated once the problem has been dealt with. As well as being outside the former coffee shop it is also near the former Roebridge Farm Shop. We believe that the nuisance associated with the seating area may have been a factor in both businesses choosing to leave Portswood, and certainly the spectacle of the seating area will be a deterrent to anyone interested in taking over the vacant premises. Beyond that, HRA is asking for your early and firm commitment to improve the enforcement of existing measures to prevent or discourage the behaviours that have been reported to you and that are causing such discomfort and loss of amenity to residents, business and visitors alike. Finally, none of this should be taken as a criticism of either the Community Safety team or of such police officers as have been involved to date.

The next meeting of the HRA Committee will be on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May. Given the significance that this issue has now assumed, it will be important to have your response(s) before then. In the meantime, copies go by email to the Council Leader, the Ward Councillors, Francesca Prior and A/Inspector Yozanne Richards as well as to our Hon Sec, Barbara Claridge, and the Convenor of the WhatsApp Group, Nadine Johnson.

With thanks in anticipation and best wishes



Roger Brown (Professor)  
Chair, HRA