

MINUTES SO17 SO:Linked project meeting

Where: St Denys Community Centre

When: 10am til 11.30am 15th September 2026

Host: Clare Diaper

Participants

Clare Diaper – Southampton Climate Action Network, The Southampton Collective

Yas Hussein – Workers Education Association

Gill Lewis Lee – RCommunity at St Denys Community Centre

Gavin Millar – Friends of Itchen Estuary, St Denys Flood Action Groups, Southampton River Rights

Sonia Cottrell - Southampton University Students Union, Front Gardens Plus, St Denys Carnival

Sera Rumble - St Denys Church Centre

Councillor Lori Foster

Councillor John Savage

Councillor Kat Barbour

Jill Doubleday - Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

Jen Schwab - St Denys Community Centre

Victoria Ugwoeme – Southampton Voluntary Services, Feed the Community project

Marie Finn – St Denys resident involved with Front Gardens Plus and St Denys Flood Action Group

Joe Jenness – Southampton Voluntary Services

Apologies

Kirsty Bowden – Sport in Mind

Giles Giles - Head of Partnerships and Community Engagement, University of Southampton

Donald Neaves – Southampton Maritime Volunteer Service

1. Introductions

All participants shared their affiliations with organisations both professional and community, as listed above.

Everyone participated in an activity where they were asked ‘How much influence or power do you have to make change happen in SO17?’

Those who felt they had a lot of power to influence change were asked to stand closest to the host and those that felt they had little power stood furthest away. This activity is designed to initiate conversations about power and influence and help participants better understand who has influence in their local area. This activity is an experiential learning practice.

Some of the comments from participants are below:

- I don't have much influence as I am not based locally
- Private businesses seem to hold a lot of power and stop local people's ability to influence
- There are exciting opportunities locally
- There is some frustration with local authority and bureaucracy
- Top down AND bottom up are equally appropriate ways to influence change
- Knowing who is responsible is key to facilitating change
- Everyone has something to give to their local area
- Individuals can provide spaces or platforms for change
- You need to spend time in an area to be able to influence change
- It feels like we have the Department of Circumlocution in charge – lots of words but no action
- There has been significant change achieved in St Denys already
- Longer term there is the possibility of Parish councils as a new layer of governance in Southampton

2. Scene setting - the challenges we are facing

The group then moved on to talk about other factors that influence what happens in SO17, focusing on wider city or regional policies plans and processes and global issues. Agenda item 3 then discusses specific local issues in more detail. In this section all participants were asked to contribute and notes were collated on butchers paper.

Other projects and challenges that we need to consider were noted as below and post meeting have been categorised into Local Resources, Local Challenges and Other local groups and projects and Bigger Picture Challenges (See table below):

Local resources • Love Where you Live events • The University • Natural communities • Integrated Neighbourhood Hubs and way of working* • The 'St Denys Factor' • The River Itchen • Green spaces • Train (St Denys and Swaythling) and transport network	Local challenges • Immigration tensions • Skills and Training • Funding Trends • 'Muscular' communities – communities with significant power • The district shopping centre
Other local groups and projects to include in SO17 • Faith Groups • Charities • Young people – their needs and opportunities for them • Southampton Local Plan • Southampton City Council	Bigger picture challenges • Climate change – resilience and adaptation • Artificial intelligence • Cost of Living pressures • Local Government reorganisation • Southern Water

* The NHS in Southampton is working together with Saints Foundation, the community/voluntary sector and the local authority to create 'Integrated Neighbourhood Hubs' in four locations across the city. The hubs bring together key services to support people to age well and live stronger, healthier lives in the community.

<https://www.hantsiow.icb.nhs.uk/your-health/schemes-and-projects/integrated-neighbourhood-hubs>

3. Rants - what you don't like or want to change about SO17

An activity that we used at the previous meeting was expanded upon in this current meeting. Participants are invited to write on Post-Its their RANTS about their local area, the things that they don't like or the things they want to change.

Clare shared the RANTS from the previous meeting with participants and all were then invited to add new rants to individual post-its. These have all been added to an [online noticeboard called Padlet here](#)

Public safety, Local economy & high street decline, Environmental upkeep & cleanliness were popular discussion topics

Sonia Cottrell Cheif Exec of Southampton University Students Union spoke and Youth and Community connection. A facilitation technique called open space was mentioned as a tool to help engage with this demographic. Open Space provides a place where people with a passion for a specific topic or project can have a table to share and discuss their topic or project.

The information on the Padlet will be used in the future to help the SO17 communities to identify the things that they most want to act upon. Please do add Comments to this board.

4. Raves - what you love or want to celebrate in SO17

Clare also shared the RAVES from the previous meeting with participants and all were then invited to add new and these have all been added to [another Padlet here](#)

Again, the information on the Padlet will be used in the future to help the SO17 communities to identify the things that they most want to act upon so please do add Comments to this board.

5. What do we need in SO17?

Clare shared that she only works on this project for 6 hours a week. Clare wants to make sure this time is wisely spent and make sure that the work is most useful for our local community and can also be shared in other areas.

The group discussed the potential for a weekly drop in session at October Books or other venue. While there was some support there was also the feeling that this would be too onerous on people's time.

Online sessions were also discussed and an October date was suggested to trial this.

6. Any other business next meeting and close

Jen Schwab shared the current story of St Denys Community Centre. They were holding an open evening on Tuesday 15th September to welcome the local community. Jen has plans to install solar and increase connection to local community and make the centre a space open to all. Please contact Jen if you have an event or activity you would like to put on in the space, would like to volunteer some time or have any thoughts or ideas in creating a local community resilience hub.

Next in person meeting: End of November, date to be confirmed