



## Friends of Portswood Rec

### Minutes of the AGM of Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> March 2026, held at the Scout Hut, Brickfield Road, Portswood, SO17 3AA

#### Committee Members Present

Garth Long (FoPR Co-Chair and Meeting Chair); Linnet Evans (Co-Chair); Louise Anderson (Treasurer); May Lindsay (Membership Secretary); Tony Ridley (Kids' Activities); Bev Pearce (Fundraising); Denise Long (Gardening).

#### Members and Others Present

Beth Austin; Jo Bailey; Kat Barbour; Jane Braithwaite; Matt Bunday; Barbara Claridge; Tim Claridge; Bob Pritchard; Izzy Reiner; Laila Ridley; Russell Smith; Frieda Stack;

#### **1. Introduction and Apologies**

Apologies received from Lorna Fielker; Dawn Bannatyne; Frank Stack.

#### **2. Approval of Minutes of AGM on 20/03/2025**

These were presented, with an amendment to the heading of Item 2: not all those listed were members. The minutes were otherwise approved.

#### **3. Matters Arising**

There were none.

#### **4. Officers' Reports**

*Note: Reports were circulated prior to the meeting, followed by any questions from the floor.*

##### **4.1 Co-Chairs Report** (Given by LE)

This summarised our achievements (along with some points of frustration), with thanks to the many volunteers and others who have assisted through the year.

##### **4.2 Treasurer's Report** (and tabled copies of accounts, LA). TR

##### **4.3 Sub Group Reports**

- Membership. ML reported a small increase to 74 members. She thanked members for their support and for additional donations.
- Gardening. DL summarised the Gardening Group's strategy as aiming to both maintain and develop in the context of changing weather patterns. Notable additions had been the dead hedge and new compost bins, with special thanks to those involved. The Collective Action for Nature Highly Commended award from Hampshire and IoW Wildlife Trust was especially rewarding.



- FoPR kids. TR had run 3 very successful sessions for younger children in summer 2025, and hoped to extend this in 2026, cautioning that it will continue to rely on volunteers. Despite ongoing discussion with the Saints Foundation, the hoped-for football sessions now seemed unlikely to progress.
- Fundraising. BP had secured valuable grants from West Solent Solar Cooperative and UK Shared Prosperity Fund to support equipment purchases, training and operational costs. The next few months were expected to be quiet on this front. A future survey could indicate what might be the next priorities.

#### 5. To receive nominations and elect committee members

##### Officers for two years

- Co-Chairs
- Secretary
- Treasurer

##### Standing

no nominations  
Kat Barbour  
Nigel Hodge

*Notes: No nominations received for Co-Chair, or the alternative Chair and Deputy Chair posts. Garth Long and Linnet Evans remain as acting Co-Chairs. If nominations are received during the year for these or other vacancies, an EGM can be held. Possible concerns about conflicts of interest for the incoming Secretary and Treasurer had been considered and mitigated. LA, GL and LE had met with Nigel Hodge; he was unable to attend the AGM due to a pre-booked holiday, but was willing to stand. All Officer and Committee members elected unopposed.*

#### 6. To receive nominations and elect committee members

##### Committee Members for one year

- Membership Secretary
- Fundraising
- Gardening
- Events (Kids')
- Events (General)
- Communications

##### Standing

May Lindsay  
Bev Pearce  
Denise Long  
Tony Ridley  
Vacant  
Vacant

#### 7. AOB

Future strategy could be determined by the new version of the Management Plan, owned by Southampton City Council but informed by FoPR.

There being no further business, this part of meeting closed

#### 20.45 Refreshments

**21.00 Guest Speaker** Barbara Claridge (HRA) gave a fascinating talk on biodiversity in her garden in France

#### 21.45 Close



## **Friends of Portswood Rec**

### **Co-Chairs' Annual Report for AGM 2026**

As Co-Chairs we have been in post for more than two years and now need to step back. What the Friends of Portswood Rec (FoPR) will be able to achieve and participate in over the next twelve months will depend on whether or not there continues to be a fully functioning Committee after the AGM, with the continuing commitment from sufficient working volunteers to fulfil our current aims and develop new initiatives. We have a core of very committed people who will no doubt want our amazing work to continue. All Officers and Committee members will be up for election at the AGM.

Over this period we have enjoyed a strong Friends base and Committee, although sadly our Secretary Pauline Prentki resigned in June after several years in the role. Currently our Secretary, Events, and Communications Coordinator roles remain unfilled. Although we have not been able to recruit an Events Coordinator, we are delighted that Tony Ridley became our Children's Activities Coordinator. We would like to say a big thank you to our hard-working Committee, Working Volunteers, our Friends group and supporters, and to colleagues from Southampton City Council. Together we have achieved so much.

We have been able to fundraise and attract grants to support our work, and together with subscriptions and donations from the Friends we continue to have sufficient monies to support our day-to-day work. Throughout the year we have continued to garden, help maintain and develop the Rec, and host events and activities for the community in line with the Southampton City Council 2024 to 2029 Management Plan which we contribute to.

Without duplicating the reports of the Officers and Committee members, we would like to highlight some notable achievements over the last year. After the tremendous fundraising Initiative by Bev Pearce and the Play Park Sub Group, over £11,000 was raised by the local community towards the replacement of the life expired play equipment. We were able to contribute roughly 10% of the total project costs for the purchase and installation of the new equipment the remaining costs were met by Southampton City Council. The Play Park was officially reopened at a public launch by the Lord Mayor and other dignitaries on 9 May 2025. Everyone was delighted with the finished product, especially local children who had waited so long. Considerable use has been made of the new equipment since its installation.

We held our Annual Quiz at Trago Lounge in April which was again well supported and we raised just under £300 for the general fund. The quiz was kindly created by



our Quiz Masters, Nick and Patrick Pritchard and there were over 50 attendees. Again thanks to all those who contributed prizes for the Raffle including Trago Lounge and International Stores. It really puts us on the map and it was a great success.

We have also received grants in 2025 from the UK Prosperity Fund and West Solent Solar Co-operative which has enabled us to purchase some essential items, whilst also supporting our day to day running costs. Items have included amongst other things: new compost bins, gardening equipment, children's games, a gazebo, and first aid courses for some of our working volunteers. We are indebted to these organisations, to our Friends Group, and to the local community for their ongoing support which truly enables us to continue to make improvements to the Rec and make it a great safe place for everyone to enjoy.

We have continued to maintain and develop the gardens with nature in mind and contributed to the Southampton Park City 2025 Urban Wild initiative on the Common in May. Our own contribution was the 'Wild Wonders - Bee's, Bugs and Beasties' event held during May half term which attracted over 200 children to the Rec, Activities included bug hunts and identification, quizzes, trails, colouring, face painting and a fantastic puppet display by our friends Puppet Back Up. Although the weather was bad, we were able to use the Scout Hut with the kind permission of the 29th Portsmouth Immaculata Scout Group. The Scouts are very supportive of the Friends and have joined us in various activities including bulb planting over the years. As well as weekly gardening activities from March to December we also held the Annual Park Tidy where we encourage Friends and the wider community to get involved, and as usual this December get together to put the Rec to bed was well supported.

Our group of gardening volunteers remains healthy and we were thrilled that the gardeners were Highly Commended for 'Collective Action for Nature' at the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust Awards in October. This is one of a number of awards that are given to groups that are working to conserve and restore nature. The park also has also maintained its prestigious Green Flag status. Sadly, current weather patterns have seemed to increase the amount of surface water and mud in winter at the top corner of the Rec. With drought conditions prevailing in summer, there appears to be no easy solution. This has led to the loss of some plants and trees, although 9 new trees were planted this Autumn by Southampton City Council. From our grants we have been able to purchase a water bowser to help irrigate areas beyond our hose run.

Tony Ridley and a small working group hosted several summer Saturday activity sessions known as FoPR Kids for pre-school and early school children. These were a great success attracting 10 to 20 children and parents to each session. It is hoped



to run further sessions in 2026 subject to having sufficient volunteers. We would ask everyone to help support this important initiative.

We have continued to reach out and engage with the local community through our events and public meetings, and have hosted well-received guided visits to the Rec for the Green Network and also Highfield Residents Association members as part of their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year. We have developed a wide communications network that include our website, Facebook and currently X, and we also make use of various WhatsApp Groups to communicate with our working volunteers and wider community. We produce Newsletters and publish monthly Nature Notes on the web. We also make use of wider media opportunities, for example volunteers Garth Long, Pam Campbell and Natalia Trujillo participated in a live radio show on Fiesta FM to talk about what they had achieved from volunteering at the Rec.

We work closely with, and are well supported by our local Councillors, colleagues from Southampton City Council, and organisations such as Southampton Voluntary Services, Green Network and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. Currently we are attempting to reestablish our previously good links with Southampton University. It is pleasing to know that we are well thought of as a community group and are considered to 'punch well above our weight'!

With so much happening and yet to happen, we have been honoured to have held the position as Co-Chairs for the Friends over the last two years. However what has been achieved has only been made possible through the fantastic collective action of our Friends, working volunteers, supporters and other stakeholders. We sincerely hope that FoPR will continue to go from strength to strength as there is so much to be done. Thank you all.

Garth Long & Linnet Evans Co-Chairs, Friends of Portswood Rec

27 February 2026



## FRIENDS OF PORTSWOOD REC

### Treasurer's Report Year End 31.1.2026

We have had another productive financial year. We have a positive bank balance and remain in profit. We had a large financial outgoing in August 2025 when monies raised for the new playpark equipment were successfully transferred to Southampton City Council (£11,000).

This reduced our temporarily inflated bank balance to a more standard level.

We've had two grants awarded resulting in additional income to a total of nearly £4000, which are gradually being spent on allocated items for which they were granted.

These include first aid courses, a water tank and compost bins. Our membership and donations also remain at a similar quantity. We had another successful quiz, which raised just under £400.

Our gardening and operating costs remain at a similar level to the previous year. Our capital expenditure was increased due to the purchases using the West Solent Grant.

We have sufficient funds to cover our overheads, with some remaining ringfenced for the grants (approx. £2700 as at 31st January). With this amount deducted we have approximately just under £5000 as a working balance.



Friends of Portwood Rec - Receipts and Payments Accounts year end January 2026

Receipts (Income)			
Membership	E322		
Donations	E264		
Grants	E4011*		
Playground Fundraising	E202		
Fundraising quiz	E394		
Sub-total Receipts		E5193	
<u>Payments (Expenditure)</u>			
Gardening	E306		
Operating Costs	E576		
Capital Expenses	E1223		
SCC playpark	£11104		
AGM	E30		
Sub-total payments		E13239	
Income- expenditure			-E8045
Bank reconciliation			
Closing bank balance 31/01/25	E15766		
Cash on hand 31/01/25	E49		
Income period 01/02/25-31/01/26	E5193		
		£21008	
LESS Expenses 01/02/25-31/01/26	E13239		
TOTAL	E7769		
Balance			
Closing balance bank 31/01/26	E7659		
Cash on hand 31/01/26	£110.10		
TOTAL FUNDS	E7769		

\*Consists of E2000 West Solent Grant, E1936 Prosperity fund, and E75 Stipend for Urban Wild.



## **Friends of Portwood Rec**

### **AGM Membership Sec report 25/26**

We have a strong supporter base. Membership is steady, we currently have 74 paid up members. In the last year we have increased our membership by 5, from 69 to 74. However some previous members have not renewed their membership some of whom have moved out of the area. Thanks to all of those who gave a donation alongside their subs. We are most grateful to our Friends Group who support our activities through their annual membership. Around one third of our Friends Group are regular working volunteers.

May Lindsay – Membership Sec March 2026

UNAPPROVED



## FRIENDS OF PORTSWOOD REC

### AGM GARDENING REPORT FOR 2025/26

It's been another productive year on the gardening front. We have about 18 members on our WhatsApp group, most regularly attend our weekly sessions. We mainly garden from March through to November, with occasional winter sessions which included the Big Park Tidy in December and some ad hoc bulb planting. Working closely with the SCC Team, we aim to maintain an attractive park for our users, alongside creating as much habitat as possible for local wildlife. Amid the regular routine tasks, we have been involved in some other activities, working with groups such as the local scouts (29th Immaculata), Good Gym and the Hampshire and IOW. Trust's Team Wilder. We are indebted to our working volunteers, our Friends Group, the SCC Team and others for their encouragement and support. We are keen to reach out and we hosted two guided visits to the Rec to showcase our achievements including for Southampton Green Network and Highfield Residents Association members, with a further visit for U3A scheduled in March. We continue to produce our monthly Nature Notes and we have a dedicated Facebook page 'Noticing Nature at the Rec'

We started the gardening year in March when we helped Les to plant a native hedgerow at the Kitchener Road entrance. The whips were kindly donated by the Council for the Protection of Rural England as part of the Hampshire Hedge Project. These included hawthorn and other species. The whips survived the drought thanks to help from one Kitchener Rd resident who provided help with watering.

In April, Bob and Rob from our Friends Group created the framework for our dead hedge, another important wildlife habitat. Since then, the hedge has been filled with branches, twigs and brash, again with the help of some enthusiastic children. As this rots down this will provide a refuge for lots of wee critters!!

During May we participated in Urban Wild, a week of events promoting wildlife in the City organised by Southampton National Park City. Our contribution was to hold our own 'Wild Wonders - Bee's, Bugs and Beasties' children's event at the Rec, which was very well attended despite the poor weather. Fortunately, most activities could continue in the Scout Hut, but 'Puppet Back Up', Les and Lizzie's puppet theatre, sadly had to finish early because of the rain. Thank you to all who contributed including the SCC Ranger Team and Ruth from Southampton Park City. Refreshments were kindly funded by Swaythling Southern Co-Operative.

On a number of summer Saturdays, Tony Ridley, our Children's Activity Coordinator ran some nature themed drop-in sessions for young children. The many nature based activities included making hoverfly lagoons for the garden. These provide the wet, nutrient rich environment in which a number of hoverfly species lay their eggs.



Autumn was a busy time, as the scouts and other children joined us again to plant some native bluebell bulbs in the grass strip behind the tennis courts. In Spring they came back again to plant snowdrops. The bulbs, a water bowser, compost bins and planters, were all purchased using money from a generous grant from West Solent Solar Co-operative. An additional grant from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund has also enabled us to purchase a gazebo. New high vis vests and hats, and to send three working volunteers on a first aid course. We are indebted to these organisations for their generosity.

In October we were thrilled to be 'Highly Commend' by the Hants and IOW Wildlife Trust in recognition of the work that we've been doing to encourage and promote wildlife. Garth and Denise attended the Wilder Conference to receive the award on behalf of all the gardeners. Well done to everyone!!

Over the year we have struggled with both wet and drought conditions. Our plants and trees suffered and some didn't survive. Some mature trees had to be removed on safety grounds. In November, the SCC Tree Team planted 9 new trees throughout the park. These are mainly native species and we just hope they will survive the deluge there's been since then.

In January Dawn Bannantyne, SCC Lead Ranger worked with FoPR volunteers to remove two large patches of bramble encroaching on the dog walking area. The hope is that eventually the brambles will weaken and we can plant wildflower plugs there. We also visited Aldermoor City Farm to look at best practice for composting.

Although we would want to thank all our working volunteers we would like in particular to say a really big thank you to Frank and Frieda for their tireless efforts behind the scenes, in helping to keep the Rec free of litter. They do a weekly litter pick and I know that we'd notice a big difference if it wasn't for their contribution. Thanks also to Lizzie and Les who regularly scythe our meadows; an essential task to maintain the variety of wildflowers and insects. We are always in need of more gardeners so please come and join our team.

Denise Long Gardening Coordinator

Feb 22 2026



## FRIENDS OF PORTSWOOD REC

### AGM CHILDRENS ACTIVITIES COORDINATOR REPORT FOR 2025/26

In 2025 we trialled the idea of running some kids activity sessions on the first Saturday of June, July and August which we called FoPR Kids. These were targeted at Primary school aged children, the sessions offered the opportunity for kids to try a range of craft activities, nature trails and quizzes. With between 10 to 20 kids attending each session, amongst other things, children were able to try their hands at decorating plant pots and stones, creating bird pictures, making bird seed balls, leaf rubbing and collaging, as well as getting involved in bug hunts, searching for worms and bird spotting. With the additional draw of the new play equipment in the playground, a good time was had by all.

As a group, we also took part in Southampton's Urban Wild week, holding our 'Wild Wonders - Bee's, Bugs and Beasties' event during May half term which attracted over 200 children. Due to bad weather most activities took place in the Scout Hut in Brickfield Road. We also attended a final gathering where Friends groups and voluntary organisations from across the city gathered together on Southampton Common to bring Urban Wild week to an end.

Conversations have also taken place with Southampton Saints football academy, to investigate the feasibility of holding some football coaching sessions at the Rec. Discussions are still ongoing and we remain hopeful that something could come of those discussions in 2026.

Big thanks has to go out to the small team of volunteers, (core of 4/5 people, plus extra hands when available), that have worked hard in making all the sessions held a success. The hope for 2026 would be to build on what we achieved last year and hold monthly sessions from April to September, but in order to achieve that, we are in need of more volunteers to join us in planning and running the sessions.

Tony Ridley Children's Activities Coordinator

22 February 2026



## Friends of Portwood Rec

### Fundraising Report 2025/26

**Gardening:** A £2,000 grant was secured from West Solent Solar Co-Operative to purchase equipment and materials to support our Gardening for Nature project. We have made some purchases from this already, but ultimately this will all be spent on a water bowser for use in the summer, compost bins, bird bath, plants and a planter, which will all be seen at the Rec over the summer.

**Running Costs and Training:** We received £1,935.81 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to cover Insurance, meeting costs, a gazebo, some kids activities equipment/supplies and First Aid training for 3 volunteers to help at our gardening and kids activity mornings. This funding has also enabled purchase of printed Hi-Vis vests and sunhats so that our volunteers can be readily identifiable when they are working at the Rec. Having grant funding to cover our running costs will ease pressure on fundraising to keep the group going, and the gazebo and activities equipment and supplies will help our FoPR kids mornings continue to run free of charge. The first aid training will ensure gardening and activity sessions run as safely as possible.

**Play Area** After fantastic fundraising efforts including grants and donations throughout 2024 and early 2025 raised a little over £11,000 we were able to contribute roughly 10% of the total project costs to for the new equipment in the play area. Work began in April 2025 with the grand opening taking place on completion in May.

Bev Pearce – Fundraising. February 2026