

Friends of Portswood Rec

Minutes of the AGM of Wednesday, 19th March 2025, 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); Pauline Prentki (Secretary); May Lindsay (Membership Secretary); Bev Pearce (Fundraising); Denise Long (Gardening).

Members Present:

Katherine Barbour; Frieda and Frank Stack; Vladimir and Radosveta Getov; Chris Pearce; Laila and Tony Ridley; Danni Grant; Matt Bunday; Cathie Holmes; Russell Smith.

1. Introduction and Apologies

Apologies received from Lorna Fielker; Dawn Bannatyne; Iman Sayfullah Nasir; Barbara Kropheller; Jo Bailey; Patrick Stevenson; Gill Orson; Bob Pritchard.

2. Approval of Minutes of AGM on 20/03/2024

These were presented and approved.

3. Matters Arising

There were none.

4. Officers' Reports

Note: Reports were circulated prior to the meeting and were followed by questions from the floor. They are appended to the Minutes in this document.

4.1 Co-Chairs Report (Given by LE)

LE said it had been a good year and GL expressed 'big thanks' to many, especially Russ and the Scouts, volunteers, friends, the Council and other groups.

4.2 Treasurer's Report (and tabled copies of accounts, LA)

4.3 Sub Group Reports

- Membership. ML reported that there are 69 members some of whom were recruited at the quiz night. However, more would be welcome.
- Gardening. DL said it had been a busy year featuring pollinator event, bees needs award (3rd and final time), nature notes and plant of the month (ongoing).
- Fundraising. BP said it had not been a very successful year, but she was, nevertheless thanked for all her efforts.



5. To note current Officers in post

Officers for two years

- Co-Chairs
- Secretary
- Treasurer

Not for election this year

Linnet Evans, Garth Long
Pauline Prentki
Louise Anderson

6. To receive nominations and elect committee members

Committee Members for one year

- Membership Secretary
- Fundraising
- Gardening
- Communications
- Events

Standing

May Lindsay
Bev Pearce
Denise Long
Vacant
Tony Ridley

7. AOB

- Play Area. Play area is set to go ahead but money is still needed for the surface under the new equipment.
- Gardening Rota. Tara suggested people use their computers to log in their availability.
- Quiz. This is in hand.
- Tony's role. He hopes to set up Saturday morning activities on the Rec for primary aged children, once per month initially. Interest to be generated at the upcoming Urban Wild event.

20.45 Refreshments

21.00 Guest Speaker Danni Grant gave a fascinating talk on her work at the City Farm.

21.45 Close

Friends of Portwood Rec

Co-Chairs' Annual Report for AGM 2025

The dual role of Co-Chairs was formally introduced through a change in the 2024 constitution, and for us this has been a very constructive arrangement. With the help of the previous acting chair, Bev Pearce, we were already starting to appreciate the way the Friends group works and how it interfaces with a myriad of stakeholders. This has been quite a challenge at times, but we now feel we have consolidated our position. We have developed some good contacts, and with the help of the rest of the Committee started to make some progress in new areas. It's reassuring to have such a dedicated Committee behind us.

The new members of the Committee have equally now found their feet and have energetically pursued a number of projects. Not least of these is the replacement of the time-expired play equipment that was removed in 2023 on safety grounds. This work has been spearheaded by Bev Pearce, who has been able to concentrate fully on fundraising. Bev has led the Play Area Subgroup in its efforts both to raise money and to secure an agreement with Southampton City Council on the provision of replacement equipment. The Friends and our local community alike have been most generous, and we have received some sizeable donations over the last year or so. Together with a contribution from the Friends' reserves, this has amounted to around £11,000. We are hopeful that the project will now move forward to a satisfactory conclusion. Thanks are due to all concerned and to those who have raised such a large sum of money through their efforts and contributions, and also to those who committed so much time in putting together grant applications although sadly these were unsuccessful.

Last winter we received a generous grant of £500 from the bus company Blue Star. This has enabled the gardening group to buy a hose reel and it will allow the group to take forward a number of projects during the coming year. The Gardening Group Co-ordinator Denise Long has over the last year received the ongoing support of a number of regular and committed volunteers who have led on a number of initiatives, for example to compost a large amount of our own waste which has been used for mulching the beds. We would also like to thank Good Gym, and the whole team from Southampton City Council and the Councillors for their support, and to the wider Friends for helping out with the Big Autumn Park Tidy. There has also been support from the 29th Portwood Immaculata Scout Group and from SUSU Hub who again helped us with planting Snowdrops and Crocuses. The latter were donated by Southampton Rotary as part of their Purple for Polio Campaign. We have relied on Sara Tschersich and the Community Pay Back team for help with some of the heavier tasks including annual bark spreading. Our Gardening team work every weekend between March and November. The gardens have gone from strength to strength with the advent of new nature friendly additions such as a hibernaculum. Denise has also produced a month-by-month series of posters on the year in the life of a bee which have been displayed throughout the year on the railings in the Rec. The park is kept wonderfully tidy by our regular litter pickers Freida and Frank Stack. The Friends have again contributed to the parks achievement in gaining the Green Flag Award and congratulations must go to Denise's efforts in securing the DEFRA Bees Needs Award for the third consecutive year.

We have become aware of some of the challenges associated with social prescribing having had several potential volunteers put forward via this route. Unfortunately none of them were

able to provide a commitment in supporting our aims. We have realised that these volunteers potentially require a lot of training and support which we do not have the resources to provide. As a result we have had to review our position on taking volunteers who need considerable help and support. This has also highlighted the need for a safeguarding statement and a code of conduct which we are currently working on.

Sadly we have found that current weather patterns have seemed to increase the amount of surface water and mud in the top corner of the Rec. Although we have discussed this with the Council, no long-term solution has been found. We have also experienced some antisocial behaviour in the park although thankfully this is infrequent, including some damage to trees, shrubs and our bug hotel. Sadly one tree was bark stripped, due we think to nefarious dog training activities. In a separate incident, a dog died after being savaged by another dog. Thankfully this was an isolated case and dog walkers tell us how much they enjoy the safety and convenience of a dedicated fenced area.

Thanks to the efforts of Friend John Wiley and others, and with the help of Cliff Brown from the Landscape Team, a chess table and new associated seating has been installed in the garden area.

The park is well known for its free access tennis courts and is used regularly by a wide variety of visitors who seem to travel some distance to make use of the facilities. Generally the courts are in good order having been resurfaced fairly recently with the financial support of the Friends, although the nets now require some refurbishment. Equally the green spaces are always busy with children playing football, flying kites and families and groups having picnics. Generally visitors are very well behaved and take a responsibility in leaving the park tidy.

As we wanted to focus on raising funds for the play area, we intentionally did not hold any major family events at the Rec over the last year. However a very successful free Easter Pollinator Event supported by a team of volunteers including, Lead Ranger Dawn Bannatyne who provided a bug table and microscopes, our puppeteers Liz and Les, and Face Painter Tara Ridley. There were also activities for children including seed planting and a nature trail. A big thank you to all who made the event such a success. Tony Ridley is now looking at forming a sub-group to explore the setting up of more regular children's events next year.

Our major fundraiser event of 2024 was the Leap Year Quiz and Raffle held with the support of Eugene at the Drummond Arms with the quiz hosted by our Quiz Master Nick Pritchard, there were over 60 attendees and we raised around £750 towards the play park. Again thanks to all those who contributed prizes for the Raffle including, The Drummond, International Stores and October Books.

The Friends membership has remained relatively stable over the last year and the subscription rise agreed at the last AGM to £4pp per year does not appear to have had any adverse effect on membership and many Friends provide us with an additional donation on renewal. We would like to increase our membership base during 2025 but would thank all the Friends for their ongoing support.

Last but not least, we commissioned a new promotional video which was completed this year. The video shows the changes in the Rec through the seasons, and highlights its accessibility



and diversity. Thanks go to Neil Maddock for a very professional job in both filming and editing. It's available on the home page of our website. Please do take a look.

Once more, we must record our appreciation of the support and goodwill from so many individuals and organisations with local connections. We look forward to making even more positive progress together over the coming year.

Garth Long & Linnet Evans
Co-Chairs, Friends of Portwood Rec
27 February 2025

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Friends of Portwood Rec

Treasurer's Report for AGM 2025

We have had another very successful year financially. We continue to remain in profit and therefore have a positive bank balance. However it is still currently somewhat higher than normal due to our successful fundraising for the playpark. We have funds of approximately 11k currently ring fenced for the play area.

We have been successful in achieving two grants in the last financial year, this was to the total of £1000 from West Solent Cooperative for the play park funds and £500 from Bluestar for our gardening group.

Subtracting the total funds allocated for the play park (£11,120), we have total working funds available of £4,566.

Our gardening, operating costs, and capital expenses are very slightly lower than the previous year. The balance sheet for year ending 31 January 2025 will be tabled at the AGM.

Louise Anderson - Treasurer FOPR March 2025

Friends of Portwood Rec- Receipts and Payments Accounts year end January 2025

<u>Receipts (Income)</u>			
Membership	£308		
Donations	£196		
Grants	£1500 *		
Playground Fundraising	£4410		
Sub-total Receipts		£6414	
<u>Payments (Expenditure)</u>			
Gardening	£486		
Operating Costs	£488		
Capital Expenses	£157		
Sub-total payments		£1131	
Surplus			£5283
Bank reconciliation			
Closing bank balance 31/01/24	£10480		
Cash on hand 31/01/24	£42		
Income period 01/02/24-31/01/25	£6414		
	-	£16936	
LESS Expenses 01/02/24-31/01/25	£1131		
TOTAL	£15805		
Balance			
Closing balance bank 31/01/25	£15756		
Cash on hand 31/01/25	£49		
TOTAL FUNDS	£15805		

*Consists of £1000 playground grant from West Solent Co-operative, £500 from Bluestar for the gardening group.

NB Restricted funds of £11,512: comprising £8620 from fundraising and donations and £2,500 set aside from group reserves for the play area, £392 remaining from Bluestar grant for gardening. Unrestricted funds of £4293 for spending on running costs and held in reserve to meet fluctuations in receipts and payments, future replacement of equipment, e.g. gardening tools, future events, risks and contingencies



Friends of Portwood Rec

Membership Secretary's Report for AGM 2025

We have 69 members at the end of this financial year. We have gained 11 new members; however some previous members have not renewed their membership due to moving out of the area.

There have been no concerns raised with the marginal increase in membership fees and we have, very kindly, received many donations on top of the renewal/joining fee.

May Lindsay – Membership Sec March 2025

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Gardening Report for AGM 2025

With the garden now quite well established, it's mainly a question of ongoing maintenance, including the replacement of plants that haven't thrived or have succumbed to adverse weather conditions. As last summer was relatively cool and wet, we were at least spared the need to water.... although the weather may not have been as amenable to our visitors and certainly didn't help the butterflies. Numbers spotted at the Rec were extremely low in line with the Butterfly Conservation Trust's announcement that 2024 was the worst count on record for their annual survey.

Undaunted, we're continuing in our efforts to create more habitat for wildlife. Tony, one of our volunteers, created a wonderful hibernaculum alongside the beetle bank. And the local scout group, 29th Immaculata, planted a further 800 crocus bulbs, kindly donated by the local Rotary Club as a way of marking their Purple4Polio vaccination scheme.

We also entered the DEFRA BeesNeeds competition again and were successful in receiving our third consecutive award. In support of our application, we held a Pollinator event for children, alongside Dawn Bannatyne, Lead Ranger. A highlight of the event was a wonderful theatre event put on by Liz and Les of Puppet BackUp....the children dressed up as bees, and participated with great enthusiasm! We also put on a poster display at the Rec detailing the life cycle of a bumblebee nest, month by month. As well as gardening for pollinators, we try to spread the word about their plight and what we can all do to help species recovery.

We are indebted to Sara and her Community Payback Team, as well as GoodGym, for their occasional help and to Kelvin Wyatt, Central District Parks Team Leader, who has been very supportive of everything we've done.

Unfortunately we have lost one or two group members this year, either through other life commitments or having to move out of the area. Many thanks to Alice, Ariel and Steven; you will be missed. But we remain as a small, committed team, who are always keen to welcome new members. So if you fancy a couple of hours of worthwhile exercise at the weekend, please come and join us. We're very friendly and have been known to enjoy a biscuitor two!!

Denise Long, Gardening Coordinator March 2025

Friends of Portwood Rec

Fundraising and Play Area Report for AGM 2025

This year we have concentrated our fundraising efforts on the garden and play area.

Gardening: A small grant was secured for this year's running costs, but we continue to look for additional funding to enable further gardening projects to be undertaken.

Play Area Fundraising for the play area has come from last year's Quiz Night, proceeds from a yoga morning organised by Ruth Newell, donations to our Just Giving page, a small grant and support from Portwood School who raised over £800. In total we have raised around £11,000 towards replacing the equipment that was removed in 2023.

The fundraising together with an online and paper petition to the Council signed by over 350 people showed the community support and enabled us to meet with SCC officers to discuss the need for replacement equipment and how it could be funded. Once an agreement was reached, we highlighted the most requested play features from the FoPR survey conducted in 2023 -swinging, sliding, climbing and dangling, and over the last couple of months various surveys have been undertaken at the Rec to assess the surface, work out access routes etc.

We will have some concept plans/designs at the AGM, and it is expected that some new equipment will be installed late spring/early summer 2025. Updates will be posted on our website, social media and notice boards at the Rec.

I'd like to record special thanks to SCC's Lead Ranger, Dawn Bannatyne who has helped us with grant applications through the year and Matthew Lovell from the Play Team who has recognised our need for new equipment and worked tirelessly with us to keep this project moving forwards.

I'd also like to thank everyone who has contributed to our fundraising efforts, and signed our petition it really has made a difference.

Unfortunately, it's now 10 years since the equipment that remains at the Rec was installed, and it's likely some of this will need replacing in the next couple of years, so fundraising for the play area will be an ongoing priority.

Bev Pearce – Play Area and Fundraising. February 2025