



## **Friends of Portswood Rec**

### **Minutes of the public meeting, 3 December 2025**

**Present:** Garth Long (Chair), Linnet Evans (minutes), Isabella Reiner, Graham Card, Bob Pritchard (RP), Christina Freemantle, David Freemantle, Denise Long, L:aila Ridley, May Lindsay (to item 10), Bev Pearce (BP), Cllr Matt Bundy, Tony Ridley, Russell Smith (from item 7)

#### **1. Welcome**

GL gave a special welcome to Isabella and Graham.

#### **2. Apologies**

Louise Anderson, Barbara Kropholler, Jo Bailey, Dawn Bannatyne

#### **3. For acknowledgement**

The Minutes of the last Public Meeting of 2 July 2025, available on the FoPR website, had already been approved

#### **4. For approval**

The Minutes of the last Committee Meeting of 12 November 2025, available on the FoPR website, were approved. BP noted in relation to the play area surfacing, 'crumble' should have read 'crumb'.

#### **5. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising other than topics covered later in the current meeting.

#### **6. Awards**

GL reported that the Friends had received a Highly Commended award at Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust's Wilder Awards in the Collective Action for Nature category. DL noted that they were particularly proud of their achievement in championing nature and biodiversity, as most winners were significantly larger organisations. (The category winners had restored a 5-mile stretch of the River Meon.) A certificate is on order to display in the Rec.

#### **7. FoPR Kids**

TR summarised the background: knowing that many children visited regularly, especially with the play park re-opened, it seemed a good opportunity to build around this. There were 3 meetings on Saturday mornings, with the main takeup from 4-7 year olds, typically 20-30 kids over a 2 hour period. Activities that kids could do with their parents included nature quiz, trail and craft activities. There was good engagement from adults, and the proof-of-concept was successful.



TR intended to continue in 2026, perhaps lining up meetings with the Saturday gardening groups. Having ready access to the right equipment (such as a gazebo, see item 8) would facilitate future sessions. GC suggested “matchbox collections”. TR would be looking for volunteers:

- A working group to plan, and
- Helpers on each day

Suggestions of groups to approach included schools and church groups (GL, MB); Team Spirit (LR), Fiesta 95 radio (GC), Saints Foundation (GL/TR). IR works in the community with older people who might be interested in making multi-generational links.

TR, GL and MB confirmed that communications had been re-established with Saints Foundation regarding them hosting football activities. Details are awaited.

## **8. Fundraising**

BP had recently bid successfully for two grants:

- UK Shared Prosperity Fund – mainly to support day-to-day operations, volunteer training, and equipment for activities/FoPR Kids
- West Solent Solar – bowser to keep plants & trees watered and lessen impact of drought; new compost bins, bird bath and plants. The raised planters in the original bid were vetoed by SCC. However this left a higher amount for buying new plants

The meeting agreed that it was imperative, for any future grant, to get the Council’s agreement before submitting the bid. Around £180 remained from 2025’s Play Park ringfenced funds.

Potential future projects and priorities were discussed including:

- Improvements to play area surfacing: flattening the mound where the old roundabout had been located; replacing ageing surfacing. It was understood that SCC’s Cliff Brown was considering grassing some of the play park surface and installing a small piece of pre school play equipment, for which quotes were being obtained.
- SCC currently have no plans for the phased replacement of play equipment for younger children. After SCC’s generosity this year, FoPR should not expect any further contributions, and any funds needed for installing a new piece of pre school play equipment on the site of the old roundabout would have to be raised through our own efforts.
- Waterlogging and drainage

GL thanked BP for her continued hard work here.

## **9. 2026 Quiz**

LE recalled that while the first (2024) quiz was very successful financially due to the focus on the play area, a lot of preparation work had been needed and the layout and facilities at the time in the Drummond were not particularly suitable. The 2025 April Fool’s quiz lacked that urgency and raised much less money, but was in a better environment at Trago Lounge.



The meeting agreed that we should run the quiz again at Trago, probably using their own quizmaster (if Patrick Pritchard is unavailable), and either as a standalone as previously, or piggybacking their regular Monday evening. A fundraising focus (eg play equipment; signage/info boards etc) was imperative. A decision would be taken at the Committee meeting in January.

## **10. Membership**

ML reported that the 2025-26 membership stood at around 74, very similar to the previous year. GL will meet separately with ML to explore how far members' interests had been captured, with a view to finding more volunteers for kids' activities.

## **11. Gardening update**

DL noted that the biggest challenge in 2025 had been drought, with a number of young trees dying off despite the Gardening Group's efforts to keep them watered. The bowser will be a great help in future years.

The alternating Saturday & Sunday format seemed to work well for most. The Group had lost a few members, most recently Natalia having completed her PhD, but had also welcomed new faces.

Achievements through the year included planting native species whips, donated by CPRE as part of the Hampshire Wildlife Highway, by the Kitchener Road entrance, and starting the dead hedge.

SCC had purchased 8-9 new trees which would be planted soon. Again there was concern about keeping these alive in another hot summer.

The Big Park Tidy was scheduled for 6 December but with prevailing bad weather might need to be cancelled. A final decision would be made the day before. If necessary, IR offered to go to the Rec at 10.30 if anyone braved the rain and turned up.

## **12. Composting**

The new dedicated bins were on order already. TR reported that the existing bins had been successful in producing compost; the group was hopeful that more green waste material could be composted in future with less needing collection by the Council.

A date had been fixed for visiting Aldermoor Farm in January.

## **13. Committee vacancies**

LE summarised current and future vacancies:

- Co-chairs: both GL and LE as co-chairs would reach the end of their 2-year tenure in March 2026 and expect to step away, although each expected to remain involved in other roles and so provide active support for incoming co-chairs (or chair & deputy). LE invited attendees to consider if they could take on this or other roles.
- Secretary: this role was now technically vacant due to Pauline Prentki having had to step down for family reasons



- Communications: a longstanding vacancy, still open though less critical than it had appeared at the outset.

BP thanked the co-chairs for their work on behalf of the Friends.

There was some discussion about whether Wednesday was the best night for public meetings. Historically it fitted in with other bookings at the Scout Hut.

#### **14. Any other business**

GL had made a brief appearance on Solent TV following the Wilder Award. GL, Natalia and Pam (from the gardening group) were interviewed on Fiesta FM

There was no further business, and the meeting finished at 9.30. LE and others had kindly donated mulled wine and mince pies.

Dates of next meetings: Committee 7.45 14 January 2026 at Highfield Cres, AGM 7.45 18 March at the Scout Hut Brickfield Rd..