

Chair's Report 2022

While in the rest of the world many things have happened again that it was claimed could never happen again, the lines between Portsmouth City Council and RAPS have remained active during the short time that has passed since the last Chair's report given to the AGM about six months ago. The City Council likes to be seen to be consultative and barely had the dust settled on the AGM before we were invited to comment on the draft consultation for the Local Plan 2038 <https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/207.9-Local-plan-2021-document-FULL-ACCESSIBLE.pdf>

The Committee, with input from members, took time to make a response to this in October. The Plan proposes a framework for devising developments and does not announce any specific initiatives. As such RAPS considered the Plan well-conceived and well-presented and it was hard to find fault with it, its four key themes in particular: improving air quality; tackling climate change; delivering sustainable development; enhancing health and well-being. There is very little in the Plan applicable directly to Port Solent but three of the strategic areas for development are adjacent or close by: Tipner, Cosham and Lakeside/North Harbour. RAPS agreed with most of the proposals (there are none with which it disagreed) but sought further clarification and some additions. As yet a summary of all comments received with responses has not been published.

A major focus for RAPS during the last three years has been the proposed development at Tipner West, rebranded last year as Lennox Point. I had heard about strong environmental objections but was not expecting the whole project to be put on hold for a re-think. I expect Lennox Point to feature again in this year's planning announcements.

RAPS was not approached directly to comment on January's Rights Of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) and there was again nothing specific to Port Solent included. RAPS asked why the proposed new right of way for pedestrians and cyclists around the south side of the Country Park was excluded, to which the response was: "The country park and Tipner West were not included in this project as the way forward for these sites is still to be determined".

RAPS is not necessarily consulted about everything connected with planning, so we are advised to keep an eye on the Your City Your Say pages of the City Council website <https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/your-say/>

The Port House and RAPS agreed it was safe enough in January to resume holding quiz nights but the Port House has been struggling to return to the way things were before the pandemic and we were asked to combine with the PSYC socials for two of the quiz nights. Turnout has so far been lower than in 2019 but we nevertheless donated £39 to the Trussell Trust in March. RAPS was grateful that Malcolm Cronshaw felt well enough, after a long spell of illness, to resume the role of quiz master. Sadly, a relapse in late March that required hospitalisation prevented him from delivering his "last hurrah" in April and we wish him a speedy recovery.

Thanks to Angela Britton's persistence with Solent Cruises, the twice-postponed Cowes Week Fireworks trip is back on for this year. Fingers crossed it will happen on August 5th.

Socials present a good opportunity to improve the work of RAPS, the chance to talk informally about matters of concern, as can be found listed in the RAPS Issues Register

on the website. Matters such as vehicles speeding along Port Way, a danger that persists despite the additional signage. Earlier this year I wrote to all three local Councillors to seek their support for installing vehicle activated signs on Port Way. Our enquiry was referred to the City Council's Safer Travel Team who wrote to say that our request will be logged and monitored along with other reports of roads with speeding vehicles but warned that the number of requests for speed control measures always exceeds the available funding. There are currently seventy-three requests from residents for traffic calming on roads in the city but only enough funding to complete up to six. There was a speed survey of Port Way last autumn that may support our case but if that showed average speeds falling below the enforceable speed limit, then there will not be another survey for three years. Meanwhile, residents should keep up the initiative by reporting incidents of speeding to 101 or submitting a report online <<https://www.hampshire.police.uk/ro/report/>> . The police may not be able to follow up but the incident will be logged to support our case.

In November, RAPS Committee members assisted the Portsmouth Tree Wardens at the D-Day memorial copse on the Port Solent field, replacing trees that had been damaged or died since the original planting in 2019. The new saplings are more mature and sturdy and are bursting into new leaf as I write.

The prospect of having to hold secret ballots at a RAPS meeting is very rare but the organising of socials exclusive to members and the need for better monitoring of membership from year to year recommended the re-introduction of membership cards. I am grateful to our Membership Secretary Olivia Firth for coming up with an elegant and affordable design in time for the 2022 AGM. This in turn urged a review of Rules of the Association to define membership more explicitly, hence the Special General Meeting called to follow the 2022 AGM at which a suitable wording will be agreed.

I will end by thanking my committee of five for their dedication and for agreeing to keep going for another year, at least.

Chris Clark (RAPS Chair) 14th April 2022