



# Portsmouth Mediation Service Annual Report 2022/23





# Trustees' Report year ending March 2023

## Trustees' Report year ending March 2023.

The Trustees present their report and accounts for the year ending 31st March 2023.

### Structure Governance and Management

The charity is a company limited by guarantee.

The Trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law and who served during the year were:

Fiona Armstrong (appointed June 2015)  
Philip Winchester (appointed December 2018)  
Alan Davis (appointed November 2019)  
Alexander Boyland (appointed September 2021)  
Paul Hutchings (appointed January 2022)  
Wendy May Jacobs (appointed January 2023)  
Tom Shaw (resigned September 2022)



*From left to right PMS Directors Paul Hutchings, Wendy May Jacobs, Fiona Armstrong, and Phil Winchester are pictured at a Trustee Away Day with John Swindell our Restorative Consultant in the centre.*

Trustees are recruited from interested individuals, volunteer mediators and representatives of the community.

None of the trustees has any beneficial interest in the company. All the trustees are members of the company and guarantee to contribute a sum not exceeding £10 for payment of the company's debts and liabilities in the event of winding up.

The trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should undertake.

The charity is managed by the trustees who exercise all the powers of the charity. For the past year, the day-to-day operation of the charity has again been carried out by the Service Manager who reports to the trustees. All policies and strategies are decided by the trustees sitting as a group on a regular basis.

The Portsmouth Mediation Service (PMS) operates for the benefit of residents in Portsmouth and for the benefit of social housing residents in the wider Portsmouth area. A substantial proportion of the work of PMS is with Portsmouth City Council.

The trustees have and continue to assess the major risks to which the charity is exposed and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to major risks.

### **Public Benefit**

The trustees confirm that they have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and in planning future activities. The trustees refer to public benefit throughout this report.

### **Vision**

PMS aims to operate as a 'Centre of Excellence and Influence' in seeing Portsmouth established as a Restorative City.

### **Mission**

Through a journey of assessment, mediation, and restorative practice, we will partner with other envisioned people and organisations to help seek the peace and prosperity of a 'Restorative Portsmouth'.

We are delighted to welcome on board new Trustee Wendy May Jacobs, Wendy May is a former volunteer with PMS and long-term friend, she brings a wealth of wisdom and insight to her role on the management board. We would also like to thank Tom Shaw for his service to PMS. Tom resigned earlier this year after he was accepted into the Royal Marines. We wish him every success in his new career.

### **Core Work**

The core work of PMS continues to be the specialist assessment service provided to Portsmouth City Council (PCC). where housing officers refer tenant neighbour disputes and conflict. In addition other areas of our service have had significant success. Our Family Mediation Service has seen a huge 60% increase in cases and has recently secured additional funding to support fractured families with communication coaching.

### **Hotwalls & Camber Dock Restorative Support Group**

Portsmouth City Council has commissioned Portsmouth Mediation Service (PMS) to develop a restorative plan to develop new relationships with some of the young people who visit the Old Portsmouth area on hot summer days. This exciting new initiative supports the City vision and the development of positive relationships set out in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. A significant development in this plan has been the formation of a restorative support group comprising local resident groups and stakeholders.

## **Training**

Training is key to our vision of a Restorative Portsmouth, and we continue to roll out subsidised training within the community and workplaces to give insight and demonstrate the impact of restorative practices. We also host a 6-day online Community Mediation Training Course which generates an additional revenue stream. The Training Team have recently come together to fine tune the course and make new improvements to ensure that it remains a market leader.

## **Extending our reach into other areas of the community**

Our team continue to make a difference in every sphere of city life, working closely for example with colleges and within the local NHS to help teams implement and embed a new positive restorative culture. We have also this year appointed one of our team (Laura) as a part time fund raiser to help generate more provision for the vision. This has already resulted in additional funding to help local faith groups become restorative centres of peace and reconciliation. Our relationship and work with The University of Portsmouth is also extending more widely as more decision makers catch the value of restorative approaches.

## **Summary**

We continue to relentlessly pursue the huge vision of seeing Portsmouth become established as a Restorative city, our manager Steve is currently chairing a panel of restorative champions from across the UK who regularly come together to discuss ideas and thinking on what it means to be a restorative city. Although much remains to be done, we celebrate the amazing progress of another year.

The Trustees wish to express their sincere thanks to our dedicated team of talented staff and volunteers and our friends and supporters who make such a positive contribution to the community.

Finally from me due to the demands of my day job I have now made the difficult decision to step down as Chair and trustee this year. It marks the end of my second stint as Chair with the charity making an impact in so many key areas of the community and making big strides on its mission to make Portsmouth a Restorative City.

We have a strong Board of Trustees but are always look for new members to add further depth and strength.

Should you be inspired to become part of our team as a volunteer or a trustee, we would be delighted to provide further information.

**Dr Alex Boyland**  
**Chair of the Board of Trustees**  
**On behalf of the Board of Trustees**



## Helping to Build Restorative Neighbourhoods

***“In a world crying out for quick fixes to some of its problems, taking the time to develop the trust and respect in positive relationships is rarely an option.”***

Just over a year or so ago we were asked by Portsmouth City Council if we could begin to develop a Restorative plan and strategy for the perennial summer problems of young people congregating around the Hotwalls & Camber Dock and the tensions this caused with local residents and traders.

Although our default response is always to say “yes, we can help” this was a very different situation to the work we are traditionally used to, where in the in the community the so-called party 2 is always more easily identifiable. This problem was much more complex and the question for us was how do you begin to build bridges and connections with transient groups of young people who often descend on the Camber during hot summer days?

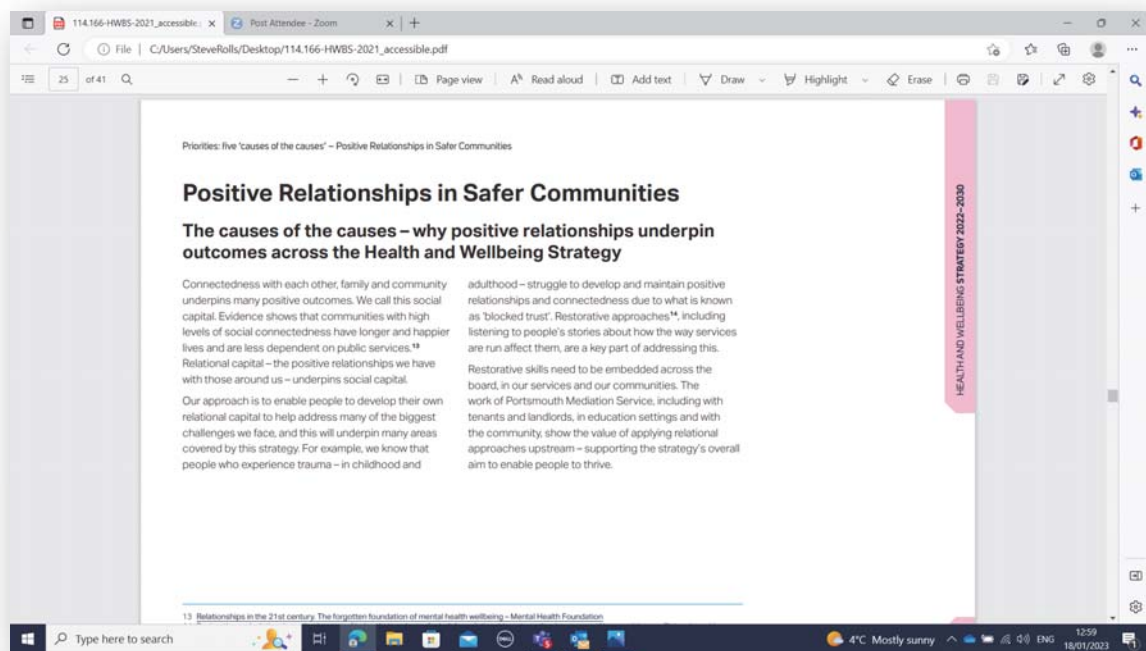
You can read more about this unfolding story in the pages of this report, but in the first instance the initial part of the plan was simply to engage with local people and begin to build relationships. In a world crying out for quick fixes to some of its problems, taking the time to develop the trust and respect in positive relationships is rarely an option.

A year or so later and with a sizeable investment in coffee and bacon sandwiches a group of local people from Old Portsmouth have emerged and come together to work together to help build a more restorative community. For a long while there had been a growing resignation to the fact that we could not police ourselves out of the anti-social behaviour, over recent months there is an increasing realisation among local stakeholders that if it's the job of the Police to keep the Peace it's the responsibility of the community to help build the Peace.

Early on it became very apparent that someone's local location and view shaped their perspective and opinions of the problems. It is symptomatic of the silo world many of us end up living and operating in. Indeed we see it in local organisations and authorities where this bunker mentality robs us of collective vision, voices, and solutions. In Old Portsmouth some really key local people are beginning to see and understand each other's views and perspectives and are now communicating and collaborating on ideas and initiatives to build community and connectedness with some of the young visitors. There is now a fresh 'can do spirit' yes, it is a long game – but the years go quickly!

We often meet decision makers who are nervous of the Restorative 'word' fearing many people will not understand its meaning, we must I think push back on this notion. In truth much of our mission is a 'sales job' in the sense that people need to understand that there is an alternative to the traditional punitive pathway that winds its poisonous way through every spheres of life. Once people understand the power and potential of the restorative road, they readily buy into doing things differently. We must continue to promote the idea and destination of a Restorative Portsmouth.

We mentioned in last year's report that conflict has a huge detrimental effect on people's mental health which is why we are so pleased to see this acknowledged in the City's Health & Well Being Strategy. We have reproduced here a screen shot of the relevant section. Restoring relationships and repairing harm are helping Portsmouth people to live healthier lives.



PMS continues to be passionate Champions of a Restorative Portsmouth, Old and New! And that is not just in what we say, I've said before when you talk the talk you have to walk the walk and I am so proud of our small team who continually model the benefits of a restorative organisation. The principles of empowering people to be leaders and risk takers in their field of expertise and influence are the same for small organisations, huge corporations and even local neighbourhoods.

When talking about so called restorative leadership we encourage organisations to reverse the hierarchical pyramid from the top-down delegation of do as I say to a bottom-up model of servant leadership that at every level seeks to empower and equip the people on the front line of the service. However increasingly we are squashing that pyramid to create a more 'flat leadership' of low control and high accountability. It's a place where a team can begin to punch well above its weight as its members understand their own areas of skill and leadership and work together in positive relationships that are characterised by great communication, empathy, and synergy. We still of course have our moments but increasingly the PMS team including our great trustees understand that together we are stronger!

It's a model that is being caught and copied by many other restorative champions and ambassadors across Portsmouth and the surrounding area. We are so thankful for our wider family of supporters and friends who carry the restorative DNA into their own workplaces and communities helping to bring transformation.

If you would like to become part of this exciting journey, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

**Steve Rolls**  
Manager



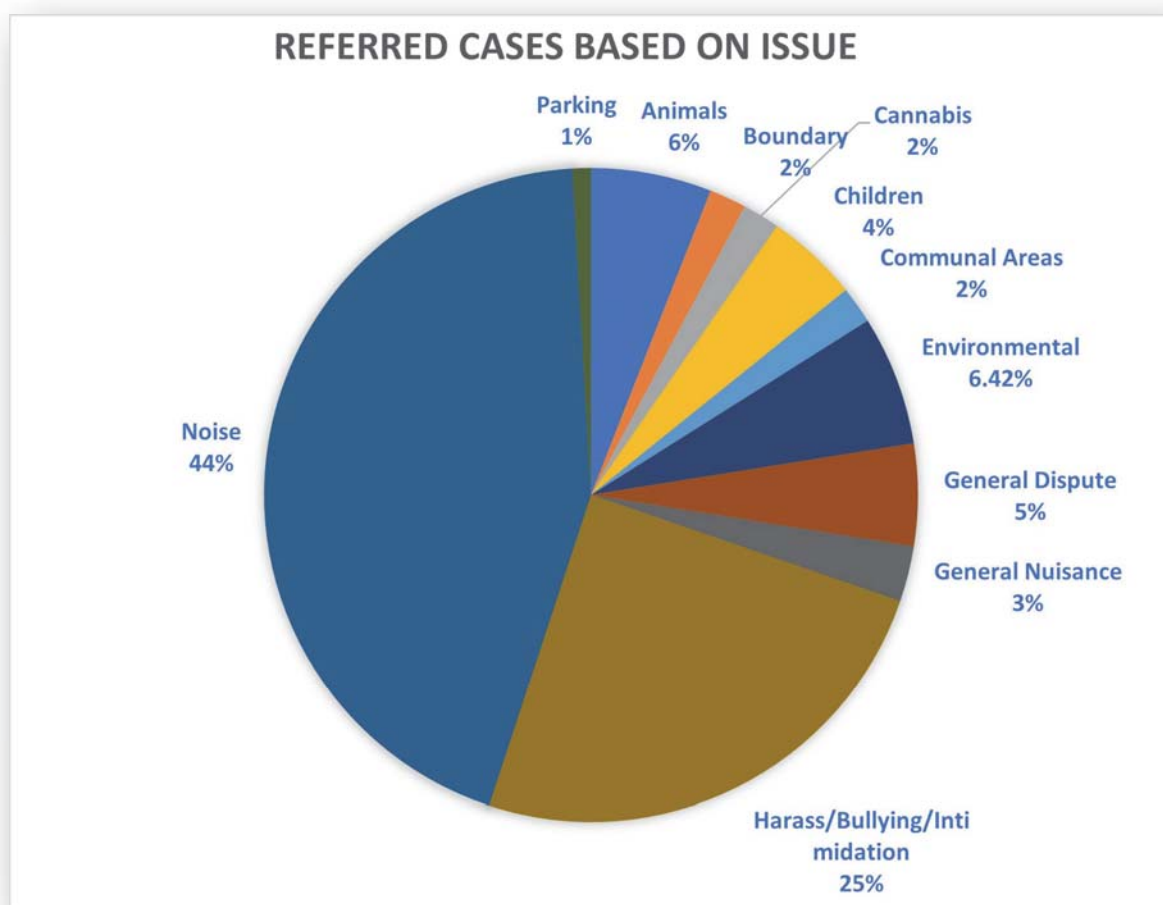


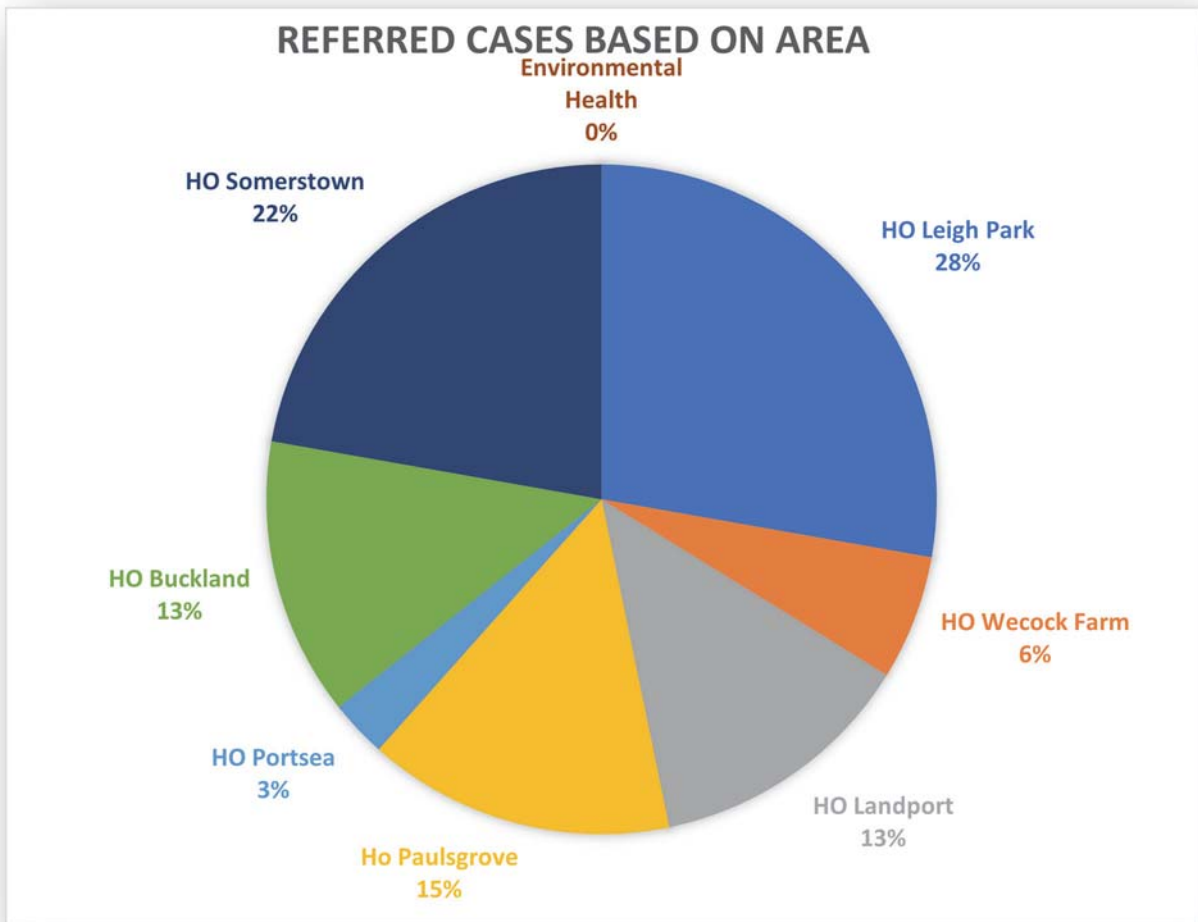
## Partnership with PCC Housing

*When conflict and tenant disputes break out in the neighbourhood, it's the role of the local housing officer to refer the problem to our Assessment Service. Our experienced professional team employ a restorative approach to help repair harm and restore good relationships.*



Our partnership between Portsmouth City Council (PCC) Housing with our Assessment Service helps provide PCC tenants with help when difficult situations arise. None of us enjoy conflict or being at odds with our neighbour, it can make us feel tense and anxious. Our experienced team have the skills and time to listen to people's stories and to help facilitate positive conversations when communication has broken down. The graph below shows the sorts of problems that arise





## Goodbye Gerry!



We wished our friend Gerry McDougall a peaceful & prosperous future as he retired from Portsmouth City Council after 23 years.

A former Trustee of PMS Gerry is pictured here with his retirement cake presented to him at our team meeting.



## Good Place for Social Workers

*"Sue saw me as a professional and never a student, she was always interested in my ideas and opinions "*



When I was allocated to Portsmouth Mediation Service for my 70-day social work Placement, I was initially sceptical about the idea, and I wondered how relevant this experience would be to my future career. I researched the organisation prior to my initial meeting with Steve Rolls and Sue Austin, I found a connection during the first meeting we had which I felt was a perfect foundation for my social work journey.

Starting off with the 6-day community mediation training, this equipped me for the experience ahead. Mediation training and restorative training changed my thinking on how PMS was the right placement for me. Also, I was curious about how the vision of the organisation was to make Portsmouth a Restorative city, therefore I was interested in being part of the journey to see Portsmouth become a Restorative city.

My PMS family has been amazing and supportive in meeting my learning objectives, I was able to fit in immediately after I joined giving me the opportunity to build my confidence and acquire new skills. Working with other members of staff was helpful, as was working with Sue Austin, whom I worked hand in hand with. She saw me as a professional and never a student, she was always interested in my ideas and opinions. With Steve, he gave me opportunities to speak with other professionals outside the organisation. Weekly teams meeting with other members of staff were moments I looked forward to, and it was a time to always build my communication and interactive skills.

I have learnt and acquired a lot of new skills during my time with PMS, and this now provides a good foundation for me as an individual to climb the social work ladder. The restorative training and practices will not only be used professionally but also personally.

In a nutshell, it was an exciting journey with PMS which I am proud of, I am delighted for the opportunities and experiences given to me so far.

**Sandra Oluwabukunmi Ebaddan**

# The CMC Community Mediation Working Group

***The Civil Mediation Council has recently set up a working group to promote the benefits of community mediation and share ideas. Peter Higgins who has represented PMS on the working group summaries some of the background***

The Civil Mediation Council (CMC) is an independent organisation based in the United Kingdom that promotes and regulates the practice of mediation in civil and commercial disputes. Founded in 2003, the CMC serves as a representative body for mediation practitioners and organisations. The primary objective of the CMC is to raise awareness and promote the use of mediation as an effective alternative to traditional court proceedings. They work towards establishing mediation as a mainstream method for resolving disputes, aiming to reduce the burden on the court system and provide individuals and businesses with a quicker, more cost-effective, and less adversarial means of resolving conflicts.

Community mediation in the UK plays a vital role in supporting individual well-being and community cohesion. It can address increasing need in the areas of health, housing, and community safety as well as preventing cases from entering both the civil and criminal justice systems.

Community mediation is delivered across most, but not all, of the UK by diverse organisations who are well placed to respond to the needs of their communities. Much of the work is carried out by experienced and professional mediators who work pro bono to support their local community mediation organisation.

To promote the benefits of community mediation and share ideas, the CMC have set up a Community Mediation Working Group to provide an inclusive platform for all community mediation organisations and individuals who work in the sector. Over the past 20 years the number of community mediation organisations has decreased largely due to cuts in funding, so it is never more needed that the community mediation sector come together to raise the voice of this valuable work.

The CMC Community Mediation Working Group is an inclusive platform for all community mediation organisations and individuals working in this sector to promote the benefits of community mediation and to share ideas.

The first Working Group met in March 2023 and identified a number of priorities to include research around impact, promotion, standards, national provision, work within the health sector, fundraising and training. The meetings take place quarterly. As of June 2023, twenty-two (22) community mediation organisations around the UK had joined the working group, all with the common aim of sharing best practice in the area of Community Mediation.

PMS are one of the community mediation organisations, that are part of this working group. PMS will engage from offering our experiences as well as listening to best practices from other community organisations around the country. We look forward to providing further updates on the progression of this working group.



## The Restorative Community of Enquiry

***"It seems like it was only yesterday that I sat down to write an article for the PMS annual report. In reality it was 12 months ago, yesterday was when I had an email reminder from Steve that I had agreed to write an article for this year's report. Time certainly does fly!"***

Of course, time doesn't change, except possibly in ways that only cleverer people than me could explain, but with regards to the ongoing mission/vision of Portsmouth becoming a restorative city, things are being achieved in a far shorter time period than previously seemed possible, and this past 12 months has been no exception.

One example that I have been asked to write about is the development of a "Restorative Community of Inquiry". This came about, as do most things with PMS, through informal conversations over a cup of tea (at which point I have to compliment the Trustees who are so willing to allow us to operate around this relational model as opposed to being target driven). The initial such conversation was between Gail Mann (PCC), Steve and me.

Gail explained about her interest and work based around communities of learning and how the basic principles involved creating safe environments where interested parties could come together and find solutions to existing problems through their shared wisdom, experience, and skills. This resonated so much with how, in our work, restorative circles functioned and how much untapped creativity and energy can be released. Though there are some differences we felt that there was plenty of scope to combine the two and so we developed the "Restorative Community of Inquiry". The core group (pictured here) at the heart of the RCOI is Gail Mann



(PCC), Caroline Strevens, Aaron Pycroft, Dominic Pearson (University of Portsmouth) and myself (PMS). Others have contributed at various times, and we hope that others will join us in the future. Our primary aim, at the moment, is to explore new and innovative ways to introduce and use restorative skills and practices in different spheres of life as well as our own particular spheres of influence.



As we meet and share thoughts, ideas, and experiences, over the inevitable cup of tea, we have only one major agenda and that is to listen and learn, to speak without fear of criticism or rebuke. This makes for a safe environment with no room for egos or self-importance.

So far this year there are several new, embryonic, restorative initiatives in the University of which I can't really comment on at this stage, but maybe this time next year if I get asked to do another article for PMS. However, one of the outcomes that are public knowledge are the series of 6 seminars this year where we look at restorative practices in different and unexpected spheres of life. Our aim is to have a speaker to provide the theory behind the practice alongside some testimony from a practitioner or recipient. Followed by discussion groups and questions/answers.

**Our first Seminar; "Discovering Forgiveness"** This pithy and challenging seminar was on the outcomes of a project between Pushing Change and Dr Aaron Pycroft from University of Portsmouth School of Criminology and Criminal Justice which was based on understanding and working with forgiveness to enable discovery of the self when addicted to alcohol and drugs.

**Our second seminar; "A Relational and Restorative Practice approach in Portsmouth's schools"** This session was an opportunity to hear from Claire Copeland, Executive Headteacher at Trafalgar School, Portsmouth, and learn about the progress in 'Relational and Restorative Practice' (RRP) in Portsmouth schools. Trafalgar School has become the flagship school in Portsmouth with regards to restorative practices and is in the process of helping other senior schools to adopt and implement similar practices.

**Our third seminar : "Restorative Leadership and Teams"** I was the speaker at this seminar in which we looked at how our present models of leadership and teams are still based around a 300-year-old, post industrial revolution world view, based upon a "Formal Control System" which relies upon rules and authoritarian enforcement which stifles creativity and participatory learning. Comparing that with how it is possible to create a culture of "Social Compliance" and corporate ownership with the adoption of restorative skills and values.

**Future seminars??** We will commence in September and have several thoughts re content; however, it requires a degree of planning when arranging dates with what are inevitably busy people.

If you would like to know more about the previous seminars or about future events, please let me know by email: [johnswindell316@gmail.com](mailto:johnswindell316@gmail.com) / [john@portsmouthmediationservice.org.uk](mailto:john@portsmouthmediationservice.org.uk) or contact PMS via the website.

**John Swindell**  
**PMS Restorative Consultant & Trainer**



## Building a Restorative Neighbourhood

*Portsmouth City Council has commissioned the Portsmouth Mediation Service to develop a long-term restorative plan for the Old Portsmouth area. The work involves relationship building, restorative training and meetings between community members, police, and some of the young people who visit the area during the hot summer months.*



From May Bank Holiday all through the summer, Southsea Seafront attracts thousands of visitors. Over the years there have been a range of problems with groups of young people congregating around the Hotwalls, Victoria Pier, and the Camber Dock and jumping into the sea. Despite serious injuries to individual in the past, the risk and excitement of this activity continues to draw young people from across the city, and from further afield. It is reportedly seen as a generational 'rite of passage' and continues despite attempts to stop it. There are also some associated problems with anti-social behaviour and damage.

This is a complex problem that affects not only the residents of the surrounding area but also the local traders, fishermen, holiday makers, visitors and indeed the young people themselves. Balancing the needs of young people against the concerns of residents and businesses is tricky.



As part of this initiative a number of key organisations have come together to form a new Restorative Support Group. They are committed to working in a joined-up way for the benefit of the entire community including the young visitors. This new group is currently represented by Friends of Old Portsmouth, Portsmouth Sailing Club, the owners of the new Fish Market, The Camber building, The International Port Authority, Spice Island and King James Quay Residents, Hotwalls Artists and Portsmouth

Cathedral. The group meets monthly during the winter months and bimonthly during the spring and summer and is supported by representatives from Portsmouth City Council, Neighbourhood Police Teams, Motive8, Portsmouth FC in the Community, PCC Play Service, Street Pastors, PCC Hotwalls & Sea Front management



*Members of the Hotwalls & Camber Dock Restorative Support Group at a recent meeting in the Camber Building.*



This work supports the Portsmouth Health and Wellbeing Strategy 'Positive Relationships' theme and the City Vision's priorities as well as three of the Hampshire Crime Commissioner's priorities: tackling antisocial behaviour, preventing young people from committing crime and improved outcomes for victims.



*Pictured here are some of the local residents who attended a restorative practice training day at the Camber Building and below some of the Restorative Support Group at a similar session.*

Although there are many different voices and opinions in this complicated situation, there is a growing acknowledgement that we cannot police our way out of these perennial problems. We can however work together to address the issues, lots of little wins can begin to cumulatively help deliver transformation

Our manager, Steve says "If it's the job of the Police to help keep the peace there must be a role for our community to help build the peace".





*A new 'can do spirit' is emerging among the local stakeholders, Top left. Joe from The Portsmouth International Port and right, Gail from The Friends of Old Portsmouth Association (FOOPA) and below Mark & Tim from the Camber Building pictured with The PMS team are all active supporters of the new restorative strategy.*







The Restorative strategy has also helped bring together some of our top youth organisations in a co-ordinated approach to the Youth Engagement & Outreach (young visitors) – Part of the restorative idea is that we are much stronger together. The above organisations are collaborating under a 'Memorandum of Understanding' designed by PMS to co-ordinate youth engagement and activity in the Old Portsmouth area.

Funding from the OPCC has enabled a joined-up approach whereby outreach workers will be dedicated to the area. The primary role of the outreach teams is to **meet and engage** with both local residents and young people. It is envisaged that relationships will be developed with local residents and traders and young visitors and that team members will learn the names of some of these people.

The Outreach teams will be very aware of the local events and activities that are being held throughout the summer and will often carry promotional material to hand out and publicise. They will also engage local residents and young visitors with a survey that seeks to better understand the dynamics and needs of the community.

These teams will over this summer become very visible, identifiable, and trustworthy to all sections of the Old Portsmouth community including regular visitors. Out of newly formed relationships, particularly with local people It is envisaged that the Youth Outreach Teams will from time to time be joined by members of the community to help further facilitate good and natural conversations with some of the young people who regularly visit the area.



## The Hotwalls Journey through Leo's Lens

***PMS secured some funding from a Mutual Gain initiative to commission a young film maker from St Edmunds school to produce a film about the unfolding Restorative story around the Hotwalls & Camber Dock.***

Pictured here with police sergeant Rich Reagan is PMS Mediator Peter Higgins and Leo, a young



film maker who together presented their idea to make a New Film 4 Old Portsmouth. to be filmed over the Summer of 2023 and with a Premiere in the Autumn, the very production of the movie will engage with the key stakeholders of Old Portsmouth including of course the young people who visit to jump into the sea.



The film will aim to capture many of the varied views and perspectives. it will also seek to be an agent of understanding and healing. The main film will project a 'glass that is half full' and seek to stimulate new ideas for an old problem. It will also be key when addressing things like water safety in local school assemblies.

## Helping Families to Communicate Well

***“We know that the only way to make agreements between parents sustainable, with positive ongoing impact for children, is to work with parents on improving their communications”***

PMS’s family mediation service has made big strides since 2021 by:

- developing the service to be run by family mediators accredited by the Family Mediation Council
- becoming an affiliate of National Family Mediation (NFM)
- working within NFM’s legal aid contract to deliver legally aided mediation

Over the last year Hilary & Chloe have continued to grow and develop PMS’s family mediation service. From April 21 to March 22 we received 174 enquiries – this increased to 292 for the period April 22 to March 23. In the last month of recording, May 23, we have received the highest volume of enquiries in a single month.

During the last year we helped just over 150 families with mediation.

We were also successful in receiving a grant from Southern Co-op’s Safer Neighbourhood Fund of £5670 to support additional work with families on communication.

We have piloted an approach and are now promoting this to families:

*“Family mediation focuses primarily on sorting out contact arrangements where these have broken down or there are disagreements about finances for the future. In all this work children are placed at the centre. However, whilst mediation might sort out contact and financial arrangements for the short term, we know that the only way to make agreements between parents sustainable, with positive ongoing impact for children, is to work with parents on improving their communications. For this reason, we offer a free of charge (grant funded) individual communication sessions before starting joint mediation. We encourage all families to take advantage of this.”*

Our family mediators, Chloe, and Hilary have also been developing and broadening their skills. Chloe has become accredited as a SEND mediator and Hilary has worked with NFM to develop training for family mediators on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion, including on Neurodiversity. She has also helped to develop an online resource for schools about family mediation.

Family mediation involves significant administration to handle enquiries and manage cases. This is especially so for legal aid cases as they are subject to audit by the legal aid agency. We are constantly reviewing our processes so that we aren’t overwhelmed with administration to the detriment of mediation work. We are currently looking for a family mediator who is working towards accreditation to join us and support us on this at PMS. This will enable us to continue to develop and grow the service over the next year.



## Treasurer's Report

An independent inspection has been carried out by Morris Crocker Chartered Accountants. Please find enclosed separate annual accounts and report. There are no Trustee interests, and none benefit financially from the service.

The Board of Trustees has continued to retain oversight of financial matters at their bi-monthly meetings, the purpose being to ensure that the day to day running, and longer-term projection of financial resources remain in a sound position.

As part of this process, a 'predicted cash flow' chart is reviewed in order to examine income and expenditure against expectations at the commencement of the financial year. It was predicted that the year-end balance would be around £46,000-£47,000. The balance was just over £43,500. In addition, PMS have opened a second savings (Gold) account, in which savings and ringfenced money on projects are kept. At the end of our financial year the Gold Account had a balance of £20,480. £1,900 of that amount are PMS general savings.

An updated draft cash flow projection has been prepared and is being used for the forthcoming year.

Our financial position has benefitted from the continuing delivery of Restorative Practice and Mediation training, both a welcomed source of income generation. This has included delivering training outside of our geographic area, illustrating the value in which PMS knowledge and expertise is held. Additional projects, such as Family Mediation and multi-agency work on the Hotwalls & Camber Docks have extended the restorative work of the charity and continue to be a source of new income.

In the financial year reported, PMS has entered year three of their five-year contract to provide assessment services to Portsmouth City Council. This contract continues to be a primary source of income for PMS and enables the service to continue to progress its vision and mission statements. This five-year contract, together with the option of a two-year extension continues to be the bedrock of the service's financial foundation.

Fund raising has continued to be challenging, so the charity has commenced dedicating a staff member to this work to provide greater focus and to explore all available opportunities.

Xero accounting software is fully embedded as the tool for managing all financial matters and is used by both staff and trustees.

It is with pride that the Trustees fully recognise the work of our service manager Steve Rolls and his team of talented mediators and volunteers in continuing to spread the restorative message across the city of Portsmouth and beyond, whilst contributing wholly to maintaining a sound financial position.

**Phil Winchester**  
**Trustee & Treasurer**





## Sort it Out – Generation 7

*The Sort it Out Peer Mediation Service operates for the benefit of students across the University of Portsmouth and is run by a Management Board that is made up of selected third year law students. Each year the Mediators and Management Board of the service change as the existing students graduate and move on. The service is overseen by PMS. Here Tanaka reflects on the Journey of Generation 7.*



*Tanaka (left) and Lorna (right) along with Paiche steered the Sort it Out Service through another exciting and challenging year.*

During this year the Sort It Out team have experienced different situations, from housemate disagreements to conflict amongst societies. At the beginning of our journey, we were initially challenged by fully understanding how to manage the service and what this responsibility would truly entail. It took us some self-evaluation and reflection to identify our weaknesses and how to overcome them. One key thing we quickly learnt was the importance of communication, which we later found to be a prominent factor at the root of our cases. We reflected within ourselves and found within our cases that issues can spiral if this is neglected. At times we have found that the objective of mediation went beyond resolving the problem, by improving the way people speak to one another and how they could convey their emotions more effectively. It was evident that by exploring effective communication and allowing a safe confidential space, parties were

able to take the learning experience deeper into their everyday lives. We also simultaneously took invaluable lessons on how essential communication is within our world.

The team were also able to experience cases outside of Sort It Out and the university with Portsmouth Mediation Service, enabling more observations of different types of conflict. It allowed us a greater insight on mediation beyond familiar student conflict and also into the scope of seeing how restorative justice can be taken into the wider community. Furthermore, the team experienced the thrill of teaching restorative practice to local primary school children and thus fulfilling one of Portsmouth Mediation Service’s aims by operating at the base of the pyramid of escalation.

Sort It Out were able to learn beyond mediation techniques and adopt essential lessons and practices from insightful meetings and training led by Steve Rolls and Sue Austin. The team learnt invaluable lessons to carry forward into the workplace such as effective restorative leadership, but most importantly we often learnt lessons about ourselves. We began this journey unsure of what lessons to expect and with no agenda of what we were expecting to learn, but we were pleasantly surprised by the overwhelming feeling of confidence to navigate future challenges. Our journey has often been about looking inwardly on ourselves to be the best type of people to resolve conflict and manage the service. But more importantly, to be the best type of people we can be as we go into our future.

Our final and most significant objective this year, is formatting a smooth and helpful transition for the next cohort. The team are finishing this year having identified weaknesses, challenges, and areas of improvement to provide a better beginning for the next academic year. We are looking forward to taking the highs and lows of our journey as a strength for the future.

## PMS Third Party Reporting Centre

PMS is part of Network of Third-Party Reporting Centres in Portsmouth – which means if you are a victim of a hate crime you can talk to us. Many people are put off by reporting Hate Crime to the Police and this can be for a number of reasons. It might be that they are concerned about losing their anonymity or that what’s happened to them won’t be taken seriously. The Stephen

Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999) highlighted a need for independent reporting sites (TPHCRCs), providing victims with the ability to report at locations other than police stations.





## PMS Being Visible

*We know that we are stronger together and that our city is better served when we come together to work together. The key principle of Restorative is relationship and we are continually seeking to collaborate and build effective partnerships and although following Covid we closed our offices we are still looking to be visible!*





## Supporting our Local Police

***We support our local police by taking referrals from them for low level anti social behaviour, this helps free up the time of officers to focus on more serious issues. Below is a case study from a typical Police referral.***

We received a case referral from the police where a hostile and toxic situation had developed between two homeowners living in a converted building. The dispute was fuelled by the way they used their private, communal garden. They were long standing neighbours with very different personalities and lifestyles and the situation had been slowly escalating for about three years having an increasingly negative impact on both households.

There had been many allegations of anti-social behaviour from both sides including damage to plants and shrubs, the placement of personal items of garden furniture, complaints regarding



an unsupervised barking dog, garden gates erected without consultation with other property owners and the unsolicited installation of a patio and CCTV. As is often the case healthy communication had broken down and both sides became entrenched in their own perspective and position.

After some careful preparation these two households in conflict agreed to attend a face-to-face mediation meeting to discuss the issues. Although neither appeared to see a clear way forward, they did say they were willing to accept the opportunity to have a facilitated meeting to explore possible options and see if any constructive progress could be made.

The meeting was both challenging and intense and emotions ran high. Our mediators managed to successfully steer the meeting, reminding the participants that this appeared to be the only practical option on offer to them to try and resolve their dispute informally and in a safe environment, or at least attempt to improve the situation.

Both neighbours were able to share some personal information of their choosing which helped to soften the situation. They were also able to suggest dispute management options and strategies. Afterwards there was a sense of relief and they both said they had benefitted from the restorative meeting and although it had not resolved all of their problems, they had had the opportunity to speak and felt they had a better understanding of each other.

## Teach Peace Off the Shelf

Sue from our team is currently heading up the delivery of our Teach Peace Peer Mediator programme for Primary School children. Here is her latest update.

Teach Peace was created by Laura Rook 6 years ago, an off-the-shelf Programme to demonstrate to children the skills they need to effectively communicate when faced with everyday conflicts in school and out. They learn how to ask restorative questions to help others identify their feelings and perspective when faced with conflict, so when their 8-week training is completed, they become peer mediators.

At the end of 2022 we took our Teach Peace Programme into 2 local schools training 16 children, 4 from each primary year group to become peer mediators. The children demonstrated by their commitment and input to these sessions that their understanding of listening to each other and effective communication are key to healthy relationships. As one 8-year-old said when asked what she had learned from our listening skills session "if people listened, really listened to each other with their hearts that would be the key to unlock all the problems in the world" wise words from one so young! After the training all were presented with their certificates and mediator caps and a rota of children was drawn up to cover breaks and lunchtime to enable them to use their skills to assist in any playground disputes or approach any children, they felt needed a friendly ear. Following up we have had feedback from Lenka who works as SENCO with Fernhurst school....



"Teach Peace mediators are still as excited as ever to be able to support others on the playground. Fantastic feedback from three friends in Year 4 who were struggling with feelings around their friendship. It took our fabulous Ava from year six, 3 sessions to go through the questions with them and find out about their perspective and feelings. Glad to report that this has really helped since and they have been more

mindful while playing together and came to me to let me know how much better their playtimes are now! It is little things like this that make it really come together. The lunch staff are reporting that our mediators are a big help and sometimes the incidents are sorted before the need of an adult intervention".

Moving forward we aim to equip many more schools with this valuable programme in our 'ground up' approach, hopefully these children will become restorative ambassadors who spread the restorative message as they navigate their way through education, work, and personal relationships.



## Portsmouth Mediation Service

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