

Newsletter



Autumn 2013

Portsmouth Society Celebrates 40 Years



The Lord Mayor of Portsmouth, Cllr Lynne Stagg, Portsmouth Society Chairman Sue McClory and Portsmouth Society President, Celia Clark at the exhibition opening. Picture by John Scott.

From the 1960s / early 1970s the fabric of Portsmouth was totally redrawn - by ring roads, delayed post-war reconstruction, slum clearance, comprehensive redevelopment and by land reclamation. But too much of what local people valued was being swept away and so a group of concerned people set up the Portsmouth Society in April 1973.

In our fortieth year we have marked our anniversary with a celebration lunch at Chimes Restaurant and an exhibition showing the work of the Society at the Guildhall café.

The exhibition, which was opened by The Lord Mayor of Portsmouth, Councillor Lynne Stagg on 12 September, records many of the Portsmouth Society's activities as well as looking at the challenges we face today. Using many of the photos, reports and memories of members, Gail Baird of 131 Design has created 8 display panels which encapsulate the Portsmouth Society since 1973.

At the opening, our President, Celia Clark, recalled some of the early successes which included the saving of the New Theatre Royal. Thanks to the absence of one pro-demolition councillor at a council meeting and a lot of lobbying by our founder members the decision to demolish it was rejected and thankfully the building remains much restored for all to enjoy today.

The exhibition is open to the public until the end of November and is open from 8.30am to 2.30pm Monday to Friday and at other times during events. The café is on the ground floor of the Guildhall with access from Guildhall Square and King Henry 1 Street.

Meetings and Events

Our monthly meetings are on the first Wednesday (not Jan/Aug/Sep) at the University's St. George's Building, St Thomas's Street, Old Portsmouth, PO1 2HY. Buses 1, 7, 23 & 700 pass the building which is a 10 minute walk from Portsmouth Harbour and Portsmouth & Southsea railway stations. Free on-site parking is also available. Free admission. For the latest programme see www.portsmouthsociety.org.uk

Until 30 November Mon-Fri, 8.30am- 2.30pm Guildhall Café.	Portsmouth Society 40th Anniversary Exhibition. Recording many of the Portsmouth Society's activities of the past four decades as well as looking at the challenges we face today.
Saturday 21 September 11am-5pm Victoria Park.	Portsmouth Summer Fair - Portsmouth's Greenest Day. Organised by Portsmouth Climate Action Network (PCAN). The Portsmouth Society will be there with a stall.
<i>Wednesday 2 October</i> 7-9pm. St. George's Building, Old Portsmouth.	English Heritage - David Brock leads the English Heritage South East Regional Team. He will describe EH's role in the numerous current local and regional heritage initiatives, as well as giving an up-date on the organisation at national level.
Saturday 5 October 10.00am Meet by the Thomas Ellis Owen Memorial on the South side of the University Library.	Ravelin Park Tree Walk. Led by Pauline Powell, Chairman of Portsmouth Three Wardens, and with coffee afterwards at the Corner Cafe, (ex-Wig & Pen pub) on Landport Terrace. Please call 02392 831 461 or 02392 667 962 with any queries.
Wednesday 23 October 7-9pm Royal Maritime Club, Queen Street, Portsea, PO1 3HS.	Portsmouth Society Moves Forward - We are also looking at the future of The Portsmouth Society and how younger people might wish to engage with us and our work. We invite you to come to a brainstorming / focus group / discussion about these issues.
Wednesday 6 November 7-9pm. St. George's Building, Old Portsmouth.	Portsmouth Naval Base – underpinning the nation's security through the 21st century: A perspective on the next ten years developments in the 900 year life of the Naval Base and its role supporting the Fleet around the world, including the new aircraft carriers. Speaker: Captain Iain Greenlees, Deputy Head Transformation, Portsmouth Naval Base.
Wednesday 4 December 7.00pm. Square Tower, Old Portsmouth.	Portsmouth Society Design Awards 2013. Our president Celia Clark will take us through yet another superb awards presentation. Festive refreshments will be available.

The Portsmouth Society – 40 years on



The Portsmouth Society's inaugural meeting was held at the newly converted City Museum on 4 April 1973. The fabric of the city was being totally redrawn at the time – by a ring of roads, delayed post-war reconstruction, slum clearance and comprehensive redevelopment – which I nicknamed 'The Second

Blitz'. Too much of what local people valued was being swept away, and we were aware that there were other cities doing things better, without so many losses of cherished buildings.

Several groups were already campaigning and influencing local policy. The Portsmouth Museums Society formed in 1952 and led by Dorothy Dymond fought successfully to preserve the historic fortifications at the entrance to Portsmouth Harbour and along the seafront. They campaigned for establishment of a museum service and records office, the appointment of an archivist, a central library and the launch of the Portsmouth Papers and Portsmouth Records Series ¹.



Model for the new City Centre, 1969, by Lord Esher (Brett & Pollen)

Polytechnic lecturers across many disciplines set up an Environmental Studies Liaison Group in 1971 to campaign for better planning and architecture, working with city

council officers ². It published a paper on Langstone Harbour. Mike West formed a branch of the Conservation Society which arranged seminars for councillors, planners, business managers and educationalists about decision-making 'in a future increasingly constrained by economic, social, political and natural pressures' ³.



Saved! The former Palace Cinema, Guildhall Walk. Sketch by Deane Clark.

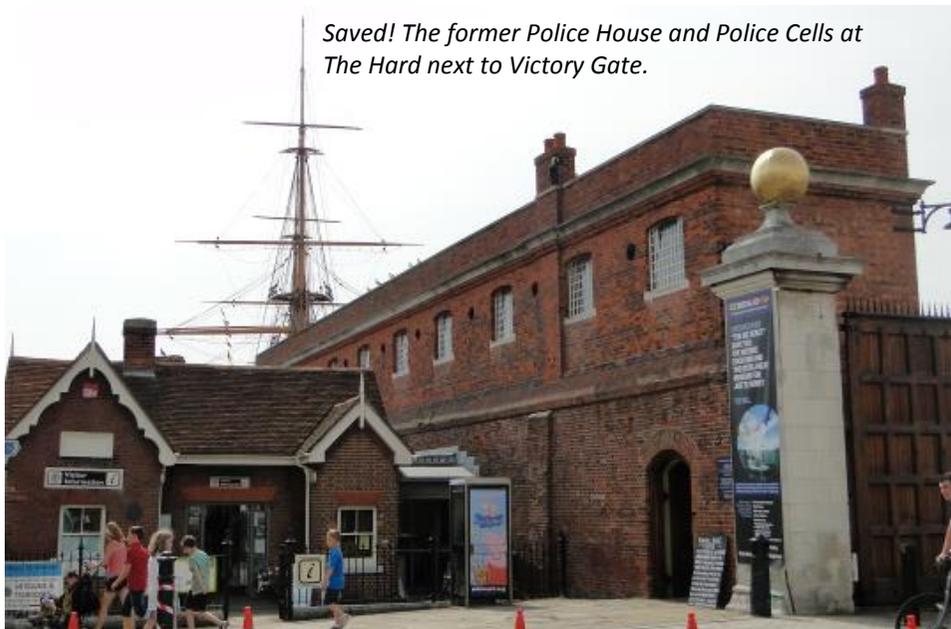
At the same time, building conservation in the form of conservation areas, campaigned for by the Civic Trust and enshrined in legislation was beginning to be adopted by local authorities, giving a degree of protection to historic townscape. Councillor Freddie Emery Wallis as chair of the Development and Estates Committee was quick off the mark, appointing Brian Young and Deane Clark as Historic Buildings Architects in the planning department. Nineteen conservation areas were quickly designated. Brian suggested that a civic or amenity society should be formed. We considered affiliating to the Conservation Society or to Friends of the Earth, but decided that the Civic Trust had aims closest to our own. John Goodall was the first chairman, Jo Vernon: treasurer, I was secretary and Thelma Merewood was the newsheet editor. Four active sub-

committees were set up: Trees and Streets, Planning, Historic Buildings and Amenities.

Before we could register with the Civic Trust, John Goodall and I had to run the gauntlet of Professor Bishop, chair of a save Portsmouth group who had campaigned to retain the park-keeper's lodge in Victoria Park. He lived in a grand house in Portchester. He told us there was no need to form another society.... We decided to take no notice. Another hurdle was that the Portsmouth Museums Society was already registered with the Civic Trust, which usually only allowed one group per town. This was a problem also faced by the Chichester Society – also formed in 1973, where the Chichester Civic Trust had become too closely identified with the local authority and was in the new group's view no longer effective. Civic societies' relationship with their local authorities – especially their politicians – is always volatile. Over the years we've been accused of being 'activists', too strident, too identified with opposition councillors... we walk a tightrope, but keep our independence and refuse to be silenced. We may also earn respect. We pride ourselves on our technical expertise and in being well informed about

national and international developments in planning, architecture, transport and good design. We put forward 'better ideas' – which sometimes get adopted. Some of us have served the city much longer than most elected councillors.

Saved! The former Police House and Police Cells at The Hard next to Victory Gate.



'Southern Comfort' was the nickname for the get-togethers of civic societies in the area – notably in Chichester, Portsmouth and Winchester to exchange ideas and experience. Ron Tate, Portsmouth planner and later president of the Royal Town Planning Institute memorably asked at a Portsmouth conference 'Why don't you all just shut up, go home and leave planning to us?'. Needless to say, we continued to work for improvement of our areas as before. The 1967 Skeffington Report had codified the opportunities for public participation in planning, which we continue to exercise by examining selected planning applications and opposing, supporting or commenting on them.

Early work included comments on the draft Hampshire Structure Plan. It's no exaggeration to say that in the late 1960s and early 1970s Portsmouth's map was being redrawn. Lord Esher's ring road plan for a new civic centre was brought to life in the model under a dome on its own stand – now sadly damaged. He proposed many new buildings, surrounded by a major inner ring road.

Losses included Cogswell's Water Company building, but when we realised that the Palace Cinema was also to be replaced by a bland office block. Dennis Sharp, cinema architecture historian, and Professor Geoffrey Broadbent helped us make the case that every city needs its jokes. The Palace, designed in Islamic style by Cogswell was

designed in 1921 after he returned from serving in the Artists' Rifles at the Khyber Pass. We were lucky that EMI, the owners, were also persuaded that the cinema was worth a new lease of life. Together, we won the inquiry, and the Palace, now a night club, still stands. Another notable early success was Roger James's intervention to save the Theatre Royal at a Labour group meeting when he persuaded his fellow councillors to oppose demolition.

The first time I addressed the full city council was in 1973 to persuade them not to knock down the Ship & Castle, the pub on the corner of the Hard nearest to the



Saved! The Ship and Castle on The Hard. The original frontage was preserved but the rest completely rebuilt.

dockyard gate. We believed it formed a vital 'pinch point' at the end of Queen Street. Turning the corner the wonderful expanse of the harbour is revealed. Subsequent neglect meant only the outer wall was left standing, until a new building was constructed inside it. We successfully fought to keep the Police House as a Tourist Information Centre, and the Cell Block behind it.

1. 'Musings on the end of an Era' Sarah Quail Portsmouth Museums Society Newsletter
2. The Conservation Society 'Management of Change' Letter to Deane Clark 29th September 1971
3. Portsmouth Polytechnic Environmental Studies Liaison Group Report to Environmental Studies Faculty Board 24 May 1971

Celia Clark

Don't forget to visit the Portsmouth Society's 40th Anniversary Exhibition which runs until the end of November in the Guildhall Café open Monday to Friday from 8.30 to 2.30. The exhibition records many of the Portsmouth Society's activities of the past four decades as well as looking at the challenges we face today.

Civic Voice – Benefits of Membership

National Trust and English Heritage - free day passes. As a Civic Voice member society of Civic Voice, we are able to offer free day passes to National Trust and English Heritage properties subject to a small number of restrictions.

National Trust properties in our area include Uppark, Hinton Ampner, Winchester City Mill, Needles Old Battery and New Battery. Osborne House, Carisbrooke Castle, Portchester Castle, Fort Brockhurst, Titchfield Abbey are all managed by English Heritage. For details on how to obtain passes please contact David Baynes on 02392 831461 or email david.baynes@btinternet.com.

Regular email bulletins and alerts. You can email info@civicvoice.org.uk and ask to receive 'Civic Update' regularly. These brief emailed bulletins provide the latest information on current planning issues and summaries of related government statements, as well as news of Civic Voice events.

Help and advice. You can also contact Civic Voice for initial advice on planning matters, especially sources of specialist information. There is a forum on the website www.civicvoice.org.uk or you can email as above or call 0151 708 9920.

Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth

The Portsmouth Society now has 'corporate' membership of the RMC in Queen Street. This means that all Society members can use the club's facilities. These include the Victory Bar, Compass Cafe, Horatio's Restaurant as well as the swimming pool and gym. Member discounts are offered on room hire and overnight stays.

The Club is conveniently located, opposite Admiralty Quarter, so do call in to check out the facilities. Before using them you need to contact David Baynes (02392 831 461 baynes.david@btinternet.com) to be given our membership number.

Please note that Society members with individual membership will need to convert to joint membership if they wish their spouse/partner to have use of the National Trust/English Heritage and RMC arrangements.

Autumn Tree Walk in Ravelin Park - 5 October

Here's an extra Society event for your diary. On the morning of Saturday 5th October there will be a Tree Walk in Ravelin Park led by Pauline Powell, chairman of Portsmouth Tree Wardens, and with coffee afterwards at the new Corner cafe, (ex-Wig & Pen pub) across the road. The walk will start at the Thomas Ellis Owen Memorial on the South side of the University Library at 10am. All members and guests welcome. Please call 02392 831 461 or 02392 667 962 with any queries.

Local History Course: The Victorians

Queen Victoria took the throne of a nation eager for change. That change influenced everything, fashion, family, political and social life as the nation moved from a rural to urban existence. How did the Victorians locally and nationally cope with the challenges? Find out on this fascinating course from the WEA. *Tutor: Jennifer Goldsmith. Mondays 2–4pm, 30 Sep – 9 Dec at the Omega Centre, Omega Street, Southsea PO5 4LP. Tel. 02392 291 346. www.southern.wea.org.uk Email: portsmouth@wea.org.uk*

Armed Forces Day

This year Armed Forces Day Ceremony and Parade was a much bigger affair than the flag-raising of the 2012 event. In Guildhall Square on Thursday 27th June we assembled just after 10am to see the Band of Her Majesty's Royal marines, service personnel, cadets and veterans parade into the square and take up their positions. All the top brass were there with the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth, Councillor Lynne Stagg, to inspect the parade which was followed by prayers, speeches and a welcome from Leader of Portsmouth City Council, Councillor Gerald Vernon Jackson.

The highlight of the day was the presentation of Arctic Star Medals to the Arctic Convoy Veterans in recognition of the remarkable bravery shown during the Second World War, risking their lives to deliver food and supplies to Russia between 1941-1945, with Rear Admiral John Lang DL, Deputy Lieutenant of Hampshire and the Second Sea Lord, Vice Admiral David Steel CBE presenting medals and spending time and care to talk to each individual, many standing from their seats or wheelchairs to salute, and have photos taken by family and the press.

The large screen in Guildhall Square provided the necessary close-ups of presentations for those too far away, as the crowds were covering the steps and area in front of the Civic Offices in addition to all the dignitaries assembled on the Guildhall steps. At the conclusion, the parade marched smartly group by group from the square leaving a proud and peaceful audience to chat in the warm sunshine and then adjourn to the Norrish Central Library for much needed refreshment.

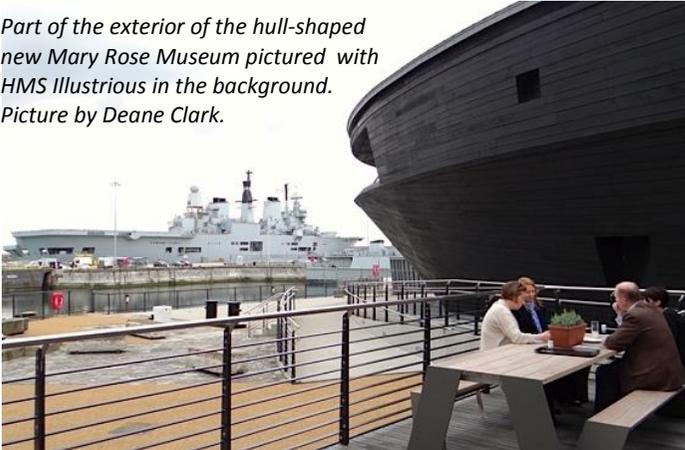
Sue McClory, Chairman.

e-Petition to Amend the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

We have been alerted to an e-Petition requesting the Government to amend the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and uphold local democratic decision making. The motion states that NPPF is inherently unsound leading to irreversible loss of open countryside and irreparable damage to valuable landscape and heritage assets which are highly valued by local communities. Clearly it won't solve everything but it might help to get rid of some weasel words. <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/49495>.

The New Mary Rose Museum

Part of the exterior of the hull-shaped new Mary Rose Museum pictured with HMS Illustrious in the background. Picture by Deane Clark.



Not until 2016 will we be able to appreciate how brilliantly Wilkinson Eyre's ark-shaped museum wraps protectively round the ship's half hull, echoing it with another curved hull which encloses lateral and bow and stern galleries. Then we will be able to see the seaward side -

the new work and preserved hull together completing the ship. The initial cocoon of barrier walls will remain until then. For now the ship is as before visible from all three viewing decks through this barrier. The new decks correspond in position to the ship's, even dipping downwards to the centre.

The extraordinary collection of Tudor objects are brilliantly explained, closely related to where they were found on the ship. A few emblematic individuals: Gunner, Archer, Carpenter, confront us directly - as skeletons and as clothed reconstructions, the tools of their trades amazingly conserved as vivid prompts to our imagining of Tudor shipboard life, down to tiny thimbles, containers for vinaigrette, violins, dice.... The block of pitch, dog's skeleton, leadlined cooking cauldron - 19,000 objects in all - and the story they tell - are so so engrossing that two or three hours pass before you long for daylight and a pause for reflection on what you've seen. Only the crew's quarters and the VIP balcony overlooking No. 1 Basin and Victory's stern offer welcome light for those who work and entertain there, but not to the many thousands of visitors the museum will attract. Maybe the ambient light levels could be increased as you rise above the dock and ship's surface? The new skirt around the Cutty Sark has the opposite problem: too much light - and heat - up to 40 degrees.... The outdoor deck of the cafe has elegant and ingeniously designed ribbon metal picnic seats you don't need to lift your leg over!

It's an irony of history that such a sudden horrific national and personal disaster, leaving the ship, crew and their possessions resting on the seabed for so many years offers us in the twentieth and twenty-first century such an extraordinary face to face and minutely detailed experience of the Tudor navy's world. But the graphic video of the sinking and drowning fatally distances us from the imagined event, because it has no sound. Surely

it is not to upset children that we hear no roar of the sea, no screams, no gasps for air? Children love being frightened! I also missed the sensation of a sailing ship: timbers creaking, sails flapping and ropes snapping and the sounds of waves and wind - suddenly stilled. The top gallery has the ship's fittings: blocks, unique mast top, anchors and heavy coils of rope, but not the feel of a sailing ship.

The Landport Gate is unaccountably absent from the visuals of still standing structures in the Cowdray print, though the classical city gate we have now, designed in Nicholas Hawksmoor's office, dates from a century later than the sinking. Glimpses of Dr. Margaret Rule learning to dive and superintending the archaeological excavation on site duly honour her central role in recording and understanding the site. The portrait of Alexander McKee reminds us of the patient work of his team of divers rewarded by identifying the wreck. The yellow cradle constructed by the Royal Engineers at Marchwood on Southampton Water to lift the Mary Rose from her seabed grave reminds us of that sickening crunch as the wreck shifted as she entered daylight for the first time again.

As a Portsmouth loyalist I would love to learn in the first panel - rather than the third - that the ship was built nearby - and where the timbers came from. I missed the 3-D models I used to enjoy in Boathouse 5, but the huge reproduction of the Cowdray print is a marvellously detailed exposition of the dramatic event, King Henry VIII safely back on land after a hasty retreat on his other ship the Grace a Dieu in the face of the advancing French fleet.

The long hard haul of the Mary Rose Trust, the fundraisers, many specialist conservationists, the architects and designers of the displays give us this extraordinary and unparalleled treasure to learn from, savour, and enjoy.

Celia Clark

Lakeside Wildlife Walks

The society enjoyed an evening visit to Lakeside, North Harbour offices in July and we were reminded that Rohan Amick runs weekly walks around the site which are open to members of the general public. You can join in Rohan's weekly walk on Thursdays from 12.30. Meet at the Atrium, Building 1000, Lakeside, North Harbour.

The Future, 2014 and all that

As some of you may know, I have decided to return to University this September to take a full-time MSc in Project Management while I continue to work part-time at The Kings Theatre. This will make life very busy for me and so I have decided to step down from the Executive Committee at the next AGM in April 2014, when I shall be starting the dissertation part of the course, to ensure that I devote sufficient time to the work.

My three years as Chairman have passed very quickly, and I have enjoyed much of the work, representing the Society at many events throughout the year in addition to hosting our monthly meetings and chairing the Executive Meetings.

Our constitution allows for between 6 and 9 executive members to serve on committee in addition to the officers, and this year we stand at 6 which means there are opportunities for people interested in committee work and the running of the Society to join the executive before we reach the AGM, to gain an insight into how we operate.

We are also looking at the future of The Portsmouth Society and how younger people might wish to engage with us and our work, which includes the use of Facebook and Twitter, as well as upgrading our website later in the year. I would like to invite you to attend a brainstorming/ focus group/ discussion about these issues on Wednesday 23 October, 7pm at The Royal Maritime Club, Queen Street. This will be an informal event, where we can use the lounge to chat, with the bar open for refreshments as required.

Simon Ball has some ideas about engaging with students from the University of Portsmouth from the Surveying & Engineer Society and as well as the architectural equivalent, as many of them use The Society as a resource for their dissertations, and he is keen to hear your comments and contributions too. I do hope you will join Simon and I for a thought-provoking evening, and should you have any questions do please get in touch. I am delighted to learn that Des Walsh has joined the planning committee chaired by John Holland, and should anyone else be interested in this aspect of our work, please contact John directly (mailbox@portsmouthsociety.org.uk).

Sue McClory, Chairman.

Proposed TESCO superstore for Fratton Park

On a warm July Friday evening members were welcomed to the Partner's Lounge at Fratton Park to meet the developers of the proposed Tesco superstore.

Point Estates purchased land to the west and north of the football stadium in February 2013 and signed a lease with Tesco as a partner to develop the part of it for a supermarket (other supermarket chains were approached but Tesco was the only company interested). The land to the north of the North Stand and east of Anson Road will be given to Portsmouth Football Club for use as a 250 space car park (with the potential to develop in the future). £25million would be invested in the supermarket site with the creation of 300 jobs (but note these are not full-time jobs – the full time equivalent is approximately 180).

The superstore would be 5,500 square metres which is larger than the North Harbour store (4,710m²) but smaller than Havant (6,215m²). The trading space will be much the same as ASDA at Fratton which has a mezzanine floor.

The design is very similar to other contemporary Tesco stores having a ground floor car park with shopping above, much like that at Havant. We commented that, to date, such



car parking is dismal and dispiriting as anyone visiting Tesco Havant or IKEA Southampton by car will understand. We asked that they think carefully about the ambience of the area to make it as bright and welcoming as possible.

Where will the shoppers come from? We all manage to get our food shopping today so the new store will undoubtedly mean

that there will be a change of shopping habits. There will be losers but we were assured that most would be those who today travel to the north of the city would no longer need to make those journeys and thus reduce the traffic on the routes out of town (so-called displacement shopping).

How will the shoppers reach the store? We asked developers (who had travelled to the meeting in separate MPVs) whether discussions had taken place with local bus companies. They promised to look into the matter and admitted that they did not know about the new Park and Ride being built at Tipner. Park & Ride to Fratton Park on match days would seem sensible. The highway proposals include a new roundabout on Fratton Way giving access to the 579 space car park and to a petrol filling station. Milton Lane and its direct pedestrian and cycle link between Fratton and Milton would be rerouted.

Sustainable design? The store will have a combined heat and power (CHP) installation which generates electricity as well as heating. Sadly, there is no intention to provide Solar Photo-Voltaic panels on the vast roof area because the weight of them would require supports throughout the building, limiting the flexibility of the trading space.

Other benefits to the community? There is an ancient and well-used footbridge across the railway on Milton Lane which links the area to Fratton. Currently this is not accessible to all and requires ramps to enable those who cannot use the steep steps. We suggested that a contribution to improving the bridge would be very welcome.

And finally. The store will be open 24 hours, which in England means 24 hours Mon-Fri, a few less on Saturday and limited opening on Sunday. But, we were reassured that we would still be able to purchase fresh milk and other supplies at the nearby Tesco Express in Goldsmith Avenue when the main store is closed. What a relief!

The Portsmouth Society, Registered Charity no. 266116

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