Winchfield Parish Council

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WINCHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 21 SEPTEMBER2026 AT 7PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT: Cllr Meyrick Williams (Chairman), Cllr Cepta Hamm, Cllr Louise Hodgetts, Cllr Richard Milnes-James and Cllr Kate Stewart (Winchfield Parish Council – WPC),

6 Members of the public

Litter Pick Co-ordinator

Mrs Alison Ball (Clerk)

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr R Quarterman, Hampshire County Council (HCC), Cllrs Anne Crampton, Tim Southern and Spencer Farmer, Hart District Council (HDC), the Footpaths Warden and members of the Neighbourhood Policing Team.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATIONS UNDER S33 OF THE LOCALISM ACT 2011

Cllr Stewart declared an interest in Agenda Item 8.3, Land North of Winchfield Court, as a close neighbour to the site.

3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

4 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Parish Council meetings held on 20 July 2026 and 7 September 2026 be approved and signed as a correct record.

5 MATTERS ARISING

On item 21, Any other Business, of the Minutes of 20 July 2026 where it was reported that there had been an issue with the power supply to the sewage pumping station Cllr Stewart confirmed that this had now been fixed.

On item 12, New Benches and Information Boards, of the Minutes of 20 July 2026 it had been noted that the noticeboard was in need of repair. Cllr Stewart advised that a member of the public, Henry Chandler, had carried out maintenance work to the noticeboard and before and after pictures were displayed at the meeting. The Council expressed thanks to Mr Chandler for carrying out the work, which had significantly improved the appearance of the noticeboard.

6 HAMPSHIRE DEVOLUTION & LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

The Chairman advised that on 7 September the Government had paused and reviewed the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) programme nationally, withdrawing the March 2026 decision for Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton, meaning there was currently no LGR decision in place for the area. Councils had been asked to stop implementation work, including the Future Hampshire programme, while the review took

place, although LGR had not been cancelled. The Government had provided limited detail on the review, and while informal indications suggested an outcome may be known early in 2027, this had not been formally confirmed.

The changes to LGR did not impact on the devolution arrangements and plans remained in place for a Mayoral election for Hampshire in May 2028. The May 2027 local council elections would proceed for HCC and HDC based on the existing council boundaries. The Parish Council elections did not depend on LGR or devolution and would go ahead in May 2027 in accordance with the normal election cycle.

It was noted that Cllr Crampton of HDC had posed a motion which would be considered by HDC Full Council on 24 September which asked the Council to agree to establish the full cost to HDC of LGR and to request that the Leader of the Council write to the Secretary of State and local Members of Parliament making it clear that local taxpayers should not be expected to pay for the Government's LGR U turn, calling for the Government to reimburse HDC for all costs incurred.

7 HART DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

The Chairman advised that the Parish Council was working with the planning consultants to prepare for the first public consultation on the draft vision for Hart, the proposed spatial strategy and the evidence gathered so far. It was expected that this consultation would take place between 19 October and 30 November. Whilst the Parish Council had been working with neighbouring parish council's on the response to the Murrell Green planning application, the response to the Local Plan consultation would likely be done in isolation so that the focus could be on Winchfield.

As part of the consultation it was expected that there would be a Land Availability Assessment which would set out all the land put forward for potential development. This would only include the sites submitted up to 5 June 2026. Any sites submitted after 5 June would be assessed and considered as part of future updates to the assessment. The Chairman advised that he had posed the following question that would be put to the HDC Full Council at the meeting on 24 September:

"Hart District Council replied to a question placed on the Planning Portal stating that it will publish a Land Availability Assessment (LAA) in readiness for this October consultation on the Local Plan. The response stated that it will include only those sites submitted prior to 5 June 26 – is this statement correct and why will the LAA not include sites submitted in the last three months?"

The Chairman would attend the meeting at HDC and report back on the response received.

It was noted that a member of the public, Henry Chandler, had written to relevant MPs and parliamentary and planning specialists about the new housing numbers being required by the Government for Hart. He had produced a briefing paper which questioned whether the Government's Standard Method accurately reflected the housing need in Hart. The current Standard Method figure required 771 homes per annum, compared with a stock-based baseline of approximately 344 homes per annum. The briefing noted that the affordability adjustment, based on Hart's workplace-based affordability ratio, accounted for approximately 427 additional homes per annum (55% of the final figure). It questioned whether workplace-based earnings were an appropriate measure of affordability in Hart, given the significant level of out-commuting, and highlighted the relevance of this issue to the preparation of the Hart Local Plan. The Chairman thanked Mr Chandler for his interest in this and for taking it up with the relevant people.

8 PLANNING

8.1 Applications received since the last meeting:

26/01218/HOU Baileys Farm, Potbridge Road

Erection of a single storey side extension to existing detached outbuilding. WPC response submitted by the deadline of 18 August: "Winchfield Parish Council has no objection to this application that seeks retrospective planning permission for the erection of a detached garaging/storage and recreational outbuilding to serve Bailey's Farm. The application seeks to regularise the development on this part of the site and conforms with WNP 2022-2037."

26/00976/PREAPP Land NE of Winchfield Lodge, Old Potbridge Road

Erection of 19 dwellings and associated works.
A detailed response was submitted before the deadline on 27 August. The full response could be seen on the HDC website.

The Chairman advised that the Parish Council response submitted contained an objection to the planning application and had been worked up in consultation with the planning consultants. There had also been communication with the residents in Winchfield Crescent as they would be significantly impacted by this proposed development. The response recognised Hart's housing-land shortfall and the provision of seven affordable homes, but advised that the site was unsuitable due to it being outside the settlement boundary, in open countryside and poorly connected to local services by sustainable transport. Concerns regarding landscape and settlement character, heritage, highways and parking, drainage and water, ecology and biodiversity, Thames Basin Heaths mitigation, residential amenity, and infrastructure were also set out in the response. The response requested that a Landscape Visual Assessment be carried out. It was noted that the responses submitted by other expert consultees aligned with the WPC response.

Thanks was expressed to the Winchfield Crescent Management Company for agreeing to contribute to the costs involved in obtaining the professional planning advice which helped inform the response to this application.

8.2 **Murrell Green**

The Chairman advised that the Parish Council meeting held on 7 September which had been to principally to consider the Murrell Green planning application had been well attended with 60 residents in the audience. The HDC planning portal was now showing 536 objections to the planning application. Whilst the official deadline had passed for public comments anyone who had not yet submitted a response was encouraged to do so as anything submitted before consideration by HDC was likely to be included.

The Parish Council response to the planning application was coming together with a draft recently circulated to councillors and Hook and Hartley Wintney parish councils. It was intended that the response would be from all three parish councils. A meeting would be held towards the end of the week with the planning consultants and representatives from all three parishes to run through any comments on the draft and pull together a final draft. The response would also be reviewed by the consultant Anne Skippers who would be able to give a view from the prospective of a planning inspector.

The Chairman asked the Members if they had any comments on the draft response. Cllr Hamm suggested that there could be more reference to education and health which the Chairman agreed with although these were issues that would be dealt with in significantly

more detail during the s106 process. Councillors agreed that the draft document was very thorough and thanks was expressed to Cllr Hodgetts and Williams for all their work on bringing this together.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Hodgetts and Williams be authorised to finalise the response to the planning application for Murrell Green, in consultation with the planning consultants and Hook and Hartley Wintney parish councils and that this document be submitted to HDC before the deadline of 5 October 2026.

It was noted that once the response was finalised it would be added to the Parish Council website.

It was noted that the final response would be sent to Odiham Parish Council as it was anticipated that Odiham Parish Council would register its support for the contents of the document with HDC.

The Chairman advised that he had recently watched the recording of the HDC Development Management Committee which took place on 16 September. At this meeting consideration was given to an application for 169 houses at Firgrove Farm, Eversley. Officers at HDC had recommended approval of this application, stating that the need for housing outweighed the harm likely to be caused. The Committee comprised nine members, of whom six voted to refuse the application and three abstained. This was considered a significant local outcome, particularly as the Chair had reminded the Committee that the application would be called in by the Secretary of State if it were refused.

The Committee collectively identified concerns relating to sustainability, habitats, the environment and coalescence, and in particular the harm to the heritage significance of a listed building. The process had required the Committee itself, rather than officers subsequently, to determine the precise wording of the reasons for refusal, which would then be recorded in the minutes. The Committee had elected to rely on a single issue, namely the harm to heritage, as the argument to be presented to the Secretary of State, so as not to dilute its case by including the other issues. This application would be followed to see if any lessons could be learnt that would be relevant to applications in Winchfield.

The Chairman advised that on the 14 September he had attended, along with Cllr Hodgetts a meeting organised by HDC with Lightwood (the developers of Murrell Green) and representatives from Hook Parish Council. This was not to discuss the specific responses to the planning application but a more general discussion. It was clear that Lightwood was very committed to the development at Murrell Green and felt that it was the only site in Hart suitable to accommodate the housing numbers needed. They also felt it was the best way to deliver the housing needed as it would come with infrastructure.

A member of the public asked whether Lightwood would consider building less houses on the site and Cllr Hodgetts responded advising that less houses would mean less or no infrastructure and it was unknown what number of houses was the cut off point for the provision of the infrastructure.

8.3 Land North of Winchfield Court

It was noted that no date had been set for the enforcement case for plots 2, 3 and 4. It was understood that the legal team working for HDC on this intended to write to the Magistrates Court regarding this and some other cases to complain about the delay in allocating a court date.

(NOTE: Cllr Stewart declared an interest in this item as a near neighbour. She remained in the room during its consideration.)

8.4 Chapel Bungalow, Potbridge Road

The Enforcement Team at HDC had passed this to their legal team.

The Chairman advised that the Paddock remained a formal gypsy and traveller site within the parish and was authorised for no more than four caravans of which no more than two should be static caravans. The number of structures on this site had increased but following action by the HDC enforcement team it had recently been reduced back down to the permitted amount.

9 HIGHWAYS

9.1 Updates from HCC Highways:

None.

9.2 Flooding on the Highway

Cllr Hamm advised that during recent rain there had not been any flooding on the highway on Station Road but that this would need to be monitored as there had not yet been significant rain fall.

At the last meeting there had been a report of a smell of sewage in the area. This had not recently been an issue as residents had been reminded of the importance of regularly emptying septic tanks.

9.3 Update on the Barley Mow Junction

Cllr Hodgetts reported that she had met with an officer from Hampshire Highways on site to discuss the proposed changes to the Barley Mow junction. The proposals showed that the Pale Lane section of the junction would be moved 1 to 1.5 metres further out into Chatter Alley. From the plans it was hard to see the benefit of this but having played it out on site it had showed that it would help to increase sightlines. In addition to the sign and line changes put forward by Hampshire Highways, at the site meeting it had been agreed to add in some dragons teeth on Chatter Alley and to include some additional speed limit reminder signs. Hampshire Highways would revise the proposals with updated costings and, if agreed by the Parish Council, detailed plans would be produced. The Parsh Council had already agreed to pay for new signs and lines as part of the Community Funded Initiative scheme. It had been confirmed that where signs were tired and needed to be replaced due to wear and tear HCC would fund this.

It was questioned whether s106 money could be used towards the costs involved in this and Cllr Milnes-James agreed to find out.

9.4 B3016 Proposed Speed Limit Reduction Consultation

It was noted that confirmation had been received from Hampshire Highways that the scheme to reduce the speed limit on the B3016 had been approved, although a date for implementation on the ground had not yet been received. Thanks was expressed to all the residents who took the time to write to Hampshire Highways to express support for this scheme.

Cllr Hodgetts had met with an officer from Hampshire Highways to discuss the new street furniture needed for the new speed limit and whether this could be in locations and of a

style suitable for holding a new SID. This had been agreed in principle but a formal application would need to be made once the speed limit was in place. It was noted that the process for obtaining the proper licence for placing a SID on the highway had changed since the last application had been made and there was now a fee of £450.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Hodgetts be authorised to submit the application to HCC for a Section 72 Licence for the proposed locations for a SID on the B3016 and that approval be given to pay the fee of £450.

Cllr Hodgetts confirmed that she had already approached a local business owner to ask for a contribution to the purchase of a new SID. She was looking into the options for a new SID.

Cllr Hodgetts provided details of the statistics collected from the SID at the Barley Mow during June, July and August. She advised that the average speed limit was 26.8 mph with a total of 75,294 vehicles counted, an average of 818 vehicles a day. The top speed recorded was 50 mph. The number of vehicles recorded in June was 19,366, in July 34,468 and in August 21,460. There was a discussion about why the number was so high in July and there was speculation about road closures in the surrounding area pushing vehicles through the village. It was noted that 74% of vehicles travelled at or below 30 mph with approximately 1 in 4 vehicles exceeding the limit across the three month period. The busiest day in the village was Tuesday with Sundays seeing the least volume of traffic. The AM peak was 8am in June and July which shifted to 11am in August which was not surprising with it being the holiday period. The PM peak was 5pm in June and 4pm in July and August. The full statistical summary was available on the Parish Council website.

Cllr Hodgetts advised that the SID on Station Road was not working properly and would be taken back to the manufacturer to see if it could be repaired.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Hodgetts for continuing with all the work on highways matters whilst also working on the planning issues.

10 FOOTPATHS REPORT

It was noted that the Footpaths Warden had given his apologies for the meeting but he had provided feedback to the Chairman prior to the meeting advising that the footpaths were generally in a good state.

There had been a delay with some of the works on the footpaths due to the contractor sustaining an injury but progress was being made. The contractor had spoken to workers at network rail about cutting back the growth through the fence from the railway.

11 NEWSLETTER

Any items for the next edition of the Newsletter, which would be out in early November, were welcomed. There would be lots of information to cover in this issue which would be slightly delayed to cover the progress with the HDC Local Plan.

12 NEW BENCHES

Councillor Stewart advised that she had been in touch with the brother of the pilot who was buried in the churchyard and had died in the Chinook disaster in 1994 on the Mull of Kintyre. Wording had been agreed for the plaque that would be placed on a new bench in the field next to the Barley Mow. Once the bench had been delivered Cllr Stewart would invite the family to attend to see the bench put into place.

13 LITTER PICK

The Litter Pick Co-ordinator confirmed that the date for the autumn litter pick would be 15 November.

14 UPDATE ON THE SPEED INDICATOR DEVICE

This had been covered under item 9.4 above.

15 UPDATE ON THE DEFIBRILLATORS

Cllr Hodgetts thanked the guardians for continuing to check all the defibrillators on a regular basis. She advised that none of the defibs had been used since the last meeting.

16 S106 MONEY

It was advised that the composting toilet at St Mary's Church partially funded from s106 funds was in place and in use. Pictures of the outside of the toilet building were displayed at the meeting.

17 EVENTS

Cllr Hamm advised that it had been a quiet summer for events but that preparations were now underway for the Christmas event with santas grotto and Christmas tree at the Hurst. She requested that funding be set aside for the Christmas event and for the Christmas tree.

RESOLVED: That a budget of £500 be set aside for Christmas events.

Cllr Hamm advised that there were new directors in post at the Beauclerk Green Residents Association and they had requested funding of a maximum of £150 to be used for signage on the estate to warn of ducks and hedgehogs crossing the road.

RESOLVED: That a grant of a maximum of £150 be awarded to the Beauclerk Green Residents Association for the purchase of wildlife warning signs.

18 COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Cllr Hamm advised that it was the intention to develop a community emergency plan and an emergency planning/ community resilience event had been attended to begin this process. There had been communication with other nearby parish council's to see if there was any scope for working together and it was thought that Eversley Parish Council might want to be involved. A further update would be provided at the next meeting.

19 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

19.1 Conclusion of Audit to year end 31 March 2026

The external audit for the year ended 31 March 2026 had been completed and the only matter that was noted related to the legal power used to provide a grant to Citizens Advice Hart. Whilst it was legally acceptable to rely on s137 of the Local Government Act 1972 for giving this grant, this power should be used as a last resort and an alternative power, s142(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972, could be used instead. The Clerk had made a note of this and would use this power from 2026/2027 onwards. This was the same comment that had been received during the 2024/2025 audit but the comments had been received too late to make the change in 2025/2026. The Notice of Conclusion of Audit had been displayed both on the Council's noticeboards and on the website.

It was **AGREED** to receive and approve the report of the external auditor contained within section 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26.

19.2 Appointment of Internal Auditor for 2026/2027

A Letter of Engagement had been received from Mike Platten of April Skies regarding his internal audit services for 2026/2027. It was noted that Mike Platten was completely independent from the Council and was suitably qualified. He was not related to or have a friendly relationship with any councillor or member of staff at the Parish Council and he had no involvement with the running of the Council beyond providing Internal Audit services.

It was noted that this was the last year Mike Platten would be carrying audits before retiring and a new auditor would be needed from 2027/2028. The Clerk would look for a new provider for 2027/2028 onwards.

RESOLVED: That Mike Platten of April Skies be appointed as Internal Auditor for 2026/2027 and that the Letter of Engagement be approved and signed by the Chairman.

19.3 Mobile Phone Contract

The Clerk requested permission to sign up to a mobile phone contract that would allow the Parish Council to have its own dedicated telephone number. The Clerk had been using her personal telephone for Parish Council business and for various reasons this could not continue.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk be authorised to signup to a mobile phone contact for the Parish Council at a cost of £6 per month and that a direct debit be set up for payment of this.

19.4 Grants for Approval

Requests for grants had been received from CPRE and from Basingstoke Canal. Money had been provided in the budget for these grants.

RESOLVED: That a grant of £200 be made to CPRE plus £60 membership fee; and that a grant of £250 be provided to Basingstoke Canal.

19.5 Planning Budget and Expenditure – For Monitoring

As there had been lots of financial activity, largely related to obtaining professional planning advice to enable the Parish Council to respond effectively to planning applications it was suggested that the planning budget be specifically monitored at each meeting.

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated a spreadsheet setting out income and expenditure on the planning budget since 1 April 2026 alongside predicted spend in the coming months. There had also been commitment from other parish councils and from a residents association to contribute towards these costs and this was also detailed in the document.

In summary the planning budget had started the year with £58,894. To date there had been spend of £9,359, leaving £49,535. Of this £26,274 had been committed with a commitment for income of £9,188 from other parish council's and a residents association. This meant there was £32,449 remaining.

It was noted that during the budget setting for 2026/2027 the planning budget had been set with the new Local Plan in mind. The planning application for Murrell Green had not been expected and was expenditure from the budget that was not planned for. It was predicted that there would be enough within the overall budget for the year, with some

flexibility to move money from other projects to the planning budget and to use funds in the general reserve. This would need to be reviewed during the budget setting process for 2027/2028 and it was anticipated that the precept would need to be increased for 2027/2028 if the Parish Council was to continue with such detailed involvement in the planning process. The Chairman warned residents this may result in an increase in the Parish Council portion of council tax of up to 50%. To put this into figures for an average band D property this would equate to an increase of approximately £4 a month.

Cllr Hodgetts advised that all the work being done by consultants on the response to the Murrell Green application was being done with the revised Local Plan in mind and some of the information would help inform that work.

RESOLVED: To note the content of the planning budget income and expenditure monitoring document.

19.6 Payments for Approval

RESOLVED: That the following payments be approved:

Clerk - AB	September Salary	£421.30	LGA 1972 s112
Clerk - AB	October Salary	£410.50	LGA 1972 s112
HMRC	Tax/NI automatically debited	£Variable	LGA 1972 s111
Clerk – AB	Expenses (WFH Allowance August & September + Teams Essentials 1 year subscription)	£70.64	LGA 1972 s111
Lloyds Bank	Monthly charge for bank account – automatically debited each month	£4.25	LGA 1972 s111
Winchfield Village Hall	Hall Hire Informal Meeting	£24.00	LGA 1972 s111
Winchfield Village Hall	Hall Hire September Meetings	£96.00	LGA 1972 s111
Hampshire County Council	Basingstoke Canal Annual Contribution	£250.00	LGA 1972 s144
CPRE	Grant	£200.00	LGA 1972 s137
CPRE	Membership Fee	£60.00	LGA 1972 s137
BDO	External Audit	£252.00	LGA 1972 s111
Teams Essentials	2x 12 month subscriptions to Teams	£89.28	LGA 1972 s111
Stone & Meadow	Professional Planning Advice – Heritage	£3,600.00	LGA 1972 s111
Stone & Meadow	Professional Planning Advice - Landscape	£4,588.16	LGA 1972 s111
Troy Planning	Professional Planning Advice	£780.00	LGA 1972 s111
The Ecology Group	Professional Planning Advice	£3,019.56	LGA 1972 s111
HTP Consulting	Professional Planning Advice	£7,112.40	LGA 1972 s111
Transavia (Ready2Print)	Printing MG Flyers	£70.00	LGA 1972 s111
Meyrick Williams	Reimbursement for Ink	£74.98	LGA 1972 s111
Louise Hodgetts	Expenses	£38.60	LGA 1972 s111
Richard Blay	Cutting back on footpaths	£450.00	LGA 1972 s101
*Payment already made; expenditure agreed by email and within previously agreed budgets			

20 CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence had been received other than that already forwarded and none that needed addressing that had not appeared elsewhere on the agenda.

21 ANY OTHER BUSINESS *Report Only*

A member of the public introduced herself as one of the new Directors of the Beauclerk Green Residents Association. She advised that there were five new directors and there was a new community focus to the Residents Association. There was due to be a community event on Sunday 27 September at 11am to tidy the area around the pond. Members of the Parish Council were invited to attend.

The Chairman thanked her for her attendance and invitation. He advised that from May 2027 he anticipated vacancies on the Parish Council and asked if there were any Beauclerk Green residents that would be interested in becoming a councillor to get in touch.

22 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Dates of future meetings were noted: 16 November 2026, 25 January 2027, 22 March 2027, 17 May 2027, 19 July 2027, 20 September 2027, 22 November 2027 starting at 7pm in the Village Hall.

It was noted that the Annual Parish Assembly would be taking place on 22 March rather than in May as was usually the case. This was to allow the current Council members to give a summary of the year prior to the May 2027 elections.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.21 pm