

**MINUTES OF THE WINCHFIELD ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY
HELD ON MONDAY 18 MAY 2026 AT 6.30 PM IN WINCHFIELD VILLAGE HALL**

PRESENT Cllr M Williams (Chairman), Cllr C Hamm, Cllr L Hodgetts, and Cllr K Stewart (Winchfield Parish Council – WPC)
Cllr R Quarterman (Hampshire County Council – HCC)
20 members of the public
Mrs A Ball (Clerk to Winchfield Parish Council)

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr R Milnes-James (WPC) (joined for part of the meeting virtually) and Cllr A Crampton (Hart District Council - HDC).

2 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 19 May 2025 were accepted and signed as a correct record.

3 CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Assembly. He particularly welcomed Cllr Richard Quarterman who had recently been elected to HCC.

Cllr Quarterman addressed the meeting advising that he had been a district councillor representing Yateley West since 2018 and he welcomed the new position at HCC.

The Chairman expressed thanks to Tim Davies for the work he had done to support the parish during his time as the County Councillor.

The Chairman advised that the Parish Council was financially sound and provisions had been made for the future, but help would be needed.

On Community Safety significant improvements had been achieved and new projects had been approved.

On Community Projects and Events, the Parish Council had invested in village life with many events taking place. New challenges would face the village in the coming year with Devolution, Local Government Reorganisation, and the update to the HDC Local Plan.

He advised that the presentation slides displayed at the meeting were available on the Parish Council website and he welcomed participation from residents during the Open Forum.

4 FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

Cllr Milnes-James had joined the meeting virtually and he presented a summary of the income and expenditure for 2025/2026:

	£'k	£'k
Receipts		
Precept	33.3	
Solar Farm Income	3.2	
PPC Group - SID donation	2.0	
s106 for bench	0.4	
VAT refund	2.2	
Interest	1.5	
	<hr/>	42.7
Payments		
Running costs	(9.1)	
Planning/NDP	0.0	
Grants/Donations/Events	(5.0)	
Community Benefit Fund	(5.1)	
Community Project Fund	(4.4)	
Repairs & Maintenance	(1.1)	
VAT	(1.8)	
		(26.4)
Movement in year		<hr/> 16.3 <hr/>
Opening reserves		65.5
Movement in year		<hr/> 16.3 <hr/>
Closing reserves		<hr/> 81.8 <hr/>

Income had been in line with 2024/2025. A donation had been gratefully received from PPC Group (the haulage company on Station Road) in December 2025 towards the cost of a new Speed Indicator Device (SID).

Expenditure had been lower than prior years by £6k. This reduction was primarily due to lower expenditure from the Community Benefit Fund which was unusually high in 2024/25 due to the cost of improvements to footpaths. The financial situation had been strengthened as the closing cash position had increased by £16.3k to £81.8k.

The budget for 2026/2027 had been approved at the January 2026 meeting. The precept for 2026/2027 had increased by 1.39% or £1.35 for a Band D household. This was materially lower than the government's measure of inflation of 3.6% for the year to December 2025.

Budgeted expenses were in line with prior year at £39k. This included a further £18k added to the Planning Fund to be used to challenge and influence any development proposals. The fund stood at £59k. The general reserves remained in line with the auditor's guidance so there was nothing more to add. A further £4.7k had been added to the Community Project/Benefit Funds for community projects within Winchfield. Ideas for this funding were always welcomed.

Summary of the 2026/2027 budget:

Budget expenses 2026/27	£'k
Running cost	9.5
Planning/NDP	18.0
Grants and Donations	4.3
Events	1.5
Community Benefit Fund	3.2
Community Project Fund	1.5
General Reserve	0.0
Other	1.0
Total	39.0

Specific reserves were available for investment in community projects. At April 2026 the Community Project and Community Benefit Funds totalled £24.5k. The Community Benefit Fund had £13.8k available. The annual annuity of £3k per year from the Oakfield solar farms would continue until December 2030. This fund was available for “charitable, educational, environmental and amenity purposes... where possible for promotion of sustainable energy and uses....not for political, religious or entertainment and hospitality purposes”. The Community Project Fund, established in 2023, had £10.7k in reserves. Relative to the Benefit Fund and s106 funds, there was greater flexibility over how Project Funds could be invested.

The Section 106 funds held by HDC and available to fund capital projects in Winchfield that had demonstrable leisure and community benefit, had all been committed. In the year, the Parish Council had supported the Winchfield Festival Committee’s application to fund remedial works to the field next to the Barley Mow to make it more usable for community events and the Parochial Church Council’s application for a composting loo at St Mary’s Winchfield. The remaining balance of c.£900 would be used to fund the purchase of two benches to be placed within the Parish. Thanks were expressed to the residents of Winchfield for finding projects over the last few years to use these available funds to benefit the community.

5 COMMUNITY SAFETY

Councillor Hodgetts advised that the relationship between the Parish Council and Hampshire Highways had been good during the year which had resulted in some successes. There had been drainage clearance and jetting throughout winter and autumn along the B3016; the eroded verges along Station Road had been reinstated and potholes along Station Road had been repaired. There was still work to do to alleviate the flooding on Station Road under the railway bridge and to address the flooding on Pale Lane near Winchfield Court. Members of the public were encouraged to report potholes and any highways issue to HCC.

The new SID had been introduced in January 2026 and would be rotated between the five approved locations along Station Road. The original SID remained at the Barley Mow and was being rotated on a semi-permanent basis. The data continued to show an average speed reduction of 4 to 5 mph passing by the SIDs with the 85th percentile speed falling, with drivers generally travelling 3 to 4 mph slower.

There had been changes proposed to the junction at Pale Lane and Chatter Alley. The aim was to extend the Pale Lane give way lineage to give greater visibility splay in both directions. Hampshire Highways had approved the Community Funded Initiative application and the process of scoping the project was underway. This would include the design and cost projections. A full public consultation of the proposal would be conducted once the outline design had been produced by HCC and approved by the Parish Council.

Cllr Hodgetts went on to announce a fantastic highways success story. The campaign with Hampshire Highways for a speed reduction on the B3016 had been successful. After many years of campaigning Hampshire Highways had introduced proposals to reduce the current 50mph section to 40mph, and extend it to beyond Dignity, Winchfield Logs and Chevertons Farm. In addition the remaining section of

the B3016 would be reduced to 50 mph. It would be possible to install a SID along the 40mph section to further discourage speeding.

Thanks was expressed to Cllr Hodgetts for her work in securing this change which would help to reduce the number of accidents which had been on the increase in recent years on this section of road, and may, as result, save lives.

With regard to the defibrillators, Cllr Hodgetts confirmed that there were eight defibrillators located across Winchfield. The Parish Council had organised and funded six training events over the last few years, with the most recent held in March. There were now circa **80** individuals from the village and beyond trained in CPR and life saving support skills. Another training event was being planned for later in 2026 and anyone who was interested in attending should contact the Clerk. Cllr Hodgetts thanked the guardians who regularly checked that each device was working correctly.

6 COMMUNITY PROJECTS AND EVENTS

Cllr Hamm gave details of some of the community projects that had been possible thanks to the money available in the community funds. She advised that the places on the Winchfield Community Choir were now all taken and there was a waiting list to join. The choir had performed at many events over the year. The choir aimed to foster a sense of belonging, enjoyment and social connection through music. It provided a space for people to meet, connect and build relationships across Winchfield and the surrounding villages. Individuals of all skill levels had been encouraged to join to enjoy the experience of singing together, promoting good mental and physical health. During the events funds had been raised that had been donated to local charities.

The Christmas event had been run in 2025 for the third year. It had been attended by 23 children with parents and grandparents. There had been a crafty corner, party, disco, games and, the highlight, meeting santa. Cllr Hamm thanked those involved in making this event happen.

The Women of Winchfield (WOW) group was continuing to thrive with many activities taking place including wreath making, meals out and ukulele playing.

For the second time in April 2026 an Easter Egg Hunt had taken place, where children attended with care givers to join the Easter Bunny in the hunt for eggs. Financial support had also been provided for a second Easter event including an egg hunt at the church.

Whilst the Greening Campaign had come to its natural conclusion towards the end of 2025/ early 2026 during the year events had taken place under this banner. These had included:

- A nature walk, identifying existing wildlife habitats and species and locating areas for improvement and new habitat creation;
- Advice for residents regarding keeping safe and enjoying nature, with particular information on ticks;
- Plant swap events which had been very popular and would continue with the next one taking place on 30 May at Caru Coffi, Trimmers Cottage;
- Working with the local primary school getting the children to produce posters around the theme of waste prevention and recycling with a prizes for the best designs. Work would continue with the school who had asked for help with providing an area to grow some fruits and vegetables;
- Construction of plant boxes that had been placed in public areas and were designed to encourage growing local and supporting insects.

Cllr Hamm concluded by advising that the next big event would be the Village Fete due to take place on 20 June.

7 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION, DEVOLUTION AND HDC LOCAL PLAN

The Chairman gave a report on Local Government Reorganisation, Devolution and the HDC Local Plan:

Devolution

Devolution was the transfer of powers and funding from national to local government to enable more decisions to be made locally, helping regions to shape their own future.

Once established, in 2028, the Hampshire and Solent Combined County Authority would receive new powers and funding from central government. Decisions about the following key regional priorities would be made locally:

- Transport and connectivity;
- Skills and employment support;
- Housing and strategic planning;
- Economic development;
- Energy; and
- Public safety.

A Mayor would be elected to head up the new Authority in 2028.

Local Government Reorganisation

The Government planned to replace all two-tier systems - where services are split between county and district or borough councils - with new unitary councils. This meant that county and district councils would no longer exist and brand-new organisations would be created. For residents in Winchfield this meant HDC joining with Rushmoor and Basingstoke and Deane to form a new North Hampshire Council which would perform all the duties and provide all the services currently provided by HDC and HCC. There would be no change to Winchfield Parish Council.

The process for making this change would involve:

- The Government bringing forward legislation to establish the new single tier of local government and make provision to abolish existing councils;
- Elections for the new Hampshire and Isle of Wight unitary councils, due to take place in May 2027;
- After the elections, a shadow council would be set up as a temporary body made up of the newly elected councillors;
- The role of the shadow council would be to prepare for the launch of the new councils in April 2028, agree budgets, policies and governance arrangements;
- HCC and the existing 14 district, borough and unitary councils would continue to run all day-to-day services until April 2028;
- Mayoral elections in May 2028 and the creation of the Hampshire & Solent Mayoral Combined County Authority responsible for strategy and collaboration, not local service delivery.

Hart District Council Local Plan 2028–2044

Due to new Government targets HDC would need to deliver 15,000 new houses in the next 20 years.

The proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) could have significant implications for Winchfield. The revised framework placed greater emphasis on development in “suitable” locations, building near railway stations, the use of payments into nature restoration levies as alternatives to appropriate assessment and the absence of the concept of Valued Landscapes.

Hart District Council Local Plan Timetable 2026–2028

HDC had recently published a timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan covering the period 2028–2044:

- Initial scoping consultation was scheduled for May to June 2026;
- Draft Plan consultation was expected during October to November 2026;
- Gateway reviews with the Planning Inspectorate would take place during 2027 and 2028;
- Submission of the Plan to the Secretary of State was anticipated in March 2028;
- Adoption was expected by October 2028 (but the timing of the Mayoral elections was noted as having the potential to alter this);

The Local Plan would eventually form part of the statutory development framework for the proposed North Hampshire authority.

Local Plan Updates

HDC was required to identify land for approximately 15,000 homes over a twenty-year period. Concern was raised that the strengthened presumption in favour of sustainable development could encourage speculative planning applications before the Local Plan was finalised.

There was a possibility that proposals similar to the former Shapley Heath development would return in the future. There was already information available on the early stages of an application for the Murrell Green area, which could comprise approximately 2,200 homes.

The Secretary of State had increased powers to “call in” applications involving more than 150 dwellings. Residents were encouraged to monitor updates published by HDC.

Parish Council Response

The Parish Council had established a dedicated planning section on the Parish Council website for planning issues and this would be kept as up to date, and as relevant to Winchfield, as possible. The Parish Council had also appointed the following specialist consultants to assist with planning matters:

- Troy Planning had been appointed to advise on planning policy and representations; and
- Stone & Meadow had been engaged to provide landscape and heritage advice.

Initial meetings had taken place with the consultants and site visits had been completed.

Parish Council Objectives for the Local Plan

The Parish Council’s key objectives in responding to the emerging Local Plan were:

- To ensure that the Plan was based on a thorough and balanced assessment of all sustainable options;
- To focus and prioritise on a strategy of brownfield first and the intensification of settlements;
- To ensure that the heritage, key landscape, biodiversity, SSSI sites and ancient woodlands in Winchfield, were preserved;
- To ensure that dwellings proposed for Winchfield met the design criteria specified in the Neighbourhood Plan;
- To ensure that appropriate levels of infrastructure and services were defined and delivered in advance of development;
- That full consideration was given to the physical constraints and limitations in and around Winchfield;
- That engagement with HDC and any developer be carried out in an early dialogue regarding Section 106 contributions; and
- To engage and partner with neighbouring villages to formulate coordinated responses to proposals.

Members noted that the Council’s guiding principle remained “the right thing, for the right reasons, in the right place”.

Murrell Green / Lightwood Land Proposal

Details had been published setting out a proposed development at Murrell Green promoted by Pegasus Group on behalf of Lightwood Land. It was reported that:

- The proposal comprised approximately 2,200 homes;
- Up to 900 of these dwellings could fall within Winchfield parish;
- Public consultation events had already taken place; and
- A formal planning application was expected in due course.

The Parish Council advised that it was continuing to work with neighbouring parish councils and specialist consultants, and that no formal position would be adopted until a planning application had been submitted. Members had reviewed indicative plans showing parish boundaries, landscape constraints and transport considerations associated with the proposal.

The Chairman concluded with an appeal for residents to consider standing for election as parish councillors in 2027. At that time the number of councillors would be increasing from five to seven. It was noted that councillors would play an important role in representing the community and contributing new ideas. Members were advised that meetings were generally held every two months and that training and Clerk support would be available for new councillors. Residents interested in becoming involved were invited to contact the Parish Clerk.

8 OPEN FORUM

The Chairman opened to floor to members of the public.

Councillor Quarterman spoke advising that he felt the meeting had provided a good and fair summary of the issues that would face councils in the coming year. He felt that the objectives set by HDC were very similar to those set by the Parish Council. There had been an increase in pressure on local councils to build new houses and this had resulted in less latitude for councils, with planning committees becoming very constrained. The Chairman requested that engagement take place with parish council so that all councils could work together.

A member of the public pointed out that a new gateway entry sign had been installed by Dogmersfield Parish Council which was a good way of slowing vehicles. He suggested some locations in the village that might benefit from similar. Cllr Hodgetts advised that these had been considered in the past but this could be revisited.

A member of the public advised that he had attended one of the Murrell Green public consultation events put on by Lightwood. He was concerned that he did not find them particularly transparent on certain details including the details of the corporate identity behind the proposals. He asked whether it would be possible to obtain a hierarchy of ownership and the Chairman said he would try.

A member of the public raised a potential issue with the giveway signage at the Hurst. It was agreed to have a look at this and see if any signage needed changing or if there needed to be additional signs.

A member of the public asked for clarification of the location of the potential new development on Old Potbridge Road and it was confirmed as being next to Winchfield Crescent. She followed up by asking about a piece of land not included in the Murrell Green proposals and it was confirmed that this was excluded as it was privately owned and therefore not included.

A member of the public expressed what a tremendous achievement the reduction in the speed limit along the B3016 was, advising that she had lived in the village for 45 years and had wanted to see such a change the whole time she had lived here.

Cllr Stewart reminded members of the public to put forward suggestions for locations for new benches as the s106 money needed to be spent and there was just enough remaining for two new benches.

A member of the public spoke to thank the Parish Council for all the work done, which for such a small community had been tremendous.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.26 pm.