



Minutes of the Highclere Parish Council Meeting

Westridge Studio

Tuesday 08 April at 7.30pm

Members Present: Cllr York (chair), Cllr Easton, Cllr Bartholomew, Cllr Falconer

Clerk: Amy White

1. 01/25 Apologies for Absence

Cllr MacIver sent his apologies.

2. 02/25 Declarations of Interest

None.

3. 03/25 To agree Minutes of Meeting held on 11 March 2025

The Minutes of 11 February 2025 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman, Cllr York.

4. 04/25 Matters arising from Meeting held on 11 March 2025

Number	Action	Person
120/24	Clerk to send Cllr Falconer's Register of Interests form to BDBC. Actioned.	Clerk
122/24	Cllr Izett to ask Bewley homes for more information on planned start and timescales, and to join the APM in May. Actioned	Cllr Izett
123/24	Clerk to add Action Plan to website. Actioned	Clerk
127/24	Clerk to ask Cllr Izett and Cllr Carr to join the APM to help explain the devolution/unitary process. Actioned	Clerk

5. 05/25 Co-option of new councillor

David Garland was unable to attend the meeting so the co-option will be moved to the May meeting.

6. 06/25 Public participation

None.

7. 07/25 Reports from County and Borough Councillors

Cllr Izett was unable to attend in person and sent in a report to the council.

Devolution & Local Govt Reorganisation:

This is happening according to the very rushed timetable imposed by Govt which commenced at Christmas. The 15 councils in Hampshire went back to the Govt on 21st March

as required with their joint proposals for unitaries across the county. Agreement could not be reached on the number of unitaries and their composition so the proposals sent to Govt were limited to an outline of shared governance principles for the new unitaries.

Worked up business cases for how services will be provided and funded by the new unitaries must be provided to Govt by September/ October. It seems likely that HCC and East Hants Council will be making a case for 3 unitaries; Hampshire mainland, Southampton & Portsmouth, effectively replicating HCC as a unitary with no district/ borough councils. The argument is that HCC provides many of the services now and therefore can absorb the districts' responsibilities and will be big enough.

12 of the other district councils including BDBC favour 4 unitaries comprising North Hants (Basingstoke, Hart & Rushmoor), South/ Middle Hants based around Winchester, and Southampton and Portsmouth. These councils are working together as FUP- Four Unitaries Preference. A unitary covering North Hants was supported by all political groups at the special council meeting convened on 20th March in Basingstoke. At over 400,000 residents it will be large in unitary council terms and is thought to strike the right balance between scale and ability to deliver services on the one hand and geographical/ representational connectivity to residents. A whole Hampshire unitary is thought to be too big and too remote from residents.

The Govt will decide ultimately at some point in 2026. The question of how local govt and in particular adult social care and education is to be properly funded has yet to be answered. While ending the current 2 tier system may bring efficiencies and cost savings in time, it won't be nearly enough to overcome the longstanding underfunding of the services local govt currently provides.

8. 08/25 Planning

For full responses, please visit the Basingstoke and Deane planning page.

- *25/00644/ROC Bears Cottage Tubbs Lane Highclere (Response sent: No comment)*
- *25/00464/HSE Woodlands 1 Burfield Highclere (Response sent: No comment)*
- *25/00733/FUL Land To The South Of Hillside Andover Road Highclere- deadline 17 April. Response to be sent: Objection.*
- *25/00782/HSE Irie Cottage Foxs Lane Penwood: Deadline 28 April- this application arrived after the agenda but was considered non contentious and therefore a decision was made: Response to be sent: No comment.*

9. 09/25 HPC Action Plan

The Glebe: Cllr Bartholomew has confirmed that the Head of Terms are being set up by Savills and should be ready by the end of the week for HPC to take on a 2-year lease.

Watermill Bridge: The Clerk has arranged a meeting that HPC will host at Westridge Studio on 06 May, to discuss the development commencement (planned for Autumn 2025 with 80 houses built in Highclere Parish), and confirm questions that will be put to Bewley Homes for the Annual Parish Meeting on 20 May.

Unitaries update: Cllrs Izett, Carr and Thacker will attend the APM and update the parishioners.

10. 10/25 Lengthsman tasks

The council has 6 unused hours from 24/25 to use up. The Lengthsman will be here on 15 April.

Action: Clerk to request moss removal on Westridge disabled/pedestrian path, removal/repair of reflective posts on A343 from Penwood crossroads to Seven Stones Bridge, and cleaning of gateways.

11. 11/25 Neighbourhood Plan

Colin Wall provided a brief update:

The "Reasonable Alternatives" workshop with AECOM was held on Wednesday 2nd April. Their objective was unclear but they seemed to want to tell us that they had looked at all the data we had used to do the selection and found it "sound". They realised that Flexford Field 2 would be eliminated by Basingstoke as not adjacent to the putative SPB and so they would be reporting their view on the comparison between Mount Common and Cleremeadows. This would cover environmental aspects in one part of their report (seems to cover all the same ground as the Navigus work) and against our objectives (just like we did) in the other. Jim Stokes has raised with you the question of funding, given that the 25/26 grant application process is not yet open but the unspent 24/25 money has now been returned. I believe we still have some headroom and PlanET are starting a little work on preparations for the Reg14 consultation.

12. 12/25 To discuss and decide on grant application received from Highclere Village Hall

The Clerk has received a grant application from HVH for £4000. The earmarked reserve for 2025/26 is £3000. The council discussed the application (attached to the end of the Minutes) for electrical and XX repairs, and agreed that as a custodian trustee, it was appropriate to support the village hall request.

Full council agreed to the HVH grant application.

Action: Clerk to confirm support for grant application to HVH committee and transfer the £4000 requested.

13. 13/25 Financial Matters

a. Accounts for payment

The Clerk presented accounts for payment (see end of Minutes). The payroll provider, Red76, is migrating its payroll services and the payslips and PAYE were not available for the meeting. The council agreed for these payments to be made after the meeting and they will be retrospectively approved at the subsequent meeting.

The Litter Warden salary will be increased to the new 25/26 living wage of £12.21ph.

Current confirmed direct debits for 2025/26:

- Red76 Payroll (payroll provider)
- Scribe Accounting (accounting software)
- Hugo Fox (website and email)
- Ionos (website and email)

Bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2025:

Unity Bank Current Account: £6167.86
Unity Bank Savings Account: £40216.66
Total: £: **46384.52**

14. 14/25 Annual Parish Meeting/Annual Meeting

The AM and APM will be held on Tuesday 20th May.

Focus:

- Welcome from Chair/ HPC priorities
- Bewley Homes development update (with representative present)
- Unitary authority update

Action: Clerk to advertise APM on website, noticeboards.

Annual Meeting 6:45pm

Annual Parish Meeting 7:30pm.

15. 15/25 Items to take forward to subsequent meeting

Lengthsman tasks for May. Action Plan (standard item).

**Date of next Meeting: Tuesday 20 May 2025, Highclere Village Hall
6:45pm (Annual Meeting), 7:30pm (Annual Parish Meeting)**

Actions from 08 April 2025 Meeting

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