



## DRAFT MINUTES

West Meon Parish Council  
6th Feb 2024; 7.30pm; West Meon Village Hall

### PRESENT:

Cllr Trenchard (Chair); Cllr Edwards; Cllr Gedye; Cllr Thomson; Cllr Silk (left the room 8.34pm; returned 8.36pm); & Cllr Waller.

### In Attendance:

Mrs Joanna Tester (Clerk); Cllr Bolton (WCC; left 8.36pm); & five members of the public.

Meeting started at 7.30pm

Item No.	Item	Discussion & Decision	Action
2609	Acknowledgements	Councillors paused and remembered in silence the contributions of all villagers who have passed away since the last meeting.	
2610	Apologies	No apologies received from WMPC cllrs. Apologies received from Cllrs Lumby (HCC) and Pett (WCC).	
2611	Disclosable pecuniary interests	None declared.	
2612	Requests for dispensations	None received.	
2613	Public questions & comments	<p>Standing orders suspended for maximum 10 mins. Members of the public commented on the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Woodlands - traffic speed issues. Resident requested an update on progress made with investigating the feasibility and costs of Woodlands entrance signs. Clerk advised that no action had yet been taken as e-mail correspondence from another woodlands resident had indicated that these were not an acceptable alternative to entrance gates. Resident advised that this was not the overwhelming view of Woodlands residents. Cllrs agreed that the Clerk should therefore continue with seeking quotes etc. It was confirmed that Woodlands residents are already liaising with WM Safe and Sound Working Group.</li> <li>• WM Safe and Sound Working Group - will be presenting report to PC next month.</li> </ul>	Clerk

2613 cont.	Public questions & comments cont.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Road closure on High St for Portsmouth Water has been changed from 19-21 Feb to 12-14 Feb. Although this is better in terms of bus services for school &amp; college children (as next week is half term holiday), it was pointed out that this short notice for residents and businesses is not acceptable. Many businesses have already made arrangements (e.g. with staff) which will now be difficult to change. Councillors &amp; Clerk advised that residents should contact Portsmouth Water in the first instance.</li> </ul>	
2614	Resume standing orders	Agreed.	
2615	District councillor's report & questions arising	<p>Report received (Appendix A). Cllr Bolton commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hospitals consultation - encourage everyone to take part.</li> <li>Fly-tipping - issue is becoming worse.</li> </ul> <p>Questions to WCC Cllrs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will WCC support PC in efforts to prevent cutting of bus service? [Yes. Need to encourage usage. Has been low since Covid. Used by school &amp; college children but not many other residents.] Cllr Waller to write letter to HCC re buses - Clerk to send.</li> <li>Cllr Trenchard - is hoping to attend the Reconnecting Communities through Community Transport online event in March.</li> <li>Cllr Trenchard asked re West Meon Hut - car park is being dug out but recent planning app was withdrawn. People on site informed Cllr Edwards that work is only linking two car parks. Clerk to report to Planning Enforcement. Cllr Edwards to send photos to Clerk. Copy in Cllr Bolton.</li> </ul>	<p>Cllr Waller/ Clerk</p> <p>Cllr Edwards/ Clerk</p>
2616	County councillor's report & questions arising	<p>Report received post-meeting (Appendix B).</p> <p>Clerk to report litter on highway (A32) via HCC online.</p>	Clerk
2617	Flood Action Group	<p>Cllr Bolton reported the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sluice gate/banking - investigation over who owns this continues. Middle of river; not put there by riparian owner. Installed after flooding in early 2000's. Been in contact with Woody Wilcock (EA) - limited use. Nick Adams-King responsible for highways/waterways. River Meon not under his remit but has confirmed no records that County was involved with this. Feel that it is EA responsibility. Put in contact with Simon Moody - going to establish whether or not they will accept responsibility and take action.</li> <li>Employee absences has meant no further update from HH re what can be done re culvert &amp; bridge maintenance that involves sections of the highway.</li> <li>[WMPC cllr asked if EA has any record of survey on River Meon having already being carried out?] May have been done &amp; rudimentary model of river available.</li> </ul>	

2617 cont.	Flood Action Group cont.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surveyor - quote has been received to take data (data to be gathered either by surveying company or by FAG); model what is going on; &amp; give recommendations as to what needs doing. Will change risks; not remove them completely. Circa £5k + VAT.</li> <li>• Clerk advised that the only applicable power that could be used for this expenditure is S137 (LGA 1972). There is currently £1,856.80 left in the 2023/24 budget; and £5,200.00 assigned for 2024/25 (this could be increased to a maximum of £6,961.64, but the extra would need to be taken from elsewhere in the budget). S137 funds are ordinarily used by WMPC to award grants, so this would have to be taken into consideration.</li> <li>• Clerk to get two more quotes. Cllr Bolton to send over info on existing quote incl. specification. To be added to Mar 2024 PC agenda.</li> </ul>	Clerk
2618	Police/PCSO report	No report received. Withdrawn as a standing item as reports will not be available going forward. A few cllrs have joined Neighbourhood Watch and will be able to informally report to the PC as and when appropriate.	Clerk
2619	Mins of previous meetings (09/01/24 & 01/02/24)	Agreed as a true record.	
2620	Clerk's progress report	<p><b>Parish Lengthsman Agreement</b> Timetable for 2024/25 has not yet been made available, but lead parish (Soberton) has confirmed that the scheme will be continuing this year.</p> <p><b>Finance &amp; Administration WG</b> WMPC-WMVH lease – no further updates.</p> <p><b>Community, Housing &amp; Recreation WG</b> Lengthsman (steps between Marlands Lane &amp; Storeys Meadows). Awaiting response from Mark Armitage (Hyde Housing) re update on if/when repairs are taking place.</p> <p><b>Public questions Replacement by HCC of x2 redundant traffic speed signs on A32.</b> No update.</p> <p><b>Planning WG</b> VDS – Parish Design Statement is the new title SDNP would like. Cllr Waller has re written and submitted the consultation statement and also the new text following the comments from SDNP, Natural England and Woodlands residents. Cllr Waller &amp; Paul Andersen will put in the new text &amp; then send back to SDNP to do the next consultation. This may be held up by local elections in March.</p> <p><b>Footpath 10</b> Cllr Edwards to investigate and update cllrs asap.</p> <p><b>Public questions &amp; comments</b> <b>Repair/replacement of fingerpost signs in Woodlands</b> - Clerk contacted Mark Keighley (HCC Highways Engineer) who is happy to coordinate. Small amount in the HCC budget for finger post repair/replacement, but it will have to come out of the 2024/25 budget. However, quotes etc can be sought before April 2024. Mark has requested location maps, historical pictures, info on what remains/is missing etc. This info has been requested from Woodlands residents. No update.</p>	Cllr Edwards

2620 cont.	Clerk's progress report cont.	<p><b>Insurance premium</b>      <b>Question re insurance for boules court if land registration hasn't yet been sorted.</b> No update.</p> <p><b>Community, Housing &amp; Recreation WG</b>    <b>Empty salt bin on Marlands Lane (half way up; blue)</b> has been reported to HCC online.</p> <p><b>Recreation Ground Play Equipment Tender</b>      <b>Creative Play Ltd.</b> References obtained and satisfactory. Cllrs Waller &amp; Edwards confirmed surface should be green &amp; black fleck (50/50) EPDM wet pour. Contracts have been signed. Estimated start date w/c 26/02/24.</p> <p><b>Entrance gates/signs for Woodlands</b>      No update: on hold at the current time as correspondence received from Woodlands residents who are still keen to pursue village entrance gates rather than signs.</p> <p><b>Flood Action Group</b>      <b>Issues on Lynch Lane</b> have been reported to HH via Cllr Lumby.</p>	
2621	Bank account	Bank account balance as of 31 Jan 2024 - <b>£126,663.60</b> (Cllrs have been provided with statement 164 (current account; balance <b>£76,301.85</b> ) & statement 5 (savings account; balance <b>£50,361.75</b> ) 01 Jan 2024 to 31 Jan 2024.	Clerk
2622	Payment of accounts	Mrs J C Tester Clerk's salary & mileage claim (Jan 2024) £609.35 NEST Clerk's pension (Jan 2024) £60.32 West Meon Village Hall Hall hire (Jan 2024) £18.00 HugoFox Monthly website charge £11.99 HMRC NI/tax Q3 2023/24 £461.55 WCC Dog bin emptying Q3 2023/24 £130.00	Clerk
2623	Planning applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SDNP/24/00174/NMA - Recreation Ground, Headon View, West Meon, Hampshire, GU32 1LH. Non material amendment to planning application SDNP/23/00222/FUL. [NO COMMENTS.]</li> <li>SDNP/24/00183/TCA T1 - Little Thatch, High Street, West Meon, Hampshire, GU32 1LJ. Fell diseased Portuguese laurel to ground level and remove stump works due to decay. T2 yew to be reduced overall to allow more light in to the property, reduce by up to 2m as appropriate to create a uniform and balanced canopy. H1 Reduce hedging laterally only to allow more light, hedge to be reduced back to fence line. [NO COMMENTS.]</li> <li>SDNP/24/00361/CND - 11 Woodland Cottages, Medlar Cottage, Woodlands, Bramdean, Hampshire, SO24 0HW. Removal of condition 2 from planning application SDNP/23/01850/HOUS amended roof design to remove the agreed skylights in favour of a solar panel array on the West rear elevation. The proposed amendments reduces light pollution within the dark skies reserve and alters the need for condition 5. [NO COMMENTS.]</li> </ul>	Clerk
2624	Planning apps received after 31/01/24	None.	



2631	Reconnecting Communities through Community Transport	<b>Resolved:</b> that Cllr Trenchard attends the Reconnecting Communities through Community Transport online event 27/03/24 at a cost of £43.37 + VAT.	Clerk
2632	HALC Hampshire Local Resilience Forum	<b>Resolved:</b> that councillors have discussed the possibility of producing an emergency contacts leaflet for all parishioners. Clerk to forward info on example leaflet and update PC w/c 12/02/24 following Hambledon PC meeting when the same proposal will be considered.	Clerk
2633	Reports & Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The sum for section 137(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 (the 1972 Act) for local (parish and town) councils in England for 2024/25 is £10.81 (£9.93 for 2023/24). This equates to £6,961.64 for the parish.</li> <li>East Hants District Council Local Plan consultation opened 22/01/24.</li> <li>Correspondence received - by Clerk and individual councillors - from Woodlands residents regarding minutes reference 2596. Request for item to be revisited. Advised that standing orders restrict the PC to only revisiting a resolution within six months of it being made if three or more councillors make the request to the Clerk in writing.</li> </ul>	
2634	Date/time of next meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tues 5th Mar 2024 at West Meon VH (Small Hall); 7.30pm. [Cllr Thomson gave apologies for this meeting.]</li> <li>Annual Meeting of the Parish to be booked for Thurs 18th April 2024, 7pm in WM Sports Pavilion.</li> </ul>	
2635	Confidential matters	Members of the public present were excluded.	
2636	Co-option of Councillors	<b>Resolved:</b> that members co-opt Hannah Davies and Virginia Burke onto the PC. Clerk to arrange necessary paper-work etc. [Cllrs voted unanimously for.]	Clerk

**The meeting closed at 9.24pm**

**Signed:**

**Cllr Trenchard (Chair)**

**Dated:**

**APPENDIX A**

**Signed:**

**Joanna Tester (Clerk)**

**Dated:**

**WCC Councillors' Feb 2024 Report**

#### Hampshire County Council (HCC) Consultation

HCC issued a consultation document in early January seeking views on a range of measures designed to achieve savings of £17.5M to contribute to buying out their currently predicted £132M deficit by April 2025.

The measures proposed cover a range of services that they currently provide but are not covered by their statutory duty to deliver. In some cases “statutory duty” has become so ill-defined over the years that it is now open to a degree of interpretation. Nonetheless, in common with a number of local authorities of all political colours across the country, the core duty of delivering social care has increasingly swallowed up the latitude that previously existed to deliver more discretionary services.

Within our Ward, the measures that would likely have greatest effect is the proposal to close the Household Waste Recycling Centres (the ‘tips’) at Bishops Waltham and Alresford. The reasoning behind this is that, as they serve relatively smaller populations, they are inevitably less efficient to maintain than the site at Bar End in Winchester. But, of course, the effect on this Ward would be dramatic, not least as their closure would almost certainly increase the amount of fly-tipping, already a very significant problem and, of which, more below.

Another measure would remove all HCC funding from local bus and community transport services that cannot be run commercially. This includes Bus 63 to Morestead and Owslebury, support for the Wednesday Meon Valley Community Bus service to Petersfield Market and Bus 67 serving Cheriton, Bramdean and West Meon. Since the 67 serves as school transport for Perins at Alresford and The Petersfield School the school journeys would continue to operate, but they may be restricted to school pupils only. All other journeys would be withdrawn

Other proposals could affect gritting of roads in the winter, filling of potholes and introducing fees for car parks at countryside sites. As with the Hospital consultation we covered last month, the important thing is to read the consultation document (<https://documents.hants.gov.uk/consultation/future-services-consultation-full.pdf>)

and have your say, both as a Parish Council and as individuals, encouraging others to do so. There are no “done deals” as yet so all contributions have the potential to affect the decision-makers. The consultation closes at 2359 on 31 Mar 24.

### Fly Tipping

There appear to be an increasing number of anti-social individuals prepared to dump their rubbish in our beautiful countryside, sometimes seeing it as a business opportunity. The statistics show that the number of recorded incidents in the District as a whole has reduced since Covid – but our lived experience suggests that there has been an increase in the rural areas. Whilst the City Council’s contractor is set targets for the clearance of tips once reported, clear-ups seem to be taking significantly longer. Both of us are working hard to secure an improvement in the monitoring of the contract and will continue to do so. You can help us by prompt and, if necessary, repeated reporting of fly-tips in your parishes, and encouraging others to do so through the ‘Your Winchester’ portal: [https://iweb.itouchvision.com/portal/f?p=customer:category\\_link:::::CUID,LANG:ACD0BCE67C4A043D378E50531407B1AF8C09DB25\\_EN&P\\_LANG=en](https://iweb.itouchvision.com/portal/f?p=customer:category_link:::::CUID,LANG:ACD0BCE67C4A043D378E50531407B1AF8C09DB25_EN&P_LANG=en)

When apprehended, fly-tippers can either be given a fixed penalty notice (FPN) of up to £400 or prosecuted. Winchester has decided to target its limited resource on prosecuting fly-tippers where there is evidence to support the case over issuing FPNs. Consequently, it has issued relatively few FPNs. There have been two successful prosecutions in the past two months resulting in fines of £1900 and £2245 respectively with, in each case, the offender receiving a criminal conviction. There is an argument that the more ‘professional’ fly-tipper who receives an FPN simply prices its cost into their ‘business plan’ but a criminal conviction hurts – or would a higher risk of an FPN deter more ‘one-off’ tips? We would welcome your views on which route should be preferred.

Neil Bolton  
Jerry Pett  
Ward Members for Upper Meon Valley

## **APPENDIX B**

## **HCC Cllr Hugh Lumby’s Feb 2024 Report**

### **1. County Council Budget Consultation**

You will no doubt have seen the publicity about councils ‘going bust’ in the last few months. The latest was Nottingham City Council, closer to home Southampton City Council is close to declaring it cannot deliver a balanced budget and Somerset Council is asking the Government to allow them to increase Council Tax by 10% this year to avoid the same situation. Hampshire County Council is not in that position, yet. Unusually for many councils it projects it finances ahead by a number of years. As I have mentioned before, these projections show that while it will be able to balance its budget for the next two years, by 2026 there will be an anticipated shortfall of £132 million.

The County Council has a legal responsibility to carry out certain functions. Examples of this are social care costs for older people, support for those with disabilities, the care of vulnerable children and young people and school transport for those who meet the necessary criteria. These mandatory services are increasingly expensive without sufficient government support to fund them fully.

Other services are discretionary, the council chooses to do these. HCC therefore has to consider ways by which it can balance its budget going forward, absent government support. As a result, it has now launched its consultation on how it might change its discretionary services to meet that budget shortfall. These include:

*School Crossing Patrols* - HCC do not have a legal duty to provide school crossing patrols. It does however have a legal duty to ensure children can travel to school safely.

*Winter Gritting Routes* - these have not been reviewed in many years, so it will be testing whether the current network is needed.

*Community Transport and Bus Services* - there is no legal duty for the County Council to support community transport or to subsidise bus routes. However, both these can play a vital role in combatting social isolation and enabling access to vital services.

*HWRCs* – I talk more about this below.

You can read more about the consultation here: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/haveyoursay/consultations/future-services-consultation> I do encourage you to take part, do not rely on others to do so.

## **2. Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRCs)**

Hampshire is the best served county in terms of its waste and recycling centres, we have more per square mile, per head of population and open them longer than any other area. As a Waste Disposal Authority, the county council is obligated to arrange for the deposit of household and garden waste at no charge under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. In 2022/23, residents made 2.1 million bookings, depositing nearly 120,000 tonnes of waste across our 24 HWRCs, costing over £10 million a year to operate.

The county council is now consulting on a range of proposed changes to save money, including:

- - charging for discretionary services (such as premium booking slots, additional services by site staff and chargeable items like gloves and sacks).
- - alternative delivery models, such as handing over management to charities or community organisations or districts or borough managing some sites
  - reductions to types of waste accepted at some sites
  - reducing opening days and or hours
  - Potential reductions to opening hours and days to achieve savings - reducing the number of sites.

In assessing whether sites should be considered for closure, the council has split the sites into four tiers, based upon their size, usage and the cost of running them and is consulting on three options, no closures, just closing Tier 4 or closing Tiers 3 and 4. The tiers are as follows:

- - Tier 1 are newer, larger sites; these are Andover, Basingstoke, Eastleigh, Gosport, Segensworth, Waterlooville and Winchester
  - - Tier 2 are strategic locations which may need some investment; these are Alton, Efford, Farnborough, Havant and Netley
  - - Tier 3 are smaller, more operationally challenging sites and comprise Aldershot, Bordon, Casbrook (Romsey), Hedge End, Marchwood, Petersfield and Somerley
  - - Tier 4 are the smallest sites, poorest performing and most expensive to run; they are Alresford, Bishops Waltham, Fair Oak, Hartley Wintney, Hayling Island.
- Not all the proposals may be taken forward but savings will have to be found, especially following the additional £2m per annum cost as a result of the Government's ban on charging for DIY waste,



as I mentioned last month. Given so many of the Tier 4 sites are near us, I do urge you to make your thoughts known about this.

### **3. New 20mph policy introduced**

HCC's new policy on 20mph speed limits has now been introduced. It largely reflects the policies we have discussed before. By way of reminder, the new policy allows the council is to introduce speed restrictions where there is a proven safety need for them, for example outside schools. In addition it allows communities to request the introduction of 20mph zones in their own area, subject to meeting specified criteria.

One of criteria, as I have mentioned before, is clear evidence of community support as 20mph zones can be very divisive. Secondly, communities will need to fund the introduction of the schemes they request themselves. This should be possible through the use of Community Infrastructure Levy or other forms of developer contributions. Given the financial challenges I have referred to above, the county council does not have the resources to fund these. Communities should also give thought to measures to reduce speed, such as Speed Indicator Devices, which are already working well across the Meon Valley Division.

**Councillor Hugh Lumby, Meon Valley Division**