WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

UPPER MEON VALLEY WARD – PARISH UPDATE – JULY 2026

Local Government Reorganisation

There is little more substantive to report as the detail will only be known with certainty once a 'Structural Change Order' has been laid before the House later in the year. Nonetheless, we can report the responses that WCC, together with the other 'legacy authorities' within Mid-Hampshire, have passed back to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

For Parish Elections, it is proposed that these are all aligned in future with the Hampshire/Solent Mayoral election cycle, starting in 2028 then every 4 years. Therefore, those parishes who were due elections in 2027 will likely have their tenures extended by 1 year to 2028, whilst those elected this year will likely be extended to 2032.

The 'Warding' arrangements for the new unitary authority are likely to be geographically coincident with the present Hampshire electoral divisions, returning 3 members in each. There will, however, be some exceptions, including the arrangements for the present Upper Meon Valley ward. The parishes of West Meon, Warnford, Exton and Corhampton & Meonstoke will remain in the Meon Valley division, but this will likely be split into two divisions each returning only 2 members. The new Meon Valley division will likely comprise these four parishes together with Droxford, Swanmore, Shedfield, Soberton & Newtown and Hambledon. The reasoning behind this is that the significant amount of development in North Whiteley would mean that the current Meon Valley division, if retained, would have a larger electorate than most. Rather than have an additional member for a larger electorate it is proposed to split the division, with each 'half' having only 2 members. Arguably this gives a more geographically logical future Meon Valley division. The other 8 UMV parishes (Chilcomb, Tichborne, Cheriton, Bramdean & Hinton Ampner, Owslebury & Morestead, Upham, Beauworth and Kilmeston) will remain within the Bishops Waltham division.

Winchester Small Grant scheme

A reminder that the Winchester Small Grant scheme (up to £700) is open for applications from local not-for-profit and voluntary groups and organisations for the rest of the year - https://www.winchester.gov.uk/grants-for-not-for-profit-organisations/small-grant-scheme

Heatwaves

Winchester City Council is actively encouraging communities to continue the 'Spaces of Sanctuary' scheme now that there are residents who need access to a cool space during extended periods of high temperatures. Whilst many of our local churches are well suited to this role it would be worth thinking through other alternative spaces that might be available in our villages that could provide welcome respite from the heat for those who need it.

….and finally

We hope everybody manages to enjoy a slightly slower pace of life through August and thank you for generously hosting us at your meetings through the last year. We will take a break from writing an update next month but look forward to resumption of normal service from September.

David Ablitt
Jerry Pett
Winchester City Council Ward Members for Upper Meon Valley