WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

UPPER MEON VALLEY WARD – PARISH UPDATE – NOVEMBER 2026

South Downs CIL Application Window Opens 2 Nov

The window for applications for South Downs CIL funding is open until 31 Mar 27. The URL for more information and guidance is:
https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/community-infrastructure-levy/revision-of-spending-cil/applying-for-cil-funds-for-an-infrastructure-project/

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

At the end of last month the Secretary of State gave an update to the LGR programme in a written statement. Its effect here is, in essence, that local elections will be held next May for one seat on Winchester City Council, as would have happened without any reorganisation plans, but that WCC will likely be replaced by a new unitary council from 1 April 2029, with elections to a 'shadow authority' now due in May 2028. That new unitary may look like the one previously announced or may change under a review currently underway, with an answer likely by "early next year". We have yet to learn how this will affect parish elections due in May 2027. The Mayoral election for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight looks set also to be held in May 2028.

New National Scheme of Delegation for Planning Applications

This new scheme took effect from 31 October this year and applies to all planning applications being decided by Winchester City Council, both for their own planning area and those they decide under their "Section 101 Agreement" with the National Park Authority. Although the new scheme specifically excludes its application to National Parks, the South Downs NPA, which has recently renewed its Section 101 agreement with Winchester, has agreed that it should also apply to those South Downs applications that are being decided by Winchester.

The main implication of all this is that most applications will now be decided by officers under delegated powers and very few will be taken to the Planning Committee. Those to be decided under delegation include all householder applications, minor commercial development and minor residential development (defined as 1-9 dwellings on a site of less than 0.5 Ha). Applications will only be referred to the Planning Committee "where the application raises an economic, social or environmental issue of significance to the local area [and/or] where the application raises a significant planning matter having regard to the development plan and any other material considerations".

The right of a Parish Council or Ward Member to ask for a committee referral for any application has been withdrawn. For those applications that are "called in" to the SDNPA Planning Committee at Midhurst, no similar referral right has ever existed; that said, if an application is "called in" it is implicit that is of the scale, or is sufficiently contentious, for the case to be referred to that committee anyway.

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