

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL – UPPER MEON VALLEY WARD

Parish update for January 2026

Mayoral Elections

As most of you already know from our discussions at Parish Council meetings prior to Christmas, the government announced, in December, that the Mayoral elections originally scheduled for May 2026 is now highly likely to be postponed by two years, until May 2028.

The decision to propose a delay has been made solely by central Government; none of the upper tier local authorities (Hampshire County Council, Southampton and Portsmouth City Councils and Isle of Wight Council) requested a postponement of the May elections.

The rationale given is to allow the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) process to be completed first, before Mayors take office. As you know, LGR and devolution are distinct.

The Government has confirmed that devolution and the consequent creation of the new Strategic Authority and the transfer of powers and funding will continue as planned. Governance will initially rest with Hampshire County Council, Southampton City Council, Portsmouth City Council, and Isle of Wight Council. However, some timings within the process may shift, and all authorities are seeking clarity on these details and any implications on the expected powers, funding and responsibilities of the new Strategic Authority.

At present, the timeline for LGR remains unchanged, with the new councils expected to launch in May 2028. The Government has indicated that it wants LGR completed before Mayors take office.

Local Elections

The Minister of State for Local Government has confirmed to the House of Commons that the Government will invite councils that are due to hold elections in May 2026 to express their views on whether it would be beneficial for them to postpone those elections to complete the local government reorganisation process.

Ministers have written to a total of 63 areas affected to ask for their views out of the 204 total areas undergoing reorganisation (important to note that this includes district/borough areas undergoing LGR). The Minister said this decision had been taken following concerns raised by certain councils about their ability and capacity to deliver reorganisation alongside local elections taking place.

A deadline of 15 January has been set for representations, and any evidence will be reviewed by government with a final decision to be made by ministers early next year.

Hampshire County Council elections have already been postponed once by the government and HCC's Conservative leader Nick Adams-King and Winchester City Council Lib Dem leader, Martin Tod have both made it clear they oppose any further electoral postponement.

Boomtown Planning app SDNP/25/0453/CND

At the back end of last year, you will remember we reported that Boomtown had submitted a non-material amendment application, to have the duration of the festival removed from the operative clause of the original permission. The existing conditions in the original permission remain unchanged, the first of these being the limitation of the permission to only 1 year. This was agreed by officers in full knowledge that it was their intention to submit a section 73 application to extend the limited duration of the original permission, as indicated in the cover letter to the non-material application dated 23rd October.

Just before Christmas the above application was made to extend the permission for 5 years. We have received assurances from both Tim Slaney and Rob Ainsley of the SDNP, that any application by way of the S73 route, or a full application route, would require submission of the same information and the same consideration of issues in assessing the acceptability or otherwise of the proposal, including BNG.

Kind Regards

Jerry Pett

Neil Bolton

Winchester City Council Ward Members for Upper Meon Valley