



Minutes of the Highclere Parish Council Meeting

Westridge Studio

Tuesday 09 December at 7.30pm

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

Clerk: Amy White

In attendance: Cllr Izett, Cllr Thacker

1. 74/25 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Malone was absent.

2. 75/25 Declarations of Interest

None.

3. 76/25 To agree Minutes of Meeting held on 11 November 2025

The Minutes of 14 October 2025 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman, Cllr York.

4. 77/25 Matters arising from Meeting held on 11 November 2025

Number	Action	Person
67/25	Colin Wall to research a different SEA provider to compare to the quote already requested from AECOM. No action yes, move to January.	Colin Wall
70/25	Clerk to add Cllr Izett's Oakley speech at BDBC cabinet meeting on Facebook- Actioned.	Clerk
71/25	Cllr Bartholomew will look into footpaths and route maps to advertise NWDNL- In action , calls and emails have been made and will be followed up.	Cllr Bartholomew

5. 78/25 Co-option of councillor

Charlie Eyre was co-opted to the council. This means that HPC now has a full complement of eight councillors.

6. 79/25 Public participation

No one was present.

7. 80/25 Reports from County and Borough Councillors

Cllr Thacker:

- The county councillor grant scheme has changed, reducing ability to support community projects. New rules also prevent from donating directly to the Parish Council, though community groups without bank accounts can still receive funds via the Council (excluding political/campaign groups).
- The local government reorganisation continues albeit mayoral elections are cancelled for 2026. Local elections on 07 May 2026 are still expected to go ahead, as only the government can cancel them and no indication of cancellation has been given.
- County Council finances remain extremely challenging. A budget shortfall of around £140m is forecast for next year despite earlier cuts, and reserves will again be needed. Without additional government funding, the Council may be unable to meet all statutory service requirements in coming years.
- Two public consultations are underway: one on local government reorganisation and one on potential service reductions (see HPC Facebook posts).
- SEND transport costs continue to escalate due to the legal requirement to provide free transport to appropriate schools, often outside the area. The Council is exploring creating more local specialist provision to reduce transport costs.
- Adult social care pressures remain high, with around 30 new high-cost cases each month. Social care now accounts for more than half of the Council's usable budget.

Cllr Izett:

- Loss of the planned election for a mayor will reduce expected central government funding from approximately £44m per year to about one-third of that amount because of the delay.
- Local Bus Services: Ongoing concern regarding reduced bus provision affecting rural communities. Although bus services are a County Council responsibility, Basingstoke & Deane contributes to subsidised routes primarily within Basingstoke, with limited benefit to surrounding villages. Discussions continue between Hampshire County Council and the Borough, but current alternatives (e.g., taxi-share scheme) are not considered effective. Commercial viability remains a barrier to restoring services.
- Oakley Farm: Significant concern remains about the proposed allocation at Oakley Farm. A public consultation event is scheduled on **15 January** at the Woodpecker Pub. A separate meeting with councillors (including Cllr Harvey and Cllr Konieczko) will follow in the evening. Planning consultant Steve Lee is preparing a detailed representation on behalf of Highclere and East Woodhay, including health and transport concerns.
- Cllr Izett is liaising with West Berkshire councillors to encourage cross-border submissions regarding infrastructure impact on Newbury.

Public Visibility Measures

- Councillors discussed deploying banners opposing the development at visible locations (e.g., along Andover Road).
- Examples from other parishes (e.g., Kingsclere) indicate this can raise the profile of local concerns.
- Highclere and East Woodhay may jointly fund the materials.

Media Engagement

- Options for broader press involvement, including local television, were discussed.
- Timing to be considered carefully to ensure beneficial coverage.

Planning and Infrastructure Concerns

- Key issues highlighted:
 - Unsustainable location with limited public transport and local amenities.
 - Highways impact on the A343 and associated junctions.
 - Potential need for significant road and water infrastructure upgrades.
 - Existing constraints around the Qual Bridge and Southern Water supply capacity.

Joint Parish Action

- Parishes including Highclere, East Woodhay, Ashmansworth, Burghclere, and Newtown may submit a combined statement of objection, in addition to individual Regulation 18 responses. Combined representation would emphasise the wider regional implications of the development.

Action: Clerk and Cllr Izett to work together on a banner for A343 regarding Oakley Farm.

8. 81/25 Update on 7, 7A Bus Services: Current Action

The Clerk recently attended a meeting with Newbury & District buses. Currently, there is little chance of N&D Buses replacing either the now-defunct Stagecoach 7 or 7A routes commercially without full subsidy from WBC or HCC. This seems unlikely given their current financial circumstances.

9. 82/25 Planning

BDBC Local Plan Regulation 18- council decision on response:

- T/00586/25/TPO Old Honeyway- no objection
- 25/02623/HSE Gate House Horris Hill- no objection
- 25/02744/OHL Former Piggery Westridge- no objection
- 25/02623/HSE Gate House Horris Hill Newtown Common- no objection
- 25/02834/HSE Gabriels View Andover Road- decision to be made after the meeting.

10. 83/25 HPC Action Plan

Speed Indicator Devices: Cllr Easton had sent three new SID options to the council in advance. Council agreed to purchase the ElanCity at a cost of £3062 (<https://www.elancity.co.uk/products/radar-speed-sign-evolis>), and to purchase a second one in January 2026.

Action: Clerk to purchase ElanCity SID.

Project ideas 26/27

- Tree survey for Penwood Heights- a previous idea from a few years ago, which Cllr Falconer argued was still necessary, as many of the trees in Penwood have a TPO which limits any maintenance being carried out.
- Mount Road milking bridge- during winter this area is often flooded, and the road is narrow that it might warrant investigating improved traffic signage.
- Poor visibility coming out of Church Lane- consideration of mirrors on the A343? Reducing the hedging width at the Church Lane/A343 junction would help (hedge in private ownership).
- Oakley Farm- continue to campaign against development proposal.
- Instagram/ drone footage of Highclere for parish council image improvement/visibility.

All ideas will be taken forward.

11. 84/25 Financial Matters

a. Accounts for payment

The Clerk presented accounts for payment (see end of Minutes).

Bank reconciliation as at 30 November 2025:

Unity Bank Current Account: £19922.60

Unity Bank Savings Account: £46033.92

Total: £: **65956.52**

Budget second draft

Precept 26/27: Current advice from Clerk is for a minimal % increase in precept spend. Currently £14k of unallocated reserve, to be allocated to appropriate projects (see above item). Precept decision to be made at January meeting.

12. 85/25 Items to take forward to subsequent meeting

Projects for next F/Y and 3-5 years (as per Action Plan). Policies and procedures for updating. Precept decision. The Glebe.

Date of next Meeting: Tuesday 13 January 2026

Actions from 09 December 2025 Meeting

Number	Action	Person
80/25	Clerk and Cllr Izett to work together on a banner for A343 regarding Oakley Farm.	Clerk/ Cllr Izett
83/25	Clerk to purchase ElanCity SID.	Clerk

Highclere Parish Council

9 December 2025 (2025-2026)

PAYMENTS LIST

Vouche	Code	Date	Minute	Bank	Cheque No	Description	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
110	Clerk Salary	04/12/2025		Unity Current Accour		Clerk Salary	Amy White	Z	841.28		841.28
105	PAYE	04/12/2025		Unity Current Accour		PAYE	HMRC	Z	478.79		478.79
106	Scribe Accounting	04/12/2025		Unity Current Accour		Accounting Software	Scribe	S	31.00	6.20	37.20
107	Payroll	04/12/2025		Unity Current Accour		Monthly payroll invoice	Red76 Tax Ltd	S	20.00	4.00	24.00
108	Hall Hire	04/12/2025		Unity Current Accour		Hall Hire	Westridge Studio	Z	20.00		20.00
109	Planning	04/12/2025		Unity Current Accour		Planning advice	Steve Lees	Z	375.00		375.00
110	WFH Expenses	04/12/2025		Unity Current Accour		Clerk Salary	Amy White	Z	26.00		26.00
112	Clerk Salary	04/12/2025		Unity Current Accour		Pension- nest	Nest Pensions	E	86.43		86.43
111	Litter Warden Salary	04/12/2025		Unity Current Accour		Litter Warden	David McClelland	Z	605.62		605.62
111	Litter Warden Expenses	04/12/2025		Unity Current Accour		Litter Warden	David McClelland	Z	25.00		25.00
113	Admin incl Ionos, website	04/12/2025		Unity Current Accour		Email admin	Hugo Fox	S	17.49	3.50	20.99
114	Admin incl Ionos, website	04/12/2025		Unity Current Accour		Hugo Fox website	Hugo Fox	S	9.99	2.00	11.99
115	Village Website	04/12/2025		Unity Current Accour		Yourhighclereparish.com	Ionos	S	15.00	3.00	18.00
116	Admin incl Ionos, website	05/12/2025		Unity Current Accour		Bank charge	Unity Trust Bank	Z	6.00		6.00
Total									2,557.60	18.70	2,576.30