



WEST MEON PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk's Report for February 2026

HR & Training

Onboarding: Met with Amanda Griffiths to co-sign the Acceptance of Office and DPI forms. The DPI form has been submitted to the Monitoring Officer at Winchester City Council. The Code of Conduct, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations have been shared. A government email account will be set up following the next Parish Council meeting.

ILCA: The Clerk has registered for ILCA training via the online learning platform and intends to commence the course next month, due to extended hours worked this month and other work and personal commitments.

Finance:

Tree Assist Quote: Following approval of Quotation 965 at the previous meeting, Hampshire Highways confirmed the road closure cost at £4,500, which exceeded the original estimate. The Clerk requested an alternative due to low traffic levels and dual access on Marlands Lane. Tree Assist confirmed that a Traffic Management approach is acceptable to Hampshire Highways, reducing the cost to £1,500 for the day. It is proposed that trees T26–T30 are felled concurrently to maximise the traffic management arrangement, as they are located on the Marlands Lane boundary. The revised total cost, including the additional four trees, is £7,150 + VAT. To be discussed at the next meeting.

Planned payments: SLCC renewal of annual subscription, which is now due, £158.00.

Q3 VAT Refund: VAT reclaim processed for period Q3 for £339.37. The refund has been received from HMRC and shows in February payments.

2026/27 Budget: The draft budget for the next financial year has been prepared, considering anticipated future expenditure. A proposed reallocation of reserves has been drafted, with a supporting rationale document provided to assist Members' consideration at the next meeting. Both documents were circulated in advance to allow Members sufficient time for review prior to the meeting.

Unity Bank: additional signatory request processing, with Cllr Fowler as the third authorised person. Emailed Unity Bank to query why the authorisation levels have changed from two to one signatory to authorise payment. No response received, will continue to follow-up.

Playground Maintenance: see item 37 for update.

Defibrillator Phone Box – High Street: A routine check identified that the AED cabinet batteries required replacement (PADS unaffected). The defibrillator was temporarily offline for one day, and a notice was posted on the West Meon Facebook page to inform residents. The Clerk purchased 10 replacement Duracell batteries (£33.49), to be reimbursed.

Asset Register: Flint Wall and Cast-Iron railings and The Cross land have been added to the asset register. Outstanding replacement costs for brick wall and rails.

Peppercorn Rent: see item 41 for update.

Overtime: Due to the volume of work this month, including policy review, draft budget preparation, reserve reallocation proposals, contractor quotations and comparisons, legal liaison, playground and open space matters, co-option administration, and responding to resident enquiries, the Clerk has worked an additional 12 hours beyond contracted time.

Correspondence

Car Park: Complaint received from a resident relating to a vehicle that had been parked in the Headon View car park, for an extended period while repairs were undertaken. Attempts were made to identify the owner; however, the vehicle has since been removed. Situation to be monitored.

Meonwara: Cllr Davies, Cllr Fowler and the Clerk met with a resident from Meonwara regarding concerns about a tree on the open space. Separately noted was the condition of the fencing surrounding the play area. Both matters were raised by Cllr Davies with Hampshire County Council, who have confirmed the fencing falls under Parish Council responsibility. The fencing, now approximately 10 years old, is broken in places. The matter will be brought to the meeting to consider repair or replacement options.

Speed & Road Safety:

Hampshire Highways: Hampshire County Council advised that, as part of its annual Planned Maintenance programme, pre-surface treatment works will take place on the A272 Petersfield Road, West Meon, from Tithelands Lane to the A32. Works are scheduled to begin on 9 March 2026 and are expected to last up to 5 nights. The road will be closed between 19:00 and 06:00. Parishioners have been advised via West Meon Facebook page and West Meon Parish Council website.

Recreation Ground/Community

Car Park: see item 26 for update.

Play Inspection: Clerk prepared an inspection report to report against. Cllr Davies and Cllr Fowler, with the Clerk, assessed both sites with Cllr Fowler completing the form, circulated in the agenda pack with observations. The form was felt to be easy to use and logical. Observations are in line with the Play Inspection, with cleaning, removing of vegetation, concern about the standalone slide. To be raised in March meeting.

Leases and Land Ownership: see item 29 for update.

Meonwara Lease: up for renewal of the lease for the land at Meonwara, through Winchester City Council. Existing terms set at £1 per annum, reviewed every 5 years.

Governance (Policies): circulated Standing Orders (amended), Financial Regulations (amended) Data Protection (updated), Data Retention (new), Financial Risk Management & Assessment (updated) for consideration and approval by members at March meeting.

Bernice Gibson-Ost

Clerk – West Meon Parish Council

Ref	Area	Task / Topic	RAG Status Green 0-3 months Amber 3-6 Red + 6 months	Progress Status	Updates / Action Needed	Meeting Agenda
12	Village Maintenance	Tree On The Cross: Survey and options appraisal	Amber	In Progress	<p>Jan: 25 - Sapling Arboriculture have submitted the planning application to South Downs Planning Authority.</p> <p>Dec 25: decision for January meeting, to proceed with submitting a Planning Application for the Holm Oak Tree.</p> <p>16/11/25. Invoice sent from S Arboriculture for inspection report and recommendations - already circulated. For them to submit the planning application is £105 + VAT.</p> <p>17/10/25: Technical report received from Sapling Arboriculture, for consideration at next meeting. Invoice for work carried out for the assessment received, for next month's payment.</p> <p>3/10/25: Met with Sapling Arboriculture with Cllr Main. The tree was inspected and while healthy, the initial views are that the tree had outgrown its location. This is causing structural damage to the flint wall. Reducing the height will not change this. A full report will be provided, to be considered by WMPC.</p> <p>July: Meeting scheduled for 9th September, Sapling Arboriculture (Tree Inspector Specialist) to review the tree/root system and damage to the wall at The Cross.</p> <p>June: Enquiry sent to 3 tree surgeons. Two quotes received and submitted. TPO in place – options limited.</p>	
14	Legal	Land Registry: application Status	Red	In Progress	<p>22/10/25: email sent to Bramsdon & Child: Application had stalled pending solicitor action. This has been confirmed as resolved by Bramsdon & Child. Email sent requesting Land Registry reference, confirmation all information is now submitted, and an updated completion timescale. Awaiting response.</p> <p>3/10/25: Bramsdon & Child confirmed that Land Registry do have the application. Land Registry advised Bramsdon & Child (by letter) to say it could not be expedited through the portal. Bramsdon & Child advise they have not seen the letter. Furthermore Bramsdon & Child claim they have expedited this over the phone (27th August 2025)</p> <p>27/08/25: Email sent asking for a progress update, reference to the Title Deeds on Land Registry and access to original deeds.</p> <p>19/8/25: Bramsdon & Child have confirmed they have located the original deeds in their South Sea office.</p> <p>5/8/25: email sent to all members of Bramsdon & Childs, escalated due to lack of response.</p> <p>28/7/25: Email sent as no response since previous call. Have asked for the issue to be escalated.</p> <p>June 25: Chaser email sent as application status unclear, so issue remains unresolved (Bramsdon & Childs Solicitors). No response as 5/07/25.</p>	
17	Working Groups	Flood Action: Weir, Culverts, Drains,	Red	In Progress	<p>Feb 26: A meeting is scheduled for 27 February with Cllr Bolton, a representative from the Environment Agency and the Chair to scope the required works and obtain contractor recommendations. The information gathered will support a CIL funding application to SDNP.</p>	

		Bridges - Reporting Issues			<p>Jan 26: Received from Cllr Bolton information received regarding weir revetments and potential CIL funding. Cllr Davies to lease with Cllr Bolton on the application.</p> <p>Dec 25: Cllr N Bolton emailed to say that he is discussing with Cllr Pett ownership of the weir. Although no funding is available, confirmation for actual ownership for future needs is still being sought.</p> <p>Nov: District Cllrs have confirmed: EA representative P Taylor has previously stated that the Weir is the asset of the EA. However, the EA have limited funding, and this is being taken up with serious flooding issues.</p>
18	Legal/Property	Legal Advice: Sports Club & Village Hall	Green	In Progress	<p>Jan 26: see issue 29 for update.</p> <p>17/10: Confirmation received back from HALC legal advisors that copies of the original documents are sufficient.</p> <p>1/10/25: Cllr Davies and I visited Hampshire Archives: 4 hours spent looking though historic records, to feedback at meeting. Further 2 hours searching information on the clerks' emails/files (historic). Records include: Abstract of Title, Conveyance 1986, Deed of Release 1986, Lease 1978 (Recreation Ground), Redemption Notice 1956, WMVH Conveyance 2017, WMVH Conveyance Document 1952, Deed of Release (Tennis Courts), Charity Commission (Recreation Ground) 1932. Noted that Hampshire Archives have no minutes between 1990 and current date.</p> <p>26/08/25: Meeting held between Clerk, Cllr Silk and Senior Legal Advisors, specialising in Charity and Parish Council land. Following meeting the next steps summarised and to be considered/agreed in September Council meeting.</p> <p>11/8/25: request has been forwarded to HALC's legal advisors due to specialist nature.</p> <p>6/8/25: request submitted to HALC asking for advice. Uncertainty around legal ownership of land occupied by the Village Hall. Delay is preventing VH from progressing to a CIO status. Legal advice requested. "</p> <p>July 25: email sent to HALC requesting free one hour call to discuss leases and Village Hall proposed ICO status.</p>
22	Projects	Woodlands Entry Signs: Confirmation of location	Red	In Progress	<p>Feb 26: No objections have been received regarding the third location.</p> <p>Jan 26: received from Clerk that Bramdean Parish Council have approved the location and will formally note it in their minutes at the next meeting. Cllr Davies included the 3rd location in the Parish News, as part of the consultation period.</p> <p>Dec 25: a third location for the Woodlands sign has been submitted to the Clerk of Bramdean. This was checked during the Xmas break, and the site looks acceptable, with sufficient space and no obstructions. My only concern is that the location is some distance inside the Bramdean boundary, https://w3w.co/turkey.passively.crystals but will wait to hear back from Bramdean Parish Council, their views.</p> <p>Nov 25: Two of the three signs have been installed. Third location lies within Bramdean boundary. Have tried calling the clerk and left message but no response. Budget preparation has prevented me from pursuing further but will be picked up in the following month. A third site location has been provided but needs to be checked for suitability.</p> <p>- For earlier entries to this issue, revert to previous Clerks Report.</p>

23	Projects	Woodlands Fingerpost Signs	Red	In Progress	<p>22/08/25: HH confirmed they are still waiting for a date from contractor who has been assigned the work.</p> <p>18/08/25: Update requested from Hampshire Highways</p> <p>June 25: Awaiting update from the contractor about timescales. Delayed due to the restructure at HCC. HCC Traffic Dept. will be in touch when more information is available (last response 6th June).</p>	
26	Working Groups	Car Park: Resurfacing and Space Optimisation - 3 quotes	Red	In Progress	<p>Feb 26: meeting was held between Chair of the Village Hall, Cllr Burke, Cllr Fowler and the Clerk to review the proposed changes to the car park. There were no objections received from the Chair. A decision by members is proposed at the meeting to move forward with securing quotes.</p> <p>Nov 25: proposal for works to the car park have been submitted by the Car Park Working Group and circulated for discussion in December meeting.</p> <p>22.08/25: I have sought quotes for resurfacing the car park and received one quotation with a price to do the initial survey at £6941.00 ex VATt . However, it at this stage may be more appropriate to obtain estimates so that the Council has an indication of likely costs before considering whether to proceed further. Two estimates have been received for discussion in September meeting.</p> <p>28/7/25: initial enquiry sent out to Nidagraveluk.co.uk, info@slatterestatesurfaces.com, info@randcgroundworks.com and Ed Bagshaw Ltd.</p>	
27	Finance	Quote/Tender process: public spaces	Green	In Progress	<p>Feb 26: Specification for maintaining the pitches and hedges has been reviewed and approved by the current contractor, noting that WM & Warnford Sports Club did not respond. The Clerk is now obtaining quotations for the work and will be shared with Members when three quotes have been received, for resolution at the next meeting (April).</p> <p>Jan26: the mowing and hedge trimming specification has been sent to W&WM Sports Hall for review and feedback before sending out for quotes.</p> <p>Dec 25: Draft specification for ground maintenance has been prepared and circulated, for consideration and feedback my council members.</p> <p>27/10/25: meeting to be held with Chair Sports Pavillion to review next year's schedule.</p> <p>11/8/25: Work confirmed by Hillier Garden Services and Mac Edwards. Worksheet sent to Biodiversity Working Group for input into any additional requirements. I also received an email from Chair Sports, who would like to review the document before it is approved.</p> <p>29/7/25: contacted Mac & Will to clarify scope of rec ground maintenance of public places.</p>	Jan
28	HR Development	Training Request	Green	In Progress	<p>July: request received from Cllr Burke to attend the following NALC training courses: The Art of Communication: Navigating Tough Decisions on 26 November, Mastering Asset Management on 28 January, and Future Leaders on 25 February. The budget for training allocated to Councillors has been spent. Council to decide if this can come out of General Reserves.</p>	

29	Legal/Property	Leases and Land Ownership	Red	In Progress	<p>Feb 26: A meeting has been arranged between a representative from HALC Legal Services and the Clerk to review scope and options for progressing matters. The Clerk will report back following the meeting.</p> <p>Jan 26: received response back from HALC Legal Services advisor confirming receipt of the documents and will respond with any questions, noting that the advisor is on limited work time due to a broken arm. Scope of the work to be confirmed in February meeting.</p> <p>DEC 25: Discovery piece is now complete and the document and supporting evidence prepared for HALC Legal Services. The document has been circulated for consideration at the next meeting.</p> <p>Sep 25: see issue 18 update.</p> <p>22/08/25: meeting held with legal advisors. Discovery piece is required to collate all the historical documents relating to the land and buildings. Summary document has been provided and will be circulated.</p> <p>11/8/25: request has been forwarded to HALC's legal advisors due to specialist nature: reference 3146 - response time 5 days from reviewing the request. Advice sought on whether WMPC should engage a solicitor, appropriate and legally sound way to regularise the land ownership and trust arrangements, lease requirements between WMPC and the Village Hall charity, how to protect the councils interest if land is transferred, suggested next steps to clarify responsibilities for both parties.</p> <p>6/8/25: request submitted to HALC asking for advice. Uncertainty around legal ownership of land occupied by the Village Hall. Delay is preventing VH from progressing to a CIO status. Legal advice requested.</p>
32	Public Rights of Way	Missing Signpost	Amber	In Progress	<p>Jan 26: Fingerpost sign incident still reported as open.</p> <p>18/08/25: Fingerpost sign reported missing from Drs Lane, location 242/1/1. Reported to Hampshire Country Council reference number 250850735HCC Rights of Way: a job has been issued to Countryside Access Ranger Team - advised this make take some time before it is completed.</p>
33	Projects	Neighbourhood Plan	Green	In Progress	<p>28/10/25: Initial discussions held with neighbouring clerks; seeking advice from HALC (Steve Tilbury) for an independent view on developing a neighbourhood plan, including any funding options and if they recommend professional services in the area. I've been advised by the neighbouring clerk that funding has been withdrawn but will follow-up when discussing with HALC.</p> <p>17/10/25: SDNP have emailed confirming the process to register an application, involving mapping of the area. I have also contacted two companies to provide estimates for professional services to give an idea of costs and time and effort that will be required. Two companies contacted are Adams Henry in Winchester and Southern Planning Practices in Twyford. 18/08/25: email circulated with proposed date for strategy meeting (29th, 30th September 1st and 2nd October).</p>

36	Planning	Planning Application	Green	In Progress	Nov 25: the planning application is still awaiting review. They have a significant backlog, and no timescales are available as to when it will be seen. 22/10/25: progress update requested from Winchester Council on Planning Application SDNP/24/03257/FUL. There has been no response so I have also asked Cllr Wallace if he can assist, as I note he was involved previously.	
37	Open Spaces	Play Equipment	Green	In Progress	Feb 26: Three contractors (Ava Play, Vitality and Infinity Playgrounds) were invited to quote for quarterly inspections, maintenance and any immediate works identified. Two quotations have been received (Ava Play and Infinity Playgrounds) and circulated to Members for resolution. The Clerk has prepared a side-by-side comparison to support consideration. Jan 26: have spoken with Viaplay and even though chased have received nothing back. Infinity Playgrounds have visited and just waiting for clarification on certain costs. Eva recreation also came out to do a site visit and provide costs. This information will be collated and shared with council members, as too late for this month's agenda. To note both Infinity Playground and Eva Recreation advise removal of the slide as this prevents a risk, due to surface area and equipment itself. All surfaces need professional jet washing and borders cleared back (the latter could be done by general maintenance). Dec 25: contacted Viaplay, Infinity Playgrounds. Infinity Playgrounds have visited the site and will prepare a quote to address the issues highlighted in the Playground Inspection Report, that require specialist work carried out.	March
38	Finance	Precept	Green	In Progress	Jan 26: the precept for West Meon Parish Council was submitted to Winchester Council requesting £41,828.00, as approved in the January meeting. Dec 25: Based on the Electoral Register information from Winchester Council the recommendation is that the Parish Council do not increase the precept value per taxpayer this year. In 2025-26 the tax base was 404.80 and in 2026-27 this has increased to 418.08. Based on the increase this provides a precept value of £41,828.00. Decision for January meeting.	
39		Budget	Green	In Progress	Feb 26: proposed budget, end of year financial assumption and a reallocation of reserves prepared and circulated for consideration by members, including supporting documentation. The 26/27 draft budget has been prepared and reviewed by a member of SLCC and also an experienced Clerk of many parish councils, and recommendations proposed. 1. Water Meadows: Provision removed at this stage as the scope, costs and timescales are not yet defined; any future request can be considered via the Council's grant process once further detail is available. 2. Neighbourhood Plan: Provision reduced by £5,000. 3. Traffic Calming: Provision reduced by £5,000, leaving sufficient funding for three SAM speed signs. 4. These amendments reduced the level of earmarked reserves proposed, which would otherwise have resulted in an increase in the precept. 5. Increase in clerks' salary and pension following the council meeting in December (for illustration).	March

					The remaining general reserve position is stronger and provides improved resilience for unforeseen events and emerging priorities, broadly in line with external audit guidance (e.g. maintaining an appropriate level of reserves/cashflow contingency).	
41	Finance	Peppercorn Rent	Green	In Progress	<p>Feb 26: response received from Chair of Village Hall. We have now heard back from our lawyer and as we suspected he says that it would not be appropriate for the charity to be charged a peppercorn rent in respect of its occupation and use of the Village Hall. Equally, the charity should not enter into any agreement in this regard. This is because the Village Hall property is held by the Parish Council on trust for the charity and must therefore be made available for the charity accordingly. The payment of a peppercorn rent or use of an agreement would suggest that the charity has some form of tenancy of the property which is not the case. Jan 26: Payment received from the Rifle Club, but they would like to see a Rental Agreement.</p> <p>Dec25: The Chairman of the Village Hall and Rifle Club have both been sent an agreement document to cover unrecovered Peppercorn rents for 2025, with future years to be collected on the 1st of April. This issue was logged by the internal auditor as it needs to be addressed. Rifle clubs are raising this with their committee, and the village hall are raising this with their lawyers, to get advice on potential impact - if any.</p>	
42	Governance	Trust: Recreation Ground: 301982: Removal of Existing Trustees	Green	In Progress	Nov 25: received in writing formal written notice from the existing trustees that they would like to be removed.	