



# WEST MEON PARISH COUNCIL

## Clerk's Report for March 2026

### HR

- **Clerk's Time:** An additional 7 hours were worked during the month to support a few ongoing workstreams. This included obtaining and reviewing quotations, liaising with contractors, site visits in relation to maintenance and fencing at Meonwara Crescent. Attending a site meeting with the Environment Agency regarding works to the weir and obtaining quotes, to support the South Downs National Park CIL funding application. Additional time was also required for year-end accounting processes.
- **Training:** 'Councillor Essentials' training course for Cllr Griffiths. Cost £120.00 + VAT (members price), dates and locations below.
  - Totton 19<sup>th</sup> May (1000-1430 hrs.)
  - Winchester 4<sup>th</sup> June (100-1430 hrs.)
  - Alresford 9<sup>th</sup> June (1830-2100 hrs.)

### Finance:

#### End of Year Accounts:

#### Year End Position

- Total Receipts for the Year **£40,533.69**
- Total Payments for the Year **£49,082.02**
- Closing Balance as of 31<sup>st</sup> March **£103,439.79**
- Q4 VAT processed

#### Accounts Status

- Accounts: prepared to 31<sup>st</sup> March
- Internal audit arrangements booked 19<sup>th</sup> May
- AGAR Preparation: started

#### Reserves Position

- **General Reserves** £38,222.62
- **Capital Reserves** £30,000.00
- **Earmarked Reserves** £35,217.17, noting £7,819.37 should be transferred back to the General Reserve (see below).

- **Hydrology Reserve**

During preparation of the year-end accounts, it was identified that the Hydrology reserve had not been carried forward in the Scribe accounting system following the transition to the new financial year. This has now been corrected, and the reserve is accurately reflected. Expenditure of £6,980.63 relating to the Stantec Report has been correctly allocated to and deducted from this reserve. The updated reserves position has been reviewed and circulated to members.

## Assets

- Brick and flint wall have been added to the asset register and estimated replacement cost. Clerk to advise insurance company.

## Other

- **Bank Interest:** Following the decision to hold funds within a deposit account, £2034.32 was earned during the financial year.
- **Projects:** The Council had planned expenditure of approximately £40,000 during the year in relation to flood defence, car park improvement works, 3 entrance signs, including a transfer of £10,000.00 to build a fund for replacement playground in the future. The Flood Defence project did not progress, as it was determined that the Parish Council does not have the necessary powers to deliver this work. The car park improvement project has taken longer than anticipated, while considering appropriate scope. Further consideration of legal advice regarding land ownership and responsibilities may defer the project.

**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.

## Annual Parish Meeting:

- Village Hall and kitchen area is booked for the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April 2026 from 6.30-9pm.
- St John's Ambulance: demonstration by St John's ambulance has been booked. An indication of expected attendance has been requested to ensure sufficient equipment is available for residents to participate.
- Village Hall and West Meon & Warnford Sports Club both contacted with the change in format, date and location. Sports Club have confirmed they can provide the refreshments. Budget to be confirmed.

## Communication

- **Biodiversity Volunteer Sign-up:** emails sent to the Clerk from interested residents have been forwarded to the Biodiversity team.
- **South Downs National Park:** Email received regarding the council's position regarding progression of a Village Design Statement / Neighbourhood Plan. Details forwarded and added to agenda for council's consideration and agreed response.
- **Meon Valley Beekeepers:** requested support in raising awareness of the impact of Asian hornets. This has been included within the Parish News and will also form part of the biodiversity display at the Annual Parish Meeting.
- **Bus Stop (High Street):** damage to the bus seat was reported. Following a visit, a contractor was contacted but has confirmed they are unable to undertake the repairs. Cllr Hickmore has offered to carry out the repair and will assess next week.
- **Recreation Ground:** Two incidents of damage occurred at the Recreation Ground during the month. These included damage to the enclosed cricket pitch area,

believed to be caused by individuals playing golf, and a post and sign being removed at the entrance from the school/church. The Clerk shared both incidents via social media. The post and sign have since been reinstated, with assistance kindly provided by a member of the community.

#### **Parish Council Website:**

- The new Unitary Model has been published on the website outlining the changes that will take place.
- Elections: dates of the election have been published on the website and noticeboard and via social media.
- Biodiversity Volunteer post: request for volunteers published on the website and via social media
- Accessibility Statement: has been added to our website in line with statutory requirements.

### **Recreation Ground/Community**

- **Tree (Cross):** planning application has been received for consideration by council members. See issue 12.
- **Leases and Land Ownership:** recommendations received from HALC advisory team. Clerk prepared a discussion document to help members to agree what the next steps are.
- **Meonwara (Fencing):** Three quotations have been obtained for the fencing works. Site meetings were held with two contractors to review the required works.
- All contractors advised that the fencing can be repaired, and that full replacement would be significantly more costly.
- **Meonwara Lease:** received (7<sup>th</sup> April) the conditions of the lease are being drawn up by the solicitors and will be sent to the clerk. The Senior Surveyor at Winchester City Council has advised that the Heads of Terms are being changed from 5 years to 10 years. Existing payment terms (if demanded) is set at £1 per annum (remains unchanged).
- **Projects (Woodlands Signs):** No objections have been received by the Clerk regarding the proposed third and final position of the Woodlands entrance sign. The matter has therefore been included on the agenda for Council's consideration and decision.
- **Lengthsman:** the schedule for the year has been received and added to the website.
- **Ash Dieback:** dates confirmed, see item 43.
- **Playground:** Infinity Playgrounds attended both Meonwara and the Recreation Ground to carry out approved maintenance works, including surface repairs and cleaning, replacement of swing fittings, installation of a new basketball hoop and net, and replacement of the balance beam and post at Meonwara.

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
12	Village Maintenance	Tree On The Cross: Survey and options appraisal	Amber	In Progress	<p>Mar 26: Planning Application received for consideration.</p> <p>Mar 26: Notice of Intent confirmed as 26th January. SDNP Planning confirmed the application was sent to the wrong department. The application has now been given priority, however as the tree has a TPO the application is being sent to Winchester for further investigation.</p> <p><b>- For earlier entries to this issue, revert to previous Clerks Report.</b></p>
14	Legal	Land Registry: application Status	Red	In Progress	<p>22/10/25: email sent to Bramsdon &amp; Child: Application had stalled pending solicitor action. This has been confirmed as resolved by Bramsdon &amp; 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 &amp; Child confirmed that Land Registry do have the application. Land Registry advised Bramsdon &amp; Child (by letter) to say it could not be expedited through the portal. Bramsdon &amp; Child advise they have not seen the letter. Furthermore Bramsdon &amp; 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 &amp; 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 &amp; 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 &amp; Childs Solicitors). No response as 5/07/25.</p>
17	Working Groups	Flood Action: Weir, Culverts, Drains, Bridges - Reporting Issues	Red	In Progress	<p>Mar 26: Following summary from the Environment Agency on works to address the revetments, three quotes have been requested from Eco-Librium, Earlcoate and Cabin BioEngineering. Cabin BioEngineering have declined due to current commitments' and SDNP deadline for the funding application.</p> <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>

					<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>- For earlier entries to this issue, revert to previous Clerks Report.</p>
18	Legal/Property	Legal Advice: Sports Club & Village Hall	Amber	In Progress	<p>Mar 26: Advice letter received from HALC Legal Services setting out their recommendations. To be circulated with Council members and discussed at the next meeting.</p> <p>Jan 26: see issue 29 for update.</p> <p>- For earlier entries to this issue, revert to previous Clerks Report.</p>
22	Projects	Woodlands Entry Signs: Confirmation of location	Red	In Progress	<p>Feb 26: There have been no objections 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, <a href="https://w3w.co/turkey.passively.crystals">https://w3w.co/turkey.passively.crystals</a> but will wait to hear back from Bramdean Parish Council, their views.</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> <p>- For earlier entries to this issue, revert to previous Clerks Report.</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 .</p> <p>However, it at this stage may be more appropriate to obtain estimates so</p>

					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. 28/7/25: initial enquiry sent out to Nidagraveluk.co.uk, info@slatterestatesurfaces.com, info@randcgroundworks.com and Ed Bagshaw Ltd.
27	Finance	Quote/Tender process: public spaces	Amber	In Progress	<p>Mar 26: three quotes have been received for the contract to maintain the pitches and hedgerows.</p> <p>Feb 26: Specification for maintaining the pitches and hedges has been reviewed and approved by the current contractor, noting that WM &amp; 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&amp;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 <b>Biodiversity Working Group</b> for input into any additional requirements. I also received an email from <b>Chair Sports</b>, who would like to review the document before it is approved.</p> <p>29/7/25: contacted Mac &amp; Will to clarify scope of rec ground maintenance of public places.</p>
29	Legal/Property	Leases and Land Ownership	Red	In Progress	<p>Mar 26: Advice letter received from HALC Legal Services setting out their recommendations. To be circulated with Council members and discussed at the next meeting.</p> <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>- For earlier entries to this issue, revert to previous Clerks Report.</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	Amber	In Progress	<p>Mar 26: SDNPA has requested an update on the Parish Council's current position regarding progression of a Village Design Statement or a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP), to inform a report to Members. They have also advised that, from 30 June 2026, design statements can no longer be adopted as SPDs and will carry limited weight.</p> <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>- For earlier entries to this issue, revert to previous Clerks Report.</p>
36	Planning	Planning Application	Amber	In Progress	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
37	Open Spaces	Play Equipment	Green	Complete	<p>Mar 26: Infinity Playgrounds have been appointed. Initial scope of work has been confirmed, in line with the agreed scope resolved at the meeting in March. Awaiting confirmation from the operations team as to a confirmed date for works to take place.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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</p>

					<p>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).</p> <p>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.</p>
38	Finance	Precept	Green	Complete	<p>Jan 26: the precept for West Meon Parish Council was submitted to Winchester Council requesting £41,828.00, as approved in the January meeting.</p> <p>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.</p>
39		Budget	Green	In Progress	<p>Mar 26: Reallocation of reserves actioned in line with March meeting. To be reviewed during the end of year financial statement.</p> <p>Feb 26: proposed budget, end of year financial assumption and a reallocation of reserves prepared and circulated for consideration by members, including supporting documentation.</p> <p>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.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>2. Neighbourhood Plan: Provision reduced by £5,000.</li> <li>3. Traffic Calming: Provision reduced by £5,000, leaving sufficient funding for three SAM speed signs.</li> <li>4. These amendments reduced the level of earmarked reserves proposed, which would otherwise have resulted in an increase in the precept.</li> <li>5. Increase in clerks' salary and pension following the council meeting in December (for illustration).</li> </ol> <p>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).</p>

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 Club 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	Amber	In Progress	<p>Nov 25: received in writing formal written notice from the existing trustees that they would like to be removed.</p>
43	Open Spaces	Ash Dieback	Green	In Progress	<p>Mar 26: confirmed dates for the removal of trees identified as 'at risk' is April 13th - 17th April inclusive. Start time between 0800-0900 hours. Partial road closure expected on the Monday or Tuesday. Subject to change e.g. weather conditions may make the ground unsuitable. WM Sports Club advised of the proposed dates.</p>
44	Open Spaces	Meonwara - Fencing	Green	In Progress	<p>Mar 26: Three contractors have been invited to assess the condition of the fence at Meonwara Crescent and submit quotations for remedial works. It is anticipated that these will be available for Member consideration at the next meeting.</p>

45	Legal/Property	Meonwara - Lease Renewal	Green	In Progress	<p>April 26: Winchester City Council have advised that the Heads of Terms have changed from 5 years to 10 years, with the remaining terms unchanged. they have appointed their solicitor to draw up the paperwork.</p> <p>Mar 26: Winchester City Council has been advised that the Parish Council wishes to renew the lease for a further five-year term on the existing arrangements. Documentation is currently being prepared by their solicitors and will be issued to the Clerk for review. Winchester has been informed that, should the terms remain unchanged, the Parish Council does not intend to instruct a solicitor.</p>
----	----------------	--------------------------	-------	-------------	---