



Minutes of the Highclere Parish Council Meeting

Westridge Studio

Tuesday 14 April at 7.30pm

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

Clerk: Amy White

In attendance: Colin Wall, NP Steering Group

1. 01/26 Apologies for Absence

Cllr MacIver and Cllr Malone sent their apologies.

2. 02/26 Declarations of Interest

None.

3. 03/26 To agree Minutes of Meeting held on 10 March 2026

The Minutes of 10 March 2026 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman, Cllr York.

4. 04/26 Matters arising from Meeting held on 10 March 2026

Number	Action	Person
113/25	Clerk will put Cllr Malone in contact with Cllr Dick from EWPC to discuss the costings- Actioned , Cllrs yet to move forward with this	Clerk/Cllr Malone
116/25	Clerk to report back from meeting with Kevin Hyde- Actioned , see item CC	Clerk
116/25	Cllr Morrey will report as many potholes as possible on the 'FixMyStreet' app and Clerk will promote reporting potholes on Facebook and the HS newsletter- Actioned	Clerk/Cllr Malone
116/25	Once the Clerk has received costings for Village Gateways, the projects will be prioritised and costed for 26/27- Actioned , see item 11.	Clerk

5. 05/26 Public participation

No one was present.

6. 06/26 Reports from County and Borough Councillors

Local Plan Update:

- Cllr Izett reported on the recent Burghclere Parish Council meeting, attended by Cllr Sam Carr, Cllr Paul Harvey (Leader) and Cllr Andy Konieczko, Cabinet Member for Planning.
- The Borough Council is challenging the Government's increased housing targets on the basis that there is insufficient water supply to support the proposed level of development.
- This concern relates particularly to South East Water and a proposed transfer pipeline, which is currently delayed.
- Evidence from a Water Cycle Study is being used in discussions with the Environment Agency to support this position.
- Wastewater capacity is understood to be less of a constraint.
- The outcome of this challenge remains uncertain; however, if successful, it may result in a reduction in required housing numbers.
- It was noted that, despite potential reductions, there has been no commitment from the Borough Council to remove specific sites (including Oakley Farm) from the list of proposed developments.
- Concern was expressed that, if the challenge is unsuccessful, it may delay the Local Plan process and risk missing the deadline to submit the plan for examination, potentially requiring parts of the process to restart.
- The Local Plan is progressing from Regulation 18 (completed) to Regulation 19 consultation later this year.
- Following Regulation 19, the plan will be submitted for independent examination, with a public inquiry expected to last 6–12 months.
- Adoption of the Local Plan is currently anticipated by winter 2027.

Neighbourhood Planning:

- The Borough Council has agreed to provide financial support for neighbourhood planning, following the withdrawal of Government funding.
- Funding criteria are currently being developed, with indicative grants expected to be up to approximately £10,000 per parish.
- Further details are awaited.
- Cllr Izett emphasised the importance of progressing a Neighbourhood Plan regardless of funding availability.

Local Government Reorganisation:

- The Government has confirmed proposals for local government reorganisation, introducing new unitary authorities.
- The relevant new authority for the will include Basingstoke, Rushmoor, and Hart.
- Key points:
 - Elections to a shadow authority will take place in May 2027.
 - Scheduled borough council elections in 2027 will be cancelled.
 - Existing councillors' terms will be extended to 2028.
 - The new unitary authority is expected to become operational in May 2028.
 - A Joint Committee will be established to oversee the transition, comprising representatives from the affected councils and Hampshire County Council.

- It is anticipated that parish councils may take on additional responsibilities post-unitary (2028), though details are not yet clear nor confirmed. Cllr Izett agreed to seek further clarification on this.

7. 07/26 Confirmation of nominations for Election 07 May 2026

The Clerk confirmed a no-contest election for Highclere Parish. All current councillors will remain (see website for full details of councillors and wards).

8. 08/26 Annual Meeting/Annual Parish Meeting

The date is 12 May 2026. Cllr Thacker and Cllr Izett have confirmed their attendance. The APM will focus on HPC's 2026-27 projects/action plan, updates on the Local Plan and its potential effect on Highclere. Other ideas to include:

- Little Penwood
- Highways issues
- Neighbourhood Plan

Action: Clerk and Cllr York to prepare brief slides for APM.

9. 09/26 Neighbourhood Plan

The steering group is chasing budget figures from PlanET. There is still no confirmation that the government will fund NPs, but there is hope. AECOM has updated the SEA to 20 houses (at no extra cost). Once the figures are confirmed, the NP can proceed to Regulation 14.

The council confirmed it is now in a position to move forward with the Neighbourhood Plan, following a pause due to uncertainty about funding and viability. *Therefore, work on the NP will now proceed.*

10. 10/26 115/25 Planning

Planning applications (full details can be found on the BDBC planning portal):

- 26/00555/TDC Plantation Cottage Westridge (Deadline 17 April)
- 26/00601/HSE Bennett House Andover Road Highclere (Deadline 20 April)
- 26/00655/ROC Park View House Church Lane Highclere- Comment: concerned about the dormer on the front of the house. Would object to the change of use of Velux windows on the rear elevation.
- 26/00559/FUL Highclere Stud Lane, Highclere Stud- no objection
- 26/00670/HSE Orchard House, Westridge Highclere- no objection

Colin Wall, representing Highclere Society, explained that Highclere Society will no longer comment on applications as a body, but will examine them and advise members of the Society of any potential planning concerns. It was agreed that a closer working relationship with the parish council and HS would be beneficial. The Clerk will now send planning applications to Colin Wall as well as parish councillors.

11. 11/26 HPC Action Plan

Please see the updated action plan on our website: www.highclere-pc.gov.uk.

Community Funded Initiative: Village gateways and improved signage in Penwood/Highclere

- The Clerk updated the council on the meeting and drive around with Kevin Hyde of Hampshire County Council, to plan projects in line with a Community Funded Initiative. Many projects were identified, to include new speed roundels, bollards and possibly road markings. Some of these suggestions will be passed to Hampshire Highways to complete. The Clerk shared the quote received from HCC for the Penwood gateway and local shop sign. (see plan at end of Minutes). The quote is £3759.75, with a £850 deposit/scoping fee required. *Council agreed to pay the £850 scoping fee.*

Action: Clerk to pay £850 to HCC for the initiation of the gateway/shop sign project.

Purchase of a second SID- Cllr Easton suggested that HPC would be in a position to purchase a new one at the next meeting.

Cllr Easton also recommended purchasing new brackets for the current SID- the brackets are plastic and probably not robust to last a long time.

12. 12/26 Financial Matters

a. Accounts for payment

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

Bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2026:

Unity Bank Current Account: **£10117.44**

Unity Bank Savings Account: **£46526.34**

Total: **£56643.78**

This marks the end of the 2025/26 financial year.

The Clerk confirmed internal audit documents were now being prepared for 03 June 2026.

The Council confirmed there are no conflicts of interest with the external auditors, BDO.

Scribe: Going forward, all invoices will be added to Scribe and not printed. Cllr Maclver will log in and check invoices prior to sign-off at each meeting.

Members allowances:

The Parish/Town Council considered the BDBC report at the 14 April 2026 meeting and decided not to adopt a Member Allowances Scheme.

The public notice is on our website.

13. 13/26 Items to take forward to subsequent meeting

Annual Meeting 6:30pm, APM 7pm.

Date of next Meeting: Tuesday 12 May 2026

Actions from 14 April 2026 Meeting

Number	Action	Person
08/26	Clerk and Cllr York to prepare brief slides for APM.	Clerk, Cllr York
11/26	Clerk to pay £850 to HCC for the initiation of the gateway/shop sign project.	Clerk