**WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL**

**UPPER MEON VALLEY WARD – PARISH UPDATE – SEPTEMBER 2026**

The season of village fetes and summer holidays being now largely behind us, we hope you managed to find some time to enjoy the sunshine – remember, this year's summer will be the least extreme that you will ever see!

**Winchester Small Grant scheme**

Another reminder that the Winchester Small Grant scheme (up to £700) is open for applications from local not-for-profit and voluntary groups and organisations for the rest of the year - https://www.winchester.gov.uk/grants-for-not-for-profit-organisations/small-grant-scheme - and congratulations to Warnford Village Hall who were recently awarded £500 from the pot for their very successful 'Pop-up Pub'.

**A32/A272 Noise**

Many will have seen the Police and Crime Commissioner's invitation to complete a survey on the lived experience of excessive traffic noise in the Meon Valley. In its preamble she claims that "the government needs to do more to tackle this issue". Parishes may be interested in the recent update by the Hertfordshire PCC's update on their current trial of acoustic cameras to combat excessive noise on the A405 near St Albans: Herts PCC Acoustic Camera Trial Update Jul 26
It would appear that acoustic cameras, deployed in a scheme considerably cheaper than the average speed cameras currently installed in our Ward, are already having some effect there. By contrast, we asked the Hampshire Police, when they attended the Winchester Scrutiny Committee back in February, and for the second year running, for the statistics of 'speeding tickets' issued as a result of the average speed cameras. A full response is still awaited.

**Heatwaves**

Given the likelihood that future summers will be no less stressful in respect of heatwaves, WCC passed a resolution at the end of August, supported by all parties, to review the District's resilience to similar weather events in the coming years, particularly with respect to its housing stock and civic buildings. It would undoubtedly be useful if parishes were able to conduct a review of resilience in their own areas – nothing onerous but, given the effects of the hear on our older residents in particular, it perhaps behoves all of us to think through what more could be done to help our villagers more at risk.

**A new rural bus service!**

The 'South Downs Rambler' bus is back from next weekend (6 September) until Sunday 1 November - fair enough, not new as it's been tried before but this time it's running through the Autumn rather than during the Summer and we've been given advanced notice. Sponsored by the Hampshire Community Rail Partnership, the service runs three round-trips between Winchester and Petersfield, taking in Bramdean, West Meon, Warnford, Exton and Corhampton & Meonstoke before climbing to the Old Winchester car park and on to Queen Elizabeth Country Park. Each journey costs £3, with passes also accepted. 'Rambling' is not compulsory - it also provides an opportunity to explore some of our country pubs whilst leaving the car at home, or will get you to the station for a Sunday trip. Please publicise widely in your communities – it would be good if it were so successful that we could push for it to run over all weekends through the year. Details are here: South Downs Rambler 2026 leaflet

**Recycling**

Thank you to everybody who has contributed to raising the percentage of waste that is recycled in Winchester District, up from 40.4% in 2024/25 to 47.3% in 2025/26 – a very significant increase.

**Re-naturing**

The local South Downs National Park Rangers, led by Elaina Whittaker-Slark who works from the Park's area office in Wallops Wood, Droxford, have helped support two ponds in our Ward: the old Woodlands Village Pond in West Meon parish is now a haven for wildlife, rather than the overgrown wilderness it had become over the past years, and a new dew pond has been established on Magdalen Hill Down in Chilcomb parish. Both are now making a real contribution to the creation and support of new wildlife corridors.

**Reorganisation**

Little, if anything, to report this time – we await the 'Structural Change Order' to be laid before Parliament this Autumn.

David Ablitt
Jerry Pett
Winchester City Council Ward Members for Upper Meon Valley