

**Minutes of the Parish Council Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 10 March 2026 at
8.15pm at School Fields Trust Hall.**

Present: Cllr B Hawker (Chair), Cllr I Moyse (Vice Chair), Cllr M Husband, Cllr M Urwin
In attendance: Sue James (Parish Clerk)

1. Welcome by Chairman

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Assembly.

2. Apologies for absence

Cllr A Rostand

3. Minutes of last Annual Parish Meeting

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 11th March 2025 were approved and accepted as a true record of the meeting at the Parish Council meeting held on 8th April 2025.

4. Chairman's Report to the Parish Electors

The Chair offered the following presentation:

This report is an opportunity to reflect on the last 12 months and our performance as a council.

We are expected to.

- Assist parishioners with local issues
- Establish good working relationships with other stakeholders
- Act as a statutory consultee on local planning matters
- Provide allotments
- Set and manage the precept

Our meetings are normally held at East Boldre Village Hall but because of refurbishment they are held at the School Fields Trust.

There are currently five Cllrs.; we are advertising one vacancy and we can coopt one other. Two Cllrs have resigned and we thank them for their contribution. Every four years on the first Thursday in May Parish Councils must conduct an election. These elections will take place in 2027.

Our Clerk, Liz Welch, resigned last summer due to ill health. We are grateful for her hard work and commitment. We recruited a new Clerk, Sue James, last November and look forward to working with her.

We thank Cllr. Mans and Cllr. Poole for their support and contribution to our debate. They have been regular attendees on behalf of their respective councils. We are grateful to them both.

We recognize the enormous challenge we now face because of the proposed reorganisation of Local Government. The consultation process, and the need to attend presentations has

absorbed a significant part of our resource. We are still waiting for final decisions from the Government.

Local Issues;

- East Boldre Community Stores Limited (t/a Chapel Stores). The shop and post office recently celebrated 2 years of trading. The Council wants to acknowledge the tremendous achievement and continuing commitment of the management committee of Chapel Stores. We encourage parishioners to use the shop and support it by volunteering; this will ensure its sustainability.
- VE Day. The community recognized this important event by inviting its age-appropriate members to a celebration at Chapel Stores; this was a great success.
- School Fields Trust. We recognize the tremendous contribution to the community of the management team at the School Fields Trust. The council fully supported the very successful 'scarecrow' event on 28/29 June; which will be repeated this year.
- Village Hall. The council recognizes and supports the need to improve the village hall and made an initial grant of £2500 towards the renovation of the hall. We are pleased that the project is now moving into its implementation stage and grateful for the updates on its progress. We congratulate the Trustees for their continuing hard work and commitment to this very important project.
- Coffee mornings. A group of local volunteers continue to provide a monthly coffee morning in response to an identified need. We note the continuing success of this venture and congratulate the organisers. The coffee morning is currently held in the Turfcutters.
- Speed watch. We have established a regular programme of Speed Watch sessions supported by a team of volunteers. This has raised awareness of inappropriate speeding. We continue to seek additional volunteers. The NFDC will install a portable software defined radio during the spring/summer to improve our knowledge of traffic densities and speed.
- Emergency plan. Mike Upton and his team of volunteers continue to maintain our emergency planning process. Mike has obtained funding for a portable generator which is kept at The Fruit Farm and will provide emergency power at the Village Hall. The Council is grateful for the team's efforts and the assurance it provides us. We now plan to identify vulnerable residents who might need assistance; and to communicate the provision of back up batteries for their telephones.
- Defibrillators and CPR training. The council is grateful to the volunteers who regularly check this equipment to ensure that it is fully operational. The Council provides funding for the maintenance of three defibrillators and is planning for their ultimate replacement. The CPR training will re-commence once the Village Hall refurbishment is complete.
- The council has been actively involved and raised concerns where appropriate about the New Forest District Council's waste collection. The service has improved after initial teething problems.

- Village appearance. The council continues to monitor the appearance of the village and to initiate maintenance where appropriate. We are very aware that individual parishioners carry out their own 'litter picks'; we are grateful to them.
- Community Policing. PSCO Richard Williams has been briefed about local issues; and carries out 'drop ins' at Chapel Stores, including a bike marking exercise and a briefing on scams. The volume of recorded crime in the village continues to be very low.
- HOPE (helping older people in the New Forest). The Council has promoted the service they provide.
- Forestry England. The need to respond to the plans to introduce car parking charges has absorbed a lot of time; the Council is disappointed that there is no detailed financial analysis to demonstrate the cost effectiveness of this plan.
- Reforms to National Planning Policy. The Council supported the New Forest National Park's response to these reforms
- Youth Support. The Council engaged with local children to understand what provision they might like within the village. Children 11 to 16 would like a meeting place to socialise with their Friends. The Council will fund a trial to address this with the support of the Handy Trust.

Other Stakeholders

- Hampshire County Council (HCC). Cllr. Mans, the leader of the HCC regularly attends our meetings providing updates on relevant matters, support and wise counsel.
- New District Council (NFDC). Cllr. Poole regularly attends and provides updates from the perspective of the NFDC, support and wise counsel.
- New Forest National Park Authority. Nick Gruber, Tree Officer, continues to provide professional support
- Councillors are represented on the New Forest National Park South East Quadrant; New Forest Association of Local Councils; New Forest Consultative Panel; and attend community forums. They provide feedback on matters relevant to the parish.

Statutory Consultee

- The council dealt with over 20 planning applications during the year. We are grateful for the hard work of Cllrs. Urwin and Moyes.

Provide allotments

The council continues to meet its obligation to make allotments available to local residents. However, the provision continues to exceed the demand of parish residents; this presents a continuing financial challenge.

The allotment holders' Management Committee has made tremendous improvements. We will continue to work closely with them in respect of further improvement.

Set and manage the precept

- The council increased the precept to £17,500 and is recommending an increase of £500 for 2026/27.
- The deficit on council business has been eliminated
- The reserves stand at more than £10,000, which meets the minimum level of reserves required to demonstrate sustainability.

Councillors are volunteers and give their time generously on behalf of the community. I would like to thank them for their commitment and hard work. I would also like to thank those members of the public who take the time to join our meetings; raising matters of concern and suggesting new initiatives for the council to discuss and support. We particularly thank our new clerk for her very hard work, which coincides with the busiest period for council business. We are extremely fortunate to have her.

5. Questions from residents to the Parish Council

There were no questions from parish residents.

The meeting closed at 8:45pm.