

# **WINDLESHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

## **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**Held on**

**Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 7.00pm**

**at**

**The Briars Centre, Briar Avenue, Lightwater, GU18 5RB**

### **1. Chairman's Welcome and Introductions**

Cllr Turner extended a warm welcome to everyone attending the meeting and provided a brief overview of the format and essential housekeeping information.

### **2. To appoint a Clerk for the meeting**

Cllr Turner proposed, Katia Malcaus Cooper seconded, and it was agreed unanimously to appoint Jo Whitfield, Clerk to the Council, to Clerk the meeting.

### **3. Minutes of the previous meeting**

It was resolved by a majority to approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19th March 2024 as a correct record. The Chairman duly signed these.

### **4. Chairman's Report**

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr Turner, gave an overview of actions taken as a result of last year's APM and the Council's objectives and current priorities. Residents were provided with the latest Strategic Plan update, the Annual Report, and the latest newsletter, which outlined the Council's work and accomplishments over the previous twelve months.

Cllr Turner highlighted matters for public engagement and, in particular, the current consultations on the potential adoption of the Heathpark Community Building and the possibility of asset transfers as a result of the upcoming Local Government Reorganisation.

Cllr Turner also reminded those present that members of the public are encouraged to attend the formal Council meetings to stay informed about local matters such as planning applications, community services, and council spending. Attending these meetings offers residents a chance to hear discussions first-hand, voice their concerns, and contribute to decisions that shape the future of the parish. It is also an important way to hold councillors accountable and ensure transparency in how the council operates.

Following this, the Chairman introduced Windlesham Parish Council's Responsible Financial Officer, who delivered a presentation on the Council's financial matters. This encompassed details regarding the 2025-26 budget, the existing earmarked reserves, and insights into the 2025-26 precept increase.

The RFO's presentation offered a clear and structured overview of the Council's financial position, supported by detailed graphs and grouped breakdowns of key areas of income and expenditure. He also highlighted that the Council holds substantial earmarked reserves, with the most significant allocations designated for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), cemetery maintenance, and the Lightwater Pavilion, among other commitments. Examples of planned CIL-funded projects include the acquisition of allotment land, traffic improvement schemes, enhancements to local playgrounds, and further community grant awards. Comprehensive figures and allocation details are available on the Parish Council's website.

### **Questions from Electors**

**Question: Why had Lightwater not received any Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding?**

**Answer:**

In response, both the RFO and the Chair provided a brief explanation of how CIL operates, clarifying that funds are generated from qualifying developments within each specific area. As there have been no significant new developments in Lightwater in recent years, no CIL contributions have been triggered for that village.

### **5. Local Government Reorganisation and the Devolution Process**

Cllr Malcaus Cooper, in her capacity as a Director and Vice Chair of Surrey Association of Local Councils (SALC), gave a brief presentation on the upcoming Local Government Reorganisation.

### **Questions from Electors**

**Question 1:**

If Surrey is divided into two unitary authorities, will a separate mayor be appointed for each, or would there be a different governance structure in place?

**Answer:**

Cllr Malcaus Cooper explained that if a formal combined authority were to be established, a single directly elected mayor would serve as the strategic leader for all unitary authorities within that combined area.

**Question 2:**

If Surrey Heath Borough Council were grouped with Woking and Spelthorne under a combined authority or reorganisation, could there be a risk that Windlesham Parish Council's reserves might be diverted to help address those councils' significant debts?

**Answer:**

Cllr Malcaus Cooper explained that while it is within the power of the borough council to conduct a Community Governance Review (CGR) to assess local governance arrangements—including the potential disbanding of a parish council, which could see the transfer of its assets to the Borough or Unitary Council - it is considered unlikely. In the current context of wider local government reorganisation, such a scenario is possible but not probable.

**Question 3:**

If the Parish Council assumes responsibility for additional services, is funding from higher-tier authorities transferred to support this?

**Answer:**

Cllr Malcaus Cooper explained that while some borough councils operate a double taxation policy, where funding will follow the transfer of services, Surrey Heath Borough Council does not currently have such a policy in place. Although there may be discussions around funding in the event that additional services are devolved, experience to date suggests that no direct funding has been passed down to parish councils when this has occurred.

**Question 4:**

How does this tie in with the Community Governance Review (CGR) that has been requested to remove Windlesham Village from the existing Parish Council?

**Answer:**

Both the Chairman and Cllr Malcaus Cooper explained that Surrey Heath Borough Council has currently chosen to defer any decision on the outstanding CGR request until either September or three months after the publication of the Government's Communities White Paper, whichever occurs first. They also noted that, in light of potential Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), SHBC will need to consider how any proposed changes to local governance arrangements, including those affecting parish councils, align with the emerging regional and structural reforms.

## **6. Open Forum for electors to discuss issues important to their communities**

**Electors present had the** opportunity to discuss community affairs, identifying matters that are important to the whole parish community

**Policing**

The community policing team was present at the meeting, and at this point in the agenda, attendees were given the opportunity to raise any concerns or issues directly with the officers.

### **1. Question - Shoplifting:**

There has been an increase in shoplifting in the village, and concern was raised that some incidents may be going unreported, due to the onerous systems. What can the police do to help, and are there ways to improve the reporting and investigation process?

**Answer:**

The police acknowledged the growing concern around shoplifting and recognised that underreporting remains a significant issue. They explained that while they do respond to reports, internal processes and evidence, particularly around accessing evidence like CCTV, can be a barrier to effective investigation. Officers noted that they were investigating a more streamlined, centralised reporting system could help, ideally one that allows incidents to be reported once and simultaneously notifies the police, area

managers, and other relevant parties. They also noted that resource limitations remain a major challenge, but improving coordination and efficiency in how reports are made and followed up could lead to better outcomes.

## **2. Question – Speeding Traffic and Safety:**

Given ongoing concerns about the volume of traffic and speeding through the villages, are the police planning to introduce any new initiatives to address these issues?

Several attendees also raised concerns about the vulnerability of pedestrians in areas affected by speeding traffic, describing the situation as "an accident waiting to happen." Particular emphasis was placed on the risks posed by heavy goods vehicles servicing nearby construction sites, which were seen to exacerbate safety issues in residential areas.

Specific concerns were also expressed about the Lightwater Bypass, where high speeds, poor visibility in certain stretches, and a lack of safe pedestrian crossing points were described as creating a particularly hazardous environment. The danger to both residents and road users was noted, with calls for urgent attention to improve safety along this route.

Cllr Valerie White also requested that the police team engage with Surrey County Council (SCC) to review their policy on repeater signage. She highlighted that in some areas—particularly along the A30 in Bagshot, the absence of repeater signs may be contributing to ongoing speeding issues. The current SCC policy is that in areas with street lighting (excluding motorways), a 30 mph speed limit is assumed unless otherwise indicated, and therefore, repeater signs will not be installed.

### **Answer:**

The police confirmed that traffic volume and speeding remain key concerns across the parish. Building on last year's work with the Road Safety Partnership, they are continuing to address these issues. Residents may have already seen PCSO John Adams active in the area as part of ongoing monitoring efforts. However, further work is still required in key hotspots, including the A30 in Bagshot, Red Road in Lightwater, and Broadway Road, Thorndown Lane, and Chertsey Road in Windlesham. The police committed to maintaining a visible presence and to continuing targeted enforcement in problem areas.

Additionally, the Chairman reminded attendees that the Bagshot and Windlesham Village Committees have established working parties to explore potential mitigation measures for these issues. The Lightwater Village Committee is also expected to consider setting up a similar group in due course.

## **3. Question – Burglaries**

Is it true that burglary rates have increased in Lightwater recently?

### **Answer:**

It was confirmed that burglary incidents in Lightwater have risen, reflecting a broader upward trend seen across the South East. The police noted that such increases can be seasonal, often peaking during darker months. They are encouraging residents to take proactive measures to deter crime, essentially working to ensure their property

appears to be the "least desirable house on the street" for potential burglars. This includes practical steps such as improving lighting, securing entry points, and using visible deterrents.

#### **4. Question – Youth and Anti-Social Behaviour**

Young people are sometimes perceived as a problem in the community, congregating, acting mischievously, and causing concern. This often seems more a result of boredom than any malicious intent. Can the PCSOs and the Parish Council work together to engage with them proactively, to see a positive solution?

##### **Answer:**

The police acknowledged that while some behaviour may appear disruptive, it's often not borne out of malicious intent. They agreed that a joint effort between the Police and the Parish Council to engage with young people could help build trust, provide guidance, and reduce low-level issues by addressing the root causes.

*20:40 The meeting was adjourned for a short comfort break.*

*20:55 The meeting reconvened*

#### **5. Lightwater Pavilion**

**Question: Why has the regeneration of the Lightwater Pavilion not been progressed?**

##### **Answer:**

Lightwater Councillors present explained that, although progress may not be immediately visible, significant work has been taking place behind the scenes to establish the appropriate governance structure required to manage the trust effectively and ensure a sustainable way forward. Members have visited the Normandy building to explore potential options for the site, and while no formal decisions have been made at this stage, councillors remain fully committed to delivering this important project for the community.

#### **6. Affordable Housing and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**

**Question: Why does affordable housing not attract funding through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)?**

**Answer:** Affordable housing is exempt from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) under national legislation. This exemption is designed to support the delivery of much-needed affordable homes by reducing development costs for housing providers.

#### **7. Closure of Swift Lane CRC**

**Question: What has been the impact on residents following the closure of the Swift Lane Community Recycling Centre, and how have people found managing their household waste and recycling since the site shut?**

**Response:** The closure of the Swift Lane Community Recycling Centre was discussed, with several attendees noting a perceived increase in fly-tipping in the area since its closure. One resident expressed concern about the changes, highlighting the difficulty in

accessing and using the Wilton Road CRC as an alternative. However, another attendee commented that they were satisfied with the current arrangements and had not experienced any issues using the alternative site.

## **8. Community Transport**

**Question:** Several years ago, Surrey County Council proposed a community transport scheme. Has this ever materialised?

**Answer:**

While the community transport scheme proposed by Surrey County Council has been implemented in some form, it has not extended to serve the villages where it is most needed. As a result, residents in those areas continue to face challenges with local transport access.

## **9. Voluntary Organisations**

The Chair of Lightwater Connected requested that the Parish Council keep them involved in community initiatives where appropriate.

**The meeting closed at 21.15.**