



Windlesham Parish Council

Joanna Whitfield
Clerk to the Council
Tel: 01276 471675
Email: clerk@windleshampc.gov.uk
Website: www.windleshampc.gov.uk

The Council Offices
The Avenue
Lightwater
Surrey
GU18 5RG

MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF WINDLESHAM PARISH COUNCIL **Held on Monday 17th February 2025, at 5:45pm, held at the Briars Centre, Briar Avenue,** **Lightwater**

| Bagshot Cllrs | | Lightwater Cllrs | | Windlesham Cllrs | |
|----------------------|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------------|---|
| Bakar | P | Harris | P | Hardless | A |
| Du Cann | - | Hartshorn | P | Lewis | A |
| Gordon | P | R Jennings-Evans | P | Marr | A |
| Wilson | A | Malcaus Cooper | P | Richardson | A |
| Willgoss | P | Turner | P | | |
| White | P | Stevens | P | | |
| | | D Jennings-Evans | P | | |

In attendance: Jo Whitfield –Clerk to the Council
Cllr Garrett - Surrey Heath Borough Councillor

P – present A – apologies PA – part of the meeting - no information
R - resigned

Cllr Turner was in the Chair

.....

| | | Action |
|-----------------|--|---------------|
| C/24/163 | Apologies for absence Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs Hardless, R Lewis, Marr, Richardson and Wilson | |
| C/24/164 | Declarations of interest Cllr White and Cllr Gordon declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 5 as both are Surrey Heath Borough Councillors and will be considering the Community Governance Review request at the Borough Council meeting being held on the 19 th February 2025. | |
| C/24/165 | Public Questions No questions | |
| C/24/166 | Exclusion of the press and public. Agreed that the following items be dealt with after the public, including the press, have been excluded under S1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960: | |

| | | |
|----------|--|--|
| | <p>Members agreed that no items were to be discussed in the confidential part of the meeting.</p> | |
| C/24/167 | <p>Consideration of Representation at Surrey Heath Borough Council (SHBC) Meeting</p> <p>Following the publication of SHBC's CGR report, Members were asked to consider if they wished to submit questions at the upcoming SHBC Council meeting. The questions had been carefully drafted based on the reports content and recommendations, as well as key concerns raised with the Clerk. They also reflected the latest developments in local government reorganisation.</p> <p>The aim of the questions presented was to ensure that any proposed changes to governance structures align with broader strategic objectives, avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts or public expenditure, and uphold the principles of transparency and accountability. These questions seek to provide residents with clear justifications for any decisions made while ensuring that governance changes genuinely serve the best interests of the entire community.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Council was asked to review the questions presented and either approve or reject each question. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If approved, the question will remain on record and be addressed at the SHBC meeting. • If not approved, the question will be formally withdrawn before the meeting. • Once the Council has agreed on the questions to be formally submitted, it was recommended that they be prioritised in order of importance to ensure that the most critical issues are addressed first within the available time <p>It was resolved unanimously that Windlesham Parish Council would make representation at the SHBC Council meeting being held on the 19th February 2025. It was also resolved to submit all 5 questions presented (see attached), which should be prioritised as follows:</p> <p>Priority 1: Justification for a Windlesham CGR Given Local Government Reorganisation</p> <p>Priority 2: Financial Justification</p> <p>Priority 3: Timing and Justification for a Second CGR</p> <p>Priority 4: Validity of Social Media Survey Data</p> <p>Priority 5: WPC's Involvement in Drafting the Terms of Reference</p> 2. Members also considered if they wished a representative or two to attend the meeting to pose supplementary questions if required. | |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | <p>It was unanimously resolved to delegate authority to Cllr Turner and Cllr Malcaus Cooper to attend the SHBC Council meeting on 19th February 2025 and present the agreed questions.</p> <p>Additionally, it was resolved by a vote of 10 in favour, 0 against, and 2 abstentions to delegate authority to Cllr Turner and Cllr Malcaus Cooper to pose supplementary questions. These questions will be determined by a working party consisting of Cllr Turner, Cllr Malcaus Cooper, Cllr Jennings-Evans, and Cllr Willgoss, which will convene at 3pm on 19th February to finalise them.</p> | |
| | There being no further business the meeting closed at 18:30 | |
| | | |

PRIORITY 1: Justification for a Windlesham CGR Given Local Government Reorganisation

The English Devolution White Paper (December 2024) outlines plans for unitarisation and the creation of additional Mayoral Strategic Authorities (Section 3.1). The report also confirms that SHBC is planning a borough-wide CGR as part of its 2025/26 Annual Plan, with work scheduled to begin in June 2025, and the CGR itself commencing in March 2026 (Sections 3.5 & 4.2). Given this, how can SHBC justify the merit of conducting a Windlesham-specific CGR now, knowing that the entire borough may be reviewed again within 12 months? Would it not be more efficient and cost-effective for the public purse, to defer this request and incorporate it into the wider borough-wide review once the government has clarified the next steps?

PRIORITY 2: Financial Justification

The officer's report estimates that a CGR could cost around £50,000 (Section 6.4), primarily due to the substantial officer time required across multiple departments, including Democratic Services, Legal, Planning Policy, Revenues, and Finance (Section 6.1). Additionally, SHBC is facing severe financial pressures, with increasing reliance on reserves, staff reductions, and service cuts (Section 3.2 & 7.2). Given these constraints, how can the Council justify this expenditure at a time when other essential services are being reduced? What criteria have been used to determine that this is a necessary and prudent use of public funds?

PRIORITY 3: Timing and Justification for a Second CGR

The last CGR was concluded in October 2020 and implemented in May 2023. The officer's report states that best practice suggests conducting a CGR every 10-15 years unless there has been a significant change (Section 1.3). Given this, has sufficient time been allowed to assess its impact before considering further changes? Furthermore, the report does not indicate any material change (such as major population growth) since the last CGR (Section 1.3). What specific evidence supports the need for another review at this stage?

PRIORITY 4: Validity of Social Media Survey Data

The September 2024 survey was used to assess support for a CGR, yet it is our understanding that there were no controls in place to prevent multiple submissions from the same device or to verify that respondents were residents of Windlesham Parish. Without these safeguards, the reliability of the data is questionable, as results may have been influenced by duplicate responses or submissions from non-residents. Given that this data is being used to justify a potential CGR, how does SHBC ensure its statistical integrity? Will the Council publish details of the methodology, including how duplicate and non-resident responses were identified and excluded from consideration?

PRIORITY 5: WPC's Involvement in Drafting the Terms of Reference

Under Section 93(3) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, SHBC must consult any local authority with an interest in the review, including Windlesham Parish Council. Government Guidance on CGRs (2010, Paragraphs 35 and 52) also states that parish councils must be consulted and their views considered.

The report does not confirm how Windlesham Parish Council will be involved in shaping the Terms of Reference or whether it will have a meaningful opportunity to represent its community before decisions are made. How will SHBC demonstrate compliance with its legal duty to consult? Will it commit to ensuring the Terms of Reference reflect the Parish Council's views before proceeding with the CGR?