Windlesham Parish Council

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MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF WINDLESHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Held on Wednesday 20th August 2025, at 7.00pm held at St Anne's Church Centre, 43 Church Road, Bagshot

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

In attendance: Jo Whitfield –Clerk to the Council
Mr Murphy – Windlesham Resident
Cllr Lee – Surrey Heath Borough Councillor
Helen Hansen-Hjul

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

Cllr White was in the Chair

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		Action
C/25/78	**Apologies for absence** Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs Hardless, Hartshorn and D Jennings-Evans.	
C/25/79	**Declarations of interest** Cllr Malcaus Cooper declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 6 on the agenda, declaring her position as a director of SALC. Cllrs Gordon, White, Wheeler, and Wilson all declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 5 on the agenda, declaring their positions as Borough Councillors. Cllr R Jennings-Evans declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 6 on the agenda, declaring her position as a Surrey County Councillor, noting that she sits on the higher authority dealing with the LGR.	

	19:11 – During the discussion, the meeting was interrupted by an interjection from Cllr Lee, who was seated in the public gallery. Cllr Malcaus Cooper objected to the disruption and requested that Cllr Lee be asked to leave. The Chair subsequently adjourned the meeting. *19:13 – The meeting recommenced.*	
C/25/80	**Public Questions** Mr Murphy addressed the Council regarding items 5 and 6 on the agenda. He noted the importance of robust governance frameworks and suggested that public bodies, including parish councils, should consider adopting systems to demonstrate transparency, accountability, and efficiency. He emphasised that Community Governance Reviews (CGRs) should be used as opportunities to improve community engagement, strengthen local democracy, and ensure effective service delivery. Reference was made to previous missed opportunities for CGRs in the parish and borough, and he expressed the view that the current process should be welcomed as an opportunity for residents to seek greater local autonomy, particularly in light of the growth of Windlesham Village. Mr Murphy concluded by stating that outcomes should provide consistent, sustainable, and appropriately structured local councils across Surrey, ensuring improved engagement and representation at the most local level.	
C/25/81	**Exclusion of the press and public.** **Members resolved 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:** **C/25/86 To discuss Code of Conduct Correspondence** **C/25/87 Burial Matters**	
C/25/82	**To consider a response to the Surrey Heath Borough Council Community Governance Consultation.** Members were reminded that Surrey Heath Borough Council is undertaking a Community Governance Review (CGR) for 2025–26. The review seeks to assess whether current parish boundaries and electoral arrangements continue to reflect local identities and support effective governance. Prior to the meeting, the Clerk had circulated guidance on predetermination to all members, in light of a previous request for a Community Governance Review (CGR) submitted in February 2024. That earlier request, which sought the removal of Windlesham village from the parish, had been initiated by Cllrs Wilson, Wheeler, Marr, Lewis, Richardson, and Hardless. At the start of the item, those councillors queried whether they should declare an interest in the matter and were duly advised to do so. However, no formal declarations of interest were made, but all Councillors present confirmed that they intended to approach the matter with an open mind.	

	It was acknowledged that, while the current CGR included the potential for disaggregation, it was a different and wider-ranging review being undertaken by Surrey Heath Borough Council in the context of Local Government Reorganisation. To support open and informed discussion, the Clerk had also prepared a statement for the Chair, confirming that all councillors would be able to participate in the debate. The statement aimed to clarify that the current consultation should not be reduced to a binary 'in or out' discussion, but rather be seen as a broader opportunity to consider how governance arrangements across the parish could best reflect local identities and ensure effective and convenient local government. It was strongly recommended that the Council actively encourage all residents to engage with the CGR consultation process. This is fundamentally a matter for the community, and it is essential that residents are well informed and that their views are captured clearly, directly, and without any perception of bias. Councillors were invited to collectively discuss the consultation and to consider formulating a formal response on behalf of the Council. There was much discussion among members, with a range of strongly held and, at times, polarising views expressed. Councillors were united in their commitment to representing their respective wards and communities and acknowledged that, given the variety of perspectives, reaching consensus on all points would be challenging. Cllr Gordon suggested that, given the level of disagreement within the Council, the Council note they support the process, but no formal response should be submitted. This view was shared by several other councillors. However, Cllr Malcaus Cooper challenged this position, stating that such an approach would not be democratic. She emphasised that, as elected Members, councillors should not abdicate their responsibility to represent their residents, regardless of differing opinions within the Council. A debate followed. Cllr Malcaus Cooper informed Members that, in her capacity as a Director of the Surrey Association of Local Councils (SALC), learnings from other areas across the country that have undergone unitarisation presented strong arguments in favour of establishing larger councils. She emphasised that such a structure would be better positioned to meet the future demands arising from Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), ensuring resilience, capacity, and a stronger voice for local communities. She highlighted that members have a collective responsibility to ensure Windlesham Parish Council is forward-looking and prepared for any structural changes. In doing so, she urged councillors to consider how best to secure representation and services, ensuring that residents do not miss out on opportunities or resources that may arise from potential reforms.	

	Cllr Wheeler clarified that, to her knowledge, over 80% of current parish councils represent electorates of 2,700 or fewer. However, Cllr Turner rebutted this point, highlighting the national trend towards much larger councils as a result of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). He noted that while this may have been typical under the previous local government arrangements, the Council must now consider what structure will best serve residents going forward within the emerging new framework. A point was raised that, while concerns had been expressed about the under-representation of Windlesham residents, committee vacancies allocated to Windlesham Councillors had not been consistently filled. It was noted that opportunities to contribute, including through committee membership, had not always been taken up. In response, a councillor stated that they had previously stepped down from a committee due to personal concerns about conduct by two councillors. There was a heated exchange regarding these comments. *19:40 – The meeting was temporarily suspended, during which time it was requested that members of the public refrain from recording while the meeting remained adjourned.* *19:45 – The meeting recommenced.* On recommencement of the meeting two proposals were brought forward as follows: Cllr Gordon proposed, and Cllr Wilson seconded, that Council make a statement that the Council supports the CGR Borough-wide consultation, and state that they are happy to encourage the public to have their say and will support their views. Cllr Malcaus Cooper proposed, and Cllr Turner seconded, that the Council should submit a response to the consultation on the basis that it is a duty of councillors to represent their residents. The Council proceeded to vote on the second proposal. Cllr Harris requested a recorded vote. **A recorded vote was taken, and it was resolved with 8 in favour and 7 against that Council should submit a response to the consultation.** **Recorded Vote** **Cllr Wilson – Against** **Cllr Richardson – Against** **Cllr Wheeler – Against** **Cllr Marr – Against** **Cllr Lewis – Against** **Cllr Willgoss - In Favour** **Cllr Du Cann - In Favour** **Cllr Bakar - In Favour**	

	Cllr Harris - In Favour **Cllr Malcaus Cooper - In Favour** **Cllr Gordon - Against** **Cllr Stevens – Against** **Cllr R Jennings-Evans - In Favour** **Cllr Turner - In Favour** **Cllr White - In Favour** Members then considered the points for consultation as outlined by Surrey Heath Borough Council. It was noted that providing an informed response was challenging due to the limited information available regarding the potential impact of proposed changes. Members expressed particular concern that residents were being asked to take a view without any indication of how such changes might affect them, for example in relation to precept levels. Cllr Wheeler noted that, with regard to the boundary anomaly affecting Lightwater, she did not hold a view on the matter and therefore did not wish to participate in the vote. 1. Is there support for an alteration of the current parish boundaries? For example, this could be the disaggregation of the current parish area or a merger with a different area. **It was resolved, with 14 in favour and 1 abstention, that Windlesham Parish Council supports minor changes to its parish boundaries to address the anomaly whereby two roads in Lightwater (Sundew Close and The Folly), currently within the West End Parish boundary, are transferred into the Windlesham Parish boundary area. This change would ensure community cohesion and reflect the geographic and functional realities of the local area.** Members then took a recorded vote on whether they were supportive of the disaggregation of the Parish. **It was resolved, with 6 in favour, 8 against and 1 abstention, that based on the information available at the time, the Council does not support a possible disaggregation of the parish area. However, Members remain open to future evidence and may reconsider the Council's position if substantive supporting information is presented.** **Cllr Wilson – In Favour** **Cllr Richardson – In Favour** **Cllr Wheeler – In Favour** **Cllr Marr – In Favour** **Cllr Lewis – In Favour** **Cllr Willgoss – Against**	

	Cllr Du Cann – Against **Cllr Bakar – Against** **Cllr Harris – Against** **Cllr Malcaus Cooper – Against** **Cllr Gordon – Against** **Cllr Stevens – In Favour** **Cllr R Jennings-Evans – Against** **Cllr Turner - Against** **Cllr White – Against** Members also took a recorded vote on whether they were supportive of the possible merging of the Parish with another area. **It was resolved, with 7 in favour, 6 against and 2 abstentions, that, subject to more information being made available, the Council would, in principle, support a possible merger of the parish area.** **Cllr Wilson – Against** **Cllr Richardson – Against** **Cllr Wheeler – Abstention** **Cllr Marr – Abstention** **Cllr Lewis – Against** **Cllr Willgoss - Against** **Cllr Du Cann - Against** **Cllr Bakar - Against** **Cllr Harris - In Favour** **Cllr Malcaus Cooper - In Favour** **Cllr Gordon – In Favour** **Cllr Stevens – In Favour** **Cllr R Jennings-Evans - In Favour** **Cllr Turner - In Favour** **Cllr White - In Favour** 2. What are the views on the number of councillors that represent the three villages of Windlesham Parish Council, and whether or not they should be adjusted, left alone, or brought to the same level as one another? **Cllr Jennings-Evans proposed that Council support a fair and equitable ratio of Councillors per head of electorate.** **Cllr Wheeler amended the proposal to add 'in line with National Guidelines', Cllr Harris seconded the amended proposal. Cllr R Jennings-Evans accepted the amendment.** **Members took a recorded vote, and it was resolved with 12 in favour, 2 against and 1 Abstention to support a fair and equitable ratio of Councillors per head of electorate, in line with National Guidance.** **Cllr Wilson – Against**	

	Cllr Richardson – Abstention **Cllr Wheeler – In Favour** **Cllr Marr – Against** **Cllr Lewis – In Favour** **Cllr Willgoss - In Favour** **Cllr Du Cann - In Favour** **Cllr Bakar - In Favour** **Cllr Harris - In Favour** **Cllr Malcaus Cooper - In Favour** **Cllr Gordon – In Favour** **Cllr Stevens – In Favour** **Cllr R Jennings-Evans - In Favour** **Cllr Turner - In Favour** **Cllr White - In Favour** 3. If the Windlesham North and South parish wards should be abolished to create a single Windlesham Village parish ward. **Members unanimously resolved to support the proposed reunification of the North and South wards within Windlesham Village.** *20:35 Cllr Wilson left the meeting* 4. Are there any other comments on Windlesham Parish Council that you would like SHBC to take into account in this consultation? Cllr Wheeler felt that any comments made in this section would not reflect the Council as a whole; therefore, the Council should not respond. However, Cllr Harris noted that Members may have more in common than some may think. **The Chair invited each Member to contribute to a response, and all councillors were given the opportunity to present their views. A recorded vote was taken, and it was resolved, with 9 in favour, 4 against and 1 abstention, to submit a comment incorporating all contributions listed below:** **Strong governance and financial management** • Windlesham Parish Council has consistently achieved clean internal and external audits. • This evidences good governance and sound financial management. **Qualified Clerk and statutory powers** • The Council is supported by a CiLCA-qualified Clerk. • The Council holds the General Power of Competence (GPC). • Together, these ensure the Council has the full capability to perform its functions effectively and lawfully. **Proven capacity to meet future demands** • The Council's track record demonstrates it is well equipped to meet the demands of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). **Active engagement with LGR** • The Clerk is proactively engaging with the LGR process.	

	• Particular focus is on devolution and the transfer of assets and services. • This work seeks to ensure that residents are not detrimentally impacted by the loss of the Borough Council. **Commitment to local representation and resident voice** • The Council is committed to protecting and enhancing local representation. • Resident feedback is welcomed to help shape responses and future approaches. **Expectations of Surrey Heath Borough Council** Whatever the outcome of the Community Governance Review (CGR), Surrey Heath Borough Council should ensure that any changes to the structure of Windlesham Parish Council safeguard its ability to remain: o Sustainable o Viable o Scalable to take on the challenges that will emerge as the unitary structure is implemented over the next few years o Cost-effective o Resilient in the long term **Cllr Richardson – Against** **Cllr Wheeler – Against** **Cllr Marr – Against** **Cllr Lewis – Against** **Cllr Willgoss – In Favour** **Cllr Du Cann – In Favour** **Cllr Bakar – In Favour** **Cllr Harris - In Favour** **Cllr Malcaus Cooper - In Favour** **Cllr Gordon – In Favour** **Cllr Stevens – Abstentions** **Cllr R Jennings-Evans - In Favour** **Cllr Turner - In Favour** **Cllr White - In Favour** *20:47 Cllr R Jennings-Evans left the meeting.* *20:50 Cllr R Jennings-Evans re-joined the meeting.*	
C/25/83	**Surrey Association of Local Councils – To Consider a Request to Collaborate on a Report Highlighting the Benefits of Town and Parish Councils within Surrey's Emerging Unitary Local Government Model.** Members considered a formal request from the Surrey Association of Local Councils (SALC) inviting Windlesham Parish Council to collaborate on and financially support a sector-led report. The report aims to demonstrate the value of Town and Parish Councils within the context of the proposed new Unitary model of local government for Surrey.	

	The Council was advised that SALC is seeking a financial contribution of £480 from each participating council to support the preparation of the Unitary Model Engagement Report. Concerns were raised about the time required to participate, considering the Clerk already has a workload exceeding her contracted hours. Cllr Harris requested a recorded vote **Cllr R Jennings-Evans proposed, Cllr Gordon seconded, and it was resolved with 9 in favour, 4 against and 0 abstentions to:** **1. Approve a £480 contribution to SALC for the preparation of the Unitary Model Engagement Report.** **2. Direct the Clerk to confirm participation with SALC.** **Cllr Richardson – Against** **Cllr Wheeler – Against** **Cllr Marr – Against** **Cllr Lewis – Against** **Cllr Willgoss – In Favour** **Cllr Du Cann – In Favour** **Cllr Bakar – In Favour** **Cllr Harris - In Favour** **Cllr Malcaus Cooper - In Favour** **Cllr Gordon – In Favour** **Cllr Stevens – Against** **Cllr R Jennings-Evans - In Favour** **Cllr Turner - In Favour** **Cllr White - In Favour**	
C/25/84	**Grant Applications – To consider a grant from the Air Ambulance Charity, Kent, Surrey, and Sussex.** Members considered a grant application submitted by the Air Ambulance Charity Kent, Surrey, Sussex. The charity requested a contribution of £500 to support the operating costs of their helicopter emergency medical service, rapid response vehicles, medical equipment, and crews. *21:02 Cllr Gordon left the meeting* Cllr Wheeler explained that she would be abstaining because she felt she had a non-pecuniary interest and because the request was from a National Charity. **Cllr Malcaus Cooper proposed, Cllr R Jennings Evans seconded, and it was resolved with 11 in favour, 1 against and 2 abstentions, that the Council will grant £500, which will be funded from the Village Grant budgets: 26% Windlesham, 37% Lightwater, 37% Bagshot.**	

C/25/85	**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: C/25/86 To discuss Code of Conduct correspondence C/25/87 Burial Matters	
C/25/86	**To discuss Code of Conduct correspondence** Members were informed that further correspondence had been received, relating to councillors' code of conduct. A summary of the correspondence was provided, and the most recent communication was circulated to Members. **It was resolved to carry out the actions as detailed in the confidential report.** *21:36 Members resolved unanimously to suspend standing orders*	
C/25/87	**Burial Matters** **Members noted the update provided as detailed in the confidential report.**	
	There being no further business, the meeting closed at 21:44	