

# WINDLESHAM PARISH COUNCIL

## ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Held on

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at 7.30pm

at

**The Hub at the Windlesham Field of Remembrance, Kennel Lane, Windlesham  
Attendance: 30**

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

Cllr White 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 White 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**

Cllr Harris proposed, Anita Gibbs seconded and it was unanimously resolved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025 as a correct record. The Chairman duly signed these.

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

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr White, 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 and the Annual Report which outlined the Council's work and accomplishments over the previous twelve months.

Attendees were advised that progress against the plan is as follows:

- 47 core objectives are rated green, including satisfactory internal and external audits, delivery of burial authority functions and good governance.
- 16 objectives are in progress and none are red.
- 22 strategic priorities are rated green, covering projects such as playground replacements, installation of outdoor gyms and the formation of traffic and infrastructure working groups.
- 7 priorities are amber (in progress) and 1 is red.

Following this, the Chairman introduced Windlesham Parish Council's Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), who delivered a presentation on the Council's financial matters.

The RFO provided an overview of the Council's financial position, outlining key areas of income, expenditure and reserves. The primary source of income remains the precept, representing a 5% increase on the previous year and remaining lower than many comparable parish councils. To keep the precept as low as possible, the Council has supplemented its budget with general reserves where appropriate.

On expenditure, staffing costs remain consistent at around 30% of total spend, with some increases attributed to additional hours. Other significant budget areas include greenspace maintenance and administration costs, covering election expenses, legal fees for asset transfers, telecoms, audit fees and civic meeting costs.

The RFO also explained the position regarding CIL income, which is allocated by committees but cannot be precisely predicted in terms of timing or value. Earmarked reserves (EMRs) include two major areas: CIL funds designated for infrastructure projects, and other allocations such as cemetery maintenance and the Lightwater Pavilion. These reserves fluctuate depending on incoming CIL receipts and planned project expenditure.

The presentation included detailed graphs and grouped breakdowns of major income and expenditure categories.

## **Questions**

No questions.

Cllr White gave a short overview of the upcoming Local Government Reorganisation. She said that from April 2027, Surrey Heath Borough Council will be replaced by two new unitary authorities: East Surrey and West Surrey, with Surrey Heath forming part of West Surrey. Each unitary council will deliver all local services, including waste, planning, social care, highways, housing, environmental health and leisure.

Elections will take place on 7 May 2026, where residents will elect councillors to the new authorities. Those elected will initially sit on shadow councils, responsible for preparing budgets, governance structures, staffing arrangements and service transfer plans ahead of the formal vesting day on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2027.

Additionally, a brief update was given on the CGR for Bagshot, Lightwater and Windlesham, now in Stage Three.

Surrey Heath Borough Council is proposing to:

- Retain a combined parish for Bagshot and Lightwater
- Create a new standalone parish and parish council for Windlesham Village

Residents are being consulted on parish names and the number of councillors for each area. After the consultation closes on 20 March, feedback will be reviewed and final recommendations made later in 2026, with any approved changes implemented ahead of the 2027 unitary transition.

## 5. **Service to the community award presentations**

Cllr White explained that the public were invited to nominate residents and groups for the awards. All nominations were considered by Full Council, and the following recipients were recognised:

- Bagshot – Rachael Welch (Dogs Walk This Way Rescue)
- Lightwater – Lightwater Scouts, Gill Cole (Lightwater PTA)
- Windlesham – Windlesham Fete Committee, George Gilbert (Windlesham Litter Pick), Shelly and Jerry Lawson (Windlesham Picnic)

Awards were then presented, and recipients were thanked for their hard work and valuable contributions to the community.

*20:05 The meeting was adjourned for refreshments*

*20:40 The meeting reconvened*

## 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.

The session was chaired by Cllr, and the following topics were discussed by the electors:

### **1. Strategic Plan (2022–2027)**

Residents began by discussing the Strategic Plan. One resident welcomed the document but noted that it had been produced by the Council rather than by residents and suggested carrying out a review to assess what has and has not worked, identifying successes and areas for improvement at regular intervals. The Clerk confirmed that a new plan has been drafted for consideration and explained that, following the Community Governance Review, the new Windlesham Village Council will set its own priorities. The resident then asked whether the current plan is predetermined to run until 2027, and the Clerk advised that this would be a matter for the Council to decide.

### **2. Consultation and Resident Engagement**

Following earlier requests for wider consultation on the Strategic Plan, another resident commented that in her experience as a Parish Councillor, it is not practical for the Council to consult on every decision. They noted that councillors are elected to make decisions on residents' behalf and encouraged residents to engage proactively with the Council where possible.

Another resident raised concerns about a lack of engagement, pointing out that many people who are not technologically confident or active on social media may be excluded. A further resident supported this view, noting that comments from the 2023 APM indicated that around half of residents do not engage via social media. The Clerk reported that the Communications Officer is expanding engagement through other methods, including parish noticeboards, newsletters and local publications, and that improvements are already being seen.

### **3. Village Appearance and Environment**

One resident commented positively on the appearance of Lightwater, noting in particular the condition of the memorial gardens.

### **4. Speeding and Traffic issues**

#### **Speed Limits & Speed Enforcement**

A resident stated that although much time is spent monitoring speeds, enforcement is lacking, and without it, speed limits are ineffective.

The Chair highlighted the option of Community Speed Watch groups.

Another resident said some Lightwater roads may need lower limits while in their opinion, others could be increased to ease congestion.

They added that SCC engagement appears limited and that schemes may not be prioritised without Parish Council funding.

A further resident considered if the unitary authority would be more responsive.

#### **HGV and Travel Plan Compliance**

A resident noted heavy vehicle movements in the Heathpark Drive area are not following designated travel routes agreed under development travel plans.

#### **Traffic Counters and Surveys**

A number of residents asked about newly installed traffic counters in Bagshot and Windlesham.

A resident in her capacity as a Parish Councillor confirmed that the County Councillor and Highways were not yet aware of the reason for the traffic counters and were making enquiries to establish their purpose.

#### **Rat-Running Through Windlesham**

A resident commented that Windlesham is increasingly being used as a rat-run and asked why this is happening. The Chair explained that motorway problems often result in traffic being diverted through the village. Another resident added that slower speeds on the A30 encourage drivers to cut through Windlesham instead. A further comment

noted that the Lightwater Bypass is frequently blocked, causing additional traffic from Lightwater to divert through the village.

### **Bagshot Traffic Congestion**

A resident noted severe congestion around the Waitrose junction in Bagshot and mentioned that there had been a serious accident there only a few weeks ago. Another attendee added that SCC Highways have been unable to optimise the traffic light sequencing at this location, which continues to worsen the problem.

## **5. Pedestrian Safety**

A resident highlighted that the pedestrian bridge between Windlesham and Lightwater is very dangerous.

A Windlesham Councillor noted that plans have been discussed to improve the bridge, but progress has been slow.

## **6. Recognition of Councillors**

A resident thanked councillors for their work and the time spent reviewing lengthy papers, but questioned why only half were present at the APM.

The role and expectations of a councillor were discussed. Another resident observed that some councillors are very engaged, while others are less so.

Discussion followed on councillor numbers, noting the CGR proposal of seven per village.

## **7. Future of Unitary Council Representation**

A Lightwater Councillor commented on the challenges of serving as a unitary councillor while working full-time, noting uncertainties around allowances, workload and meeting frequency. They suggested the role may be more suited to those retired or financially independent.

The Chair said retired individuals often bring valuable experience.

Another attendee noted the significant pressures on council officers and another added that unitary authorities may struggle to become fully operational in time.

It was noted by the Chair that any issues falling outside the Parish Council's jurisdiction, such as highways and traffic matters, would be raised and highlighted to the relevant authority.

**The meeting closed at 21.21.**