



Windlesham Parish Council

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30th September 2026

To: The Members of the Windlesham Parish Council

You are hereby summoned to attend an Extraordinary meeting of the Windlesham Parish Council, convened by the Chair of the Council, to be held at Lightwater Library, 83A Guildford Road, Lightwater, GU18 5SB on **5th October 2026 at 5:45pm** to act upon the undermentioned business.

If you are unable to attend the meeting, please send your written apologies.

Joanna Whitfield
Clerk to the Council

Cllr R Jennings-Evans
Chair of the Council

MEETING INFORMATION

Members of the public are invited to attend this meeting or alternatively, if you wish to submit any questions or comment on any of the items on this agenda without attending, please email clerk@windleshampc.gov.uk by midday on 5th October 2026. Please note that submissions for public participation will be read aloud at the meeting, along with the name of the person submitting the comment. If you do not wish your name to be made public at the meeting you must specify this to the Clerk in writing at the time of submission.

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for absence**
- 2. Declarations of Interest:** Members to declare any interest, including Disclosable Pecuniary Interests they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the Parish Council's Code of Conduct and to consider any requests from members for dispensations that accord with the Localism Act 2011 S33(b-e).
- 3. Public Question Time:** In accordance with Standing Orders, a period not exceeding 20 minutes will be allowed for public participation.
- 4. Exclusion of the Press and Public.** To agree any items to be dealt with after the public, including the press, have been excluded under S1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.
- 5. Lightwater Recreation Ground** - final review of Bonfire documentation

Exclusion of the press and public - To exclude members of the public, including the press, for consideration of items excluded under S1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

6. Lightwater Recreation Ground – confidential discussion if required.

7. To consider reasons for apologies.

**Item 5 – To consider permissions for the 1st Lightwater Scouts Bonfire at Lightwater
Recreation Ground**

Full Council EGM 5th October 2026

Purpose of Report

To provide Members with an update following further discussions with the Scouts and consideration of the revised Risk Assessment, Version 3.2, and to invite Members to determine whether the proposed bonfire should be permitted to proceed on Council-managed land.

Members should note that the report providing an overview of the risk assessment and the matters for Council's consideration will be considered in open session. The full detailed risk assessment and supporting documentation have, however, been supplied to Members confidentially. These documents extend to approximately 60 pages and contain information relating to identifiable individuals involved in the organisation and management of the event, together with detailed emergency arrangements and operational control procedures. A confidential agenda item has therefore been included to enable Council, where necessary, to consider any information falling within Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 in private, subject to the required public interest test.

Actions

Members are requested to:

- 1. Review and consider the documentation provided.**
 - 2. Note the clarification subsequently provided by the Scouts' insurer.**
 - 3. Note the further information and controls contained within the revised Risk Assessment, Version 3.2.**
 - 4. Note that the proposed bonfire has been reduced to approximately 4m x 4m, thereby complying with the Council's existing resolution concerning maximum bonfire size.**
 - 5. Note that the proposed location remains approximately 15 metres from the nearest property boundary and approximately 20 metres from the nearest residential premises.**
 - 6. Determine whether, having considered the revised Risk Assessment, the insurer's clarification, previous advice and representations, the known site history and the Council's responsibilities in relation to the land, Members are satisfied that the proposed mitigation and operational controls provide sufficient assurance for the bonfire to proceed.**
 - 7. Note that responsibility for the operational management of the event and implementation of the submitted risk controls remains with the event organiser.**
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Background

The Council has previously considered the proposed 1st Lightwater Scouts Bonfire and Fireworks Event at Lightwater Recreation Ground, scheduled for 7 November 2026.

At the Extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 1 September 2026, Members considered advice received following a Surrey Fire and Rescue Service site visit, the Council's responsibilities as landowner and concerns relating to the proposed bonfire location. Council resolved on 1 September 2026, by 12 votes in favour, 1 against and no abstentions, to grant permission subject to:

- **Suitable mitigation measures being agreed with the football club. The bonfire shall be relocated to ensure a minimum distance of 20 metres from any property not owned by the Council. Clarification shall be sought as to whether this distance is to be measured from the centre of the bonfire or from its nearest edge.**
- **The Council shall meet the reasonable costs of any agreed mitigation measures affecting the football pitch, including either reinstatement of the affected area following the event or amendment and remarking of the pitch to revised dimensions, as appropriate.**
- **The bonfire shall be limited to a maximum size of 4 x 4 metres.**
- **The event organisers providing a comprehensive risk assessment demonstrating that appropriate consideration has been given to risk management, including health and safety requirements, and that suitable mitigation measures are in place.**
- **The event organiser will carry out a ground condition assessment prior to the event.**
- **The event organisers shall set out within the risk assessment the methodology by which ground conditions, including ground dryness, will be assessed and monitored before the event.**
- **The event organisers shall include within their risk assessment details of how wind conditions will be monitored before and during the event, together with the control measures that will be implemented should wind speeds or wind direction create an increased risk to attendees, neighbouring properties or surrounding land.**

Subsequent Council Resolution, 22 September 2026

The matter returned to Full Council on 22 September following the submission of further documentation.

Council reviewed the information presented and resolved that permission for the fireworks could proceed subject to confirmation from the Scouts' insurer that there were no policy exclusions affecting the event.

Update: This confirmation has been received, and permission has subsequently been granted for the associated fireworks display and the relevant invoice raised.

Additionally, Members noted that the location of the bonfire remained approximately 15 metres from the nearest property boundary with a bonfire of approximately 5m x 5m. This did not meet the conditions previously imposed requiring a minimum 20 metre separation and maximum 4m x 4m footprint.

Following consideration of new information provided by the Scouts regarding the proximity of the bonfire to the fireworks, Council resolved that: permission for the bonfire would be granted subject to the Scouts informing their insurer of all relevant information and providing confirmation from their insurer that they were content with the bonfire's distance from the boundary.

Insurance Clarification

Following the Council's resolution, clarification was sought from the Scouts' insurer.

The insurer has advised:

"The policy does not impose any specific stipulations regarding boundaries or separation distances. These considerations should be addressed through the group's risk assessment process and appropriate risk management measures to ensure events are conducted safely.

Given the above, if the Council has any concerns regarding the adequacy or content of the risk assessment, I would suggest that these are discussed directly with the group rather than with us."

In light of this advice, Officers have continued to liaise directly with the Scouts regarding the matters previously raised.

Revised Risk Assessment, Version 3.2

The Scouts have subsequently submitted a revised assessment which addresses the outstanding issues. In particular, it defines observable conditions that would require intervention and sets out the actions available to the Event Manager and Head Fire Marshal should those conditions arise. The proposed bonfire has also been reduced to a maximum of 4m x 4m, in accordance with the Council's resolution.

Members are asked to review and consider the operational and safety documentation supplied confidentially as they may contain personal data and/or operational safety information.

Documentation Assessment

Version 3.2 of the risk assessment documentation substantially addresses the matters previously identified in relation to how adverse conditions associated with the bonfire would be identified and responded to.

In particular, the revised documentation:

- **provides further rationale for retaining the proposed bonfire location;**

- explains the relationship between the approximately 15 metre property-boundary separation and the separation from the professional fireworks firing/exclusion area;
- reduces the proposed bonfire footprint to approximately 4m x 4m, thereby complying with the Council's continuing restriction on bonfire size;
- provides defined management responsibilities for the Event Manager and Head Fire Marshal;
- provides for a dedicated five-person bonfire fire-safety team;
- provides for monitoring of bonfire stability, sparks and escaped embers, surrounding grass, nearby vegetation, neighbouring property and changing wind conditions; and
- identifies firefighting equipment and water provision immediately available to the fire marshal team.

The document specifically assigns overall event responsibility to the Event Manager and bonfire/fire-safety coordination to the Head Fire Marshal, with the latter coordinating the five-person bonfire team.

The monitoring arrangements remain principally observational and judgement-based, rather than relying solely on prescribed numerical thresholds. However, Version 3.2 now provides significantly more information about how conditions will be monitored and how the operational team will respond.

This assessment should not, however, be interpreted as a guarantee that the event is without risk or as the Council assuming responsibility for the operational management of the bonfire. The operational arrangements set out in Version 3.2 remain those of the event organiser.

Matters for Member Consideration

Notwithstanding the assessment above, the final question is whether Council, having regard to its responsibilities in relation to the land, is satisfied that the documentation submitted provides sufficient assurance for the bonfire to proceed.

Members should therefore take account of the information as a whole, including :

1. Surrey Fire and Rescue Service advice previously reported to Council, including the reported experience of heat from a previous bonfire causing windows at a nearby property to become excessively hot.
2. The known history of the site, including information concerning previous tree damage.
3. The reduction in the proposed bonfire to approximately 4m x 4m x 3m, meaning the footprint now accords with the Council's existing maximum-size restriction.
4. The proposed location, which remains approximately 15 metres from the nearest property boundary and approximately 20 metres from the nearest residential premises and the rationale behind this.

5. The revised monitoring and intervention arrangements contained within Version 3.2.
 6. The allocation of operational responsibilities, including the Event Manager's overall responsibility and the Head Fire Marshal's responsibility for coordinating the bonfire fire-safety team.
 7. The insurer's subsequent clarification that the policy does not prescribe specific boundary or separation distances and that these matters should instead be addressed through the organisers' risk assessment and appropriate risk-management measures.
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Reason for Referral Back to Full Council

During the Council's consideration on 22 September, some Members raised concern about Officers' lack of experience of running events and the absence of training in this area. In light of those concerns, it is not considered appropriate for the Clerk to make the final decision administratively without Members having sight of the revised documentation and the opportunity to consider the additional rationale, monitoring arrangements and intervention measures now provided.

The revised documentation substantially addresses the previously identified gaps in relation to monitoring and intervention. However, the assessment of whether that provides sufficient assurance for the Council, having regard to its responsibilities in relation to the land and the information previously placed before Members, is appropriately a decision for Full Council.

Returning the matter to Members is therefore consistent with the concerns previously expressed and ensures that the Council's final decision, together with the information taken into account in reaching that decision, is formally considered and recorded.

CONFIDENTIAL