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Minutes of Council Meeting
Thursday 19th February 2026, 6.30pm at Beaulieu Village Hall

Present:

Cllr. N. Hubbard (Chair), Cllr. M. Dolbear (Vice Chair), Cllr. A. Cowie, Cllr C. Knight, Cllr. J. Rowland, Cllr. S. Steele.

In Attendance:

Cllr. K. Mans, Mr N Barwood, Mrs Pearson, Mrs. N. Deering (Clerk)

2609. Apologies and confirmation of agenda.

Cllr. S. Reece, Cllr. D. Poole
Agenda confirmed,

2610. Chairman's Opening Remarks.

The Chairman read out a statement, which was circulated to all present.

2611. Declarations of Interest

None,

2612. Minutes of Last Meeting

Proposed: Cllr. Dolbear. Seconded: Cllr. Rowland. All Cllrs. In agreement,

2613. Representatives Report's.

HCC – Cllr. Mans reported that the budget will likely increase by another 5%, including a 2% rise for social care and council tax adjustments in line with inflation. The government has supported HCC's stance against delaying elections, although all county parties requested a postponement. He noted his devolved budget is exhausted and highlighted ongoing challenges with flooding and potholes, emphasising the need for coordination among local authorities, including the Environment Agency. Proposals include creating lagoons, enlarging pipes and culverts, and improving stream management. Mrs Pearson noted that inadequate pipes cause Estate flooding; reed beds are effective, and rainwater harvesting should be expanded. With new construction increasing runoff, improved drainage and stormwater solutions are necessary. Some county areas are addressing potholes, and community-led efforts for temporary repairs were suggested. Cllr. Hubbard commented that proper repairs are needed and that this can only be undertaken by HCC Highways. Funding for social care has reduced road maintenance budgets, and Cllr. Mans emphasised resurfacing roads more frequently rather than relying solely on pothole patching. He also announced that this is his final year after 17 years as a county councillor, as he joins the NFNPA.

NFDC – Cllr. Poole not present.

Police – Reports circulated.

2613. Road Safety – Cllr. Cowie highlighted three hazardous spots for pedestrians, especially the crossing from the playground to the shop, the bridge by Mill House, and the blind corner near Beaulieu Abbey Church bus stop. He stressed the need for incident reporting and community involvement, and mentioned efforts to engage sponsors, the MP, and local organisations. Cllr. Mans suggested posing the problem and proposing a clear solution. BPC may seek help from the design department of HCC to assess whether the suggested solutions are feasible. There are funds available for these kinds of schemes. It's important to ensure clear communication with those affected. Consultation may be necessary. Cllr. Rowland asked if the High Street speed limit could be reduced

to 20mph. Cllr. Hubbard explained that speed monitoring showed an average speed of 19.9mph during the day, but acknowledged there is speeding in the evening despite traffic calming measures, which NFDC has advised are the maximum likely to be installed. Mrs. Pearson suggested prioritising pedestrian safety issues near Mill House bridge, which the Estate is likely to support. Cllr. Cowie mentioned they proposed chicanes to direct vehicles to the centre of the road. Cllr. Hubbard suggested focusing on this, agreeing with the freeholder and, once consensus is reached, approaching HCC's Design department.

2614. LGR - Cllr. Hubbard said had good coverage in Lymington Times, which had also been sent out to national papers.

2615. 2026 Annual Meeting Planning – Cllr. Hubbard noted last year's successful Annual Meeting at the Climate Centre with around 30 attendees and contributions from the water company, police and LGR. The consensus was to hold the meeting again on the Wednesday before the May AGM, with this year's scheduled for 20th May at 6pm. Councillors suggested selecting three relevant topics, such as road safety. The current venue was deemed suitable, and they agreed to keep the format simple. Ideas should be submitted to Cllr. Hubbard, The Annual Meeting will be included in the March agenda.

2616. Council Updates

Playground and Recreational Field – Cllr. Cowie mentioned that nothing has changed; washers are done and the swing is okay. There is still a problem with the broken pedestrian gate because it is locked, and local children climb over it. The top bar is broken, and most of the fence posts are damaged. It won't collapse yet, but the gate might. Cllr. Hubbard requested that Cllr Cowie take photos and write to Mrs Pearson.

Cllr. Training Update – A Knowledge & Core Skills course is booked for Thursday, 5th March, for Cllrs. Knight and Reece.

Electronic Banking Update – Lloyds Bank has updated their software, allowing us to sign up the Clerk as a signatory. Currently, Cllrs. Hubbard, Steele and Dolbear are approved.

Data Protection – All Cllrs except Cllr. Reece now have their council emails operational. From now on, we will only use our council email addresses.

FE Car Parking Charges – Cllr. Hubbard said that Cllr. Reece and he attended a Quadrant meeting where our concerns were clearly explained to Richard Burke from FE. It is clear they only consult with stakeholders whose approval they need, including Natural England regarding SSSI issues, the NPA, Verderers, and CDA. Locals have not been consulted. At the meeting, Richard Burke committed to sharing risk assessments, proposals, and the business case, which we have not yet received. The aim is for income generated from parking charges to fund improvements to the NF. Many fear it will be problematic, with a significant risk of displacement parking. Regarding concessions, they mentioned discounts for commoners. The annual fee for residents will be £96 for two cars (with only one allowed to park at a time), valid across England, and they stated they have no concessions for disabled or low-income individuals, although they offer discounts to anyone doing NE work and volunteers.

2617. Public Participation. – None.

2618. Representatives Reports.

– CDA/NFALC/NFCC/Forest Update – Cllr. Reece not present. Cllr. Hubbard said the NPA want to buy a new head office. They have bought 3 semi-detached houses at Foxlease, the Girl Guide camp, and are going to let 2 and use 1 for storage. The NPA confirmed that these lettings are not aimed at supporting individuals on low income.

- Planning Update – Cllr Steele said at January meeting we had 3 applications. Recommended permission on Little Salterns for a garage and Spearbed Copse for change of use of land. Tree House Study Centre for car park that the CET need, discussed all aspects of this planning application and Minutes are on our website. BPC recommended permission as no NPA policies infringed and had extensive pre app advice, landscape and ecology officers all supported application. We have put in our reply to the NPA. February meeting, 5 applications, 4 we recommended permission. Hayters Mead we reviewed amended plans for 2 extra extensions, they were much more in keeping for this heritage asset in conservation area. Garage reduced in size. Thorns Farm, grain dryer store, agricultural development. Replacement of overhead power lines, poles covering Warren Lane and Gins Lane, Sowley Farmhouse. River House, Dock Lane, concerns about one of the conditions, construction management plan, as asking if large vehicles will be able to turn on this site. This is becoming increasingly important. Dock Lane has been damaged by large vehicles accessing two building sites. Essential that this building site can accommodate delivery lorries. Cllr. Steele said she would ring the planning officer who will get in touch with River House planning consultants. Planning officer said there are concerns about ecology condition on that location, looks as if boundaries have been changed since they originally got planning permission, probably to make more space to park vehicles and use as storage, congested site. Waiting to hear from officers and return our decision at later stage.

- Asset Management – Bus Shelter. Cllr. Steele said waiting for finer weather to get this repaired. Ist Aid Course – Cllr. Hubbard said the Clerk is making a list of anyone wishing to attend next course which we could run in the spring. Would require 15-20 people. Could advertise this on our chat group.

- Twinning Garden – Cllr. Hubbard said there is nothing we can do until it dries out. Linda Deering has attracted a few new people. Said maybe we could get the Young Farmers involved with weeding etc.

- Speedwatch – Nothing to report.

2619. FINANCE

Approval of Clerks salary. Cllr. Hubbard stated that the F&GP Committee did not hold a formal meeting, but members met to discuss the matter. Upon further reflection this year, it seemed fairest to identify one of the pay grades used for parish council positions, set by the National Joint Council and agreed with the unions. It was noted that Nicky is not a qualified Clerk, and that we work as a team should be taken into account. The most appropriate pay grade proposed is therefore SCP10, which would increase the Clerk's pay by £135 to £3,692.00 following the change of grade. Inflation will not be agreed upon for approximately 2-3 months, when it is then backdated to 1st April, with a likely 4% increase to bring her to the correct grade and 3% for inflation.

Proposed: Cllr. Dolbear. Seconded: Cllr. Cowie. All agreed.

Review of Insurance Arrangements - Cllr. Hubbard said the council was concerned about the increase in insurance costs last year, and the Finance Committee is proposing a subcommittee, Cllrs. Steele and Hubbard get tenders from 4-5 companies and report back. All Cllrs. In agreement.

Monthly Finance Report – Cllr. Hubbard said not too much to report. Loss in January £407 to be expected. Reserves of £28,166 on budget. Increased estimated surplus for the year of £2,666, and that will go into the asset management reserve.

Approval of bank payments – Agreed to replace the Clerk's laptop, estimated at £600. Apple, so it will fit in with most of our kit. Importantly, iCloud will be set up as at the moment we do not have a backup of the clerk's files. IT Clinic today was £49.99. BVH £75.00. No invoice this month from Paul Deakin as not been able to work much due to the weather and will add to March invoice. £292.65 Clerk's salary, Clerk's holiday pay £429.09, PAYE £10.80. HALC £256.80 for Cllrs. Knight and Reece to attend Knowledge & Core skill course.

Proposed: Cllr. Dolbear. Seconded: Cllr. Cowie. All agreed.

St. John Ambulance – Cllr Steele proposed a donation of £150 following the First Aid course run by them last year is very justified and worthwhile. Cllr. Hubbard abstained with a disclosed conflict of interest.

Proposed: Cllr. Steele Seconded: Cllr. Dolbear All agreed.

2620. Correspondence – Clerks & Councils Direct, all other emailed to Cllrs. Village School council sent a letter requesting support for a drinks machine in the BVH. This should be directed to the BVHT and a suitable response would be sent by the Chair.

2621. Items for Future Meetings – Need to put a Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting date in the diary as will need to do AGAR. Suggest week commencing 20th April, circulate and book Committee room.

Cllr. Steele noted concerns about wheelie bins in the High Street, stating residents expected black bags and a food caddy instead. She recalled an agreement against wheelie bins for this area. Cllr. Hubbard agreed and suggested the parish council draft a letter of disapproval and consult Mrs. Pearson. He will scan the relevant letter and collaborate with Mrs. Pearson on a response.

Meeting closed at 8.10p.m.