

Flat One, Palace Stable Yard, Beaulieu, Hampshire SO42 7YL

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Minutes of Council Meeting Thursday 17th July 2025, 6.30pm

Present:

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

In attendance:

Cllr. K. Mans, Cllr. D. Poole, Cllr. B. Hawker, Mr. A Bishop-Weston, Mr. and Mrs. Brearley, Mr. N. Barwood, Mrs. C. Dyke, Mrs J. Kirman, Mrs. J Cavanagh, Mrs. N. Deering (Clerk).

2549 Apologies and confirmation of agenda:

Apologies from: Cllr. M. Dolbear. The draft agenda previously circulated was confirmed.

2550 Chair's opening remarks

Cllr. Hubbard welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2551 Declarations of interest in current agenda

None.

2552 Minutes of last meeting

Proposed: Cllr. Rowland Seconded: Cllr. Cowie Unanimously agreed.

2553 Local Government reorganisation

Cllr. Mans outlined HCC's preferred Option B2, which would replace the current two-tier system of county plus district/borough councils with four new unitary councils:

1. North & Mid Hampshire – covering Basingstoke & Deane, East Hampshire, Hart, Rushmoor, Winchester [population approx. 656,000].
2. South-West Hampshire & Solent – covering Eastleigh, New Forest, Southampton, Test Valley [population approx. 707,000].
3. South-East Hampshire & Solent – covering Fareham, Gosport, Havant, Portsmouth [population approx. 533,000].
4. Isle of Wight – remains as a standalone unitary authority [population approx. 141,000].

Cllr Mans explained that this option:

- Meets Gov't criteria for scale and financial viability, delivering estimated net savings of £50m pa.
- Has moderate one-off setup costs compared with other options.
- Reduces risk of service disruption by building on existing frameworks.
- Balances efficiency with respect for local identity and rural voices.
- Offers a configuration that combines economies of scale with local responsiveness.

On discussion, it was acknowledged that it also has the following risks:

- Not ensuring rural and local communities feel properly represented.
- Scepticism that any savings will be made, indeed that additional costs will be incurred.
- Tight timeline, with full implementation targeted for April 2028.

Cllr. Mans explained that he has asked HCC to consider an alternative option that would bring the New Forest into a much wider single authority outside the existing Southampton and Portsmouth Unitary Authorities.

Cllr. Poole then explained NFDC's Preferred Option (Option 1 – Rural-focused Unitary). NFDC supports the creation of a rural-focused unitary council that keeps the New Forest whole and groups it with other largely rural districts. This preferred model would combine the New Forest, Test Valley, Winchester, and East Hampshire into a single unitary authority.

Cllr. Poole explained that this Option is favoured as it:

- Preserves local identity and heritage, recognising the unique geography and communities of the New Forest.
- Keeps the New Forest whole, avoiding splitting the district between different councils.
- Provides service delivery tailored to rural areas, avoiding domination by urban priorities.
- Creates a more balanced and sustainable authority by grouping rural and semi-rural districts together.

He further explained that NFDC has rejected:

- Option 2: Grouping the New Forest with urban councils such as Southampton and Eastleigh. NFDC argues this would ignore rural priorities.
- Option 3: Splitting the New Forest, with areas like the Waterside absorbed into an urban-focused unitary. NFDC argues this undermines identity and risks poorer governance outcomes.

The parish councillors and the attending parishioners then had a Q&A session. Cllr Hubbard thanked everyone for their questions on this complex matter.

Cllr. Hubbard then summarised by thanking Cllrs. Mans and Poole for their summaries and for answering the questions posed. He explained that 99% of respondents in a recent Beaulieu Parish poll indicated that Beaulieu parishioners did not support the HCC preferred option, as it was a mainly urban solution. They had expressed strong support for a rural proposal, which aligns with what NFDC now proposes. He explained that Beaulieu Parish Council has considered the matter carefully and fully supports NFDC's preferred Option 1, rejecting HCC's preferred Option B2. He noted disappointment that the County and other councils cannot reach a mutually agreed proposal, as this now risks leaving Central Government free to pursue their own course.

Police – Alert circulated.

2554 Council Updates

Playground & Recreational Field: Cllr. Cowie reported no change other than the top bolts on the swing need tightening more. The ROSPA report was good, and litter is under control.

SDR Vehicle Speed Review: Cllr. Hubbard reported receiving an email from Swann at NFDC indicating that they are still sorting out insurance on equipment. He mentioned that councillors would need training and reminded council that it had agreed that Speedwatch should to be expanded, and not just undertaken on Palace Lane.

Waste bins: There are still problems with the bin at the Marina.

Tractors / harvest traffic through the village: A complaint about a speeding tractor near the Montagu Arms has been received, and the farmer involved has been spoken to.

Councillor training: The clerk will notify Cllrs. Knight and Reece when HALC arranges the next Knowledge & Core Skills course. Cllr. Reece said that it is difficult for her to attend because of her commitments. The Chair reminded councillors that, according to our published Roles & Responsibilities, all councillors have agreed to dedicate time to training. In particular, because of the delegated powers for the Planning Committee, its Terms of Reference require committee members to complete general councillor training and relevant planning courses. A solution is needed.

Electronic banking: Cllr. Hubbard reported that Cllrs. Dolbear, Steele, and himself are now registered for electronic banking. There have been IT issues in registering the Clerk, which needs to be resolved. The Chair reminded council that all electronic payments require the same level of approval as for cheques, which is one authorised person separate from the clerk or councillor initiating the payment. The council agreed that on this basis future payments can be made electronically.

Data protection: Cllr. Hubbard will review this after the holiday period.

2555 Public participation

None

2556 Committee & representative's reports

CDA/NFALC/Forest update – Nothing to report.

Planning Committee Update – Cllr. Steele reported we had 3 applications:

- (1) 25/00729VAR Little Salterns, Salternshill Lane, Beaulieu. SO42 7YE – Application to vary condition 2 of planning permission 22/00652 for replacement annex with link, to include basement plant room, front porch, replacement thatched roof to main dwelling, extension to height of 3 no. chimneys, 1 no. new chimney, removal of 1 no. chimney, external alterations to include replacement windows and doors.

Cllr. Steele explained that this proposal was for a number of fairly immaterial changes to the original plans which do not impact on DP37 on habitable space. The committee unanimously

recommends permission but would accept the decision reached by the National Park Authority

Proposed: Cllr. Hubbard Seconded: Cllr. Rowland Unanimously agreed.

(2) 25/00654 Bramble Cottage, Furzey Lane, Beaulieu. SO42 7WB – Erection of barn for agricultural use.

Cllrs Knight and Dolbear had declared an interest on this application and had stood down. Following review the Committee recommended permission for the following reasons but would accept the decision reached by the National Park Authority as:

- Proposal Compliant with DP50 in that it is for agricultural purposes and there is a functional need to help maintain a commoner's smallholding
- The site is fairly well screened and will not impact on the Conservation Area and neighbouring amenity
- Application is supported by SP48.

Proposed: Cllr. Hubbard Seconded: Cllr. Steele Unanimously agreed.

(3) 25/00606FULL Little Marsh House, Park Shore, Beaulieu, SO42 7XL – Outbuildings, associated landscaping, demolition of existing outbuilding.

The Committee had some concerns that the proposed site 40 metres to the west extends the built-up site further across the site when viewed from the Solent. However, on balance, the proposed new site is more discrete and secluded for this larger building, where it will be better screened and softened by existing mature trees. The proposal conforms with DP37 on outbuildings. Although larger than the existing boathouse, it is proportionate and subservient to the main dwelling and the Committee had therefore unanimously recommended permission but would accept the decision reached by the NPA.

The committee had expressed the view that the majority of outbuildings on the site had been replaced there should be no further development on the site.

Proposed: Cllr. Hubbard Seconded: Cllr. Reece Unanimously agreed.

Pennerley Lodge: Cllr. Steele updated council on Pennerley Lodge. We have sent our refusal to support this application to the NPA and they have confirmed that have received our comments.

Voluntary Code of Practice for Traffic & Logistics Plans: Cllr. Hubbard thanked Cllr. Rowland for producing this draft Code of Practice, which outlines BPC's expectations for guiding the planning and management of traffic and logistics on local building development sites. This has been circulated for comment. Given the disruption and damage that has occurred—particularly on large sites—it was agreed that this is an important step forward. Cllr. Cowie is to send comments to Cllr. Rowland. Subject to this, the council agreed to adopt the Code.

Proposed: Cllr. Steele Seconded: Cllr. Reece Unanimously agreed.

Asset Management Committee – Cllr. Cowie said the school has agreed that we can have a locked box and hose reel on the wall. Cllr. Steele said we have new pads for the defibrillator, tested and all working.

Twinning Garden – Cllr. Reece requested that Mrs. Pearson calls a meeting so rotas can be organised and we need to know who is available before creating the rota. Reported that the hose reel is now on the wall.

Speedwatch – Already discussed.

2557 Finance

Monthly Finance Report circulated. Cllr. Hubbard said we were currently on budget. Said Paul Deakin needs to give us an invoice for two months. Agreed to delegate sorting of outstanding village hall invoices to Cllrs. Steel and Clerk.

Bank Payments for approval – Viking £85.25, Clerk £296.25, Cllr. Reece £118.99

Proposed: Cllr. Steele Seconded: Cllr. Rowland Unanimously agreed

2558 Correspondence

Clerks and Councils Direct and Illuminations Collection

2559 Items for future meetings

It was noted that we do not have a scheduled council meeting in August. However, council agreed that one will be held if required to consider any BPC representation as part of the LGR consultation process.

Meeting ended: 8.15p.m.