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2025/26 Annual Review

The Parish Council continues to work on behalf of parishioners across a wide range of local matters including planning, road safety, asset management, local government reorganisation, environmental issues and community engagement. All council and committee meetings remain open to the public and we continue to encourage residents to engage constructively with issues affecting the parish.

The Council comprises:

- Cllr. Alexander Cowie
- Cllr. Mike Dolbear (Vice Chair)
- Cllr. Nick Hubbard (Chair)
- Cllr. Charlie Knight
- Cllr. Sami Reece
- Cllr. Jim Rowland
- Cllr. Sara Steele
- Clerk to the Council: Mrs Nicky Deering

The Parish Council currently has one casual vacancy and anyone interested in becoming a parish councillor is invited to contact either the Chair, Cllr Nick Hubbard, or the Clerk, Mrs Nicky Deering.

1. Road and pedestrian safety

This remains a key concern.

Following the earlier Speed Data Recorder (“SDR”) review on Beaulieu High Street, which confirmed that average traffic speeds were below 20 MPH within the 30 MPH limit, the Parish Council undertook a further detailed SDR review in 2025 on Palace Lane (B3054).



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The SDR review on Palace Lane confirmed that this stretch of road carries exceptionally high traffic volumes for a “B” road, with levels more comparable to those of an “A” road. Over the monitored periods, almost 89,000 vehicles were recorded, with average speeds broadly in line with the 30 MPH limit. Whilst a small minority of vehicles were travelling at excessive speeds, the overall results indicated that current speed compliance compares favourably with national averages.

The review also reinforced the Parish Council’s long-standing view that the principal issue affecting residents is the sheer volume of traffic and weight of large articulated lorries on the route, along with the associated noise and pollution, rather than widespread excessive speeding.

This year, the Council intends to acquire and implement an electronic Speed Indicator Device (“SID”), which we aim to position in key areas of the village where speeding is more likely, including Harlick Hill and Palace Lane Hill. Further details will be provided in due course.

The Council is also concerned about pedestrian safety and is currently in discussion with NFDC and Hampshire County Council regarding the risks to pedestrians walking on the pavement around the bridge and by Mill House. Whilst pavements cannot be widened in these areas, the Council is exploring other possible safety measures and will update parishioners further as appropriate.

The Parish Council remains particularly conscious of road safety risks during school arrival and departure times around Beaulieu Village Primary School, where protecting children and pedestrians remains a priority.

2. Parking and Traffic Management

Parking pressures within the village continue to be a significant issue for residents, visitors and local businesses.

In March 2026, the Parish Council organised and hosted a public meeting to discuss village parking arrangements. The meeting was well attended and led to a constructive exchange of views and several agreed actions.

It was recognised during discussions that there is a limited scope to create substantial additional parking within the village centre. Nevertheless, the Parish Council is grateful to Fairweathers Garden Centre and the Beaulieu Estate for working constructively to explore practical improvements. As a result, arrangements have now been agreed to provide approximately ten additional off-road parking spaces for traders’ staff cars to help ease



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pressure on the High Street and the surrounding area. The Parish Council greatly appreciates the work undertaken to achieve this.

The Parish Council will continue to monitor parking arrangements and work with relevant stakeholders to identify further practical improvements where possible.

3. Forestry England Parking Proposals

One of the most significant issues affecting the wider New Forest during the year has been Forestry England's proposals to introduce parking charges across New Forest Crown Lands car parks.

The Parish Council has been actively engaged throughout this process, working closely with neighbouring parish and town councils, local organisations and parishioners. A major concern raised by many residents has been the potential impact on local communities, particularly the risks of traffic displacement into villages and residential areas, together with the possible effects on accessibility, local businesses and those on lower incomes or with disabilities.

The Parish Council has sought detailed information from Forestry England regarding the underlying business case, environmental assessments, equality impact assessments and mitigation measures associated with the proposals. Whilst Forestry England has released a number of supporting documents, concerns remain regarding the adequacy of local consultation and whether sufficient consideration has been given to the unique circumstances of the New Forest.

The Council continues to support a balanced and evidence-based approach which protects the special character of the New Forest whilst recognising the importance of maintaining appropriate public access for residents and visitors alike. We will continue to engage constructively with Forestry England and other stakeholders as the proposals develop.

4. Planning

The Parish Council continues to undertake its role as a statutory consultee on planning applications within the parish.

The Council annually reviews between 30 and 40 planning applications and normally undertakes around one or two site visits each month to better understand proposals and their potential impact on neighbouring properties and the wider community. Our Planning Committee meetings are open to the public, and we have been pleased with the constructive engagement received from both supporters and objectors across a range of applications,



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including some which have generated significant local interest.

The Parish Council seeks, wherever possible, to work constructively with applicants and the New Forest National Park Authority to ensure that planning policies are properly applied and that proposals are considered in the best overall interests of the parish and its community.

5. Asset Management

The Parish Council continues to manage and maintain a range of important community assets on behalf of parishioners, including the playground, school playing field, public benches, bus shelters, CCTV systems and the public defibrillator.

The Council continues to inspect these parish assets throughout the year and invest in maintenance and repair as required. In addition, recognising the future cost of replacing playground equipment and similar infrastructure, the Council is continuing to build a dedicated sinking fund (the Asset Replacement Reserve) to support future replacement programmes, particularly for playground assets which are likely to require renewal over the next decade.

The Parish Council remains committed to maintaining these important community facilities to an appropriate standard for the benefit of residents and visitors alike.

6. Local Government Reorganisation

A major issue during the year has been the Government's proposed reorganisation of local government across Hampshire.

Beaulieu Parish Council took a leading role in coordinating an open letter to our local MP, signed by 14 parish councils and the New Forest Association of Local Councils, expressing strong concerns about proposals to incorporate the New Forest into a Southampton-focused unitary authority structure.

Following Government consideration, it has now been proposed that the Waterside area should join Southampton, whilst the remainder of the New Forest would form part of a more rural-based unitary authority alongside Test Valley and neighbouring areas.

The Parish Council believes that splitting the New Forest between different unitary authorities is a deeply unsatisfactory outcome that risks weakening the coherent representation of New Forest interests. There are also concerns about the long-term financial implications for the proposed rural authority if significant economic areas are separated from it.



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The Parish Council will continue to work with neighbouring councils and elected representatives to ensure that the interests of Beaulieu parish and the wider New Forest community are properly represented during the implementation process.

7. Beaulieu Community Awards

The Parish Council is delighted to announce the launch of the new Beaulieu Community Awards Scheme.

The awards are intended to recognise the exceptional contributions made by individuals, groups and organisations across a broad range of community activities. Categories will range from young person achievement awards to recognition of lifetime contribution to the community.

Nominations will open on 1 October 2026 and close on 31 January 2027, with the inaugural awards presentation taking place at the Parish Council's Annual Meeting in May 2027.

The Council hopes that the scheme will provide an opportunity to formally recognise and celebrate the many people who make an outstanding contribution to life within the parish.

8. High-Speed Broadband

Many parishioners have expressed strong interest in the Government-backed rollout of high-speed broadband infrastructure in rural areas of the New Forest.

We understand that Wessex Internet continues to advance its plans to provide these high-speed internet services across the parish, including in more rural areas. Implementation dates remain subject to planning approvals and infrastructure arrangements.

The Council recognises the importance of reliable high-speed internet services for residents, businesses, and home working, and will publish further information as soon as the details are confirmed by Wessex.

9. Financial summary

A summary of the financial results for the year is set out in Annex A.

The precept for last year amounted to £19,469, representing an annual charge of £35.95 for a Council Tax Rate D payer. There was a surplus for the year of £3,139, which has been transferred to the Asset Replacement Reserve.



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The Council's updated financial position is published with the Calling Notice for the Council's regular monthly meetings.

10. Acknowledgements

The Parish Council would like to thank parishioners for their continued support, constructive engagement and attendance at meetings throughout the year. Community involvement remains vital to the Council's ability to represent the parish's interests effectively.

We are particularly grateful for the ongoing advice, support and cooperation from Rachel Pearson of the Beaulieu Estate and Nick Barwood of the Beaulieu Residents Association.

The Council would also like to record its sincere thanks to Cllr Keith Mans for his many years of wise advice, support and service as a Hampshire County Councillor. Keith has been a valued supporter of the parish over many years, and we wish him well in his retirement from county council duties.

Following the recent county council elections, Dan Poole has been elected as a Hampshire County Councillor, in addition to continuing in his role as a New Forest District Councillor. Dan already knows the parish well. Our thanks to Dan for his advice and support over the last year, and we look forward to continuing to work closely with him at District and County levels on matters affecting our community.

We are grateful to Patrick Fairweather giving up his time to be our internal auditor.

Finally, the Parish Council would like to thank Nicky Deering, our Clerk, for the considerable time, professionalism and effort she contributes throughout the year in supporting the work of the Parish Council and the wider community.

Signed on behalf of the Council

Nick Hubbard
Chair
Beaulieu Parish Council

15 May 2026

Annex A

Summary Financial Statement

Income & Expenditure Account		Year ended 31 March	
		2026	2025
Reserves b/fwd:	General Reserve	20,065	20,065
	Asset Replacement Reserve	1,451	-
	Total Reserves	21,516	20,065
Income	Precept	19,469	19,036
	VAT recoveries	1,616	497
	Grants received	-	700
	Contribution to costs	747	-
	Bank interest received	372	9
	Total Income	22,204	20,242
Expenditure:	Waste collection	5,178	5,042
	Asset management costs	4,018	2,730
	Staff costs (incl payroll mgt fees)	4,312	4,197
	Insurance	1,017	847
	New assets	602	2,900
	Other costs	2,293	2,410
	Recoverable VAT	1,645	666
	Total Expenditure	19,065	18,792
Surplus for the year		3,139	1,451
	Transfer to Asset Replacement Reserve	(3,139)	(1,451)
	Balance to General Reserves	-	-
Reserves c/fwd:	General Reserve	20,065	20,065
	Asset Replacement Reserve	4,590	1,451
	Total Reserves	24,655	21,516
	Cash at bank	24,655	21,516
	Fixed assets	40,631	40,754
	Liabilities	-	-
	Total Net Assets	65,286	62,270