

Minutes of the Hurstbourne Priors Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> of January 2026 in the Hurstbourne Priors Village Hall at 6.30pm.

Present: Cllr Mrs C Read – Chair  
Cllr Mrs S Wyatt-Tilby – Vice Chairman  
Cllr Mrs L MacGregor – Tufton  
Cllr Mr T Crutchfield  
Cllr Mr A Milne  
Cllr Mr P Lockett  
Cllr Mr P Smail  
Richard Waterman – Parish Clerk  
Mr D George  
Borough Councillor Mr S Carr  
Members of the Public - 4

Apologies: County Councillor Mr T Thacker.

### **WELCOME.**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **DECLARATION OF INTEREST.**

Cllr Mr A Milne declared an interest in the Village Hall.

### **PARISH CLERK VACANCY.**

The Parish Clerk introduced Mrs Heidi Easton who has expressed an interest in the Parish Council Vacancy.

The Chairman reported that she already has someone interested in the Parish Clerk Vacancy and that she had put an advert in Hill and Valley and was hoping for more responses.

### **BOROUGH COUNCILLOR MR SAM CARR.**

Borough Councillor Mr Sam Carr's reported on the following:

- Cllr Mr S Carr reported that he still has some funding available under his delegated Borough Councillor Community Budget.
- LGR – Consultation on the proposals for the splitting of Hampshire has now closed. Government will review the results and make their decision.
- DRAFT LOCAL PLAN – The Basingstoke and Dean consultation on Reg.18 on the Local Plan has now closed. Hurstbourne Priors had no allocation for development in Reg.18, However, there could be allocations under Reg.19 due to changes in Policy.
- The election of a Hampshire Mayor has been delayed until 2028.
- Hampshire County and Borough Elections will be held in May 2026.
- BASINGSTOKE AND DEANE BUDGET – The Council Tax will increase by 3.99%
- ST MARY'S HILL – Basingstoke and Deane have agreed a way forward regarding enforcement of the Acoustic Fencing and have agreed to fund a noise assessment from an Acoustic Consultant. Cllr Carr and the Chairman will liaise with residents to ensure suitable properties are

available for the noise tests. It is hoped that this can take place as soon as possible.

- The shared gravel drive that was causing problems has been re-done. It was reported prior to the meeting that the repairs carried out have been damaged by the contractor's own vehicle leaving the site. Repairs will need to be carried out and the weight limit for vehicles using the drive will need to be investigated.

### **MR D GEORGE - Local Plan issues with Mill Springs and Bere Hill.**

MR D George spoke about the effect proposed development in Whitchurch may have on the chalk streams. This issue was discussed at length.

Presentation Notes Below:

## **Campaign to have the River Test Catchment prescribed for protection against phosphate pollution by Natural England.**

Some years ago, Natural England put in place "nutrient neutrality" guidelines which required developers to offset the additional nutrient load as a result of the development in the catchments of our chalk streams. It also (in combination with the LURA) require Water Utility companies to upgrade their Wastewater Treatment Works (WWTWs) to remove nutrients using highest technically achievable standards.

Inexplicably the River Test (as part of the Solent Catchment) was one of only 3 chalk streams in the UK which was not prescribed for protection against phosphate contamination, despite it being the limiting nutrient for the river.

At the time these decisions were made by Natural England, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDDC) recognized that the Test Catchment was particularly sensitive from an environmental perspective and therefore successive Local Plans had concentrated development in the River Loddon catchment and to the East of the Town.

The recent BDDC spatial strategy which closed for consultation in January 2026 includes for significant housing developments, consisting many thousands of houses, to be built in the Test Valley catchment, which will require the upgrading or building of new WWTWs. Unless these are upgraded to highest technically achievable standards the effluent and in particular the phosphate loading will pose a significant threat to the River and Chalk Aquifer quality in contravention to the WFD targets for these water bodies. Such effluents will inevitably lead to eutrophication of the river with consequential damage to the ecology, heritage and rural economy that rely upon the health of this important chalk stream.

**We therefore call upon Natural England, the Environmental Agency and BDDC to reconsider the decision not to prescribe the River Test for phosphate protection in the light of these recent developments.**

## **Addendum Discharges from Whitchurch Wastewater Treatment Works**

The Whitchurch Wastewater Treatment Works has served the Whitchurch community for many decades and probably dates back to the late 19th or early 20th century

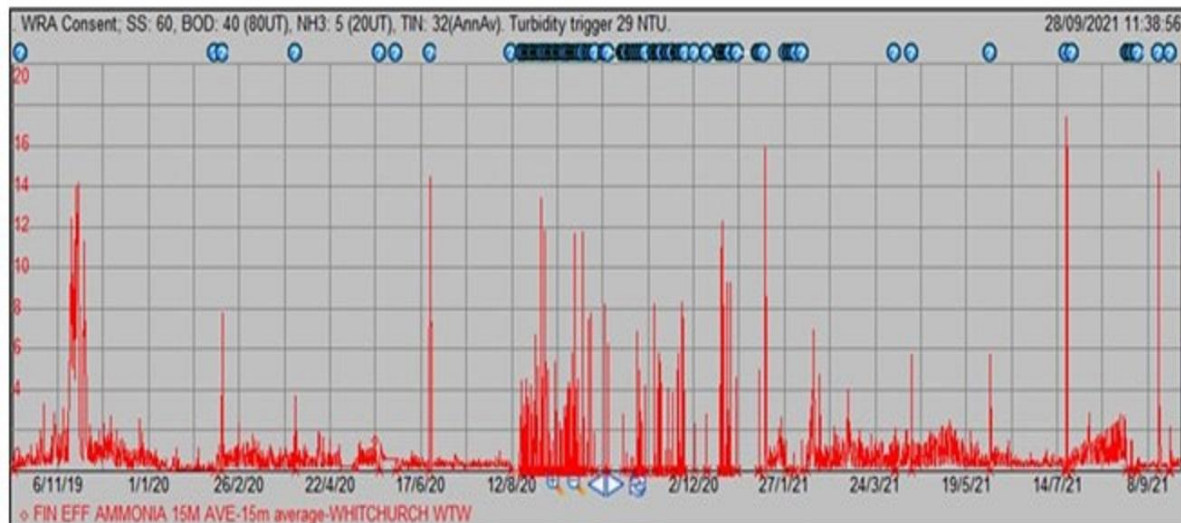
The secondary treated sewage effluent from this plant is infiltrated into the Chalk Aquifer via infiltration systems. The dry weather flow limit is 2336 m<sup>3</sup>/day.

Its permit current many years old, covers only basic limits and was not based upon any formal risk assessment.

Notably whilst limits are given for total inorganic nitrogen (32mg/l) no limits are given for Phosphorus and effluent is not monitored for phosphate content.

The flow to the plant frequently exceeds the dry weather flow. During these periods the capacity of the treatment works is exceeded and effluent which includes untreated wastewater is discharged to the aquifer.

These discharges are easily identified in the figure given below which shows the ammonia concentrations against time. The peaks indicate periods when untreated effluent is being discharged.



### How much water is discharged during these events.

In order to assess the significance of these events we need to know the flow of water and the period over which these events occur.

Despite the flows to the plant being monitored in accordance with the permit conditions, the dry weather flows are not available to the public in the EA database. I have made a freedom of information request in this regard but have not yet received a request.

A figure of 1753 m<sup>3</sup>/day for dry weather flow was given in the BDBC Water Cycle Study (WCS) no date is given in relation to this flow. Given that the WCS was commissioned in 2020 it is expected that the figures provided is now out of date and does not take into account housing development which has occurred since 2020.

There has been considerable development since 2020 and more is planned. The frequency of “spills” suggests that the capacity of the WWTWs is very limited to accommodate future housing development.

I will update this section should my freedom of information request be successful.

### How often do these “spills” occur.

Information with regard to the frequency of these events is very difficult to find. Whilst Overton WWTWs which also discharges to groundwater is shown on The National Storm Overflow Hub Whitchurch inexplicably is not.

It is also important that there are many occasions when the flows at the Whitchurch WWTWs exceed the DWFs and effluent is discharged largely untreated to the aquifer. According to the Environment Agency's Event Duration Monitoring (EDM) data, the Whitchurch Sewage Treatment Works (STW) and its associated network have seen significant spill activity over the last five years.

While "Dry Weather Flow" (DWF) is a regulatory measure of average daily flow, the **EDM data** tracks when the system is actually overwhelmed.

### **Whitchurch STW Spill Statistics (2020–2024)**

The data below represents the annual returns for the storm overflow located at the Whitchurch Sewage Treatment Works.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Count of Spills</b>	<b>Total Duration (Hours)</b>	<b>Note</b>
<b>2024</b>	102	1,842	High duration likely due to sustained high groundwater levels.
<b>2023</b>	114	2,125	One of the highest spill years on record for the Test Valley.
<b>2022</b>	48	612	A relatively "dry" year with lower groundwater levels.
<b>2021</b>	94	1,510	Significant spill duration despite lower count than 2023.
<b>2020</b>	89	1,480	Data reflects 100% monitor operability.

This means that Whitchurch is discharging partially untreated wastewater to the groundwater approximately 20- 25% of the time during wetter years.

### **Why are these discharges of concern.**

These discharges are of concern because;

Phosphate is the limiting nutrient for the river Test. Even modest increases will result in eutrophication and damage to the sensitive habitats. It becomes problematic at concentrations almost two orders of magnitude less than nitrate.

Unlike nitrate which is primarily derived from agriculture, the contribution of phosphate from sewage effluent to the environment is of a similar order to that of agriculture.

Whitchurch WWTWs has no discharge limit for phosphate and no treatment employed specifically designed to remove it.

Consensus of research is that the Chalk Aquifer has a limited capacity to adsorb phosphorous and to process is reversible. After many decades of discharge there is evidence to suggest that this capacity is exhausted and that relatively unattenuated flows are likely to occur to the River Test.

Given this any works to increase the capacity of the WWTWs will likely have the effect of re-mobilising the phosphate already adsorbed.

## **HARROWAY.**

Cllr Mr P Luckett reported that unfortunately there was a very serious accident at the crossroads despite all the additional signs and road markings that Hampshire Highways installed in 2025. On this occasion a car hit the electricity cable pole with such force it caused a power cut in the area. Highways have been contacted as they need to review the crossroads again to see if there are any further safety measures that could be added. The putting down of 'rumble strips' along either side of the Harroway on the approach to the crossroads was discussed.

Cllr Mr P Luckett suggested that the Parish Council install a defibrillator at St Mary's Hill. This was thought a good idea, and a site with an electrical supply will be investigated. The Clerk will apply to Cllr Mr S Carr for funding for this from his Community Budget.

## **TUFTON.**

Cllr Mrs L MacGregor.

- Residents feel that they get limited money from the precept spent in the Tufton. Correspondence received from Cllr Mr T Thacker confirmed that the open space at Tufton adjacent to the River Test is not registered on the Land Registry but is managed by Hampshire County Council. Cllr Mr T Thacker has confirmed that Hurstbourne Priors Parish Council could apply to Hampshire County Council for a License to manage this open space.

The terms and conditions of such a license are unknown, but Cllr Mr T Thacker felt that it may give the Parish Council powers to improve and protect the land.

Cllr Mrs L MacGregor asked the Parish Council if they agreed in principle for a license to be explored and for Hurstbourne Priors Parish Council to take over the management and maintenance of this open space?

Cllr Mrs S Wyatt-Tilby raised concerns about public liability and litigation, this will need to be confirmed before any license is undertaken. The Parish Council agreed in principle to exploring issues with taking on a license.

- Cllr Mrs L MacGregor hoped the grass cutting paid for out of the precept could continue next year. The Clerk confirmed that he had included this in the Budget for the next financial year.
- The Clerk will chase the additional 'Slow Pedestrians on the Road' sign that he ordered.
- Cllr Mrs L MacGregor asked if there was any news on Permissive Footpath? The Chair reported that Rebecca Kimber-Danger from Fowler and Fortescue is no longer returning her telephone calls but that she will keep persisting.

## **MINUTES.**

The November Minutes were signed as a true record.

## PLANNING.

There were no new planning applications to discuss.

Dairy Cottage – The Chairman reported on her correspondence with the Compliance and Enforcement officer of BCBD regarding the dilapidated state of Dairy Cottage. They have confirmed that Fowler Fortescue have responded that work should begin shortly on the site.

## FINANCIAL REPORT. December 2025 and January 2026 INCOME.

Hill and Valley	£250.00
	<b><u>£250.00</u></b>

## EXPENDITURE.

Eon Electricity	Pavilion	£68.62
R.N. Waterman	Wages	£600.00
TVBC	Grass and Hedge Cutting	£466.98
Lloyds Bank	Bank Charge	£12.00
Hiscox	Insurance	£236.86
Eclipse Pest Control	Mole Control	£250.00
Ridgeland Landscapes	Water Leak Pavilion	£1,223.40
Business Stream	Water Bill (to be refunded)	£859.65
		<b><u>£3,717.51</u></b>

BANK ACCOUNT BALANCE AFTER ABOVE MOVEMENTS = £21,769.00

Working Capital	£1,091.66
General Reserves	£5,000.00
Play Area	£1,193.75
Pavilion Refurbishment	£14,483.59
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£21,769.00</u></b>

## 2026/2027 PRECEPT.

The Parish Council needs to increase the Precept considerably to meet the costs of the re-thatching and extensive refurbishment of the Pavilion, work on the Recreation Ground Trees and repairs to the Scoring Hut. Funding must also be put in place for ongoing ground maintenance and grass cutting within the Parish.

The Clerk had circulated the budget sheet presented at the November Meeting to the Parish Councillors prior to the meeting:

Hurstbourne Priors Parish Council - PRECEPT DISCUSSION NOVEMBER 2025

ESTIMATED RESULTS 2025/2026

BUDGET 2026/2027

INCOME

	£		£
Opening Balance BFW 2025	34.93	Opening Balance BFW	143.00
Precept/Grants	14,200.00	Precept	14,200.00

Pavilion Income	470.00
May Fair	8,674.47
Parish Grant from B&D	754.87
Fund Raising	355.60
Electricity Refund	500.00
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£24,989.87</u></b>

Pavilion Income	400.00
Parish Grant from B&D	754.87
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£16,475.87</u></b>

#### EXPENDITURE

Subscriptions	60.00
Parish Council Insurance	1,303.32
Pavilion Insurance	2,730.32
Audit Fees	225.00
Hill and Valley	284.00
Clerks Wages & Office Allow	3,600.00
Postage/Stationary/etc	494.23
Village Hall Hire	145.00
Service of Mower	200.00

Subscriptions	60.00
Parish Council Insurance	1,400.00
Pavilion Insurance	2,900.00
Audit Fees	600.00
Hill and Valley	284.00
Clerks Wages & Office Allow	3,600.00
Postage/Stationary/etc	450.00
Village Hall Hire	145.00

Pavilion Running Costs	2,700.80
Recreation Ground Maint	3,762.25
Defibrillator Battery	112.50
Play Area	88.00
Village Maintenance	694.42

Pavilion running costs	900.00
Recreation Ground Maint	3,000.00
Service Equipment	200.00

Web Site	421.00
Sewage Treatment Plant	200.00
Pavilion Refurbishment Fund	6847.47

Tufton Maintenance	1,260.00
Village Maintenance	500.00
Sewage Treatment Plant	270.00
Web Site	400.00
Pavilion Refurbishment	

**Total £23,868.31**

**Total £16,057.00**

Carried Forward 1,121.56

Carried Forward 418.00

**Total £24,989.87**

**Total £16,475.87**

Reserves	£5,000.00
Play Area	£1,194.00
Pavilion Fund	£14,483.59
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£20,677.34</u></b>

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Funding Required for:

Work on Trees.

Maintenance of the Pavilion

Repairs to the Scoring Hut

The Parish Council discussed the Precept budget:

- REFURBISHMENT OF THE PAVILION - Cllr Mr P Lockett asked how much the shortfall was for the re-thatching of the pavilion. The Clerk stated that, as of the last quote, there is a minimum £15,000 shortfall. Cllr Mr P Lockett suggested that the Parish Council add this to the Precept to get the project finished as the recent grant application was unsuccessful.

Cllr Mrs L MacGregor stated that she was not convinced that the Thatch was a priority, it is not leaking and may well have a few years more before we go down the re-thatch route. There are more pressing repairs needed i.e. The Flat Roof at the rear of the pavilion is now leaking.

Cllr Mrs L MacGregor asked if an independent survey on the state of the thatch has been undertaken? The Chairman reported that three Thatcher's have viewed the roof and all stated that it needs re-thatching.

- TREES – Work on at least two of the Parish Council owned trees needs to be undertaken. The Chairman will arrange two separate surveys and report back at the March meeting.
- SCORING HUT – The scoring Hut needs refurbishing at a cost of just under £2,000.

After a lengthy discussion it was agreed to increase the Precept by £20,800 to cover the cost of getting the Pavilion re-thatched, Tree Works undertaken and repairs to the Pavilion and Scoring Hut. Previously the Parish Council has kept the Precept to a very low level only raising it to cover specific things like the increase in insurance for the Pavilion.

The Hurstbourne Priors Precept for the Year 2026/2027 was set at £35,000. Proposed by Cllr Mrs S Wyatt-Tilby – Vice Chairman and seconded by Cllr Mr A Milne. A vote was taken and all agreed.

The Chairman stated that this level of increase in the Precept was to be a temporary measure for 1 to 2 years maximum to meet the funding shortfall.

### **VILLAGE HALL.**

Cllr Mr A Milne reported that the Boiler has been serviced. The Fire inspection highlighted several issues that have all now been addressed.

Cllr Mr P Lockett suggested the Village Hall Committee take a look at the Engelfield Village Hall Video, which he thought might be a good idea for Hurstbourne Priors to replicate.

YouTube link: <https://youtu.be/cUnm8BmDLQY>

### **FOOTPATHS.**

The Parish footpaths are clear and walkable, though muddy.

### **PAVILION AND RECREATION GROUND.**

PAVILION – The Clerk reported that he has been back through the Hurstbourne Priors Financial records and the showers have been repaired and replaced several times over the years, mainly due to lack of use. The Clerk asked if it might be more prudent not provide showers, put doors on the cubicles and use them for storage.

The Chairman stated that showers are required by the Cricket Team as a requirement for the league they play in but that she would see if we could have one per changing room rather than two.

### **CLOSE OF THE MEETING.**

The Chair thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting.

**DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING.**

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> of March 2026 at 6.30pm in the Hurstbourne Priors Village Hall.

**DATE OF MEETINGS FOR 2026**

All meetings will be held in the Village Hall and will start at 6.30pm

Thursday 28th May

Thursday 30th July

Thursday 24th September

Thursday 26th November