

Minutes of the Hurstbourne Priors Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday  
26<sup>th</sup> of March 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  
Richard Waterman – Parish Clerk  
Members of the Public - Mr Tom Fitz-Gerald, Mr and Mrs Burgess, Mr  
John Hart, Mr Bruce Trentham and Mr Steven Marshall

Apologies: Cllr Mr P Smail, Borough Councillor Mr S Carr and 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.

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.**

The Chairman invited Mr Fitz-Gerald to address the meeting as he had his  
son with him.

Mr Tom Fitz-Gerald read the following statement:

Good evening, Councillors. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Tom Fitz-  
Gerald, the owner of Southrope. I am here to address the Council's objection to my planning  
application, Ref: 26/00387/HSE.

I am deeply concerned that this decision appears to have been made outside of a formal  
public meeting, which would be a bypass of the Local Government Act 1972 and I have 3  
points to raise to the council this evening;

Point 1: I am formally asking for confirmation of how this decision was reached. Was  
there a vote, and if so what was the count?

Point 2: I ask all Councillors to be mindful of the Code of Conduct regarding personal  
and professional relationships in this matter. Decisions must be made on planning merit  
and public interest, not personal associations, and any such relationships must be  
sufficiently declared.

Point 3: The Benefits of the Proposal. The council has neglected to represent in their letter  
any of the positives that the proposal might bring, here is a short summary of some of  
these;

1. . The current 1970s bungalow is entirely out of keeping from the current conservation area and holds no architectural merit. The council's actions look to leave it as a blot rather than support the changes.
2. All other properties in the vicinity are 2 story buildings. We have capped the upward extension at a half story and hipped the roof at either end. Neither of these were our first choice, but have been actively chosen by Vix and I to minimise the impact.
3. Excluding the garage, which is not changing height, Southrope sits behind the property line drawn between Bramley cottage and Paddock View.
4. Visibility. Southrope is barely visible when moving south along the road and will remain so, the main building can only be seen once past the boundary line from Bramley cottage. When moving north, the bend in the street hides Southrope, with only Bramley cottage visible until the large beech hedge is passed on the boundary of no. 15. There are also 2 prominent garages that block the sight of Southrope past no. 15.
5. No demolitions and redevelopment. With a near half acre plot an alternative would be to demolish Southrope and add multiple new dwellings on the site. Although these may be slightly further from the road they would certainly be built as two story buildings, in the same nature as all the buildings to the south of Southrope, will have a much larger impact on the village and our neighbours.

Closing: Before I conclude, I want to be clear on my expectations for the record. As this Council's objection was submitted without the benefit of a vote in public or the opportunity for the applicant to address the technical misconceptions in your letter, I am formally requesting that the Council withdraw its objection to Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.

If the Council is not prepared to do so tonight, I expect a written explanation as part of a Request for Information as to why a formal public meeting was not held prior to the March 6th submission. I am now handing a formal Request for Information to the Clerk regarding the communications and process used to reach this decision and any subsequent parish council communications about the Southrope proposal to date.

I look forward to your response within the statutory timeframe. Thank you.

Cllr Mrs Wyatt-Tilby expressed concern that Mr Fitz-Gerald,s comment at point 5 was a veiled threat and that it should be noted as such in the minutes.

The Chairman asked Mr Fitz-Gerald if he knew if the Heritage Officer had been to the site and on what date. Mr Fitz-Gerald stated that he did not know of any such visit.

The Chairman said that the Parish Council would respond in writing and thanked Mr Tom Fitz-Gerald for coming to the meeting.

Once Mr Fitz-Gerald had left the meeting the Chairman asked Councillors if any of them had been approached by either of the applicants in relation to their application. No Councillors had been approached.

Mr John Hart asked for clarification on why the Parish part of the Council Tax Bill has increased by such a large amount. He was concerned there had been no consultation with the Parish on why there is such a big increase or an explanation for how the money is to be spent.

The Chairman stated that a letter to all parishioners is soon to be distributed explain the need for the large increase needed for crucial repairs to the Pavilion on the Recreation Ground. The refurbishment will include:

- Re-Thatching
- Installation of a new flat roof
- Installation of a new water heater
- Electrical work
- Showers, cubical and drainage
- Updating fixtures and fittings
- Internal and external woodwork repairs

In addition, repairs are required to the Lych Gate and work is required to trees adjoining the recreation ground.

The pavilion and the recreation ground are assets that Hurstbourne Priors Parish own, and it is the responsibility of the Parish Council to maintain these assets for the future.

This rise in the Precept is intended as a temporary measure to address the funding gap during the upcoming works, expected to last 1-2 years. After this period, we will have the opportunity to reassess it.

Mr John Hart asked if the Cricket Club were contributing to the cost of the refurbishment and do they pay for the use of the facility; he was concerned that the Parish Council are using the precept to subsidize the Cricket Club.

The Chairman stated that yes, it is true that the Cricket Club use the pavilion and recreation ground more than anyone else, but the pavilion and recreation ground are also used for private cricket matches, the May Fair, weddings, fund raising events and birthday parties. Negotiations are taking place for more financial contributions from the Cricket Club, including them running their own fundraising events.

Mr John Hart asked why the Chairman does not register a conflict of interest at each meeting when her Husband is President of the Hurstbourne Priors Cricket Club? The Chairman stated that her Husband has no role in the running of the Cricket Club and is only a figure head. There is no conflict of interest as the funds are for the Pavilion and not for the Cricket Club.

#### **PARISH CLERK VACANCY.**

The Chairman introduced Mr Steven Marshall who has expressed an interest in the role of Parish Clerk. Mrs H Easton has withdrawn her interest in the role.

#### **HARROWAY.**

Cllr Mr P Luckett reported that he has not been able to secure an electrical supply for a defibrillator at St Mary's Hill but will persevere. The driveway that was damaged by the contractor several months ago has been repaired.

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council have confirmed that they have engaged an Acoustic Specialist to look at problems at St Mary's Hill.

Despite another accident at the crossroads, Highways have confirmed that they will not be taking any further action at present to improve safety and the site has been placed on a five-year watch list.

### **TUFTON.**

Cllr Mrs L MacGregor.

- Residents of Tufton are not happy with the large increase in the precept, especially as so little of the Council Tax money is spent in Tufton.
- Cllr Mrs L MacGregor asked if there was any news on Permissive Footpath? The Chair reported that Rebecca Kimber-Danger from Fowler and Fortescue has asked to speak to her.
- The bench is to be sited at Tufton over the next few days, and three ornamental cherry trees have been planted. The first Grass Cut for the 2026 season has been done.

Mr and Mrs Burgess from Rivers Edge Barn stated that they were happy with the trees that had been planted but would have liked to have been consulted before they were planted. Mr and Mrs Burgess would like to have known the position of the bench and again were disappointed that they have not been consulted.

The Chairman suggested that she met on site with Mr and Mrs Burgess to discuss plans for the open space at Tufton.

Further discussion on the information board and parking issues on the open space at Tufton were discussed, it was noted that at this stage there are no firm plans and no funding available. Discussions with Hampshire Highways have not been positive, but 106 money allocated to outdoor space is available for this area.

### **MINUTES.**

The January Minutes were signed as a true record.

### **DEVOLUTION.**

The Chairman reported that the Government have confirmed what the split of Hampshire will be - as hoped Basingstoke & Deane will be grouped together as North Hampshire and will be with Hart and Rushmore. The other areas are Mid Hampshire — Test Valley, Winchester, East Hampshire and The New Forest - South West Hampshire - Southampton, Eastleigh and the Councils along the Solent - South East Hampshire - Farnham, Gosport, Portsmouth, Havant etc - and The Isle of Wight.

### **PLANNING.**

There were no new planning applications to discuss.

Cllr Mrs S Wyatt-Tilby reported that she has been doing a lot of work on the

Apsley Application.

Cllr Mrs S Wyatt-Tilby will gather the information recorded through email correspondence and put together a response to the complaint made by Mr Tom Fitz-Gerald earlier in the meeting.

## **FINANCIAL REPORT FOR FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2026**

### **EXPENDITURE.**

Eon Electricity	Pavilion	£68.62
R.N. Waterman	Wages	£600.00
TVBC	Grass and Hedge Cutting	£466.98
Lloyds Bank	Bank Charge	£ 9.50
Hiscox	Insurance	£236.86
RM and CH Chapman	Maintenance Tufton	£136.00
Business Stream	Water Bill (to be questioned)	£291.51
		<b><u>£1,572.61</u></b>

Business Stream – Two bills now questioned totalling £1,151.16 – Direct Debit now cancelled.

BANK ACCOUNT BALANCE AFTER ABOVE MOVEMENTS = £20,196.39

Working Capital	£ 519.05
General Reserves	£4,000.00
Play Area	£1,193.75
Pavilion Refurbishment	£14,483.59
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£20,196.39</u></b>

**VAT to be reclaimed on 31/3/2026 = £444.26**

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

The Chairman reported that she has met with several tree contractors and has quotes for the work. Meetings with contractors are planned for the work on the pavilion including the flat roof and thatch. The Chairman hoped that work on the thatch could start later this summer.

The Chairman thanked everyone who helped with the Village Clean-Up.

Cllr Mrs S Wyatt-Tilby reported that she intends to meet with the Hurstbourne Priors Cricket Club to discuss their ongoing use of the Recreation Ground and Pavilion and the expected financial contribution to the up-keep of the facility.

### **VILLAGE HALL.**

Cllr Mr A Milne reported that the Village Hall has had a good tidy up in the storeroom and new racking has been installed. Quotes to re-decorate the Village Hall are in hand. The Village Hall Management Committee have viewed the video suggested by Cllr P Luckett and are interested in the concept.

### **FOOTPATHS.**

One of the footpaths is currently closed while the Electricity Company carry out overhead electrical maintenance. The remaining Parish footpaths are clear and walkable.

**VITACRESS.**

The Chairman reported that she had attended a recent meeting with Vitacress and been shown around the site to look at the river restoration work. Restoration of the river bank, including the inclusion of overflow area of the river and new planting to encourage wildlife including the installation of Kingfisher tunnels to encourage breeding is ongoing. It was suggested that a 'nature' column could be included on a regular basis in Hill & Valley. The Vitacress site hosts barn owls, which are monitored by the Hawk Conservancy Trust as well as Otters and other interesting species.

Vitacress are also pushing Southern Water to repair the verges and roads on behalf of the village on the amount of damage the large number of tankers being used is causing.

**CLOSE OF THE MEETING.**

The Chair thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting.

**DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING.**

**Please note change of date from that advertised**

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> of June 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 4<sup>th</sup> June

Thursday 30th July

Thursday 24th September

Thursday 26th November