

SPARSHOLT PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Wednesday 16th April 2025 at 7:00pm in the Memorial Hall.

Minutes

Sparsholt Parish Council: Cllr Sue Wood, Cllr John Little, Cllr David Brown, Cllr Sam Culhane, Cllr Mark Himbury, Cllr Jon Walthoe

Attended: Cllr Warwick, Cllr Horrill, Alastair Barron, Malcolm Hewson, James Payne, Becky Pickles (Clerk) and 11 members of the public

Apologies: Cllr John Cooper, Cllr Nigel Reid, Julie Milburn, Liz Hanratty, Kerry Croutear, Terry Dunn, Harriet Bridgeman, Joy Housham

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and noted the apologies as above.

2. Councillors Jan Warwick and Caroline Horrill

County Cllr Jan Warwick talked through the Hampshire County Council Annual Report 2025 including HCC 2025-26 budget, where it is spent and the challenges. Devolution and the Mayoral Combined Authority and the Local Government Reorganisation highlighting the guiding principles and the timetable. The Guiding Principles are quality, minimising risk, financial stability and using anchor institutions/area. The Timetable is September 2025 – Final Plans Submitted, May 2026 – Mayoral Election, May 2027 – Unitary Authority Elections and May 2028 – Unitary Authorities go live. Lastly Cllr Jan Warwick talked through her budget for the financial year 2024-25 and noted that Sparsholt Parish Hall had been given a grant towards a wood floor cleaner. She thanked all the voluntary groups that make a real difference to our community.

City Cllr Caroline Horrill talked through Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation and what this would mean to Winchester City Council. There will be less councillors with larger areas and residents and there will be 4 to 5 Unitary Authorities, councillors are deciding who will link up with who to form the new Unitary Authorities. The Government would like areas to be Parished and for Parish Councils to take up more of the reins locally. Next week the Planning Inspection begins, this is a review of Regulation 19 Local Plan to see if it is a sound and acceptable plan which will come to fruition by the end of 2025 and a decision to start the next plan will happen within 6 months. There is a change to the waste collection routes and food waste collection will be introduced by the end of the year. Cllr Caroline Horrill talked through her grant allowance and noted that Sparsholt Shop had been supported to improve its IT equipment and Sparsholt Hall to enhance its PA equipment.

3. Village Organisations –

Shop - Alastair Barron read through the Shop report showing that it is financially stable, copies are available in the shop and stated that the AGM is coming up soon. He explained the four strands of the shop including access, good product, providing a range of products and being at the heart of the village. The shop is for the people by the people. The shop has an emphasis on local product and if anyone has any ideas or requests for the shop please speak to Jeanette. The shop is run by paid staff and over 40 volunteers, Alistair thanked all these people and said that they are always looking for more volunteers if anyone is interested.

St Stephen's Church - Alastair Barron read through the Church's Annual Report, copies of which are available in the Church porch. He read through the Aims and Purposes of St Stephen's Church and how important the friends of St Stevens' Church were, particularly for organising successful events such as the Fete and the Harvest Supper. The Church provides a spiritual home for everyone in the village and the Reverend is improving links in the community by working with the school and the college.

Ham Green - Malcolm Hewson explained that the Ham Green Conservation Group currently has 14 volunteers. The Ham Green site is a site of interest for nature and conservation. The volunteers maintain the byway and the footpath. They have installed two benches, thanks to Howard Annesley's work. Tree contractors for Scottish and Southern Electricity Network have cut back tree growth beneath the power lines and they will shortly fell some dead ash trees at the Dean end of the site to prevent them falling on to the power lines. The Ham Green Conservation Group have also worked with the Hampshire Forestry Project, part of Hampshire County Council Countryside Service. There continues to be increased deposits of dog excrement, signage will be put up soon to remind dog owners to clear up after their own dogs.

Sparsholt College – Cllr Sue Wood read out the written report sent by Julie Milburn before the meeting. The report highlighted the increase in student numbers, the curriculum, the planting of a vineyard, the new Higher Education Science Centre, preparation for the annual Chelsea Flower Show and Celebrations for the 125th Anniversary Celebrations for Sparsholt College.

4. Resilience Planning

James Payne, Estates Director Sparsholt College, gave a very informative and compelling presentation on Resilience at the College. He described more recent incidents and the challenges of the complex environment at the College and how he had used his many years of experience to reinforce the Resilience of the College while developing, testing and sometimes initiating the College's Emergency Plan. He highlighted that Martyn's Law, which had just received Royal Assent, would apply not only to the College as an Educational establishment but also to any number of village events that could attract audiences of more than 100 people. James expressed his delight in working with the Parish Council to share his expertise as we develop our Parish Community Emergency Plan.

John Little thanked James for his professional and comprehensive talk outlining the hazards and risks at the College and looked forward to his continued input into the Parish's challenge as amateurs working mainly with volunteers. John advised that the latest draft of the Community Emergency Plan and Leaflet would be available on the parish website www.sparsholtparish.org/resilience

5. Report from Sparsholt Parish Councillor Sue Wood

Cllr Sue Wood gave a comprehensive Annual Report for Sparsholt Parish Council including finance, budget, precept, highways, road signs, SLR's and the 20mph limit consultation. She outlined the key projects that the Parish Council have been involved in this year, most significantly contributing to the Winchester City Council Local Plan. Also highlighting that Planning applications continue to be one of the main components of the Parish Council activities. Cllr Sue Wood thanked Nicky Breen for her four years with the Parish Council as Clerk, she left in December 2024 and welcomed Becky Pickles as the Parish Clerk and RFO. She also thanked each Councillor for their time and commitment, Cllr Horrill and Warwick for their support, Alistair Barron and Jeanette Davis and the team of volunteers at the shop, and Liz Hanratty Headteacher at Sparsholt Primary School, who is leaving at the end of the school year, for her contribution to the education of the local children over the years.

6. Close of Meeting

Cllr Sue Wood thanked all those who attended and those who had spoken at the meeting