

PARISH OF MINSTEAD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING of the Parish of Minstead
held in the main hall of Minstead Village Hall on
Wednesday 11th March 2026 at 19:30 hrs

DRAFT MINUTES

All minutes are draft until ratified at the next meeting

1. Attendance Register and Apologies

- **Present**

- Cllr Andrews
- Cllr Bennett
- Cllr McGhee

- **In attendance**

- Diana O'Grady, Clerk
- District Cllr Brand
- 11 Parishioners

- **Apologies**

- Cllr Pascoe.
- Cllr Smith.
- PCSO Richard Williams
- Cllr Standeven.

2. Minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting, 12th March 2025

- Agreed by all who were at the 2025 meeting. Signed and dated by Chair.

3. To receive the Police report by PCSO Richard Williams

- None received

4. To receive the report from Holly Fitzgerald, New Forest Invasive Non-Native Plants Officer, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

- 'Non-native' species are introduced by human activity. 10 – 15% of non-native species established in GB cause significant adverse impacts.
- The Aims of the New Forest Non-Native Plants Project are to Survey, Advise, Control, Undertake Research and Raise Awareness.
- Successful control of invasive non-native plants in the New Forest depends on knowledge of locations.. please report sightings in the New Forest to holly.fitzgerald@hiwwt.org.uk
- Holly has provided Identification packs which contain the most common non-native plants that can be found in and around the Parish.

5. Matters Arising from the last Minutes

- None

6. To receive the Annual Report by Chairman

- Thank you all for making time to attend this year’s Annual Parish Meeting - which is a legal requirement, is for **Parishioners’** benefit and, for convenience, is convened by the Parish Council. Whilst **all** parishioners are most welcome to attend, speak and ask questions, only those **registered** as **Local Government electors** may **vote**, on any business conducted.
- As always, the **Parish Lengsthman** has done a huge amount of good work in all kinds of weather, *“Thank You, Stephen.”*
- The **Minstead Oil Buying Group** continues to be a great service, and we all thank Mike Hutton for running this, especially at this rather difficult time!
- There is also a **FloGas buying group** for LPG looked after by Dave Donawa.
- **Speedwatch** is locally administered also by Dave Donawa, many thanks to him and his team of volunteers. Join in, anyone?
- We have had good success using the “Fix My Street” App to **report road and verge problems**, fly-tipping, abandoned vehicles and a host of other issues directly.
- Please remember that all property owners are responsible under **Riparian Ownership** rules for keeping their hedges cut back and ditches cleared alongside their properties, even if these are outside their garden boundary. An explanatory notice is on the board by the post-box on the Village Green and may be found online.
- Don’t forget the Village Website, eNewsletters & eNewsFlashes, our Facebook pages, the Community WhatsApp Group, Op Sherlock WhatsApp Group, sign up if you haven’t already.
- Our continued efforts to bring **Ultrafast Fibre Broadband (FTTP)** to the whole Parish have borne more fruit, we are more covered now and still more is coming. Wessex Internet still on the case with OpenReach.
- Work on the Cricket Pavillion is still in hand – more later this evening . . .
- I believe the organisation of this year’s Minstead Fete is in safe hands?
- I must report that Cllr Brice Stratford stood down from the PC a couple of months ago
- Anyone willing to volunteer to join us? Come on, join in & make a difference.
- **Once again, I hope you will join me in thanking all Parish Councillors (we’re all volunteers you know) and our Clerk for their time, industry, and effectivity; both County and District Councillors for their continued support; our Policemen Richard and Mark; and all those of you who take things on in, around and for this Village.**
- I’ll take brief questions on this report now, there is space for public items later in today’s Agenda.

7. To receive the Financial Statement by the Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer

- Council finances remain in a sound position with a current balance in excess of £10,000 (including reserves).
- As well as expenses relating to council administration and normal maintenance within the parish, the Council has spent almost £10,000 to replace the roof on the cricket pavilion and will spend £16,826 including over £300 VAT on the timber, to replace the cladding which forms the walls.

A large part of this will be covered by a grant from NFDC secured through much hard work and complicated form-filling by Cllr. Pascoe. £1018 has come in donations, and the rest will come from Parish Council reserves set aside for this purpose. Cllr. Smith has organised the materials and the labour and is overseeing the build.

Together they have completed a significant project for the village and I'd like to thank them.

- The Council holds a general reserve of £8,350, this is an emergency fund and is a requirement.
- Council has increased the precept request to £17,368 for the coming year, 2026-2027. This was necessary to keep up with inflation and results in an increase in Council tax of £1.53pa on a band D property.
- Grants were received this year from:
 - o HCC to support HCC Parish Lengthsman Scheme: £1,100 towards Lengthsman salary; this is expected to continue into 2026 – 2027 and 2027-2028.

Thanks to Stephen Short for keeping the village tidy, it makes a great difference every day.

- o Pavilion cladding £6750.00 as above from NFDC.
- The Parish Council made grants and donations in the year 2025-2026 to:
 - o Minstead flower show, the churchyard, and Royal British Legion, totalling £1,190
- Audit of the governance of Minstead Parish Council and the accounts for financial year ending 31 March 2026 will be carried out in May 2026. Documents will be available on the website at the beginning of July 2026.

You can view the Parish Council finances yourself at any time on the Minstead village website, with details published monthly in the minutes.

Year	Precept	PC expenditure	CPI
2021	11,500	11,850	5.4%
2022	12,000	14,625	10.5%
2023	12,000	15,277	4.0%
2024	14,400	16,000	3.0%
2025	16,700	£43,000	3.4%

Expenditure to date is almost £43,000 which includes the £10,000 cricket pavilion roof and over £16,000 on the cladding.

Where did we go over budget? Audit because of the unexpected interim audit
Open spaces consistently

8. To receive the Report by/from Hampshire County Councillor Edward HERON

- None received

9. To receive the Report by/from New Forest District Councillor Hilary BRAND

- Chair, colleagues and residents. I'd like to give an overview of the work I've carried out over the past year on behalf of residents in Lyndhurst, Minstead and Emery Down.
- It has been a busy and varied year, with a great deal of casework, community engagement, and ongoing liaison with New Forest District Council, Hampshire Highways, local organisations and residents. Although some months were quieter for formal meetings, the volume of issues raised by residents has remained consistently high.

Council and Committee Work

I attended a number of Full Council meetings, where council operations are reviewed and motions for change are put forward.

- I am a member of the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel, where we review Council Housing Residents Satisfaction Survey, updates on emergency housing and housing stock improvements, Community Safety and other community projects.
- Throughout the year, I attended several all-member briefings. One of the most significant topics has been Local Government Reorganisation. Five options have been put forward across Hampshire, and NFDC's preferred option is a rural grouping with East Hampshire, Test Valley and Winchester. This reflects the shared rural character of these districts and the fact that all have parish and town councils. We hope to have a decision by the end of this month.
- I also attended briefings on the Waste Strategy rollout, the mock Housing Inspection expected this year, and the Electoral Services update ahead of forthcoming elections.
- At Lyndhurst Parish Council, I attended regular meetings, including a special meeting on the Fenwick Hospital planning application and the future of the Post Office

Highways and Infrastructure

Highways issues have been a major part of my work this year. I attended several meetings with Hampshire Highways regarding the proposed design changes to Lyndhurst roads. These plans have been presented to Lyndhurst Parish Council and a Public Engagement meeting is planned for 19th March 2026. This is the culmination of approx. five years work.

- I have also been working to address traffic and parking problems in Emery Down. I met with the owners of the New Forest Inn to explore possible improvements, and these suggestions have been passed to Highways.
- Residents have raised concerns about the introduction of parking charges in forest car parks and the potential impact on nearby residential streets. Highways have advised that any future permit scheme would need to be considered by the Traffic Management Team and agreed by residents if problems arise.
- Other issues raised include potholes across the area, a collapsing section of Princess Crescent, and ongoing concerns about Mill Lane. After reporting the Mill Lane issues to Google Maps, residents have since noticed an improvement in traffic flow.

Waste, Recycling and Environmental Issues

Waste and recycling have generated a significant number of enquiries this year. There have been repeated problems with missed glass collections in both Lyndhurst and Minstead, as well as missed bin bag deliveries. These have been escalated to NFDC on several occasions, and collections have been completed following intervention.

- The Minstead Recycling Store continues to be a concern. I have raised this repeatedly and am still awaiting confirmation of repairs and regular emptying.
- Fly tipping has been reported in both Minstead and Lyndhurst and has been cleared promptly after being raised.
- Wheelie bins for the new collection service will start to be rolled out across the area from 9th March all bins and caddies should be rolled out by 24th April. If you have not received one by this date please report to NFDC.

Housing and Community Safety

Housing casework has included mould in a council flat, which has now been treated, and loose stone slabs at Crofton Cottages, which are still awaiting a response. A long-running issue with a resident's back door has finally been resolved after repeated escalation.

- Concerns about pavement parking in Lyndhurst — particularly affecting mobility scooter users — have been raised with Highways. While enforcement options are limited, they have agreed to cut back overgrown vegetation to widen the pavement, and I have contacted our PCSO about placing advisory notices on vehicles.
- I also worked with NFDC Community Safety, the Police and local businesses regarding the Cooper Drive weekend.

Community Engagement and Local Support

I continue to run and attend The Den Youth Club, where the children have enjoyed

activities ranging from rounders and basketball to orienteering and archery. I also continue to support Friends of Lyndhurst Surgery.

- I am a committee member of the Lyndhurst Village Decorations Committee, this year I hosted a Murder Mystery evening which raised £1,500.
- I have met with the Lyndhurst Twinning Association to discuss grant funding and new initiatives, and have supported Minstead Village Fair and Minstead Cricket Pavilion with grant funding.
- I am also continuing to work on finding a solution to the loss of the free taxi service for elderly residents in Lyndhurst and Emery Down, and have raised this with both Hampshire County Council and local charities.

Planning and Development

I have been contacted by many residents regarding the planning application for the Fenwick Hospital site, and I have passed these concerns to the National Park Authority.

- I also attended a briefing on the Fawley Waterside proposals, which now focus on business development, data centres and maritime uses, with no housing and fewer jobs than originally proposed.

Closing Summary

In summary, this has been a year of sustained and wide-ranging work. From highways and housing to waste services, planning, community safety and youth engagement, I have continued to raise residents' concerns, push for improvements, and support local groups and initiatives.

- Some issues have been resolved, others are ongoing, and many require continued pressure — but I remain committed to ensuring that the voices of Lyndhurst, Minstead and Emery Down are heard and acted upon.
- Thank you.

10. Update on Cricket/Community Pavilion (Cllrs Smith and Pascoe)

- At the beginning of the year Cadnam CC chair Paul Godfrey introduced a recommended roofer and project managed the installation of the new roof. The new roof cost £10,000, and comes with a 25 Year guarantee.
- To replace the external cladding we were awarded the grant a of £6750 from New Forest Rural Development Fund, NFDC in October. We sourced the builder after getting other people to look at the job. The Parish Council had £5000 funds earmarked for the job. Thanks to your kind donations and donation from the Fete committee we have another £700.

The original estimate was £9810 from Colebrooks. Due to the building's condition that was increased by £5000 to a total of £14810.

Soffe's woodyard have kindly given us a huge discount in the price of the cladding. (The last time it was done, Soffes also donated the wood.) They also delivered it to us for free. The total cost of the wood was £1680 plus Vat.

In total we have a short fall of £4376. The PC is able to cover this from reserves and are actively seeking other grants towards this.

- Cllr Smith has project managed the external cladding and repairs to the cricket pavilion currently ongoing.
- Cadnam members will volunteer their time to repair the interior but we need to fundraise to buy the materials.
- The assembly noted that the pavilion will also be for non-commercial community use. It provides small internal and large external spaces and will not compete with Minstead Village Hall which provides large internal space and little external. The cricket / community pavilion

will not be available for commercial hire but may be 'borrowed' by members of the community for small private gatherings.

11. Items requested by public

- There is great concern in the Parish about the volume and speed of traffic passing through. This causes damage to the verges and hedges as well as increasing the risk of human or animal injury.
 - Hampshire County Council priorities have now shifted to favouring pedestrians and cyclists, therefore this could be a good time to apply for any grants available.
 - District Cllr Brand urged that the Parish Council put together a plan so that should funding become available the PC is ready to apply straight away.
 - It was agreed that a committee separate from the Parish Council but co-ordinated by the Parish Council will be put together to work on traffic matters.
- War memorial, Council has been working to have the fence restored or replaced.
- Request for Forestry England to attend the next Annual Parishioners' Meeting
- The parishioners in attendance raised a vote of thanks for the Parish Councillors giving their time and effort for the benefit of the village.

Meeting closed at 21.12

The next Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council will be on Monday 13th April 2026 at 1930hrs,

The next Annual Parish Meeting will be on Wednesday 17th March 2027 at 1930hrs.

Signed Chair Date