

ST. NICHOLAS HURST PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
HELD IN ST NICHOLAS CE PRIMARY SCHOOL, HURST
ON TUESDAY 2ND SEPTEMBER 2025 AT 7.30 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Curry (in the Chair),
Boyd, Eastaugh, Ewart, Kendall, Percival,
Openshaw, Robinson and Thomas.

OFFICERS: Mrs Maria Bradshaw, (Clerk).

PUBLIC: Two Members of the Public.

9596 Public Forum

The Chair welcomed the public.

There were no questions in the public forum.

9597 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Smith.

9598 Declarations of Interest

The Chair declared an interest with regards to the discussions to be held around the fencing and bollards at Martineau Green.

9599 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 1st July 2025 were approved.

9600 Matters arising

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

9601 **Borough Councillor Update**

Finance/budget update

The Chair welcomed Borough Councillor Conway. He outlined to Members how busy the Borough Council had been organising a campaign regarding the Local Government finance settlement. The forecast is not good with a predicted loss of £50m over the next three years. In the event that Council tax is taken to the cap, this will not cover the loss of government funding.

As the population grows, demand for services is forever rising and the Borough Council is hoping to persuade Central Government to introduce a 4% floor which may help cover off some of the impact of inflation. There will be winner and loser Councils. He explained how the Government will face substantial costs with Councils becoming insolvent and Councils having to be run from central level. There is a likely increase in Councils requesting emergency funding to operate.

Councillor Boyd asked if emergency funding needs to be repaid. Borough Councillor Conway confirmed that such funding is deemed a loan and not a grant. Councillor Boyd further asked is there is a formula behind the redistribution to which Borough Councillor Conway confirmed there is. The Government will formulate a model in October with the Borough Council being informed in late November/early December. The budget will then be set in February 2026.

Recent appeals

Borough Councillor Conway thanked Members who had presented and attended at the two recent appeals in respect of Land between Lodge Road and Tape Lane and the 9 houses, Land North West of Hogmoor Lane. He said that the quality of input was high.

Councillor Boyd noted that he thought the Inspector was fair and Borough Councillor Conway thought that a reasonable chance of success was likely in both instances.

Councillor Boyd thanked Borough Councillor Conway for his attendance.

Borough Councillor Conway left the meeting at 8pm.

9602 **Planning Applications**

Current applications

Members discussed the applications attached to these Minutes. They had no adverse comments pertaining to applications 251553, 251430, 251635, 251706, 242961, 242960, 251818, 251843 and 251408. They objected to application 251385 and application 251998 was with Councillor Thomas for initial review.

Community Hub application, 242430

Councillor Robinson updated Members with regards to progress with the community hub application. He confirmed that, following the recent tree survey, Wokingham's Tree Officer has requested the structure is moved 6m. Councillor Robinson confirmed that this was not an option which was going to be pursued. The Clerk would contact the Planning Officer to understand further the reasoning and implications of the request.

RESOLVED: the Clerk to communicate the Parish Council's planning comments to WBC; and
the Clerk to contact the Planning Officer to query the request made by the Tree Officer in respect of application 242430.

9603 Finance

The following accounts were presented for approval this month:

Sep-25										
						Main Fund	CIL*	Neighbourhood Planning	Lodge Rd Appeal	Total
Previous Balance					£	67010.83	217569.66	-5027.62	1442.29	280995.16
The following accounts are presented for approval this month:										
Ref	Expenditure - Payee									
6.1	SCS (grounds maintenance)					905.02				
6.2	M Bradshaw (reimbursement for stationery)					32.80				
6.3	St Nicholas CE Primary (hall hire)					25.00				
6.4	Tactical Facilities Management (dog waste July)					251.32				
6.5	Castle Water (allotments June)					10.73				
6.6	5G (phone)					44.51				
6.7	P Curry (expenses)					2.00				
6.8	Lyreco (stationery)					47.27				
6.9	SCS (grounds maintenance July)					905.02				
6.10	Holt Arboriculture (impact assessment community hub)						408.00			
6.11	Castle water (allotments July)					10.91				
6.12	5G (phone)					42.26				
6.13	PKF Littlejohn (External audit)					504.00				
6.14	Tactical Facilities Management (dog waste August)					251.32				
6.15	Parish Noticeboard Company (50% noticeboard)					1695.00				
6.16	M Bradshaw									
	Salary (August)				1827.59					
	(Income Tax)				-141.20					
	(National Insurance)				-62.37					
	(Pension)				-73.10					
	Office				40.00	1590.92				
6.17	NEST (Employee pension £73.10 + Employer pension £54.83)					127.93				
6.18	HMRC (Employee's Income Tax £141.20 + Employee's NI £62.37 + Employer's NI £211.59)					415.16				
6.19	M Bradshaw									
	Salary (September)				1827.59					
	(Income Tax)				-141.20					
	(National Insurance)				-62.37					
	(Pension)				-73.10					
	Office				40.00	1590.92				
6.20	NEST (Employee pension £73.10 + Employer pension £54.83)					127.93				
6.21	HMRC (Employee's Income Tax £141.20 + Employee's NI £62.37 + Employer's NI £211.59)					415.16				
	Total Expenditure					8995.18	408.00	0.00	0.00	9403.18
	Income									
	Dunt Lane rent					160.00				
	Cash back					1.33				
	Bank interest					845.92				
	Total Income					1007.25	0.00			1007.25
	Revised balance c/f					59022.90	217161.66	-5027.62	1442.29	272599.23

External Audit 2024/25

The Clerk confirmed that the AGAR had been returned by the External Auditors with no matters arising. All documentation had been uploaded to the website with a Notice of Conclusion posted.

RESOLVED: all payments were approved; and
the audit process for 2024/25 is concluded.

9604 Parish Council Mission Statement

RESOLVED: outstanding for Councillor Boyd to produce, after the outcome of the two current appeals in respect of Land NW of Hogmoor Lane and Land between Lodge Road and Tape Lane.

9605 St Nicholas Night

The Chair confirmed that St Nicholas night would take place on the evening of Sunday 7th December 2025. She asked that all Councillors attend as the event needs a lot of setting up and down.

Members agreed that it would be appropriate to ask the new Parish Vicar to turn on the tree lights.

Members were supportive of asking a few local businesses to set up stall so increasing the interest at the event.

It was noted with sadness the recent passing of Tony O'Shea who acted as last year's Father Christmas. Councillor Openshaw agreed to fulfil the role this year.

Tasks were distributed as below:

- Waitrose (mince pies) – Chair
- Mulled Wine - Chair
- Contact the Vicar – Chair
- Chocoholics - Chair
- Waltham St Lawrence Silver Band – Clerk
- Contact local businesses – Clerk
- Tables – Clerk
- Tree – Clerk
- Purchase of new PA System - Clerk
- Father Christmas Costume – Clerk/Councillor Openshaw

Discussion was had around the collection for the band. It was agreed that the band should have their own collection boxes so it is clear who the donation is going to.

9606 **Correspondence**

Prompt dealing of Planning Applications

The Chair reminded Councillors of their obligation to promptly review applications when passed to them in the first instance i.e. within one week. The Clerk is increasingly chasing comments at the last minute and this cannot continue.

Fencing in Martineau Green

The Chair was not involved in this discussion.

The low level fencing, originally located around the shrub beds in Martineau Green, is largely broken. Members agreed for it to all be removed so eliminating and danger.

Additionally, the entrance bollards at the beginning of the lane need replacing.

The Clerk to contact the Parish Council's handyman to arrange both.

Pond Maintenance

Councillors Openshaw and Eastaugh to meet to discuss what pond maintenance needs completing.

9607 **Information Reports**

There were none to report.

The meeting ended at 8.40 p.m.

Signed.....

Date.....