



MINUTES OF MEETING OF EAST WOODHAY PARISH COUNCIL
08 December 2025
19:15 East Woodhay Village Hall

Chairman: Cllr Hurst (Chair)

Present: Cllrs K Titcomb, G Dick, S Cooper, R Donoghue, M Rand, C Roots, D Blakeway

Clerk: Amy White

Item 1: 94/25 Apologies

None.

Item 2: 95/25 Declarations of Interest

None.

Item 3: 96/25 To approve Meeting Minutes of 10 November 2025

The Meeting Minutes of 10 November 2025 were accepted as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman, Cllr Hurst.

Item 4: 97/25 Actions from Meeting of 10 November 2025

Item	Action	Owner
61/25	Action: Cllrs Titcomb and Roots will put together a planting costing proposal for EWH (for CIL funding use). Carry forward to January meeting.	Cllr Titcomb, Cllr Roots
90/25	Clerk and Cllr Titcomb to find a contact/facilities manager for the BT building to discuss hedge screening opportunities. Carry forward to January meeting.	Clerk & Cllr Titcomb
92/25	Cllr Hurst will create a shorter update on buses to be posted to the community. Actioned- also see item 12.	Cllr Hurst

Item 5: 98/25 Public Participation

None.

Item 6: 99/25 Borough and County Councillor Reports

Cllr Carr updated the council:

1. Government & Local Authority Changes

Significant changes have been announced regarding local government structures and devolution. Full clarity is lacking.

- Concerns raised that:
 - Powers and funding are being concentrated in larger city regions (e.g., Birmingham, Manchester).
 - Rural areas will likely receive fewer powers and less investment.
 - Funding packages may not arrive until 2026–2028, leaving uncertainty in the meantime.
 - “Mayoral” areas will receive substantially more powers and money compared with non-mayoral areas.
2. Budget & Local Government Finance
- Large sums are being reallocated nationally, but local budgets remain stretched.
 - Questions raised about:
 - High spending on street cleaning and other contracted services.
 - Realistic expectations for what parishes will receive.
 - Some improvement is expected in planning services, as additional investment is being directed there.
 - County and borough councils are drawing heavily on reserves to remain solvent through 2026/27.
 - Council tax increases are expected.
3. Oakley Farm
- Agreement that all parishes affected should submit a joint response to BDBC to cover Oakley Farm only, not a joint position on the entire Local Plan.
 - Parishes will still submit individual Local Plan responses.
 - Other potential development sites appear more sustainable than Oakley Farm.
4. Next steps
- Steve Lees (planning consultant) to coordinate the Oakley Farm response and give advice on Local Plan submissions if needed.
 - Further liaison with neighbouring parishes (e.g., Burghclere, Newtown)
 - Public meeting scheduled for 15 January 2026 – Need clarification from BDBC about who is responsible for publicity/communications.

Cllr Thacker covered the following issues:

1. Community Transport Issues
- Loss of local bus services remains a major concern.
 - Community transport tender recently issued; responses expected after Christmas.
 - Challenges:
 - Insufficient funding to operate meaningful rural routes.
 - Existing arrangements for neighbouring parishes (e.g., Ashmansworth and Burghclere) do not extend to this parish.
 - The GP surgery patient participation group has raised concerns about:
 - Patients being unable to access appointments.

- The need to be consulted on any replacement transport plans.
- Questions raised over Basingstoke Connect and whether funds had been allocated—some confusion among borough officers.
- 2. Watermill Bridge Transport Plan
 - Cllr Hurst commented that although this has recently been signed off, it contains inaccurate assumptions about available transport (references the 7/7A bus, which no longer runs).
 - Councillors consider this misleading to the public and damaging to community confidence.
 - Need to raise with BDBC for correction.
- 3. County Councillor Community Grants
 - Parish groups can apply for community funding, although parish councils are currently excluded.
 - Councillors reminded:
 - Organisations need a bank account to receive grants.
 - Parish councils can assist if needed.

Item 7: 100/25 Finance Update

Bank reconciliation 30 November 2025:

Natwest: £30791.78

Redwood: £24439.09

TOTAL: £55230.87

a. Accounts for payment:

The Clerk presented the accounts for payment. See end of the Minutes for a full list.

b. Budget second draft:

Cllr Titcomb led an open discussion on considerations for projects going forward (2026 onwards).

Suggestions include: Village signs which incl North Wessex Downs National Landscape; street furniture improvements incl signposts (parish image); improving the outward appearance of the BT building with hedging; boardwalk improvement (the section that was not included in the recent improvement off Trade St, and the path from Fullers to Heath End (fp10)); reprinting of the local walk booklets; consideration of ageing recreational assets incl play areas, tennis courts; Meadowbrook play area; recreation ground car park.

All of the above ideas will be discussed further in 2026 and ranked in terms of priority and cost.

Item 8: 101/25 Planning Update

Please see the most recent Planning Minutes on the EWPC website.

The NP Monitoring report deadline is 09 December. The planning committee will respond on behalf of EWPC.

Action: Cllr Titcomb to organise for the planning committee to meet in January to respond to the Local Plan Regulation 18.

T/00545/25/TCA Cottage Farm House, North End - no objection (planning meeting where this was to be discussed was cancelled).

Item 9: 102/25 Legal Matter

Cllr Donoghue has amended the Heads of Terms notice received from BDBC (as discussed in the November meeting). This revised version will be sent to BDBC for agreement.

Action: Clerk to send the revised version of the Harwood Paddock/Meadowbrook Head of Terms to BDBC for agreement.

The application from a parishioner to buy a parcel of land from Harwood Paddock/Meadowbrook has now been withdrawn as the existing covenant prevents this.

The recreation ground boundaries have been marked. Cllr Donoghue will now send this information to the surveyors for the preparation of a land registry-compliant plan, and to request a quote for a valuation of the land.

Action: Cllr Donoghue to send recreation ground boundary information to surveyors.

Item 10: 103/25 Amenities Update

Hedging and elm trees: There has been no update on whether we have been successful in the offer of disease-resistant elm trees. Please see the most recent Amenities committee Minutes on the decision on the grouping/location of trees.

Parish field- an oak tree has been cut back in the field, other tree work has been completed in Brownies corner.

Cllr Rand will be meeting with RJ Lampards to discuss the efficacy of the new drainage pipes in the field and will report back in the next Amenities Committee meeting.

Item 11: 104/25 Highways

Cllr Dick's report and current issues log are on the Highways section of the website.

East End Fingerpost: The Clerk has received a quote from A1 Ultimate Signs of £195 to repaint and replace one finger of the signpost in East End. Council agreed to accept the quote.

Action: Clerk to accept A1 Ultimate Sign quote for improvement of fingerpost in East End.

Item 105: No 7 bus service

Cllr Hurst has written a report since the meeting with Newbury and District buses on 04 December which is an appendix to the Minutes, below. This will also be placed on Facebook.

Action: Clerk and Cllr Hurst to post most recent bus update to the community.

13: 106/25 Items to carry forward to subsequent meeting

Usual items, precept decision, Legal Update.

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90/25	Clerk and Cllr Titcomb to find a contact/facilities manager for the BT building to discuss hedge screening opportunities. Carry forward to January meeting.	Clerk & Cllr Titcomb
101/25	Cllr Titcomb to organise for the planning committee to meet in January to respond to the Local Plan Regulation 18.	Cllr Titcomb
102/25	Clerk to send the revised version of the Harwood Paddock/Meadowbrook Head of Terms to BDBC for agreement. Cllr Donoghue to send recreation ground boundary information to surveyors.	Clerk Cllr Donoghue
104/25	Clerk to accept A1 Ultimate Sign quote for improvement of fingerpost in East End.	Clerk
105/25	Clerk and Cllr Hurst to post most recent bus update to the community.	Clerk/Cllr Hurst