

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE PARISH ASSEMBLY 2025

Wednesday 21st May 2025, 7.30pm, Mapledurwell & Up Nately Village Hall

Present – Parish Councillors Hugo Cubitt (Chairman), Suzanna Horsey, Kevin Rafferty, Colin Robertson, Alison Stent; Clerk Susan Turner; Guests BDBC Council Leader, Cllr Paul Harvey; BDBC Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning & Infrastructure, Cllr Andy Konieczko; Ward Cllr Onnalee Cubitt, Village Hall Chairman Tim Lewis. Members of the public 14

7.30pm

1 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Apologies received from PCSO Andy Jones; Footpaths Warden Martin Carfrae.

Chairman's thanks to the Parish Council and all volunteers for their work during the year.

2 UPDATES FROM PARISH COUNCILLORS

CLLR KEVIN RAFFERTY

.1 Summary of finances 2024/25

.2 Playground

Throughout the year, I have carried out regular, routine inspections of the playground.

The inspections cover examination of the fence posts and fencing: the gate and the signage; the seating; the bark pit and its wooden surround, plus testing of each of the items of equipment.

I also pick up any discarded rubbish and empty the rubbish bin.

This year, we have replaced the gate and the 'No Dogs' sign, purchased a new picnic bench, laid scalplings to the path to the tennis courts and under the picnic bench, repaired the wooden surround to the bark pit and filled the pit with new bark.

The Community Payback Team has done a very good job of clearing the whole area of leaves, twigs and small branches, including the removal of the majority of the moss on the 'soft' surfaces around both sets of swings, the rotating items and the rocking items.

The nettles have been cut down in the area, at the far end of the playground, furthest from the village hall, also the work of the Community Payback Team.

Outstanding work required is reseating of two loose fence posts, at the far end of the playground, opposite Oak Tree Cottages. There is no danger of the fence falling over.

For insurance purposes we have an annual, higher-level inspection, carried out by a RoSPA inspector, and we have complied with last year's recommendations.

The next inspection is due this month – May 2025.

CLLR ALISON STENT

.3 Village Hall grounds

The Community Payback team have made several visits this year, working to clear the old road of detritus and leaves, brush down the pavilion, and clean the play equipment and clear the playground of leaves. Still on the to-do list is clearing the old car park.

The Parish Council is responsible for two of the three defibrillators in the Parish – the ones in the Up Nately phone box and on the outside wall of the Gamekeepers. We were notified by the supplier that their 10-year warranty had expired; taking advice from South Central Ambulance Service and the St John Ambulance, they have no issue with the ongoing reliability of the defibrillators so long as they and the cabinet are maintained, and batteries and pads are in date.

Tennis courts – know not a great surface – as would be achieved by resurfacing – but they are the best that could be achieved for funds available. The holes have been fixed, the surface is sound; c£6K has kept two courts open and useable for a number of years while we look for options to build funds; potential has been touched on for players to form an official club in order to be eligible for grant funding. Brooms will be provided for the courts again so players can help to keep them free of leaves

CLLR COLIN ROBERTSON

- .4 Allotments** The rather large fallen Ash tree is now reduced to a log to be retained for wildlife. Smaller limbs and brash have been used to make faggot bundles to reinforce the river banks. Fruit trees are still growing despite two waterlogged winters. Apiary now doing well though unfortunately suffered losses over the winter.

To thank Colin Trussler as always who continues to do a splendid job of mowing the paths through the allotments.

All allotments are presently taken, but no one at the moment on the waiting list.

- .5 Chalk stream** Ongoing plan of introducing a lot more native flowers.
A lot more brush bundles have been required to repair the banking after high river flows; with thanks to Alan Hutton for access to his field next to allotments where tree works have provided additional brushwood for the 120 faggots, bundled and tied.

- .6 Highways** The potholes at the Greywell Road end of Frog Lane finally received attention – the biggest ones filled – and the blocked culvert there cleared by Highways.

(Kevin also noted thanks to Hants Highways for fixing the Tunworth Road surface outside Cob Tree Cottages – where they only had the road closed for three hours or so.)

Comments from the floor

- Appreciation for the hours of work put into making faggot bundles – looking very smart.
- Cllr Cubitt offered to again deliver leaflets to the Hollies to continue to raise awareness there of the allotments; the apartments have a high turnover rate. Colin noted this much appreciated; we presently have two allotment holders from the Hollies.

CLLR SUZIE HORSEY

- .7 Up Nately** Looking out for all things Up Nately; please contact me with any issues. The ponds is looking really good, but to suggest another working party probably in a couple months' time. If you'd like to be involved with that please look out on the Whatsapp.
- .8 Canal** – Walkers by the canal often need to negotiate nettles and tree branches. The Canal Society will organise a working party come the end of June. In the meantime, Mark Minter, a local volunteer – who works in conjunction with the Canal Society – continues working. If see him please do thank him.

3 VILLAGE HALL

Update from Village Hall Committee Chairman Tim Lewis.

- To thank the Parish Council as a group for helping and supporting us; To Su and Alison for organising for the Community Payback team who've done a great job – good to see and very obvious what's been done.
- The Village Hall is doing well. For those who've not attended Village Hall events, they've been a success; and last year to July the Hall received over 100 bookings – in addition to the regular daytime booking for the Monkey House Nursery who are staying with us.
- This year we will spend c£20K refurbishing the kitchen; the next big expense will be refurbishing the loos. And one broken window to repair – reported today.

From the floor

Thank you to all the Village Hall Committee for all the events and activities, do a very good job.

- Request for more activities – suggesting table tennis.
- Line dancing is coming up.

7.55 *The Chairman introduced borough councillors, thanking them for attending, Cllr Harvey having just driven back from Leeds.*

4 BOROUGH COUNCILLOR UPDATE

.1 Comments on progress / projects to date

PH Have a really strong team; now a majority of Independents supported by Lib Dems. As mentioned, have been in Leeds today, talking to people who want to come to Basingstoke to invest. A really good signal for progress after only two years in administration. Put in play so many things, different projects beginning to gain momentum.

For signature (p2 of 5)

Festival Place – Leasehold sold to investors MDSR; retail base management company Estama appointed to manage and oversee. The Debenhams site taken, another signal of confidence. Other ideas to rejuvenate town Centre, Onnalee leading on. Focus on Top of Town – this environment has been left for so many years. The Community starting to talk to us, beginning to put faces to names. Talking to investors wishing to come to Basingstoke, from very small to £100M investors.

Progress of Manydown in the last 24 months... services in place for first two parcels of land, the first to be developed later this year, the first houses ahead of schedule. Focus here on quality, beauty and green space. A third of Manydown North will be Country Park.

.2 Major Changes – Devolution, Local Government Reorganisation and NPPF

PH 'Three unwanted hand grenades before Christmas from Government...'

.3 NPPF and Local Plan

AK Cllr Andy Konieczko gave a recap on the Local Plan position before publication of the new NPPF – as per the last time visited the Parish.

At that time we were planning for a figure of c700 new homes per year for the first five years of the plan. And pushing Government to introduce measures to encourage build out of the c7K housing permissions outstanding.

With the new NPPF, the borough's housing figure is close to 1,250 homes each year for 15 years of the Plan to 2040.

Our previous Government figure was 828 dwellings per annum; 700 could be evidenced to be a required figure, arguably the natural demographic increase figure; now we have a requirement for 60% above that.

This figure is being imposed on us; with such a large increase in housing requirement we had to abandon the Reg 18 Draft Plan consulted on and go back to the drawing board with a new call for sites.

The results of this new call for sites is now published – 70 responses but many are small sites, many are likely to be unsuitable, nothing that will plug the gap between the previous Reg 18 Plan Spatial Strategy and the new figures.

Over the next few weeks Officers will be further evaluating, and Cabinet working do decide the sites they will include. Evidence from Officers will include impacts of the proposed sites on utilities, infrastructure, environment and so on.

A new Reg 18 Draft for the Local Plan is due to be published for public consultation towards the end of this calendar year.

Unfortunately going to be very tough, difficult choices; will be unable to avoid concreting over greenspace. Have increased the density in town centre as far as is sustainable, Basing View a logical choice for high rise, there is a demand for this in the town centre.

Thus we have accommodated numbers in Basingstoke town centre as much as can, but there will be impacts on rural communities.

A warning now that we are forced by Government; if we don't deliver their housing numbers we will lose all our planning powers.

Not what any of us wanted to do, not elected to do this. Will continue to stay in touch and explain the rationale for our position.

PH The housing numbers are ludicrous, and Government knows it. Frustration that we are going to have to allocate land to meet these figures. The choice is that we don't, and then it's a free-for-all. To try to curb the worst by allocating sites we don't want to allocate.

Worst of all worlds as we had something that worked, a creditable Reg 18 Plan with positive consultation feedback from residents.

Water is hugely important – the impact of how much we take – and how we dispose of foul water – no getting away from this. Historically to the present we have never managed to catch up with the water infrastructure deficit from housing growth.

Question re sites with approved consent. Confirmed 7K housing permissions outstanding.

AK Once planning is granted, then BDBC Planning Officers liaise with the developer to work

out an annual rate of delivery. This feeds into Government's requirement to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing (based on the annual housing figure).

Government requires the borough council – the LPA (local planning authority) – to evidence this required delivery rate over five years. But the borough council has no control over this part of the process, it's all up to the developers to decide how many and how fast they wish to build out – or not. The LPA has no means of requiring land owners / developers to build until they have financial incentive to do so.

Have been lobbying Government to introduce measures to require developers to build on sites that have planning permission. Charging 50% of expected council tax once permissions are three years' old would incentivise developers not to land bank.

Comment from floor re incentive to land bank – land with planning consent only increases in value.

OC Cllr Cubitt noted the additional housing requirements imposed on LPAs as penalties by Government for under-delivery on the required 5-year supply...

Developers choose for their own financial benefit not to build out existing permissions – which is outside the council's control...

Government responds by imposing penalties on the council in the form increased housing numbers so more planning permissions have to be granted [for developers to sit on] ... Completely insane.

New NPPF housing figure equates to over 21K by 2042, that total looking more like 23K. An annual figure of 1150 new homes, totally artificial, totally beyond our needs.

PH To also bear in mind that we are unable to take control of the process by selecting sites that would be best suited. Have to choose from sites put forward.

This just as all is changing in Local Government in the next few years.

.4 Devolution

PH We did know Devolution was coming – regional authorities with an elected Mayor was in the Government's manifesto.

Whether or not to join the 'Priority' devolution programme was a decision made by the relevant 'first tier' authorities: Hampshire County Council, the two City unitaries – Portsmouth and Southampton – the island Unitary of the Isle of Wight

These authorities had to agree to come together to and submit the request to Government for Priority Devolution – for The Hants & Solent Combined County Authority – by 21 January.

The post of Mayor will be very important – effectively Government's representative in Hampshire. Those who run will be people with a high public profile. Here, we're more interested in Policy. Mayoral authority will have strategic governance of all the combined area, including planning. A very real concern that the housing problems from one area be moved to another.

.5 Local Government Reorganisation

PH Local Government Reorganisation is different. And wasn't in the Government manifesto. Involves redesigning the structure of all Local Government – abolishing the two-tier structure where this is in place – to form unitary councils.

Agree brings possibilities in marrying all services. BDBC is pushing for four mainland unitaries with a Northern Hampshire Unitary comprising BDBC, Hart and Rushmoor.

HCC took its own line in independently commissioning a study into a unitary covering most of the current HCC area. So three mainland Unitaries – two city-based (Portsmouth and Southampton) and one for much of the rest of Hampshire. At c1.2m population this would be the largest Unitary council in the country, bigger than Birmingham; and would **subsume** all District / Borough assets.

Now living and breathing these negotiations – as so critical for the economic base to work. BDBC is the most solvent authority in the county; HCC is on the verge of bankruptcy.

Financial issues not all HCC's fault; Government has taken £150K out of their budget by freezing Council tax; being undercut for years, at some point going to break.

Important to show how a Northern Unitary works as a joint enterprise; BDBC is the larger economy; Hart is solvent; Rushmoor has some debts due to bad property purchases. A Northern Unitary does have a number of positives; the economies of North Hants in general look NE up the motorway corridors, up the Blackwater Valley and on to London. Farnborough and Aldershot have economic bases which work well with that of Basingstoke. This Northern Hants Unitary would have a population of c450K; the original Government guidance was for 500K or above, but since then they have cited lower figures. BDBC, Hart and Rushmoor already have some joint services, joint working. If keeping within County boundaries, Rushmoor has no choice but to be with Hart.

All HCC land and other assets within the Unitary area would also transfer to the new Unitary Authority; along with all County responsibilities. Do recognise the challenges of Adult Social Care and Childrens' Services.

Around the country, Councils have £Ms of debt – Government has to get its head around problems it created. Government knows the problem with escalating costs of childrens services and adult social care. They are hoping to save a few £M in combining all authorities. But at some point they will have to put funding in, or take adult social care out of Local Government and fund nationally.

This – and how to deal with the NPPF housing figures – on top of day job – negotiations with investors and running the council

So important to let us have your opinions, let us shape the debate

Comment from floor – 'How can we engage every school child in hampshire...?'

PH Will continue pushing for a Northern Hants Unitary, can create a business case, County will have to share all their data. Hants say they are the only one with the expertise to deal with 'county' responsibilities of education and health and social care. We have people with expertise in these areas. Appreciate that the issue of dealing with social care will not be easy and Council Tax will be a problem

AK Agree with Northern Unitary approach, but concerned for what will mean in terms of finances. BDBC is gold standard of local authorities because we have a strong financial base. Can see a future where some this is diluted, and not see a future where council tax is not going to rise.

OC If it does end up as a wider Hants unitary we will have no say, no democratic representation.

The Chairman thanked all BDBC Councillors for their time and for keeping the Parishes updated.

4 **QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR**

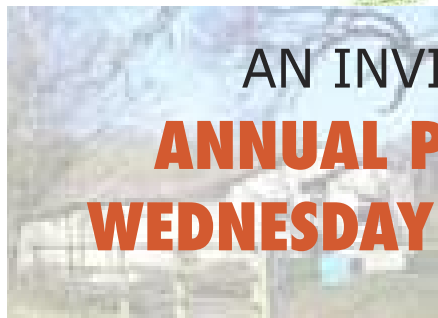
- i Somehow need to get the EA to put a moratorium on house building until the issues with water and sewage disposal are addressed.
- ii Environment Agency doesn't have the powers or the people to be effective.
- iii To rebuild the Basingstoke Canal.
- iv Various water cycle studies by previous Administration. The results of a Water Cycle Study will depend on its parameters and the questions asked.
 - The first concluded no capacity for more homes; not the right answer to enable development.
 - The second found it could enable development by measures to reduce consumption and improved technology at the water treatment plants. This finding based on analysis of inputs and outputs, not on a full environmental study which wasn't part of its remit.
 - A further water cycle study has been commissioned.
- v Recent debate with Water Companies – Southern Water not show; TW sent apologies. SE Water at least turned up and admitted they did not have a solution, there hadn't been the sufficient investment in infrastructure.
- vi Ward Cllr Kate Tuck presented motion to Full Council of 15 May (reported in the *Telegraph*) on a Declaration of Rights for our Rivers . Looking to an emerging global movement of governments recognizing Rights of Nature, in particular Rights of Rivers. Fully supported by all local environment groups including Natural Basingstoke and the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.

The Chairman thanked all for attending; meeting closed 8.45pm.

For signature (p5 of 5) Date

APPENDIX I

Mapledurwell & Up Nately
Parish Council



AN INVITATION TO THE **ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY** **WEDNESDAY 21ST MAY 7.30PM**

To be held in the Village Hall

This is a meeting for residents, not a Parish Council meeting – a social event with wine and crisps as always! – an opportunity to discuss issues relating to the Parish; to give feedback, raise questions, and suggest projects.



AGENDA

Revised 16 May

Times intended as a guide only

- | | |
|--------|---|
| 7.30pm | 1. Chairman's welcome and introductions |
| | 2 Parish Councillor updates |
| | 3 Village Hall Chairman's update |

- | | |
|--------|--|
| 7.50pm | 4 Presentation and discussion with borough councillors
Council Leader, Cllr Paul Harvey, and Cllr Andy Konieczko, cabinet member for Strategic Planning & Infrastructure |
|--------|--|

main topics

**BDBC Local Plan Update
Devolution &
Local Government Reorganisation**

Q&A to follow

- | | |
|-----|-------------------------------|
| 9pm | 5 Open session Q&A |
|-----|-------------------------------|

Thank you and close

We look forward to seeing you all

Hugo Cubitt, Chairman