

District Councillors' Parish Update - October 2026

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Droxford Fire Station

Public Event - Saturday 3 October 3pm

Earlier this year, funding was approved to replace the Droxford Fire Station building because of concerns about its condition and the need to maintain an operational presence in the area. The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority is now being asked to consider whether that funding should instead be redirected towards other priorities, including additional operational firefighter posts. The decision will be made at their meeting on 8th October.

The Fire Service has confirmed that there are currently no plans to close Droxford Fire Station. However, it has also confirmed that the existing building has significant structural issues and that its condition is becoming increasingly difficult to manage.

The key question is therefore not whether the station is closing on 8 October, but what happens if the rebuild is delayed and the current building subsequently becomes unusable.

- How fire cover across the Meon Valley would be maintained in those circumstances;
- What would happen to the fire engine and crew currently based at Droxford;
- What alternative options have been considered to maintain an operational presence in the area; and
- What long-term plans exist for maintaining effective emergency response cover across the Meon Valley.

The purpose of the event is to give local residents an opportunity to understand the issues, show their support for local firefighters, and demonstrate the importance that local communities place on maintaining effective fire cover before the Fire Authority takes a decision.



Water, Rivers and Future Growth

At September's meeting of the Health and Environment Policy Committee, councillors heard from Southern Water, Portsmouth Water and the Environment Agency about the challenges of managing water supplies, protecting river quality and ensuring infrastructure can support future growth across Winchester District.

Representatives highlighted the increasing pressure on water resources, particularly in South East England, and the need to balance housing growth with the protection of important chalk streams such as the Rivers Meon and Itchen. Portsmouth Water outlined plans to reduce leakage, expand smart metering and limit future abstractions from sensitive catchments, while Southern Water discussed major investment programmes for wastewater treatment, water quality monitoring and the proposed Hampshire Water Transfer and Recycling Project.

The Committee questioned the organisations on a wide range of issues, including flooding, wastewater treatment, emerging pollutants such as PFAS ("forever chemicals"), water recycling, leakage reduction and the role of nature-based solutions. Members also explored how water companies and regulators will engage with the emerging Spatial Development Strategy being prepared by the new Combined County Authority.

A particular focus of the discussion was the importance of treating water infrastructure, natural systems and environmental resilience as key considerations when planning for future development. The Committee welcomed the opportunity for continued engagement on these issues and has requested a future session focused on flooding and the role of the Local Flood Authority.

This was a useful and timely discussion as work begins on the new Winchester Local Plan and wider strategic planning across Hampshire and the Solent.

More information, including slides from the meeting, are available at: [Health and Environment Policy Committee on Thursday, 17th September, 2026](#)

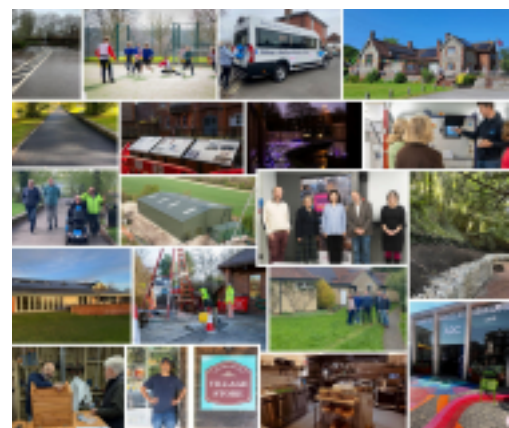
Grant Funding Opportunities

District Small Grant Scheme - Open

To provide small-scale, one-off grants of up to £700 to local voluntary/not for profit groups and organisations. [District Small Grant Scheme](#)

CIL Funding - Winchester

The funds are aimed at community led schemes with allocations between £10k and £200k. The following types of infrastructure and facilities are eligible for CIL funding:



- Education facilities
- Healthcare facilities
- Energy and carbon reduction schemes / climate change mitigation
- Open space provision
- Built facilities, indoor / outdoor sport, recreational and informal leisure and social facilities
- Green and blue infrastructure
- Community and cultural facilities
- Active travel and movement infrastructure

Next bidding window opens in November 2026. Find more details on the Winchester City Council website: [Grants for Not for Profit Organisations](#)

CIL Funding - SDNP

The 2025-26 SDNPA CIL bidding window is closed. SDNPA funding decisions for this round will not be made before Autumn 2026.

The dates for the annual 'call for projects' for 2026-27 have not yet been announced. When the 2026–27 bidding window opens, expressions of interest must be submitted online via the [Projects for the South Downs](#) portal. The authority will prioritize infrastructure projects that align with its core corporate plan priorities: *Nature Recovery*, *Climate Action*, and *A National Park for All*

Hampshire Forest Partnership Funding

Now open for applications for tree planting projects taking place during the Winter 2026/27 planting season.

A new fund, Black Poplar Fund, supports the planting of this rare native species in suitable locations such as floodplains, riversides, and other areas that experience periodic flooding.



Whether you are planning to establish new wooded areas (up to 0.5 hectares), hedgerows, community orchards, disease-resistant elms, or black poplars, you are encouraged to apply for funding. To apply, please complete the [Winter 2026/27 application form](#)

If you are unsure whether your planting project is eligible for funding, please complete the [Eligibility Check](#) before applying.

Green Business Grants - open until 21st October 2026

Businesses in the Winchester district can apply for a grant of up to £3,000 to cover up to 90% of project costs. See the Winchester City Council website for guidance, eligibility and application forms as well as information about free carbon assessments for businesses: [Support for sustainable businesses - Winchester City Council](#)

Planning

Next Winchester Local Plan 2026-2044

The first consultation is now open for comments until Friday 9th October: [Scoping Consultation - Winchester District Local Plan](#)



This is an early stage of the process, where the council is asking what it should investigate and how residents should be involved. It is not choosing development sites yet.

A briefing for parish councils was sent by Cllr Lee on 25th September to provide support with preparing responses to this scoping consultation.

Local Government Changes

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

On 7 September 2026, Government announced that it had withdrawn its previous decision on local government reorganisation (LGR) for several areas, including Hampshire and the wider Solent area, and will now review that decision following updated legal advice. A further announcement is expected from the government near the end of October.



As it stands, Winchester district council elections in May 2027 will go ahead using existing boundaries.

Further news can be found on the dedicated LGR website: [Future Hampshire](#)

Hampshire & Solent Combined County Authority

The [HSCCA Website](#) remains the main public source of information during this period and includes further detail on the Authority's proposed responsibilities, governance arrangements and the future role of the Mayor.

The inaugural HSCCA Board meeting was held on 13 July 2026. This marked the formal establishment of the new Combined County Authority. It will oversee £1.3 billion of long-term investment and bring more decisions about the region's future closer to local communities.

Community

Winchester Health and Well-Being Forum

Community organisations, voluntary groups and local partners are invited to join the Winchester Health & Wellbeing Forum, a space for those with an interest in improving public health and wellbeing across the district.

The forum provides an opportunity to share insights, build new partnerships and work collaboratively on key health priorities. It's a great way to connect with like-minded organisations, learn about local initiatives and explore how we can work together to create healthier, more connected communities while helping to reduce health inequalities.

Upcoming sessions: Tuesday 22 September 2026 – Home & Ageing Well
Tuesday 12 January 2027 – Physical Activity and 2026 Review

Contact the Communities team for more information communities@winchester.gov.uk

Winchester City Council Community Hubs

Join us for a FREE cuppa and a bite to eat at one of our Community Hub at Wickham or Winchester. Have a friendly chat with our officers about any issues relating to benefits, housing, and wellbeing. For informal guidance, information and signposting for anyone looking for support around the cost of living.

- *Alresford*: Every 3rd Wednesday of the month 10:00 – 12:00pm at St Gregory's Church, Grange Rd, Alresford SO24 9HB.
- *Wickham*: Every 1st Monday of the month | 2.30pm - 4.30 pm. Wickham Community Centre, Mill Lane, Wickham, Fareham PO17 5AL.
- *Winchester*: Every 3rd Thursday of the month | 10.30am - 12.30pm. Unit 12 Community Food Pantry, Winnall Valley Rd, Winchester SO23 0LD.
- *Winchester*: Every 3rd Monday of the month | 10.00am - 12pm. The Carroll Centre, Somers Close, Stanmore, Winchester SO22 4EJ.

Meon Valley Community Bus

The Meon Valley Community Bus Association website has all the current timetables and information regarding private hire: <https://meonvalleybus.co.uk/>

They are also producing information leaflets for residents in the area covered by the bus.

To find out more or apply to volunteer, contact Steve Houlding at mvcba1985@gmail.com



Home Energy Efficiency

My Home Made Better

An initiative launched by the Hampshire Environment Centre [My Home Made Better](#).

The aim is to inspire residents with one-to-one advice, case studies, videos, online resources, open homes, events and webinars, all designed to help individuals make more informed



decisions about their properties.

There is free training available for people who would like to become local 'energy champions,' who will then be able to provide energy efficiency information to help residents improve their homes.

Contact Stuart Mills at WinACC for more information stuart.mills@winacc.org.uk

Other Home Energy Efficiency Opportunities

The following offers advice and support. But please carefully check eligibility for grants as they will depend on the type of home and your circumstances.

- [The Energy Saving Trust](#) . Guidance for the type of insulation for properties
- [Energy Company Obligation \(ECO4\) scheme](#) - supports energy efficiency measures for homes in fuel poverty.

Note. There is a higher grant (recent 2026 change) for switching to Air Source Heat Pumps. Up to £9,000 for homes currently using oil or LPG heating (off-gas properties). This uplift is targeted at rural/off-grid homes, where switching costs are higher.

More info at: [What does the UK government's heat pump grant mean for oil-using households' bills? | Nesta](#)

A useful article that might help 'Beat the Heat' in certain circumstances for Heat Pump owners. "[My heat pump runs backwards \(and yours could too\)](#)"