

District Councillors' Parish Update - September 2026

Cllr Malcolm Wallace - mwallace@winchester.gov.uk

Cllr Danny Lee - dlee@winchester.gov.uk

Cllr Suzanne White - swhite3@winchester.gov.uk

Climate Adaptation, Mitigation and Nature

Recent heatwaves, droughts and increasing pressures on nature have highlighted the need to strengthen action to reduce the impacts of a changing climate — including the corresponding risks from winter storms, flooding and other extreme weather events.

There is nothing radical about climate adaptation and mitigation. It is simply common sense. We know many of the risks, and taking practical steps today can help protect our communities from tomorrow's climate challenges.

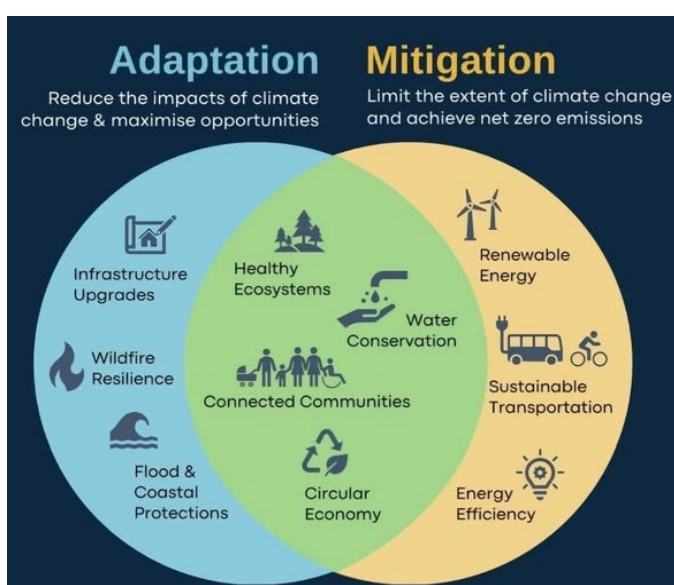
To help future-proof our area, your councillors have successfully brought two Motions to Winchester City Council.

The aim of both Motions is to make our communities more resilient, protect the natural systems we depend upon, and ensure that decisions being taken now are better prepared for the conditions we are likely to face in the future.

The two Motions are:

- **'Beat the Heat'** – ensuring that extreme heat and overheating are fully considered in policies, resilience planning and the new Local Plan.
- **'Nature as Critical Infrastructure'** – recognising nature as critical infrastructure and ensuring that nature, climate resilience and natural systems are at the heart of future planning, growth and investment decisions across Winchester and the wider Hampshire and Solent area.

The emerging Mayoral Combined County Authority will also be asked to consider the 'Nature as Critical Infrastructure' principles when preparing its strategic Local Growth Plan, Spatial Development Strategy and future investment frameworks.



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.

Hampshire Forest Partnership Funding

Now open for applications for tree planting projects taking place in Hampshire 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.

Hampshire Forest Partnership's funding programmes include:

- Linking Leaves – community-led planting in public or shared spaces



- Shoots Along the Routes – for farmers and landowners
- Community Orchards – for public or shared spaces
- Disease Resistant Elms – helping support white-letter hairstreak butterfly populations
- Black Poplars – for land around rivers and streams that regularly flood

To apply for funding, 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.

Planning

New National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The government has published a new National Planning Policy Framework which sets out the government's policies for plan-making and for making decisions on development proposals in England and how they are expected to be applied.



Officers are analysing the NPPF and what it means for the Councils adopted local plan and decision making on planning applications.

The Aug 2026 NPPF is not simply an update to the Dec 2024 NPPF. It represents a substantial redesign of the planning policy framework.

Three changes stand out:

1. Reintroduction of strategic planning through mandatory Spatial Development Strategies.
2. Separation of plan-making and decision-making policies, creating a clearer development management framework.
3. Stronger integration of housing, infrastructure, climate resilience, energy, water and nature recovery into a single spatial planning system.

It is also noted to address housing targets, the framework strengthens the "presumption in favour of sustainable development" within settlement boundaries (Policy S4), sets a "default yes" for housing near well-connected transit hubs, prioritises rural brownfield land, and mandates that local authorities allocate at least 20% of their housing requirements across small-scale sites (under 2.5 hectares) to support SME builders.

The new NPPF came into force on 17 Aug.

The final version is much better than the draft which gave cause for concern. Following feedback to the consultation, it is now still possible for councils to set

higher climate standards for new housing developments, subject to strong evidence . Find out more from this Bioregional webinar: [New NPPF & setting local climate standards](#)

Next Winchester District Local Plan 2026-2044

On 30th June, Winchester City Council agreed to immediately commence plan preparations under the Government's new legislation for Local Plans to be complete within 30 months.

The government has not yet provided guidance on transitional arrangements for authorities affected by Local Government. Nevertheless, the Council is engaging with other Mid Hampshire authorities to explore opportunities for collaborative or joint plan-making and shared evidence gathering for the proposed mid Hampshire geography.

The first formal consultation runs from 7–28 Sep. It will seek views on how stakeholders should be involved and what the Local Plan should cover. Deadline for comments by 28 Sep.

The current Local Plan Timetable can be found at: <https://www.localplan.winchester.gov.uk/local-plan-2026-2044>



Next South Downs National Park Authority - Local Plan

The existing 2019 Local Plan (LP) remains the statutory development plan while a replacement is being prepared. The proposed new Local Plan was published in May 2026, with its Regulation 19 consultation ending on 23 Jun 2026.

SDNPA intends to submit it for independent examination in autumn 2026, with adoption expected during 2027.

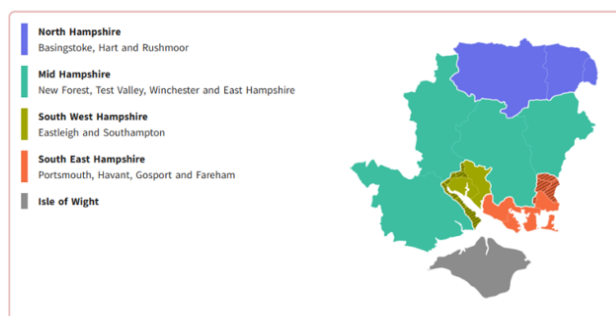
The new Local Plan is deliberately linked to the 2026–31 Partnership Management Plan planning principles to form the objectives of the new LP.



Local Government Changes

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

The local government reorganisation (LGR) website, developed jointly by councils across Hampshire, is now live and brings together the latest information about LGR as a central source of information for residents: <https://www.futurehampshire.gov.uk/>



The legal process to establish the new councils is expected to be confirmed by Parliament in Autumn 2026. Existing councils will continue to deliver services until the new arrangements come into effect. However, Hampshire County Council is currently challenging the Government's decision on reorganisation, and this may yet have an impact on the overall process and timescales.

Local elections scheduled for May 2027 will instead be replaced by elections to the new councils. Those elected will initially serve on a "shadow council," helping to prepare for the transition. The new unitary councils are expected to formally take over on 1 April 2028, when the existing councils will be abolished. Key dates:

- Autumn 2026 – Final decision confirmed by Parliament
- May 2027 – Elections to new (shadow) councils
- 1 April 2028 – New councils formally take over services

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.

Housing & Benefits

Housing Improvement Workshops

Winchester City Council tenants can get involved in workshops and activities as well as the [TACT \(Tenants and Council Together\)](#) board to have a say in shaping the future of their housing services.

The Housing Improvement Workshops are regular interactive sessions where tenants, shared owners, and leaseholders work alongside council officers to co-design better housing services. Each workshop covers one of the following themes:

- Safety & Quality Workshop - How safe and well-maintained is your home? What is your experience of repairs and maintenance?
- Transparency, Influence & Accountability Workshop - Do you feel heard? Is our service fair, open, and responsive to your concerns?
- Neighbourhood & Community Workshop - Is your neighbourhood safe and well looked after? How effectively is anti-social behaviour addressed?
- Tenancy Workshop - Are our lettings, tenancy support, and allocations fair and effective?

Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF)

The Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) is a government fund that helps people on low incomes who are struggling with money or facing an unexpected financial shock.

Applications are currently being handled through Citizens Advice Hampshire as part of Hampshire's interim CRF arrangements, with the council indicating that a longer-term delivery model will be in place from autumn 2026.

How to apply and eligibility details can be found at: [How our crisis support can help you](#)

Community

Winchester District Community Buildings Forum

An opportunity for people involved in the running of community buildings (village halls, community centres etc) to network and hear from a range of speakers.

Thurs 24 Sep 1:30-3:30pm - Colden Common Community Centre.

This forum is for anyone involved in running a community building in Winchester district. Hosted by Winchester City Council and Action

Hampshire, and is a great opportunity to gain experience, network and share ideas and challenges. This time there will be discussions about how volunteers can support your building, with advice on how to recruit and retain volunteers. There will also be a talk on the latest funding available.



If you would like any further information about this event please contact the community's team at Winchester City Council: 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

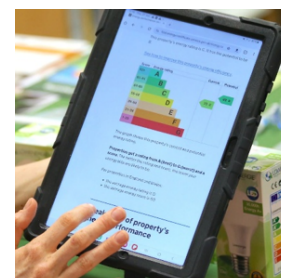


Home Energy Efficiency

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