

**DRAFT**

**WHITSBURY PARISH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD MONDAY 9TH JUNE 2025 AFTER THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY AT 7pm  
IN WHITSBURY VILLAGE HALL**

**25-001- Election of Chairman-** *To elect the Chairman and receive the signed Declaration of Office.*

Cllr Geoff Dominey proposes Cllr Steve Husher for Chairman, Cllr Hilary Sutton seconds the proposal. All the Council approve Cllr Steve Husher to be Chairman. Cllr Steve Husher accepted the position and signed the Declaration of Office.

**25-002- Election of Vice Chairman-** *To elect the Vice Chairman*

Cllr Husher proposes Cllr Graham Thompson for Vice Chairman and Cllr Geoff Dominey seconds the proposal. All the Council approve Cllr Graham Thompson to be Vice Chair. Cllr Graham Thompson accepts the position.

**25-003-Apologies for Absence-** *To receive and record*

Apologies from Cllr Chris Harper were received. The Council agrees to accept his apology.

**25-004-Declaration of Interest Form -** *To receive confirmation from all Councillors that Declaration of Interest forms are up to date.*

All Councillors present confirm that their Declaration of Interest forms are up to date.

**25-005-Councillor's Declarations of Interest-** *Declarations of Interest Members are invited to declare disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests in items on the agenda as required by the Code of Conduct for Members and by the Localism Act 2011.*

No interests declared.

**25-006-Minutes of Previous Meeting-** *For Approval & Signature of the minutes of the meeting held 14th April 2025.*

The minutes of the 14<sup>th</sup> of April meeting were declared correct and signed by the Chairman.

**25-007- Open Public Forum –** *The public is invited to speak on items relevant to the parish. This shall take no longer than 15 minutes and time is shared with all speakers.*

Members of the public would like to organise some gardening and tidying in the village. To be discussed at next meeting. Another Member of the public wanted to express they would miss the bus service and would appreciate something being done to save it.

**25-008-Matters Arising-** *All items have been actioned or will be reported on later in the meeting except for the following from 14 APR 25: **Item 6-** A letter has been sent to Fordingbridge Town Council regarding the concerns the Parish of Whitsbury has about the proposed homes to be built on Puddleslosh Lane. These proposed homes have not yet applied for planning permission. **Item 7-** Several work items have been found for the lengthsman and going forward the Clerk will make lengthsman arrangements with the consult of councillors outside of a parish meeting.*

**25-009-Reports by County and District Cllrs. E. Heron and J. Richards-** *To listen and record the reports*

Cllr Heron unable to attend, but Cllr J Richards gave an update on devolution. Hampshire County to reorganise itself into 3 or 4 unitary authorities. Each authority should have 500,000 people living in it. Various configurations are being discussed. One includes the current New Forest being paired with Southampton another is Southampton with only the coastal area of the New Forest. Reorganising should start in 2027 and should be finished by 2028. Very soon there will be public consultation about what kind of unitary authority we would like to be apart of. This should be filled in by the public and by parish councils. It is proposed this less layered form of government should save money.

**25-010- Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR)-***To complete and sign the Certificate of Exemption for the AGAR 2024/25 Form 2.*

The form was examined, the Council agreed it was accurate, and the form was signed by the Chairman.

**25-011-Internal Audit-***To note receipt of internal auditor's report and agree on any actions*

Cllr Husher proposed a plan of action to meet the requirements and suggestions of the internal auditor contained in the report. The Council agree to follow the plan with the help of the clerk.

**25-012-AGAR-***To complete and sign the Annual Governance Statement of the Annual Return (Section 1)*

It was noted that a risk assessment still needed to be completed. The Council agrees the form is accurate and Chairman signed Section 1 of the AGAR.

**25-013-Exercise of Public Rights-***Agree to the dates of the Exercise of Public Rights*

It was agreed by the Council that the Exercise of Public Rights would take place between the 11<sup>th</sup> of June and the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July 2025.

**25-014-Standing Orders-***To review, discuss and adopt new standing orders*

The standing orders are still being reviewed by Cllr Thompson and Cllr Dominey. They will be proposed again at the next meeting.

**25-015-Financial Regulations-***To review, discuss and adopt new financial regulations.*

The Council have read the Financial Regulations and approved them. They will be reviewed again next year.

**25-016- Tree -***Update about tree behind 7 Lower Grove*

After investigation by Cllr Thompson and Cllr Harper it was concluded that the tree in question is likely to be sitting on Wessex Water land. The clerk has written Hampshire County and informed them they should contact Wessex Water.

**25-017-HALC Membership-***To discuss and decide whether to join HALC-*

The cost of membership is £191. All the Council approved rejoining HALC for the cost of £191.

**25-018-Finance and Clerk's Report-**

- *Statement of accounts*
- *To discuss and decide on reserve of open space monies-* After discussion the Council agrees to move the sum of £3001 to the Community Instant Access Account to be held for the use of the upkeep, development and care of the Open Space.
- *To discuss and decide moving to online banking.* The Council agrees to add Cllrs Dominey and Husher to the bank accounts and decide to use online banking. The Council also agrees to add the clerk and Cllr Thompson to online banking. Clerk will arrange with Cllrs. and the bank.

**To approve payment of the following accounts:** The whole Council agrees to the following payments.

- Melissa Hildreth – MS365-£11.52 + £2.55 (stamps)=£14.07
  - Melissa Hildreth - Bitdefender £19.99
- Do The Numbers -£125
- S Colbourne -£180

**Payments to ratify-** Council ratifies the following payments

- Graham Thompson - £100 Gift Card for Edward Hale
- Graham Thompson - £544.98 for Clerk laptop and mouse
- April Banking Service charge -£4.75
- May Banking service charge- £4.25
- ICO Direct Debit of -£47.00 (yearly charge of £52 with DD discount=£47)

**25-019-Jim Dyer Legacy-***To hear an update on the church path project. To discuss and clarify the Council's involvement with the Jim Dyer Legacy*

It was agreed that discussions on the legacy were previously discussed during council meetings as it was convenient to meet. It is understood and agreed that it is not appropriate to discuss during council meetings as

the funds are with the accounts of the Village Hall. It is proposed that meetings about the Jim Dyer Legacy take place after a council meeting and will include members of the Village Hall committee, members of the Council and other residents of Whitsbury.

**25-020-Speed Reduction-** *To hear an update on the progress made since the grant was awarded*

Cllr Dominey has submitted the paperwork to Hampshire Highways to start on the project. The relevant person at Hampshire Highways was on holiday. It is noted that the application to make the works will cost £300. The whole Council approves spending £300 or however much the application cost is to Hampshire Highways. Once accepted by Hampshire Highways the project would then go on a schedule. It will be important to know when works will happen as it will affect traffic in the village. February and March is the busy time for articulated lorries coming to the stud farm. Coordination should be done with the stud farm to limit problems. The grant allows 2 years to complete the project; this would be by March 2027.

**25-021-Village Emergency Plan-** *To hear any update of the progress made on the Emergency Plan*

The Village Emergency Plan working group have developed a good plan. It still requires some tweaking, but it is a very good first draft. The working group would like to apply for a grant for a generator. When the document is complete it will be shared with the clerk for safe keeping. A redacted version will be given out to villagers. The plan will be advertised in the newsletter.

**25-022-Whitsbury Village Plan-** *To hear an update on additional notice board*

Cllr Husher is still waiting to hear if a notice board is needed for the other end of the village. The website has been updated with Dark Skies information. The notice board is the last item to complete from the plan.

**25-023- Handrail for footpath-** *To discuss the possibility of a handrail from Lower Grove Path to Cartwheel*

A member of the village can provide a quote for the handrail.

**25-024-#49 Bus** – *To have an update on what to do about the loss of this route.*

Cllr Husher went to a Fordingbridge Town Council meeting where the bus was being discussed. Their town council said the bus company quoted £12000-13000 a year to maintain the bus service. Hampshire County Council claimed cutting the bus service would save them £2500. All the villages in the bus route would need to share the cost to maintain the route. The Clerk has been approached by Fordingbridge Town Council clerk to have a meeting of all the village clerks to discuss the matter. Clerk agreed that the matter was important to Whitsbury so would agree to a meeting. Clerk has yet to hear anything back from Fordingbridge. The loss of this bus route would mean no public transport in the village.

**25-025- Model Publication Scheme-** *To discuss and adopt the ICO Model Publication Scheme,*

The Council, having reviewed the scheme agree to adopt it in its entirety.

**25-026-Minor Matters and Items for Next Agenda-** *Councillors to report minor matters and items for future agendas.*

- Cllr Thompson informed the Clerk and Council he would not be able to attend the next meeting.
- To discuss gathering a group for tidying up and doing some gardening in the village

Next meeting date: **28<sup>th</sup> July, 2025**

*Melissa Hildreth*, Clerk to the Parish Council

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