



LISS PARISH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

A meeting of Liss Parish Council took place at 7pm on 16th February 2026 in Liss Village Hall

Members

*Mr K. Budden (Chair), *Ms S. Baldwin, Ms R. Crane, *Mr I. James, *Mr D. Jerrard,
*Mr C. Olley, Mr C. Mort, *Mr P. Payne, *Mr A. Smith, Mr R. Smith,
*Mrs S. Stratford-Tuke, *Mr D. Turner and *Ms C. Williams.

* Present

In addition to S. Smith (Clerk), County Councillor Russell Oppenheimer and one member of the public.

01/26 Apologies

Members accepted apologies from Cllrs Mort and R. Smith. It was noted that District Councillor Roger Mullenger has sent apologies and that Cllr A. Smith would arrive late to the meeting.

02/26 Declarations of Interests

Councillors were reminded of their responsibility to declare any pecuniary interest they may have in any item of business, no later than when that item is reached.

Cllr Williams noted her position as a trustee to the Triangle in relation to agenda item 15 on CIL allocation.

03/26 Chair's announcements

The Chair advised that the Annual Parish Meeting would take place at 7pm on Wednesday 18th March 2026 in the Village Hall. He advised that this was not a Council meeting, rather a meeting of electors, but that all councillors were encouraged to attend.

The Chair also advised that Bill Briggs has sadly passed away. Members expressed their condolences to his widow and family. The funeral would take place at 2.30pm on 23rd February 2026 at St. Mary's Church. Bill Briggs would be remembered for his many contributions to Liss.

04/26 Adjournment for public participation

Frank Smyth, the new Chair of the Royal British Legion in Liss, was in attendance and spoke about the need for the Legion to raise funds for significant works to the building, including the roof, the installation of solar and replacing of internal furnishings. He noted how the facility had become an important community asset which was well used in the village and requested that LPC provide a letter of support for their application to the SDNPA for CIL funding.

The chair expressed initial support for an LPC letter of support and noted that LPC had smaller sums of CIL which could also be applied for.

Cllr James suggested an application to the EHDC Community Action Fund given that solar installation formed part of the building upgrade.

The member of the public left the meeting at this point.

05/26 Update from the County Councillor

Cllr Oppenheimer had submitted a written report at **Annex A** which he presented.

In response to questions, Cllr Oppenheimer clarified the following:

- a) That 'all in one' machines to repair pot holes used elsewhere in the country were not suitable for Hampshire as the rural road system was varied and without foundations which was not always the case in some cities. Heavier vehicles may have also played a role in the state of the roads, but the unprecedented weather had certainly played a key role and the lack of any dry spell had hampered repair works taking place.
- b) That the timetable for Local Government Reorganisation was on track with elections to the shadow authority in 2027 with a view to going live in 2028; the preferred model would be announced in March.
- c) That details on unspent developer contributions held by HCC totalling approximately £180,000,000, had been circulated previously. He noted that strict conditions were attached to the funds and that he did not think any were specifically related to projects in Liss. Cllr Oppenheimer undertook to circulate the spreadsheet containing the information again.

Cllr Oppenheimer left the meeting at this point.

Cllr A. Smith joined the meeting at this point.

06/26 Update from District Councillors

The District Cllrs had both submitted a written report as at **Annex B and C**.

Cllr James presented his report. He undertook to check the percentage increase on the budget and to advise which measure was used. He also undertook to check whether there was a traffic light system for Community Asset Transfers as was the case elsewhere, and to clarify the concept of 'neighbourhoods'.

07/26 Minutes of the meeting of Council of 15th December 2025

Resolved: That the minutes of the Council meeting of 15th December 2025 be approved as an accurate record (proposed by Cllr Jerrard and seconded by Cllr Olley, with all in favour).

07/26 Matters arising

The Chair clarified that the LPC Local Government Reorganisation consultation response as agreed had been submitted.

08/26 Payments and receipts for the period 1st December 2025 to 31st January 2026

Cllr Olley noted an interest as LPC appointed trustee to the Newman Collard Playing Fields Trust as the Trust had received a payment as set out in the report.

Resolved: That the receipts and payments set out in **Annex D** for the period 1st December 2025 to 31st January 2026, for the Liss Parish Council accounts, be approved (proposed by Cllr Williams and seconded by Cllr Smith, with all in favour).

09/26 Report of the Planning Committees of 12th January 2026 and 9th February 2026.

Members noted the reports of the Planning Committees of 12th January 2026 and 9th February 2026.

10/26 Report of the Staff Committee of 26th January 2026

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11/26 Report of the Charities Committee of 26th January 2026

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12/26 Report of the Facilities Committee of 26th January 2026

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13/26 Report of the Finance Committee of 2nd February 2026

Members noted the report of the Finance Committee of 2nd February 2026.

14/26 Allocation of LPC CIL

Resolved:

- a) That the sum of up to £13,000 be allocated for Village Hall window works, as recommended by the 2nd February 2026 Finance Committee.
- b) That the sum of £3,984 be allocated to the Triangle for the installation of LED lighting, as recommended by the 24th November 2025 Finance Committee.
- c) That the sum of £1,150 be allocated for the addition of a 3 Phase Gateway to the Pavilion solar installation, as proposed by Cllr Smith.

The CIL allocations were proposed by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Payne with all in favour.

Cllr Smith noted that the 3 Phase Gateway would provide resilience faced with power cuts, which could be particularly useful for community residence.

15/26 Approval of the Financial Risk Assessment 2026

Resolved: That the Financial Risk Assessment 2026 as recommended by the Finance Committee be approved (proposed by Cllr Williams and seconded by the Chair with all in favour).

16/26 Consideration of the Draft Liss Parish Council Action Plan 2026/27

Resolved: That the Action Plan for 2026/27 as drafted (subject to one minor amendment) be presented to the Annual Parish Meeting.

The Clerk noted that the Action Plan would then be open for a period of public consultation prior to approval at the Annual Meeting of Council in May.

17/26 Approval of the Asset Register

Resolved: That the Asset Register be approved (proposed by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Williams with all in favour).

18/26 Approval of the Insurance Cover

Resolved: That the Insurance Cover be approved (proposed by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Williams with all in favour).

The Clerk clarified that the building valuations were based on a report undertaken on 2022, also that an exercise had been undertaken in recent years to review the provider of the insurance cover.

19/26 Approval of the redrafted Appointment of Freeman/Freewomen Policy

Cllr Williams explained that the policy previously drafted required amendment as it had been established that only principal councils could appoint Aldermen/Alderwomen.

Resolved: That the redrafted policy on the Appointment of Freeman/Freewomen be approved (proposed by Cllr Williams and seconded by Cllr Stratford-Tuke with all in favour).

20/26 Appointments to external bodies

Resolved: That Roger Hargreaves and Cllr A. Smith be appointed to the Newman Collard Playing Fields Trust as LPC appointees (proposed by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Williams with all in favour).

NB. Members had already agreed to appoint Roger Hargreaves on 19th January 2026 for reasons of expediency as the Trust were in urgent need of trustees. This resolution was to formalise the position in his case.

21/26 Matters to report

Cllr Williams advised that she and Cllr Olley had held the usual councillor surgery at the Triangle earlier in the day; issues raised included positive feedback about bulb planting at the Newman Collard Park as well as pond/water drainage issues.

Cllr Williams also advised that the Triangle had benefitted from a significant financial gift which had enabled significant infrastructural improvements to be planned for the building. Works, including new windows, floors and heating, would take place shortly. The lighting would also be upgraded thanks to the grant of LPC CIL approved earlier in the meeting.

Cllr Baldwin reported that she had attended a meeting of the Liss Forest Residents Association and had reported back to the Clerk in order to seek advice on how to move forward with certain issues.

Cllr Stratford-Tuke asked the Chair about rail cancelations; the Chair advised that some cancelations had been down to engineering works to reduce the risk of landslides and some had been down to trespassers on the lines.

Cllr Olley had attended a meeting of the Newman Collard Playing Field Trust for which he would provide an update in the exempt session.

Cllr Smith advised that he had liaised with a representative from the Andlers Wood development about the crossing; he felt it was important that LPC was in contact with the management company.

The Chair advised that South Western Rail were about to embark on a consultation to changes in the rail timetable for the first time in about twenty years. It was likely that the EHAP&TC would represent parishes in the consultation. He noted that the level of rail usage was finally back to pre-covid levels but that the patterns of use were different.

Cllr Turner left the meeting at this point.

22/26 EXEMPT session

Resolved: That the following item be taken in exempt session (proposed by Cllr Williams and seconded by Cllr Olley with all in favour).

23/26 Approval of Villager of the Year 2026: EXEMPT minutes

The Chair closed the meeting at 20h25.

Date of next scheduled meeting: Monday 16th March 2026, 7pm

Signed:.....Dated:.....

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT TO ALL PARISH COUNCILS IN PETERSFIELD HANGERS

1 FEBRUARY 2026

1. Highways maintenance update

I am acutely aware that the state of our roads is bad at the moment, and that residents are upset by it. I drive to various places in my car every day and so I share the frustration. I wish to assure you that the problems we are seeing are not the result of a lack of focus by Hampshire County Council. The main culprits are: increasingly extreme weather, heavier vehicles and rampant materials inflation over the last five years. Of course, the funding crisis in local government caused by escalating care costs and escalating special educational needs costs has played a key part. We are 100% reliant on the Highways funding we get from central Government, which is totally inadequate. The experts tell us that it would cost £600m a year properly to restore and maintain Hampshire's roads. Yet we are actually in receipt of just £60m per year in Hampshire.

Since Christmas, wintry and wet weather has hit our highway network particularly hard. The impacts of regular freeze-thaw cycles and persistent rain have accelerated road deterioration, leading to a significant surge in pothole reports and repair requests. This level of degradation leads to weakened road surfaces and the failure of the underlying layers. To tackle the damage and spike in demand, the Highways Team, working closely with our contractor M Group, have successfully secured extra supply-chain resources - and they have managed this despite a significant rise in demand for frontline resources nationally from other highway authorities.

Highways have extra Jet/Dragon Patchers already out on the Hampshire network with more due soon. In addition, extra carriageway patching gangs started on 12 January, and more are expected to join by the end of this month. Further resource increases are likely over the coming weeks. However, their work has been hampered by ongoing heavy rain and low temperatures. You cannot repair potholes when the road surface temperature is below 8 degrees or when it is raining heavily. We need to hope for a clear fortnight for the teams to really get a grip on it.

While dealing with potholes will remain the main focus over the coming months, the winter weather is also placing pressure on other parts of the network, especially drainage assets. To help manage the increase in flooding, there are also additional jetting machines available to respond to issues related to piped drainage systems. A team is also available to tackle other localised flooding problems. In addition, an extra white-lining team is now on the network addressing small, localised sites where markings have deteriorated.

In light of the increased demand, it is inevitable that some reported defects will need to be temporarily infilled to ensure road safety. Whilst permanent first-time repairs are always preferred, the level of demand is currently so high across Hampshire that infill repairs will need to be considered as a quick-fix for safety reasons while longer term permanent repairs are scheduled. Nobody likes infill repairs because they sometimes fail within days. But I trust the Highways engineers when they say that this is the best way to maintain safety for road users. They are the experts.

In summary, we are doing everything we can to bring our highways back to a safe and acceptable state as swiftly as possible. I appreciate your patience and I would be very grateful for your help with explaining the situation to residents.

2. May 2026 elections.

As you know, Hampshire County Council refused to request a delay to elections despite pressure from Ministers to do so. I am proud of our principled stance. Thankfully, the Government has not imposed a delay on Hampshire so the May elections are proceeding.

Town and Parish Councils may wish to consider organising village hustings for candidates in April so that residents can hear directly from the candidates. This can be an important and helpful part of local democracy.

3. County Councillor grants

I wish to draw attention to a change to the rules around County Councillor grants to Parish Councils. Recently, a grant which I had approved to Ropley PC was caught by this rule and rejected by officers. This was vexing for me and even more vexing for Ropley PC.

The rule quoted at me by the Grants Team was this one:

iv) Grants will continue to be available for Parish Councils, however grants should not support normal business operation or projects that can be revenue funded (including through precepts) or funded through alternative sources like the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Please could I ask Town and Parish Councils to be mindful of this constraint when making applications in the future. We may need to check with the Grants team in advance which I can always do.

4. New Partnership Management Plan for South Downs National Park

The SDNPA have published their new 5-year management plan covering the period 2026-2031. This is a key document for the National Park and is a requirement of the National Parks legislation. I was interested to note a shift towards nature recovery which I think is welcome.

A range of ambitious targets have been agreed, including increasing tree canopy and woodland cover by 4,200 football pitches (2,625 hectares) by 2031 to help store carbon, soak up water and create vital new havens for wildlife.

A goal of restoring or creating more than 3,300 hectares of wildlife-rich habitats by 2031 has been agreed – an area the size of Worthing or Hayling Island. These new havens are outside current protected nature sites and will help significantly boost regional biodiversity in the long-term and increase resilience to higher temperatures and flooding.

Meanwhile, a key goal is that all water bodies in the National Park achieve “high” or “good” status by the end of 2027. It comes after a major study last year showed that most bodies of water are failing to meet good ecological standards.

The Plan also commits to engaging with 2,500 schools, inside and outside the National Park, and delivering 500 nature-based activity sessions for young people. I do not think any of us would argue with that one.

The plan is for the whole National Park and it can only be delivered in partnership with farmers, landowners, local authorities, the health sector, water companies, businesses, schools, charities and communities. There is an important role for Parish Councils in identifying areas for nature recovery and getting plans in place for designating those areas and restoring them through planting and other measures.

You can read the full plan at this link:

<https://partnership-management-plan.southdowns.gov.uk/>

RUSSELL OPPENHEIMER
County Councillor for Petersfield Hangers

DRAFT

Report to Liss Parish Council - Monday 16th February 2025**Councillor grants**

- My last £800 went to Triangle to help with replacement windows.
- Grants for the coming year will be the same at £7,000 per councillor and £129,000 in a central pot for climate related projects.

Casework, Including

- Blocked road drain in Andlers Ash. HCC say it's not causing a problem for drivers. But it is for residents and pedestrians.
- Pedestrian crossing at Limes Close. It's a private road so HCC say it's not their issue. I will follow up since there is a pavement both sides and yellow lines painted.

Planning

- SDNP Partnership Management Plan has been published.
- Local plan final draft, known as Reg 19, will be published in the next few months
- Followed up the request about potentially calling in planning applications by speaking to planning officers.
- The final of the new draft NPPF has been published and councillors received a briefing paper of the changes. There are a few improvements and being in SDNP helps us, however there are some aspects which weaken protections,

Other

- -

EHDC business

- The budget has been published to be debated at full council on Thursday 26th February. The council tax band D rise will be £5 for the EHDC portion.
- The government has given an indication of the next three years' central grants which will help in financial planning.
- I attend the Audit committee where the external auditors were very critical of three elements of the 2024 / 25 accounts.
- The food waste collection service should start in October, several months later than expected
- I asked a question about poor quality landscaping schemes, with inappropriate plants, provided with the larger planning applications.
- I am on a working group reviewing the procurement of software (or anything else really) because the recent new planning system for the non-SDNP has had installation and usability problems.

Local Government Reorganisation

- We expect a Government decision in mid-March, or it will have to wait until after the county elections because of "purdah", also known as the pre-election period.

Questions?

- Please email me.

Roger Mullenger, 16th February 2026
 roger.mullenger@easthants.gov.uk

District councillor report February.

This month is budget month. Assuming that it is accepted I have nothing exceptional to report. Everything will rise in line with inflation. The council set it as 4.8% based, I believe, on the figure for August 2025. The district precept of the council tax will go up by £5.00 for the standard band D rated house taking it to £156.92 for the coming financial year. This is above the inflation rate but an amount allowed by legislation.

I have a couple of points that I would to highlight:

Parking charges are again a contentious issue. Because charges must match the value of coins that the ticket machine accepts they cannot be raised by an exact percentage. They are always rounded up. So because this effect is compounded over the years they end up way over the inflation rate.

We still await the review of car parking policy. At the last Overview and Scrutiny committee Cllr Woodard proposed that we recommended cabinet to defer the increase in parking charges until after this report could be considered. I seconded and the Liberal Democrat members voted to support it. We were out voted.

A significant, but ever decreasing, proportion of the council's income is generated from the commercial property portfolio. £120 million was borrowed at very low interest rate from the Public Works Loans Board to buy commercial property for they yield it generates. There is no way that buying an office block in Derby or Warwick could be considered a public works for East Hampshire. Clearly never what the loans were intended for. In fact the government stopped the practice in 2020. I consider this source of income unethical. This point is made more obvious in the new budget. Some of the property has been sold. The receipts for the sales have been invested in Treasury Bonds. Treasury Bonds pay a higher rate of interest than the original Public Works Loan Board's loan. In essence the British tax payer is subsidising East Hampshire. I will not be supporting this year's budget.

The new budget includes a grants pot for local community projects. It will be the same arrangement as last year. Each East Hampshire councillor will be able to approve of grants of up to £1000.00 per project to a total of £7000.00. Another £3000.00 per councillor will go into the Community Climate Action Fund. This fund offers much larger grants for community projects related to combating climate change.

The current round ends at the end of this month. All my pot has been used up. The new round should be opened at the end of April/beginning of May.

Food waste collection that should have started in April will not start until October.

The council changed its planning system last year. The result was chaos. As we live in the National Park it did not affect us directly. However the Overview and Scrutiny has set up a task and finish group to investigate. Both Roger and I sit on it. We have only had a couple of sessions but it would appear that the system had been over sold regarding both its adaptability and maturity. Further investigations continue.

We did not hold our first Saturday of the month councillors' surgery in January. Normal service has now been resumed.

I have a significant case to report regarding the Hillbrow Road car park. I moved to Liss in 1982. For all this time up until last year I, and everyone else in Liss, thought that cars could be parked in the yellow bays without restriction. But starting last year parking tickets began to be issued. The signage in the car park says "All day". In fact the regulations say 24 hours is the limit. I am told that parking

permits are available for this car park. However they are not available on the council website. All the other car parks that have permits are available from the same page of the website.

Therefore it appeared that residents living in the area of the village hall with no off street parking had nowhere legal to park.

I have resolved this issue. I have been promised that parking permits will be made readily available, that the signage will be made unambiguous and parking tickets will not issued until all the issues are resolved.

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Ian James

DRAFT