



***DRAFT Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting, hosted by
Limpfield Parish Council and held on 8 May 2025 (VE Day) at St Peter's
Church.***

Attending: Cllrs Thomas Briggs, John Thompson, Bob Harvey, Ann Osborn, Mark Wilson, Bernie de Haldevang, Jenny Williams, Tony Taylor, Michael Tinker

Parish Clerk: Sophie Martin

District Councillors: Catherine Sayer (Leader of TDC), Ian Booth and Claire Blackwell

National Trust representative: Mark Dawson

Thomas Briggs invites the Rev Helen Cook to bless the meeting with a prayer.

1. Apologies for absence.

1.1. Cameron McIntosh sent apologies during the meeting as plane was delayed

2. Minutes from the last meeting

2.1. Move to approve the minutes from the last meeting as circulated and on website.

All agreed and approved as published/circulated. See online.

3. Introduction by the Chair, Thomas Briggs

Tom Briggs asks each councillor to introduce themselves.

TCB thanks various volunteers in the community, including John Nathan for the Detillens Speedwatch, co-optees Robin Masefield, Maggie Kemp (Biodiversity) and Ted Beresford Knox (Planning LNP) and thanks for former councillor Sophie Kemp who resigned in February, Bernie De Haldevang who will be stepping down in June, and welcomes Michael Tinker to the council.

TCB alludes to current local government reorganisation that is expected to have a significant impact on the Parish Council on a local level.

TCB also gives a quick update on the Horse Trough and its replacement. Thank you to all those who contributed to the GoFundMe campaign and to the Drinking Fountain Association for their generous donation. The insurance claim has now been approved, and we can instruct the stonemasons on the creation of the replica.

4. Finance Update - Tony Taylor

Notes are all on the website – presentation slides and annual report.

AT gives overview of reserves, income and expenditure for the year.

The council started the year on £84,371 and ended on £78,318 with a conservative budget for the year. Budgeted items totalled £76,400 with spending at £55,569 - 73% of the budgeted expenditure.

An interest-bearing account was set up during the year which has earned £1029 in interest.

AT notes that the Parish Council is debt free with a strong balance sheet, has just completed another positive audit and that due to devolution and potential budgetary demands, the LPC will be reviewing the 2025/6 budget in the coming months.

5. Neighbourhood Plan & CAAMP Update - Ann Osborn

5.1. Ann Osborn presents overview of LNP projects and achievements for the year, including CAAMP and the successful Footpaths programme. Please see attached notes.

5.2. NT's Mark Dawson formally announces that Conor McNeil will be leaving his post as Ranger, to pursue an MA at University of Manchester. A recruitment drive is about to start however the NT currently has recruitment freeze and can only recruit for a 12-month position, pending reviews and funding. In the meantime, the Taskforce will be overseen by other members of the regional NT team.

MD also explains the NT's decision to stop the use of limestone on pathways and in the car parks, in lieu of granite which is the preferred option to minimise environmental damage. This is due to limestone's vulnerability to damage from acid rain and water absorption, which can lead to significant deterioration over time. While limestone is durable, it reacts with acidic rainwater, and its porous nature allows water to seep in, causing it to degrade.

This presents an issue with the car parks to which granite cannot be added without the removal of the existing limestone and funding is needed for this.

6. Planning Update – Jenny Williams

6.1. Jenny gives an overview of key planning issues at the moment – please see attached notes.

PLEASE SEE ANNUAL REPORT ON THE WEBSITE FOR FULL BREAKDOWN OF ALL OF THE ABOVE

7. Local Government Reorganisation – Catherine Sayer, Leader of Tandridge District Council – please see attached notes of Catherine's presentation.

8. QUESTIONS

8.1. Kevin Ludbrook asks if the Woking / other councils' debt operational or from bad investments? Catherine says this is largely from bad commercial investments and notes that the PWLB should also take some responsibility in this for agreeing to the loans in the first place.

8.2. Mary McGregor – What happens to Adult Social Care in terms of funding? CS: ASC funding will be split across the county/unitaries.

8.3. Robert O'Donovan asks whether there are any plans for OLRG / local alliance to join forces with other residents' groups further afield in order to better represent the interests of the residents. CS says that at the moment there are no plans, primarily because the residents' groups/alliance would lose efficacy if they got too big which would be counterproductive and against their core principles.

8.4. Kevin Ludbrook if there is there a possibility of this being separated from the rest of the services given its domination of funding? CS says that the new unitary would need to be responsible for all functions, so that would include adult social care. The 4.99%

council tax increase that the unitary would be able to levy annually would include 2% for social care. At the moment, only the government can change that arrangement.

8.5. Emma Tinker would like to know if voters/residents can do anything about this process, given this has not been voted for. CS says unlikely and while it's following a legal process, there is no public consultation only consultation of "stakeholders" – e.g. county, district and borough councils. CS says that she suspects decisions have already been made as to how Surrey will be split, and this process is purely for legal box-ticking, which is an extraordinary waste of money and everyone's time, and very dispiriting for all involved.

8.6. Mark Wilson asks if debt is likely to be written off at any level, in that if it is done here (for Woking) then that sets a precedent for elsewhere and everyone's debt would need to be written off. He also believes that in terms of North-South "optics", debt in Surrey is not going to be looked upon favourably by northern constituencies. CS says that she believes Woking's debt is fairly unique in its recoverability and therefore it may still be written off, but this is by no means a given.

8.7. Ann Osborn would like to know if there will still be any representation at Tandridge District council offices in terms of local contacts. CS says this is not yet known. There may be some depots locally on a practical level. In terms of the building itself, this would be a good opportunity for Oxted Health Centre for better facilities. They currently lease their building which is in disrepair but will not be upgraded by the landlord.

8.8. Ian Booth asks is there an upside to devolution? CS says that this is a two-step process as far as Surrey is concerned and Mayoral authority is the key in the long term – this is where the money and power lie, but we are a way off from this. Ultimately a Mayoral structure is perceived to be a more cost-effective model, however Claire Blackwell notes that potential cost savings do not include the costs of having a mayor and all that it entails in terms of support, entourage etc, so the savings would be greatly reduced once that is taken into consideration.

8.9. Ted Beresford-Knox asks if there is likely to be any local oversight with regards to Planning as he is concerned that decisions will be made without local knowledge. CS does not believe there will be much in the way of local oversight or decisions by councillors (Committees) as opposed to planning officers. She believes the government will seek to remove all "blockers" to development as ultimately in the government's plans, it will all boil down to development/building houses. However, the unitaries may have some additional influence as a combined force in terms of challenging developments.

Thomas Briggs closes the meeting 8.54PM

Parishioners in attendance (c.35 not including councillors)

Refreshments are served.

Please see website page for LPC annual report, presentation slides and presenters' notes. www.limpsfieldparishcouncil.gov.uk/annual-parish-meeting