

## **Minutes of Copythorne Annual Parish Meeting held at Copythorne Parish Hall on May 9<sup>th</sup> 2025 starting at 7pm.**

**Present as Chairman of the meeting:** Cllr. Graham Chillcott – Chairman of Copythorne Parish Council

**In attendance as Clerk of the meeting:** Mr David Rigby – Clerk to Copythorne Parish Council

24 members of the public attended the meeting (22 from within the Parish)

*(numbering of minutes follows the numbering of the agenda)*

### **Meeting**

#### **1. Introduction, welcome, apologies for absence**

Cllr. Graham Chillcott introduced himself as the Chairman of Copythorne Parish Council and welcomed those present. Apologies had been received from County Cllr. Edward Heron and Dist. Cllr. Joe Reilly.

#### **2. Approval of Minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting (April 30<sup>th</sup> 2024)**

The minutes of the meeting held on April 30<sup>th</sup> 2024 were agreed as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman, Cllr. Graham Chillcott.

#### **3. Announcement of Parish Award Winner 2025**

The Chairman announced that Lady Kara Hawks had been awarded the Parish Council's Parish Award for 2025 in recognition of her dedicated support of local organisations over many years, including Copythorne Women's Institute, Copythorne Parish Council & Copythorne Community Group. Lady Kara was presented with a framed award certificate.

#### **4. Policing Update**

On behalf of PCSO Richard Williams, the Clerk of the Meeting presented a New Forest Heart Area policing report which covered burglary, speeding and fly tipping. These being the priorities highlighted by the latest "Let's Talk" survey. Residents were also reminded of the availability of property marking kits made available with NFDC funding.

The Clerk also reported the activities of the Copythorne Community Speed Watch team who in 2024 conducted 48 roadside surveys. In total the Speed Indicator Device recorded over 13,000 vehicles during the surveys, with 1,771 breaking the 30 Mph speed limit, which is just over 13%. All those drivers will have received a police letter which also explains the distress it causes especially to local residents. 67 drivers were recorded at speeds in excess of 50 Mph in 30 Mph zones. All of these excessive speeders will have had direct police contact, usually as a personal visit from the Roads Policing Team.

#### **5. Member of Parliament Update**

The Right Honourable Sir Julian Lewis MP began by thanking the Parish Councillors and the Clerk for their efforts at this increasingly important time for Local Government. He went on to talk about the changes coming to both Hampshire County Council and the District/Borough Councils and existing Unitary Authorities under the proposed Local Government Re-Organisation plans.

He shared his concerns that NFDC might be split across different Unitary Authorities within the new structure as other middle tier councils sought to "pick and choose" areas that would benefit them. He acknowledged that Central Government have suggested that this would only happen in exceptional circumstances.

Sir Julian made mention of PCSO Richard Williams who he heard speak at the Netley Marsh Annual Parish Meeting and also the recent departure of the Chief Constable of Hampshire Police who he felt had been doing a good job. He then took questions from the floor.

Q1. Will HCC exist after the Local Government re-organisation?

A1. No, there will be a Strategic Authority with an elected mayor.

Q2. Will the mayor be a politician?

A2. I am not sure but I would expect the candidates to have the support of individual parties.

Q3. Will the new system cost more?

A3. I don't know but I wouldn't be surprised.

Q4. Will the new Unitary Authorities be political?

A4. Undoubtedly yes, in the same way as currently with District/Borough/existing Unitary authorities. The grouping through may result in a change of political control. They will still be elected.

Q5. It would be a great shame if NFDC were to be merged with Southampton?

A5. I agree. Most of the groups on NFDC feel the same.

Q6. We will still have Lord Lieutenants for the historic counties?

A6. I would very much expect so.

There was then a request from a resident that those present should express concerns to the leadership of NFDC about the possibility of a split of NFDC across different new unitary authorities and ask them to do all that they could to avoid this. Another asked if the meeting could request that a letter be sent asking NFDC that. The Clerk advised that under the Local Government Act 1972, Sch 12, para 18 (1-4) it was possible to do so. The Chair of the meeting asked for a show of hands which indicated an obvious majority in favour.

**ACTION – Clerk of the meeting to write to both the Leader and Chief Executive Officer of NFDC as outlined above.** Actioned, letter attached as Appendix A

Cllr. Chillcott thanked Sir Julian for attending and for his report which had indirectly resulted in a request for a vote at the APM for the first time in many years.

## **6. County Councillor Update**

Unfortunately, County Cllr. Edward Heron was unable to attend the meeting. No report was provided by him.

## **7. District Councillor Update**

District Cllr. Derek Tipp presented a report on matters relating to the activities of New Forest District Council, including finances; commencement of the introduction of the new domestic waste collection services; NFDC housing stock repairs and additions; review of the Local Plan; CIL Fund spending on local projects; and the Local Government Re-Organisation. Dist. Cllr. Tipp then invited questions.

Q1. What is collection frequency for food waste; concerned that animals may learn to open them?

Q2. How many different type of bins will we have and what are the collection frequencies?

A1/2. Recycling bin (240L), collected fortnightly; General rubbish bin (180L) collected fortnightly, alternate week to recycling; outdoor food waste caddy (23L), collected weekly; indoor food waste caddy (5L); glass box (45L), collected fortnightly; garden waste bin (180L), collected fortnightly (subscription required). I believe that the food waste caddy will be animal proof.

Cllr. Chillcott thanked Dist. Cllr. Tipp for his report.

## 8. Paultons Park Update

James and Lawrence Mancey gave an update on current and future projects at the Park. They spoke about the recently installed Solar Car Ports that are currently delivering around 4 mWh of power on a daily basis; the imminent opening of a new attraction “Ghostly Manor”; a “watch this space” announcement due next week for new rides scheduled for 2026/27; and the longer term plan for the building of around 90 accommodation units. A short Q&A session then took place.

Q1. How many visitors will the accommodation hold and how many people are in the park at its busiest?

A1. Up to 400 guests in the accommodation units and around 10/12,000 is the daily park capacity.

Q2. A resident said that they had evidence of otters and badgers near to the proposed site for the accommodation units which they would gladly share with Paultons. He went on to say that the report submitted to the NFNPA in connection with the Environmental Impact Assessment Screening had not made mention of their existence.

A2. The Ecologists report was submitted by our planning agents and we would happily share with them any information that you have with regards to wildlife that might be affected by the proposed development. Please send us the information.

## 9. Commoners Defence Association

Andrew Parry-Norton (Chair of the CDA) who lives in the Parish gave a presentation on the key issues affecting New Forest Commoners and forest farmers. He started by explaining that Commoning has shaped the landscape, it has been formed by the animals and tourists come to see them. He acknowledged that the Forest is struggling for money and that whilst the current “Higher Level Stewardship Scheme” had been very helpful it was coming to an end in 2028 with no plans to continue.

He continued by explaining that Commoners receive funds under the “Basic Payments Scheme” for the animals that they graze on the forest and that this source of funding is continuing to reduce year by year and is planned to end in 2027. The land that commoners use isn’t owned by them it is mainly Crown Land. The Verderers can be considered the farmers and the Commoners are the grazers.

The average age of a Commoner is believed to be around 70. Whilst forest land not owned by the Crown does come up for sale from time to time it currently sells for £45k an acre.

A “Landscape Recovery Scheme” for the New Forest (along the lines of the Wareham Ark which is working on an implementation term of 20 years) might be a solution to help Commoners continue to exist financially. However, the New Forest is around 7½ times bigger than the Wareham Ark. Also it has taken many years to get the Wareham project to the point of a submission to DEFRA with just 64 stakeholders. The New Forest has some 400, not including the various councils and manors that own parcels of land. So a big concern is what might happen between existing funding schemes ending and a Landscape Recovery Scheme starting?

Andrew then took a few questions from the floor:-

Q1. Will Forestry England’s car parking charges plans cause more “verge parking”?

A1. The scheme is being planned for 2026 and lots of discussions have been and continue to be had. FE has done a lot of work on creating roadside ditches to prevent parking but some of these cause problems for grazing animals. There is soon to be a meeting with the National Trust about displacement parking on the Northern Commons which they own.

Q2. Only way the scheme could work is to have ANPR and not disfigure the Forest. Maybe change byelaws to stop/fine verge parking. ANPR screens could display warning signs about no BBQ/bonfires and no animal petting. Concerns over keeping the parking charge money in the Forest to help FE locally.

A2. All good points.

Cllr. Chillcott thanks Andrew for his time and hoped that this was the start of a dialogue with the Council.

## **10. Schools Update**

The new Headteacher at Bartley School, Will Hodge, was unable to attend due to a prior engagement in London and so provided an update on the activities at the school over the last year by way of a report.

## **11. Parish Design Statement (“PDS”) Update**

On behalf of the PDS Steering Group, Parish Cllr. Sherri Johnstone gave an updating report. She started by explaining that a PDS is a way for local communities to propose guidelines for the design of any new development that may take place in their area. Based on an analysis of the character of the settlement and its surroundings, a PDS adds local detail to existing planning guidance. It can be adopted by the planning authority as a Supplementary Planning Document and used to help in determining local planning applications.

She then explained that over the last 12 months, regular discussions on progress and content of the PDS had taken place between the Steering Group and the NFNPA Planning Department. These have resulted in a draft of the PDS having reached the stage that it has been endorsed by the NFNPA Planning Committee and a formal consultation on it, arranged by the NFNPA, is currently taking place.

The consultation - started on April 23<sup>rd</sup> and ending on June 4<sup>th</sup> - is being managed by the NFNPA. Statutory Consultees to planning applications along with local residents and a range of other bodies have been invited to make comments. These will then be considered by the NFNPA; the Parish Council; and the Steering group with a final version of the PDS hopefully being presented to a NFNP Authority Meeting on July 24<sup>th</sup> 2025 for adoption. Details of how residents can comment were provided

## **12. Flooding Update**

Cllr. Sherri Johnstone who chairs the Parish Council’s Flooding Advisory Committee (“FAC”) gave a presentation which covered the following; the Aims of the FAC; the causes of flooding; main rivers in the Parish; Flood Zones (and how to register for Flood Alerts); Riparian responsibilities and who is responsible for watercourses; what the FAC has been doing to try and help reduce flooding risks.

## **13. Questions from the floor**

A resident thanked the Parish Council for being so pro-active within the Parish.

Another resident asked when the bench would return to Splitwind Pond. The Chair advised that it was hoped that this would take place before the end of May.

## **14. Closing address**

The Chairman of the meeting thanked the local residents present for attending; the speakers for their informative presentations; the Parish councillors and Clerk to the Parish Council for their presence; and the ladies of Copythorne Women’s Institute for providing refreshments before the start of the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm

Signed..... SIGNATURE REDACTED.....  
Cllr. Sherri Johnstone (Chair, Copythorne PC

Dated.... MAY 29<sup>TH</sup> 2026....