HORNDEAN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE GROUNDS MEETING HELD AT JUBILEE HALL ON 2 FEBRUARY 2026 AT 6.30 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors A Redding (Chairman), J Lay, D Prosser and R Sowden.

IN ATTENDANCE: Becky White, Clerk; Matt Madill, Grounds Manager; Susan Blake, Admin Assistant (Minute Taker)

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE: 1 member of the public.

G 47/25/26 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Apologies were received from Cllrs R Smith & J Tyler.

G 48/25/26 TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
No declarations of a pecuniary interest were received.

G 49/25/26 TO OPEN THE MEETING TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC
The meeting was duly opened to members of the public.

G 50/25/26 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE GROUNDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 24TH NOVEMBER 2025
The minutes of the previous meeting had been previously circulated.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 24 November 2025 be signed by the Chair as a true record of the meeting.

G 51/25/26 TO CONSIDER A WAYLEAVE REQUEST FROM CITYFIBRE AT LAND AT CATHERINGTON LITH AND STUBBINS DOWN [TITLE NO. HP528224] IN RESPECT OF THE UK GOVERNMENT'S PROJECT GIGABIT.
Project Gigabit is a UK Government funded initiative to deliver ultrafast full-fibre broadband infrastructure to 'hard to reach' and underserved rural communities across the country, including Horndean and the surrounding area, which are not considered viable by commercial operators.
In Hampshire, the network rollout is being implemented by CityFibre. The network is designed to use public land as much as possible, however in some cases it inevitably crosses private land. CityFibre have therefore requested that HPC grant them a wayleave to install infrastructure at land owned by HPC at Catherington Lith and Stubbins Down. The Clerk's report on the matter had been circulated prior to the meeting, recommending that UpConnect, CityFibre's contractor, pay a visit to site prior to the commencement of works in the view of the footpath designations and single track pathway.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the requested grant of wayleave for signature, subject to UpConnect's confirmation that a site visit will take place before works are scheduled.

G 52/25/26 TO DETERMINE NEXT STEPS REGARDING THE CURRENT CONTRACTUAL USAGE OF THE FOOTBALL PITCH AT FIVE HEADS RECREATION GROUND.
The Council would like to see all pitches in regular use and co-operation between clubs is essential to this aim. Since the last Committee meeting the Grounds Manager has been in touch with both Football Clubs as requested, however no progress has been achieved regarding improved access to pitches. The contracts with the club run on a year to year basis. No progress has been made and Cllrs were in agreement that the situation had gone on long enough and that both teams need to be brought to the table together to work out a lasting solution.

It was **RESOLVED** that Horndean Football Club and Horndean Hawks be invited to attend a joint meeting with the Clerk, the Grounds Manager and the Chair of Committee to discuss the existing arrangements and those for the forthcoming 2026/27 season to allow clear and equitable agreements to be issued to each club in a timely way.

G 53/25/26 TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER AN UPDATE REGARDING OPTIONS, AS ADVISED BY THE LANDOWNER HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, FOR THE LEASE NEGOTIATIONS IN RESPECT OF HPC'S MANAGEMENT OF LAND AT CATHERINGTON DOWN.

Horndean PC has leased Catherington Down from Hampshire County Council since 2006, renewing the agreement in 2016. HPC receive £750 per year towards maintenance of the land from HCC, which is managed in accordance with HCC's Site Management Plan 2004-2009, which was appended to the 2016 lease agreement, although not updated. The lease is due to expire in April 2026 and HPC have been in contact with HCC regarding the options for renewal over the past year. Following a meeting with a member of the HCC Countryside Team, attended by the Grounds Manager, the Clerk and Cllrs Redding and Prosser, at which possible options for the way forward were discussed, HCC has now outlined three possible options for future management of the Down: 1. Do not renew lease, HCC's Countryside Service to carry out site management going forward; 2. Relinquish ownership of the site to HPC; 3. Extend current lease by 2 years. A report by the Clerk had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Chair and Grounds Manager gave further verbal updates, noting that a meeting was scheduled with the Hampshire County Council Countryside Team on 4th Feb 2026. The options were discussed, with most feeling that allowing the Down to return to HCC would be a retrograde step whilst acknowledging that Option 2 exposed HPC to significant and ongoing capital outlay to bring the fenceline up to an acceptable standard. Option 3 was considered the preferred way forward, partly because it would create a continuing relationship with the forthcoming Unitary Council but only on the proviso that HCC be amenable to making investment in the required works.

It was **RESOLVED** that a recommendation of option 3 to go to Full Council with the Clerk, Chair and Grounds Manager delegated to continue negotiations in the interim.

G 54/25/26 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE IN RESPECT OF POTENTIAL TREE WORKS AT WAGTAIL ROAD AND DETERMINE NEXT STEPS.

Two separate residents have been in touch regarding a HPC owned tree which is covered by a Tree Preservation Order and reported incidences of debris, dead wood, bird droppings and squirrel access and are requesting the tree be cut back. It was noted that property owners are entitled to cut back trees which are overhanging their boundary but are still required to apply to EHDC for permission in light of the TPO and that this information has been shared with the residents. Both the Grounds Manager and the Clerk have made site visits and the tree, whilst quite large in height and reach, appears to be healthy, having been cut back five years previously. The tree in question is on the list for inspection during the annual survey. A report by the Clerk had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was noted that the Tree Policy required updating and it was agreed that this would be brought back for consideration to a future meeting of the Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** to defer any decisions on required works until the tree surgeons survey report had been received following the scheduled inspection. A further update would be brought to Committee.

G 55/25/26 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE IN RESPECT OF THE PROCUREMENT PROCESS FOR IMPROVEMENTS AT JUBILEE FIELD AND DETERMINE NEXT STEPS

The Grounds Manager gave an update, noting that all bids had been received and were currently being reviewed with a meeting scheduled for 4th Feb 2026 to review all tenders with the consultant. The item would appear for consideration and resolution at the next Council meeting of 9th February 2026. The project implementation would be managed in-house and would also cover the installation of an accessible pathway. This was noted.

G 56/25/26 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE IN RESPECT OF THE COMPLETED PROJECTS/SIGNIFICANT WORKS UNDERTAKEN BY THE COUNTRYSIDE TEAM

The Ground Manager gave an update on recent activities including a tidy up of the Downs Park woodland strip, spread and shrub tidy up around the parish and the hedge laying project at Parsonage Field (which had involved twice the usual number of volunteer sessions over the last few weeks). The new information boards for the Green Trail & Heritage Network had been installed in all but one of the agreed locations, with the remaining location pending formal agreement from HCC. Works identified within the new Pond Management Strategy would be scheduled from Spring onwards. Modifications to the workshop layout to create a new drying area for staff & volunteer clothing had been agreed. The Chair thanked the Grounds Manager for his update, the efforts of the Countryside Team and the continued involvement of the volunteers who were recognised as a most valued asset.

G 57/25/26 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE IN RESPECT OF THE HORNDEAN GREEN TRAIL AND HERITAGE NETWORK

The Chair of Committee gave an update, noting that all the information boards were now in situ much earlier than anticipated, bar the one at Blendworth, and thanked the Countryside team for giving this priority. One landowner noted that the maps marked a path across their land that was not a Public Right of Way. This had been acknowledged by the Council and the offer made to install additional signage at the site to advise members of the public regarding using the correct route of the PRoW; the landowner had been satisfied with HPC's confirmation and agreed that the project was very positive. Waymarkers had been installed on the Catherington and Blendworth trails including some with QR codes which linked directly to the HPC website. Information leaflets had also been designed, supported by HCC and the two trail routes were available via the HCC MyJourney app. Discussion was held regarding making the leaflets available in paper form and potential outlets for collection, including distribution to local businesses and deferred for further consideration. Legal work was required regarding the siting of the outstanding information board in Blendworth and two milestones & 1 gateway at Dell Piece West, all of which were sited on HCC land. A quote had been received from HCC Legal, which was within the project budget, and HPC was now awaiting the relevant documentation. This was noted.

G 58/25/26 TO RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS, IN THE VIEW THAT PUBLICITYWOULD PREJUDICE THE PUBLIC INTEREST BY REASON OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS OR ARISING OUT OF THE BUSINESS ABOUT TO BE TRANSACTED. (PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

It was **RESOLVED** to exclude the public from the meeting.

The part of the meeting held in public concluded at 7.30 pm and those members of the public in attendance left the meeting.

G 59/25/26 TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE GROUNDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 24 NOVEMBER 2025.

It was **RESOLVED** that the confidential minutes of the Committee meeting held on 24 November 2025 be signed by the Chair as a true record of the meeting.

G 60/25/26 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE CLERK REGARDING ONGOING INSURANCE MATTERS AT STONECHAT ROAD AND HOLLYBANK CLOSE

A report had been circulated by the Clerk prior to the meeting giving updates on each matter and recommendations for next steps.

It was **RESOLVED** that the officer recommendations in respect of insurance matters were accepted.

G 61/25/26 TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER A REQUEST FROM COFFEE@DOLLYS REGARDING AN AMENDMENT TO THE EXISTING FOOD AND DRINK VENDORS AGREEMENT.

A report had been circulated by the Clerk prior to the meeting outlining the vendors request to trial an additional day's trading at the Jubilee Field site and retail hot food items.

It was **RESOLVED** to agree to the vendor's request and review the impact, including any resident feedback, in April 2026. The vendor would be invited to attend the next meeting to give an update to the Committee.

The meeting concluded at 7.55 PM

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Signed - The Chairman

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Dated