NORTHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Date:	Thursday 17th September 2026	**Time:**	6:30 pm
Venue:	Village Hall, Northington		
Present:	Juliet Blanshard		Chair
	Rhona Hatchley		
	Andy Bason		
	David Corney		
	Russell Gordon-Smith (from 7pm)		District Councillor
	PC Brad Hurt 29623		Rural Police Officer
	One member of the public		
	Wendy Simson		Clerk
Apologies:	Gail Taylor		
	Claire Pinnger		District Councillor
	Margot Power		District Councillor
	Jackie Porter		County Councillor

Apologies for Absence

Cllr Taylor informed the Clerk that they were not able to attend the meeting as did Cllrs Pinnger, Power and Porter.

Declaration of Pecuniary & Personal Interests

The Councillors confirmed that there no interests to declare.

Minutes of the last meeting

The Councillors reviewed minutes for the meeting on 16th July 2026 and agreed the minutes as a true representation of the meeting. The Chair proposed that the minutes be formally accepted, Cllr Hatchley seconded this, the minutes were approved.

Police Update

PC Hurt introduced himself to the Councillors and explained that he had been covering the area including Northington since April. There are three rural officers who cover the area around Winchester. In addition to his regular role, PC Hurt also steps into the Sergeants role when his manager is not available.

PC Hurt informed Councillors that very little was reported from Northington but if a resident needed to get in touch email was the best route, PC Hurt's email address is:

brad.hurt@hampshire.police.uk

PC Hurt explained that this was only to pass on information for example a vehicles which has been abandoned. **Any crimes need to be reported to 101 or 999.**

Cllr Bason informed PC Hurt that the Farm Managers and Game Keepers have a WhatsApp group and one of the local police officers is included to ensure they are aware if there are any issues. Cllr Corney is also part of a Community WhatsApp which includes an officer.
The Police can support if the Parish look to set up a Speedwatch group, the Councillors explained that as a small community they had struggled to get sufficient volunteers to make the project viable.

Matters arising from the last meeting.

1. **Update on work to access faster broadband in the past**

Cllr Taylor informed the Clerk prior to the meeting that they were still working on this project and would report at the next meeting.
Action: Clerk to add as an agenda item for the next meeting.

2. **Update on speeding farm vehicles on Northington Hill**

There has been no formal evidence of the farm vehicles in question but Cllr Bason has spoken to all the local farm managers about avoiding Northington Hill unless required to be in this location.

3. **Update on new Bench for in front of the church**

Cllr Bason brought the new bench to the meeting, the Councillors all viewed the new piece of street furniture in the carpark. It was agreed that a second bench be purchased to provide a similar amount of seating to the existing bench.
Action: Clerk to order a second bench and get delivered to Cllr Bason.
The Chairman asked what the Council wanted to do with the existing bench, it was agreed that it would be stored at the Chairman's home in case someone wants to repair it in the future.

Highways

1. **Feedback on HCC Road Safety Survey for junction by Village Hall**

Cllr Corney informed the Parish Council that he had followed up on the application for a survey and was informed that there is a backlog and it would be completed when there is an opportunity to do so, this is likely to be next year.

2. **Update on location or Speed Indicator**

Cllr Corney informed the Parish Council that he had a contact who may be able to advise on more suitable locations for the new Speed Indicator.
Action: Cllr Corney to liaise with contact to identify how to proceed.

District Councillors Reports

The Councillors reports were circulated to the Parish Council earlier in the month.
Cllr Gordon-Smith gave the Councillors an update on the Local Government Reorganisation which has been withdrawn, Nick Adams-King, Leader Hampshire County Council sent the following update on 13th September**:**

This week brought important, and from my perspective welcome, news about Local Government Reorganisation. Therefore, I wanted to provide a specific update following the Government's decision to withdraw its Local Government Reorganisation proposals for Hampshire and the Solent.
There has been quite a lot of commentary since the announcement, so I thought it would be useful to explain where things now stand and what I think it means for Hampshire.
The important point is that the Government's previous decision for Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton has been ***withdrawn, not paused****.*
That matters.

The decision taken earlier this year to replace the existing councils with the proposed new unitary authorities no longer stands. The Government has instead announced a review of the wider Local Government Reorganisation programme and will need to decide afresh what, if anything, it wishes to propose for Hampshire.

That does not mean Local Government Reorganisation can never return. It may well do. But any future proposal will need to be considered again on its merits.

For Hampshire County Council, this also brings the Judicial Review proceedings we launched against the previous decision to an end.

I have always said that taking legal action against Government was not something we did lightly. We did so because we had serious concerns about the evidence underpinning the decision, and particularly about whether the proposed new authorities would be financially sustainable.

The potential consequences of getting a reorganisation of this scale wrong were enormous. The costs would ultimately have fallen on residents through higher bills, reduced services or both.

The Government has now withdrawn the decision following further legal advice and will reimburse the County Council for ***all of our legal costs****.*

I think that vindicates the decision we took to challenge it.

Had we simply accepted the previous proposals and moved on, we would now be well advanced in implementing a structure which Government itself has concluded needs to be reconsidered.

We have agreed to bring the present Judicial Review proceedings to an end, but importantly we have also ***reserved our right to bring a fresh Judicial Review*** *should a future Government decision produce another proposal which we believe is financially unsustainable, inadequately evidenced or otherwise unlawful.*

I very much hope that will not be necessary.

My preference is that the breathing space created by this decision is used to bring councils, communities and Government together and properly consider the future of local government across Hampshire and the Solent.

There is no reason to rush this.

Reorganising councils serving more than two million people is a once-in-a-generation decision. Whatever eventually replaces the present system needs to be financially sustainable, protect the services residents depend upon and properly reflect the communities it serves.

There is also a separate question which I believe Government now needs to address: ***who pays for all the work undertaken on the previous proposals?***

Over recent months councils across Hampshire have spent considerable amounts of money preparing for Local Government Reorganisation. Just as importantly, large amounts of officer time have been diverted from normal council business to meet Government deadlines and prepare for implementation. That work was not undertaken on a whim. Councils were responding to a process and timetable set by Government.

My view is therefore quite simple: ***the abortive costs of Local Government Reorganisation should be borne by Government, not by Hampshire council taxpayers.***

We will now establish the full cost to Hampshire County Council of the process to date and will be asking Government to reimburse those costs.

At a time when local government finances remain extremely challenging, money spent preparing for a reorganisation which has subsequently been withdrawn is money which could otherwise have been used to support the services our residents rely upon.

The Government has also confirmed that the local elections due in May next year will proceed on the existing council boundaries. That gives everyone some welcome certainty and removes the immediate pressure to implement wholesale structural change to an artificial timetable.
We should use that time well.
For Hampshire County Council, our focus can return more fully to improving services and securing the long-term financial sustainability of the authority.
At the same time, I hope Government will take the opportunity to consider carefully, and with genuine engagement from councils and communities, what the future of local government in Hampshire and the Solent should look like.
I have never argued that our present structures must remain unchanged forever. But change of this scale has to be based on evidence rather than deadlines, and it has to leave local government stronger and more sustainable than it was before.
For now, I think the withdrawal of the previous decision is a very positive outcome for Hampshire and gives us the opportunity to approach the question again in a much more considered way.
Cllr Gordon-Smith informed the Councillors that there would be further developments and these would be included in the monthly reports. It is believed that the Reorganisation would happen but when was in question.

Financial Update
The Clerk detailed the payments to be made on the agenda, these are:

- Clerk's salary (July to September) - £300
- PAYE (July to September) - £80
- Village Hall Hire (17th September) - £30

Councillors approved all these payments.
The Clerk informed the Councillors that the review from the Pension Regulator had been received, this is updated every 3-years, however the Clerk is required to earn more than £10,00 to qualify so a nil return will be completed.

Village Hall Update
Cllr Hatchley reported that there was nothing to report from the Village Hall Committee.

Planning applications & related matters
The Parish Council have received two applications since the last meeting, they are:

1. **Chapel Cottage (26/01403/HOU) –** Proposed 2 storey side extension and internal alterations. No objections.
2. **Lawn House (26/01684/HOU)** – Demolition of existing garage and replacement with timber ancillary building. Installation of tennis court on adjacent lawn area. No objections.

Lengthsman
The dates for 2026/27 are:

- 29th September
- 8th December
- 9th March

Cllr Bason reported that the June date was cancelled due to staff sickness and they have not yet agreed when this visit is to be rescheduled. Cllr Bason reported that he did not always get a response from RP

Commercial Services, the Clerk asked that she be copied in as always found them to be very quick to answer emails.

Action: Cllr Bason to provide a list of work required for the September visit and ask for the rescheduled date for the missed visit.

General Correspondence

Flag pole at Village Hall – The Parish Council received a letter from a resident asking the Parish Council if a flag pole could be erected at the Village Hall.

The Councillors discussed the suggestion and agreed that more information would be required including:

- Local support for a flag pole
- The cost of purchase and installation
- Annual inspection costs

The Councillors agreed that if the Village Hall Committee collated this information and submitted a one off grant application that it would be considered by the Parish Council.

Action: Clerk to draft response to resident.

Date of the next meeting

Proposed dates of 2026 meeting.

- Thursday 19th November

The meeting ended at 7:50pm

Signed: …….. (Juliet Blanshard, Chairman)

Dated: 17th September 2026