

Marchwood Annual Parishioners Meeting

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at Marchwood HUB, Lloyd Recreation Ground on Monday 27 April 2026 commencing at 7.00pm.

Present: Marchwood Parish Councillors, Hampshire County Councillor David Harrison, members of the public. Cllr John Case – In the Chair

Also in attendance: A Woodward, Deputy Parish Clerk/RFO.

Apologies: District Councillor Young and Parish Councillor Buckett due to personnel reasons.

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 28 April 2025:

The minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on 28 April 2025, were approved.

Report from the Chairman Marchwood Parish Council

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the 2026 Annual Parish Meeting.

This is an opportunity for councillors to engage with our community, share what we have achieved, what we aim to achieve in the coming months, and update parishioners on matters of interest.

Later, there will be an opportunity for a Q&A to enable tonight's audience to ask questions that fall within the Parish Council's remit.

Parish councils are the first tier of local government in England, designed to represent local communities, deliver services to meet local needs, and improve the quality of life and wellbeing in their area. They act as a voice for residents, influencing planning, maintaining local facilities and set the budget.

Firstly, welcome to our new meeting venue, The Hub, which we intend to make a greater focus of activity in the coming months.

Last year saw a significant investment in sustainable energy, which, in hindsight, seems a very prudent investment given the volatility in the world now.

We have installed a heat pump for central heating, solar panels, and battery storage to harness green energy, making The Hub more environmentally friendly and providing the parish with green energy that will not only reduce our energy bills but also charge our electric vehicles.

Later this year, we intend to switch to a different energy provider to benefit from electricity tariffs that will further reduce our energy bills.

Your council and officers are aware of the consequences of the now-familiar pattern of winter

storms and the unfortunate flooding they leave behind, and we continue to work with other agencies to remind them that planning should be more acute to the dangers of climate change in their communities and ensure flood prevention is high on their agenda.

In recent years, we have been alerted to the term 'Riparian'. Riparian refers to the land immediately alongside a natural watercourse, such as a stream, brook, or, in our case, traditional ditches that take rainwater from the nearby fields and open spaces that run through Marchwood to the River Test and Southampton Water.

Riparian landowners typically own land up to the centre of a watercourse and are responsible for its maintenance, including preventing pollution and clearing blockages.

We take our responsibilities seriously, and I want to express our thanks to our team who have once again done a splendid job along Cork Lane. If your property has riparian areas, please ensure you undertake the appropriate maintenance.

Sadly, Marchwood has witnessed an increase in what is often termed 'anti-social behaviour', which manifests itself in many ways.

Generally, anti-social behaviour refers to actions that cause or are likely to cause distress to others or create a nuisance/annoyance in communities.

One of the most common complaints we receive in the parish office is the encroachment of vegetation by properties adjacent to the public right-of-way, which endangers or obstructs users of the many footpaths in and around Marchwood.

Under Section 154 of the Highways Act 1980, it is the property owner's responsibility to ensure that any trees or hedges under their control do not encroach onto a public footpath. It is not socially acceptable for residents using mobility vehicles, pushchairs, or prams, or for pedestrians, to have to step onto the highway to travel through our village.

This is antisocial behaviour, and we can all do something about it.

Therefore, to avoid violating the Highway Act, please ensure this aspect of your garden spring clean is at the top of your Things to Do List.

Unfortunately, a minority of individuals have, in recent weeks, caused considerable anti-social behaviour in the Lloyds Recreation Ground. Much of this stems from wheel-spinning around the car park in the early hours. Or static vehicles blasting out loud music at all times of the day.

In addition, there appears to be a culture that this is somewhere to go and drink, even though there is a ban on alcohol in this area.

Once again, it is just a few individuals who are causing the issues. However, this shouldn't be an excuse for failing to take appropriate action.

The Council are aware of the anti-social behaviour and arranged a meeting with the local PCSOs to discuss the best way forward.

We had a very productive meeting and agreed to work with the police to identify cost-effective, proportionate ways to reduce the number of incidents.

Anti-social behaviour takes many forms, and parishioners are encouraged to inform the appropriate organisation of their concerns. Unfortunately, this unwelcome behaviour isn't restricted to the Lloyd Recreation Ground; I am aware of other areas around the village.

We are aware of the feelings of some parishioners about how effective our police are, but, like all public services, they are stretched, so they need all the information to appreciate what is happening fully and to justify the deployment of this finite resource.

Therefore, I urge you and your neighbours to keep reporting these matters to the police so they can build a picture of the problems we are facing. I'm afraid that if we do not, the senior officers who allocate resources will remain ignorant of our problems, and nothing will ever get done.

You can copy us in, so we are also aware of the number and types of incidents. When we have our regular meetings with appropriate officers and organisations, we have the evidence to hand and not hearsay.

Unfortunately, the parish council cannot solve all the problems alone; by working with our parishioners, statutory bodies, and elected officials, we will do our utmost to achieve the outcome we all want.

So, once again, I urge you and your neighbours to help us to help you.

We were very disappointed that our bid for funds to build a pump track at Cork Field was not successful, despite meeting the eligibility criteria and the support of our District Councillors.

However, this will not deter us from exploring how we can better use Cork Field for all our residents, particularly our young people and those who enjoy the open spaces for exercise and relaxation. We are fully committed to making Cork Field an inclusive, safe recreational area for everyone.

We were also disappointed that plans to refurbish the 3G Courts were rejected, but the project will proceed.

The 14-year delay for the pathway that follows the stream from Kingfisher Way, passing over Bilberry Drive, through The Rushes, and the Shorefield Development, to connect with Admiralty Way and the new Cork Farm development is beyond a joke.

Why has it taken so long, and why have there been so many false starts?

It is not for the want of trying on the part of your Parish Council and District Councillors.

After all, it is our money, which, sadly, has been eroded by ever-increasing costs and inflation.

One of our key priorities for the coming year is to improve our provision for our young people. The village has several playparks for the under-12s, but we are aware that we need to do

more for our older young people, particularly facilitating activities during school holidays.

In recent days, we have begun a dialogue with an organisation with a proven track record of youth engagement, offering a wide range of options.

Once we have more details, the parish council will provide a further update, but we are very confident we have a summer programme in place for the long summer school holidays. But our plans will also include a programme for the autumn and winter, including weekends.

Hopefully, by the time the next edition of the Marchwood Village News is published, we will be able to share more positive news.

Marchwood Parish Council is delighted to invite residents and visitors to a community Festival at Lloyd Recreation Ground on Saturday 18 July, bringing a full day of entertainment, live music and family fun – with free entry for children (16 and under). Still, for the rest of us, tickets are £12 each, which represents excellent value for money.

The festival runs from 12 pm to 10 pm, starting with a lively afternoon just for children, featuring Krazy Kev's Magic Show, Debbie D's Party Fun & Disco, and a live compere to keep everyone entertained. There will also be plenty of activities around the arena, from glitter tattoos, football games and rides to emergency service vehicles on display.

From 4 pm, the focus turns to live music, with popular local duo Thunderbolts & Lightning, plus tribute acts Take That – Rule the World and Queen – Rhapsody, all performing on a professional outdoor stage with full sound and lighting.

Food and drink will be available throughout the day, including a Parish Council-run beer tent, helping to keep prices affordable. Adult entry tickets are available in advance or at the gate, with wristbands used for entry and bar service.

This is about bringing people together for a fun, relaxed day out – something for all ages, right here in Marchwood.

Everyone is welcome, so bring friends, family and neighbours along and help make it a great community day out.

However, we will maintain high standards, comply with our public safety licensing requirements, and ensure that avoiding public nuisance is the paramount concern.

Therefore, no glass bottles will be permitted on-site, and alcohol will be available only from our licensed bar. If you are lucky enough to look under 25, you will be asked to prove that you are aged 18 or over when you buy alcohol.

So, there is no time like the present to secure your tickets.

To stay ahead of events, we must make bold choices and aim for excellence. If we settle for just being good enough, we won't achieve excellence in all we aim to do.

Complacency and negativity are our biggest threats to achieving meaningful, long-term

positive change in our village. We must be inclusive, understand, and engage with each other, both business and residents, if change is going to be positive.

We shouldn't be ashamed of pursuing dreams or challenging the status quo. Furthermore, we shouldn't be restricted by fear of potential obstacles.

We want real, tangible benefits for Marchwood, including improved road routes to alleviate heavy goods traffic and paths along our busy roads. The path from Cracknore Hard to Autumn Road has been a great addition, so can we dream of a decent path from Marchwood Industrial Park along Normandy Road up to Byams Lane?

The development of Solent Gateway 2 will remain one of our top priorities, and the parish council will continue to be involved in top-level discussions, as we have an excellent working relationship with ABP.

We see this as a significant opportunity for our village. We will only be successful if we continue to foster a healthy working relationship and promote honest, open communication networks, so we are informed throughout the planning and implementation process.

This approach also applies to the proposed development of the A326. The council has already been involved in the process, with Hampshire County Council briefing us and allowing us to comment on the many areas of concern, including the road junctions at Twiggs Lane and Staplewood Lane, the proposed Pilgrim Roundabout into Solent Gateway Two, and the flow of traffic through our village.

I am sure that when the outline plan is finally approved and serious planning is underway, further public consultation will be a regular occurrence.

I want to acknowledge the role that Southampton Football Club has played in our village life.

They kindly donated tickets for matches at St Mary's Stadium and have organised open days at Staplewood. We will continue to develop new opportunities, especially for our young people, during the coming months.

Hopefully, the kindness off the pitch will be rewarded on the field as they press for an early return to the Premier League.

Again, some of you may be aware of the review of the Hythe Ambulance Station. I am pleased to inform residents that I have been invited, along with others, to meet with the South-Central Ambulance Service to discuss the situation at Hythe Station. It will be interesting to hear about the proposed changes and how they will affect us.

Due to the local elections, the visit needed to be arranged after the election period, so I cannot provide further details at this time.

Unfortunately, partnership working was less evident when the local bus company changed its route without informing the community of its intentions, thereby preventing us from making a representation.

Similarly, our Good Neighbours policy was brushed aside, as we still await contact from the firm planning to build a tar distillery in the Industrial Park. Despite the lack of community engagement, we have submitted several concerns regarding the plan and await a response.

I don't know what this year will bring, but there are still many things to do and decide upon.

As a parish council, we should have high ambitions and not fear setting lofty, challenging goals.

Striving for excellence is a sign of strength and commitment to our community.

Being good enough, is simply, not good enough.

Report from County Councillor David Harrison

Cllr Harrison thanked the Chair for his report as he has pretty much covered everything already.

Hampshire County Council is responsible for lots of different things with 75% of its budget is spent on adult social care. The remaining 25% is for highways, libraries, museums and waste disposal.

The Chair has already covered the buses and the A326.

Passenger Railway - At the end of May 2026 the Office of Road and Rail will decide if a commercial service will run from Marchwood. We could have a service up and running by next year.

Very important that Hampshire County Council, New Forest District council and the Parish Councils continue to work together.

Community Volunteer Award

It often goes unsaid, but Marchwood prospers from the many unsung heroes and community champions who go under the radar, undertaking a range of community service in their own time. They are modest folk who enjoy what they undertake without expectation of reward or recognition. We must respect that, but it shouldn't stop us from showing gratitude. Therefore, we were so grateful for all the nominations received for this year's Community Champion.

We want to showcase how much we appreciate what they do, starting with a simple, but meaningful "Thank you".

Hopefully, the following citations do justice to our two recipients. Both were nominated with persuasive statements that highlighted their unique contributions, achievements, and impact on our village.

Certificate of Appreciation

Giving up your personal time for others is an attribute that is sadly undervalued and often taken for granted, so I am pleased to announce that Theresa Ledger is the recipient of the 2026 Certificate of Appreciation.

Theresa volunteers her free time each week to help our younger parishioners at the Marchwood Junior School. Her enthusiasm and commitment are of immense value in helping our youngsters enjoy their school time.

In addition, Theresa is a valued and respected Oakhaven Hospice volunteer who is compassionate, reliable, providing comfort to patients and respite for families.

Theresa's certificate of Appreciation was given to Cllr Hindle to present to Theresa at a later date.

Unsung Hero & Community Champion

For years, singers and singing teachers have been reporting anecdotal accounts suggesting that singing is good for health and well-being.

Judging from the numerous nominations, our 2026 Community Champion has confirmed that this is indeed the case.

Armed with his acoustic guitar and volumes of ring binders, this year's recipient of the Marchwood Unsung Hero & Community Champion Shield has encouraged and inspired parishioners to come together in music, song and laughter.

As one of his many fans wrote, "A good man with a big heart who is exceptionally generous with his time."

So, it is my great honour to announce that this year's Community Champion and Unsung Hero is John Bell.

Cllr Case presented John Bell with the award.

John thanked everyone for the lovely award and said "I couldn't do what I do without the support of the WI".

Cork Field Consultation

Cllr Case reported that the feedback from our consultation was very poor.

We want to improve the use of the site, whilst keeping it an accessible area to be used by all.

Unfortunately, we didn't get any funding for a new pump track.

Q & A

Judy Saxby read out and handed in a letter of support for the LGR (Local Government Review)

Cllr Case responded by clarifying that we did not just abstain from the option to stay with New Forest area, we abstained from all the options as didn't feel we had enough information to decide as a Parish Council.

Councillors still had a right to respond individually.

Cork Field – A parishioner raised concerns that the steps are broken as you come out of Cork Field into Cork Lane. Children are riding their bikes down the slope and straight into the road.

A326 improvements - Cllr Hindle asked Cllr Harrison when we can have more detailed plans for the A326 so that we can share the information with the public. It would be good to invite HCC to come along to the Marchwood Village Hall to answer questions.

Cllr Harrison confirmed that the A326 improvements have been approved by Government costing £183 million, even though there is a £28 million short fall.

They will need to submit two planning applications with detailed plans, one to the District and one to the New Forest National Park. These plans can be reviewed and commented on.

Diversion Signs – Cllr Hindle asked if Hampshire Highways could remove diversion signs when works have been completed; they are everywhere and seem to be breeding.
Cllr Harrison said he would raise this issue with Hampshire Highways.

Traffic – A parishioner expressed concerns regarding the number of vehicles that come through the village when there is an accident on the A326.

Traffic Lights – A parishioner asked if we can have traffic lights at Staplewood Lane, Pooks Green crossroads as very dangerous junction. He has seen many accidents over the years and one day it will be a fatality.

Cllr Case agreed that it is a dangerous junction. The Speedwatch team have caught many drivers speeding at that junction and also witnessed drivers who had been using their mobile phones whilst driving.

Cllr Harrison said he would report the issues raised to the highway authority who would may undertake a site visit to see what would be the best solution.

Hedges – A parishioner raised concerns about overgrown hedge outside Merceode Lodge Care Home.

A parishioner requested that the trees and hedges be cut back on the A326 by Staplewood junction as it was difficult to see on coming traffic.

Cllr Harrison suggested that residents report these issues on the HCC website, it is really easy

to report and the work is usually carried out quickly.

LGR Decision

A parishioner - When the Governments LGR decision was announced, myself and a team of volunteer's went door to door gathering signatures to oppose the decision.

The support was overwhelming and I have not yet spoken to anyone who approves of the plans.

I got to around 300 signatures from just a handful of roads, but realised at this point that I was doubling up the efforts of the New Forest Together campaign, so instead turned my efforts to supporting their campaign.

Now that the government has announced the proposed LGR option, will Marchwood Parish Council officially support the New Forest Together campaign alongside our MP, NFDC, our Hampshire County Councillor, other Waterside Parish Councils and the vast majority of Marchwood residents?

If this question could be added to the agenda for the Annual Council Meeting on the 18th of May, it would be very much appreciated.

He introduced Mr and Mrs Hartley-Binns who were leading the campaign and handed over to them.

Mr Hartley-Binns stated that he had sent a letter to 22 Parish Council asking them to support their campaign to keep the New Forest together.

25,000 to 30,000 signatures were required on their petition for Sir Julian Lewis to take it to Westminster.

We can't get the decision overturned, but we want to make a fuss about it. He asked as a Parish Council please can we support it.

The meeting was informed that a paper version of the petition would be available in the village hall in the coming days.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the Annual Parish Meeting.

Close of meeting 8.55pm