Highcliffe & Walkford Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of **Full Council** held on Wednesday 8th July 2026 at 18.30 in The Old School, 254 Lymington Road, Highcliffe. BH23 5ET.

Present: Cllrs A Sofianos (Chair), A Martin (Vice Chair), T Butcher, R Ede, B Hutchings, W McNeill, S Skinner, S Slatter, S Walter.
In attendance: Vanessa Ricketts FSLCC (Clerk and RFO), Nicki France (Assistant Clerk) and one member of the public.

074 Apologies for Absence:

Apologies were received and noted from Cllr D Martin (work commitments). BCP Ward Cllr L Dedman gave apologies due to a prior BCP commitment.

RESOLVED: That the apologies for absence be accepted.

075 Declarations of interest:

There were no declarations of interest.

076 Minutes of meeting 10th June 2026

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: The minutes were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chair.

077 Chair remarks:

The Chair advised that, since the previous meeting, Highcliffe Food and Arts Festival had taken place and had been a hugely successful event and considered it to be the best event yet. The organiser, Mary Reader, had sent an email expressing thanks to the Council for the support, both financial and for those Members who had volunteered on the day.

The Chair, and Members, wished Cllr Ede a happy birthday.

078 Public Representation:

A member of the public raised a concern with the current waste collection service provided by BCP Council. The BCP Ward Councillor addressed this in his report.

079 BCP Councillors Reports

Cllr A Martin addressed the council:

BCP's waste collection service was failing and had been for time. Cllr Martin had written to the Director of environment and Chief Operating Officer to complain and request a meeting with his group to discuss remedial action. He considered it a public health issue, and this would also be addressed at informal cabinet. He had also asked for a food collection point to be set up at Wilverley Road.

Highcliffe shoreline paths works would commence on 15th September. Beach replenishment works would be undertaken at the same time in coordination.

Nigel Brooks was stepping down as Chair of Community Speed Watch but will continue to be part of the group. The Parish Council expressed thanks to Mr Brooks for his 6 years of service.

Cllr David Martin would be sitting on the interview panel for the appointment of the Director of Children's Services.

Cllr Martin had attended a parking consultation meeting with the traffic team at BCP. There would be a number of Traffic Regulation Order consultations in Highcliffe including Nada Road, Carisbrooke way, Woodhayes Avenue, Glenville Road, Smugglers Wood Road, Bute Drive and others.

With regard to the proposed Festival of Nature, Cllr Martin had met with the events coordinator and a meeting would be set up with the Clerk, Chair and Vice Chair.

Jesmond Wood – Cllr Martin reported that there was no formal decision from BCP yet, but there was no obligation for the developer to off-load the land to BCP and no obligation for BCP to buy it, therefore, HWPC ay have to look to buy the land. A valuation report was required. The Clerk agree to add this item to September's Council meeting for consideration.

080 Resolutions Report

Members received and reviewed the Actions Against Resolutions report.

081 Finance

Members considered Part A (schedule of accounts and current bank balance), Part B (bank reconciliations for the same period).

a) Members noted the schedule of accounts and current bank balance.

A Member requested information on an allotment readjustment. As the finance system was not available at the meeting for interrogation, the Clerk advised that she would email Members with the answer.

A Member raised concerns regarding the bank charges and suggested that the Clerk should look to alternative banking arrangements.

RESOLVED that the schedule of account and bank balances be approved and signed by the Chair.

b) Members noted the bank reconciliations for June.

RESOLVED that the Bank Reconciliation be approved and signed by the Chair.

082 Casual Vacancy

Members were advised that no election had been called during the statutory notice period for the casual vacancy and that the Council was now free to agree to co-opt to the vacancy.

It was therefore proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to implement the co-option policy and advertise the vacancy.

083 Nea Meadows Dredging Update

The Chair delivered an update: he had met with a contractor to discuss alternatives as to how the dredging could be undertaken. Due to the overgrown nature of the lake it is necessary to undertake some clearance in order for an accurate quotation to be prepared. A permit would be required from the Environment Agency for the dredging work, and a risk assessment and method statement from the contractor would be required to achieve this. Drone footage has been taken and shows exactly how overgrown the lake is. The Amenities Officer is willing to begin clearance around the lake. Amenities Committee will receive an update report at its August meeting.

A Member had made a suggestion regarding the disposal of the silt by adding it to the existing wetland area. However, the Ecologist had advised this would overwhelm the wetland but suggested using the concept elsewhere on the lake and creating a walled dam. The question would be whether the walled dam would cost more to produce than the removal of the silt and this would need to be explored.

084 Bowls Club lease

The Clerk reported that the Bowls Club lease did not reflect the agreement made between the previous Chair and advised that either the lease should be altered to reflect the agreement, or the agreement should be reconsidered. It was noted that a rent review was due.

RESOLVED that the Clerk investigate the rent review situation, get quotations for surveys and report back to next Council.

085 Old School transfer update

The Clerk presented a written report on the proposed transfer of the Old School Building from Highcliffe Residents Association (HRA) to Highcliffe & Walkford Parish Council, to present the financial and resource implications of the transfer, and to seek formal approval for the Council to proceed with the direct transfer of the asset and assume responsibility for the building from 30 September 2026.

RESOLVED that:

1. The Council notes the progress made towards the transfer of the Old School Building.
2. The Council notes the appointment of Surrey Hills Solicitors to undertake the conveyancing process on behalf of the Council.
3. The Council notes that tenders for the required building works have been received and will be considered in confidential session.
4. The Council notes the reinstatement value of the property of £1,080,000 and that an insurance quotation from Zurich Municipal is awaited.
5. The Council accepts the transfer of the assets identified within the attached HRA Asset Schedule.
6. The Council notes the financial and resource implications associated with ownership and operation of the Old School Building
7. The Council agrees to proceed with the direct transfer of the Old School Building to Highcliffe & Walkford Parish Council.
8. The Council agrees to assume responsibility for the Old School Building and transferred assets with effect from 30 September 2026, subject to completion of the necessary legal documentation.

9. The Clerk is authorised to take all necessary actions to complete the transfer on behalf of the Council.

086 Q1 Budget report

The Clerk advised that there had been an issue with the report and that budget inputted on 2nd April had been inexplicably altered by the finance system. The RFO and Finance Officer were investigating this and as a consequence the report would be reissued by email and brough back to the next council meeting.

087 Reserves

Members considered the reserves and made the following adjustments:

- A new reserve titled Community Wood Project be created with £50,000 from general fund.
- The Projects Reserve be transferred to the Old School Reserve.
- £20,000 from general fund be transferred to the Old School Reserve
- Shoreline Paths and Highcliffe Recreation be voided
- A new reserve titled Nature Village be created with £10,000 from general fund
- The Play Areas Reserve of £8,000 be transferred to the Play Equipment Highcliffe reserve
- £10,000 from the Highcliffe Rec and Pavilion reserve be transferred to the Play Equipment Highcliffe reserve
- £10,000 from the Highcliffe Rec and Pavilion reserve be transferred to Play Equipment Bluebell
- £10,000 from the general fund be transferred to Car Park Wingfield.
- £10,000 from the general fund be transferred to Car Park Nea Meadows

RESOLVED that the reserves be updated as set out.

088 Investment Policy

Members considered the existing Investment Policy that has been adopted in November 2025. It was agreed that Cllr Hutchings would draft a new policy for consideration at the next meeting of Council.

089 School Crossing Patrols

The Chair advised that BCP Council was proposing to terminate the Crossing Patroller in favour of a proposed zebra crossing. The Crossing Patroller had reached out to the Council for support as the zebra crossing could take years to install due to lack of funding and the children would therefore be at risk. It was noted that BCP Councillors did not support the plans.

RESOLVED that the Chair write to BCP Council to express concerns and request that they engage with the Parish Council on this issue.

090 Matters for consideration

A Member requested that the question of the ownership of the War memorial be brought back to Council. It was noted that the Rotary Club are undertaking the cleaning and restoration work and that under War Memorials (Local Authorities'

Powers) Act 1923, s.1 the Council had the power to maintain, repair, protect and alter war memorials so ownership was not required.

091 Exclusion of the Press and Public:

Resolved that the press and public be excluded for the remainder of the meeting due to the confidential nature of the following business. (Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) 1960, s1 (2)).

092 Old School Tenders

Members considered a report outlining the specification of the Old School works, together with the tenders received and the evaluation report.

RESOLVED that, subject to appropriate health and safety information and insurance, Shoreline Contractors be appointed to carry out the works.

093 VAT Registration

Members considered advise received regarding VAT registration.

RESOLVED that the Clerk advise PSTAX to proceed with the VAT registration for the next financial year.

094 Date of the next meeting

A Member had requested a change to the published date of the next meeting and the Planning Committee meeting, due to work commitments.

RESOLVED that the next meeting of Council and the September Planning Committee take place on **Wednesday 2nd September 2026 at 6.30pm**

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 20:45.

Signed …….. Date ……