



<b>Committee Meeting on:</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> December 2025
<b>At:</b>	Church Room, St Nicolas Church
<b>Committee members present:</b>	Simon Edge (Chair), Les Huett , Carolyn Elson, Neil McDowell, John Downman, Keith Whale, Julia Dickinson, Gill Caldwell, Margaret Lawson, Frances Fancourt, Diane Poole, David Armstrong
<b>Councillors present:</b>	C Cllr Clare Curran, Cllr Andrew Matthews, Cllr Laurie Penney.
<b>Apologies received from:</b>	Geoff Tranter, David Cox.

#### Corrections from previous meeting

<b>Item 1 Minutes</b>	No corrections
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#### Actions from previous meeting(s):

<b>Reference (date / #)</b>		None
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#### Agenda

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<b>2. Local Government Review</b>	<p>John Downman noted that Stage 1 of the CGR by MVDC on whether residents would prefer the setting up of Parish Councils, or not, had met with a very poor response from residents (Cllr Penney understood the response to be <i>circa</i> 550, so 0.8 % of the electorate). The Stage 1 results would be considered by the full Council at its meeting in February and the decision taken on progressing to Stage 2, scheduled to commence later that month. SE questioned how the low response to Stage 1 could justify progressing to Stage 2. Cllr Andrews countered that in his view the low response gave an even stronger impetus to progress to Stage 2 which would be a postal questionnaire, rather than online. This would outline the role of Parish Councils and determine whether residents would be in favour, noting that Stage 2 would be neither a referendum nor a direct vote. Cllr Andrews indicated that the responses would be considered on a ward basis, rather than aggregated.</p> <p>There was a discussion as to whether a Town Council could be formed instead, or without a Parish Council preceding. Cllr Matthews had</p>

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	<p>understood that not, but it was noted that the NALC website indicated to the contrary. He undertook to check this.</p> <p>Concern was expressed that the public had not been given any indication as to how the new Unitary Authorities would operate and what structures would be introduced, such as Neighbourhood Committees. Therefore, members of Committee remained concerned that the CGR was premature. Neither of the MVDC Councillors were able to make any commitment to the extent of disclosure of likely precepts in the Stage 2 communications, apart from it being likely that a generic average might be given. Several members of the Committee challenged the Councillors as to how residents could be asked to make a decision on Parish Councils, with an implication on Council Taxes, without knowing in advance the likely cost? Cllr Matthews agreed to take this concern back to Council. Given this, members of the Committee believed it essential that a public referendum with full disclosure of likely precepts based on actual costs should be held before any new Parish Councils were created.</p>
<p><b>3 Management Group</b></p>	<p><b>3.1 Finance:</b> The Treasurer reported that the YTD was £9.8k (last year £9.4k) Xmas Lights this month £385, Total £1.985. Expenditure: Planters for L Shotts £879, Newsletter £2,404, Comm Cost £446, Insurance £853 Bank Balance £20.1k (Last Yr £23.8k)</p> <p><b>3.2 Secretariat:</b> It was still to be determined whether tax needs to be paid on the End of Year Report. The November Newsletter had now been distributed to all houses in Bookham with 4 extra pages. It had been very well received.</p> <p><b>3.3 Membership:</b> The Newsletter had caused £400 subscriptions to be paid.</p>
<p><b>4 Planning</b></p>	<p>KW reported:</p> <p>(i) Recently there had been a noticeable fall in the number of Planning Applications, most mainly of minor extensions.</p> <p>(ii) The Bookham Design Codes had been refreshed.</p> <p>(iii) The MVDC guidelines on BNG had been updated.</p> <p>(iv) One application causing concern was the proposal to remove a right of way from Lower Shott to the Guildford Road, but SCC had set out the guidelines for establishing a right of way. Les Huett undertook to communicate with residents in the area as such establishment requires demonstration of its use over a defined period.</p>
<p><b>5 Environment</b></p>	<p>The Chairman congratulated the whole of the Environment Team for their success at MVDC's Sustainability event. The Team's individual and collective</p>

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	<p>recognition as part of the awards ceremony was testament to the exceptional work they do for the community.</p> <p><b>5.1 Blue Hearts:</b> Nothing further to report.</p> <p><b>5.2 Litter Picking:</b> Margaret Lawson was pleased report that last Sunday 4 more pickers had attended, which was most encouraging.</p> <p><b>5.3 Trees:</b> Frances Fancourt reported that the SCC Tree Sale had proved very satisfactory. A local tree surgeon had volunteered to plant new trees in a suitable plot in the Bookhams.</p> <p><b>5.4 Water Courses:</b> Julia Dickinson reported that sufficient money was available for new water testing to be undertaken.</p>
<p><b>6 Projects</b></p>	<p>In the absence of Geoff Tranter, the Chairman stated that the Christmas Lights in the High Street and on the Church tree had been installed. The multi-coloured lights in place of the white lights had been very well received. Also, the public toilets in Lower Shotts were now upgraded and the three murals had been installed in the bus shelter.</p> <p>It was considered that the young student who had painted them had done a superb job and her input should be recognised.</p>
<p><b>7 Other Organisations Updates</b></p>	<p>Rev Gill Cauldwell confirmed that St Nicolas had been decorated for Christmas, including a spectacular wooden tree and would be open to the public on the Shopping Evening next week. Eight services had been planned over the Christmas period. She highlighted that, in the past, Jane Austen's Grandfather had been the vicar of St Nicolas.</p>
<p><b>8 Councillor's Updates</b></p>	<p><b>C Cllr Clare Curran</b> advised:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work on re-surfacing Lower Road was nearly complete and the introduction of a 20-mph limit in the upper part of Station Road was on-going, its start having been delayed.</li> <li>2. Progress was being made in remedying the drop in the road after the Cobham Road crosses the M25, but the remedial works come under National Highways not SCC Highways.</li> <li>3. She advised that the SCC Budget for next year was likely to show an increase of 4.99 % in Council Taxes. She expected a further significant increase in Council Taxes in future years.</li> </ol> <p><b>Cllr Lawrence Penney</b> had met with Berkeley Homes to establish where they stood in relation to the new Howard of Effingham School. He understood that there remained a further 3-4 months in Planning. Following this, they planned to commence works from July 2027 and aimed for completion in</p>

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	<p>2029. Notwithstanding the delays to date, Berkeley Homes stated that they remain committed to the project.</p> <p><b>Cllr Andrew Matthews</b> reported:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. New street lighting on the road outside the Care Home in Park Road was to be undertaken with works by EDF.</li><li>2. The old Youth Centre in Lower Road had been demolished, and it was hoped to be rebuilt during 2026.</li><li>3. New electric recharging points were being installed in the MV Lower Road Car Park.</li><li>4. The MVDC Budget was nearing completion and was expected to lead to an increase of 2.99% in Council Taxes.</li></ol>
<p><b>9 Chairman's Updates</b></p>	<p>A case of animal cruelty had been reported in Bookham but, despite multi-agency investigation including by the RSPCA and the Police, no resolution had been reached.</p> <p>Consideration is being given to the fitting of plastic plaques on the top of BRA provided public seats situated around the Bookhams.</p>