



# Brockenhurst Parish Council

70B Brookley Road, Brockenhurst, SO42 7RA

## Minutes of a meeting of Brockenhurst Parish Council

held on Tuesday 17 February 2026, at 7.00pm, in Brockenhurst Village Hall.

**Members Present:** Cllr R Horne (Chair), Cllr R Bowles, Cllr M Harris OBE, Cllr P Hollins, Cllr J Korbey, Cllr J Wingham, Cllr K Whittle.

**Officers Present:** Dr G Pettifer (Clerk & Proper Officer)  
Mrs M Marler-Roe (Responsible Financial Officer)

There were ten members of the public in attendance at the meeting and two online.

### PC.26/263 Public Participation

One member of the public spoke in support of Martins Road bridge (see Appendix 1).

One member of the public spoke about BCAG Culverley Green Flood Mitigation Pilot (see Appendix 1).

One member of the public spoke about Brockenhurst Community Speed Watch, and the Village Centre Strategy.

### PC.26/264 Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Pearse, and Cllr Wolstenholme.

### PC.26/265 Declarations of interest/Requests for dispensation

There were no declarations of interest.

### PC.26/266 Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 20 January 2026, be **APPROVED**, and were signed by the Chair.

### PC.26/267 Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting

Cllr Hollins asked if there had been a response from CCllr Mans regarding justification for the replacement of the bridge in Brookley Road. The Clerk confirmed that no response had been received.

### PC.26/268 Reports by the Hampshire Council Councillor; New Forest District Councillor; and representatives on outside bodies

To receive the report of the Hampshire Council Councillor; New Forest District Councillor; and any further reports from Parish Council representatives on outside bodies.

- a) Hampshire County Councillor's Report – CCllr Keith Mans was not present.
- b) New Forest District Councillor's Report – DCllr Adam Parker gave his report, including his petition against the car parking charges at Forestry England car parks; flooding and Storm Chandra, and the multi-agency meeting convened for March; SGN essential gas maintenance works and the lack of progress with the mains replacement.
- c) Brockenhurst Community Speed Watch – Cllr Doughty gave an update on the work of Brockenhurst Speed Watch (BSW)

### **PC.26/269 Reports of Committees and Sub-Groups**

There are no approved/signed minutes of the standing committees or working groups to be received that have not already been presented to Council.

### **PC.26/270 Finance and Payments**

Councillors considered the February payment list.

- a) It was **RESOLVED** that the payments to creditors in the sum of £878.52 be APPROVED.
- b) The bank reconciliation report, 31 December 2025, in the sum of £141,116.89 was presented to the Chair for signing.
- c) The RFO gave a Bank Summary Report of current bank balances, as at 31 December 2025, as follows:

Unity Current	£4,928.06
Unity Deposit	£39,037.67
95 Day Business Nationwide	£33,327.39
Instant Access Cambridge BS	£33,367.29
CCLA	£30,456.48
Total in Banks	<b><u>£141,116.89</u></b>

### **PC.26/271 Live pilot for 2025/26 AGAR Submission**

The report from the RFO regarding live pilot for BPC's 2025/2026 AGAR Submission in May/June 2026 was NOTED.

### **PC.26/272 Policies for Review/Adoption**

- PC.26/272.1 It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Absence Management Policy
- PC.26/272.2 It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Capability Procedure
- PC.26/272.3 It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Grievance Procedure
- PC.26/272.4 It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Disciplinary Procedure
- PC.26/272.5 It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Terms of Reference Events Working Group

### **PC.26/273 Community Grant Applications**

It was **RESOLVED** to award New Forest Citizens Advice Bureau a community grant of £150.00.

### **PC.26/274 Martins Road Bridge**

The verbal update on Martins Road bridge was NOTED.

### **PC.26/275 SGN Gas Main Replacement**

The verbal update on Southern Gas Network's essential gas main replacement was NOTED.

### **PC.26/276 Flooding in Brockenhurst**

The Chair reported that a meeting was due to be convened between the statutory agencies, local authorities, and flooding organisations regarding flooding. A full report would be made available at the next Full Council meeting.

### **PC.26/277 Casual Vacancy**

The information regarding casual vacancy was NOTED.

The Chair gave thanks to former Councillor Michael Croker for all his work and commitment to the Parish Council.

**PC.26/278 Parish Clerk's Report**

The verbal report from the Parish Clerk & Proper Officer was NOTED.

**PC.26/279 Any other items the Chair or members deem urgent**

Cllr Horne confirmed that the Brockenhurst Resilience Group were due to meet.

Cllr Bowles confirmed that Brockenhurst Speed Watch and the Friends of Brockenhurst Station were invited to attend the Village Centre Strategy Working Group meetings.

**PC.26/280** The date of next meeting was scheduled for **Tuesday 17 March 2026 at 7.00 pm**, in the Village Hall, Brockenhurst.

Meeting closed at 8.22pm.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 1:**

**To:** Brockenhurst Parish Council

**From:** Brockenhurst Community Action Group (BCAG), part of the Brockenhurst Village Trust (BVT)

**Date:** 17th February 2026

### **Items:**

- 1. MARTIN'S ROAD FOOTBRIDGE**
  - 2. BCAG CULVERLEY GREEN FLOOD MITIGATION PILOT**
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## **BROCKENHURST COMMUNITY ACTION GROUP (BCAG) BACKGROUND**

BCAG is a volunteer group committed to working with the community and authorities to support initiatives important to the community. It started from a network of Community WhatsApp groups in October 2019 and evolved over time to facilitate positive action in response to shared challenges. The objectives of the group were first shared with the Parish Council January 2025. This led to Roger Gomm supporting the Parish Council in the Resilience Working Group and developing the Village Emergency Plan which has now been adopted. Due to the strong alignment with its strategic direction, Brockenhurst Village Trust (BVT) took on the BCAG plans in February 2025. An update on BCAG was shared at the Parish Meeting April 2025.

BCAG was set up as a formal sub-committee of BVT with approved Terms of Reference September 2025, with John Stanton asked to lead on behalf of the Trustees. BCAG has three core objects:

1. Support an informed and connected community through a communications network.
2. Identify and Lead 'Community Action Groups'.
3. Promote existing and new community groups.

These objects are underpinned by 7 key principles: Inclusive and Representative; Courteous and Tolerant; Solution Driven in Line with Regulations; Community Led; Apolitical; Non-Commercial; Uphold values and behaviours of BVT and ethical standards of the Nolan Principles

Existing active BVT approved projects include:

- *Communication Hub:* Community Website; WhatsApp Community; Village Magazine
- *Public Access:* Martin's Road Footbridge; SGN Community Updates
- *Resilience:* Defibrillators; Culverley Green Flood Mitigation
- Brush Up Brockenhurst
- Aircraft Noise Mitigation

Details of these projects are shared with the BVT and can be available for the PC upon request.

In parallel, Roger Gomm is working with the PC Resilience Working Group regarding Village Wardens and consideration of implementation of a flood related road signage network. These initiatives may be adopted by BCAG subject to approval.

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## ITEM 1 – MARTIN’S ROAD FOOTBRIDGE

### Parish Council Decision Requested:

- Approval of the Parish Council’s future role in maintaining the Bridge
- Engagement with both Forestry England (FE) and Brockenhurst Community Action Group (BCAG) to enter into a formal agreement to maintain the Bridge.

**Proposers: Ken Crompton (Local Resident, BCAG Committee Member)  
John Stanton (BCAG Lead, BVT Trustee)**

### Recent Background

10<sup>th</sup> September 2025, Forestry England notified the Parish Council of the intent to remove Martin’s Road Footbridge on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2025. This led to a significant public surprise and opposition to the planned removal of the footbridge and the suitability of alternative access via a bridge near to the allotments.

Consultations on how to resolve the situation started on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> September between Forestry England (led by Craig Harrison), the Parish Council (Cllr Russell Horne) and BCAG (John Stanton, Ken Crompton, Dave Darnell).

Three options were considered:

1. Repairing the existing bridge
2. Removing the existing bridge and building an alternative bridge
3. Improving the suitability of an alternative route to the nearby bridge to the allotments

Option 2 was quickly dismissed due to the high costs and significant barriers in getting approvals for a new structure given the alternative options. Option 3 was discussed with FE offering to further cut back vegetation on the bend near the Cloud Hotel. However, they would not consider making a new safe path as they had no responsibility to do so compounded with the economic and environmental impacts. Option 1 was discussed at length. All parties agreed that the bridge is no longer safe for public use, with the main point on contention being whether the bridge was structurally sound and therefore it was feasible to make simple repairs to make it safe.

Following the initial meeting, FE agreed to co-fund an independent structural survey of the bridge to ascertain its core condition. The general agreement was that if the bridge was not structurally sound it would be removed, however if it was structural sound then FE would work with the Parish Council and BCAG to keep the bridge open within the following framework:

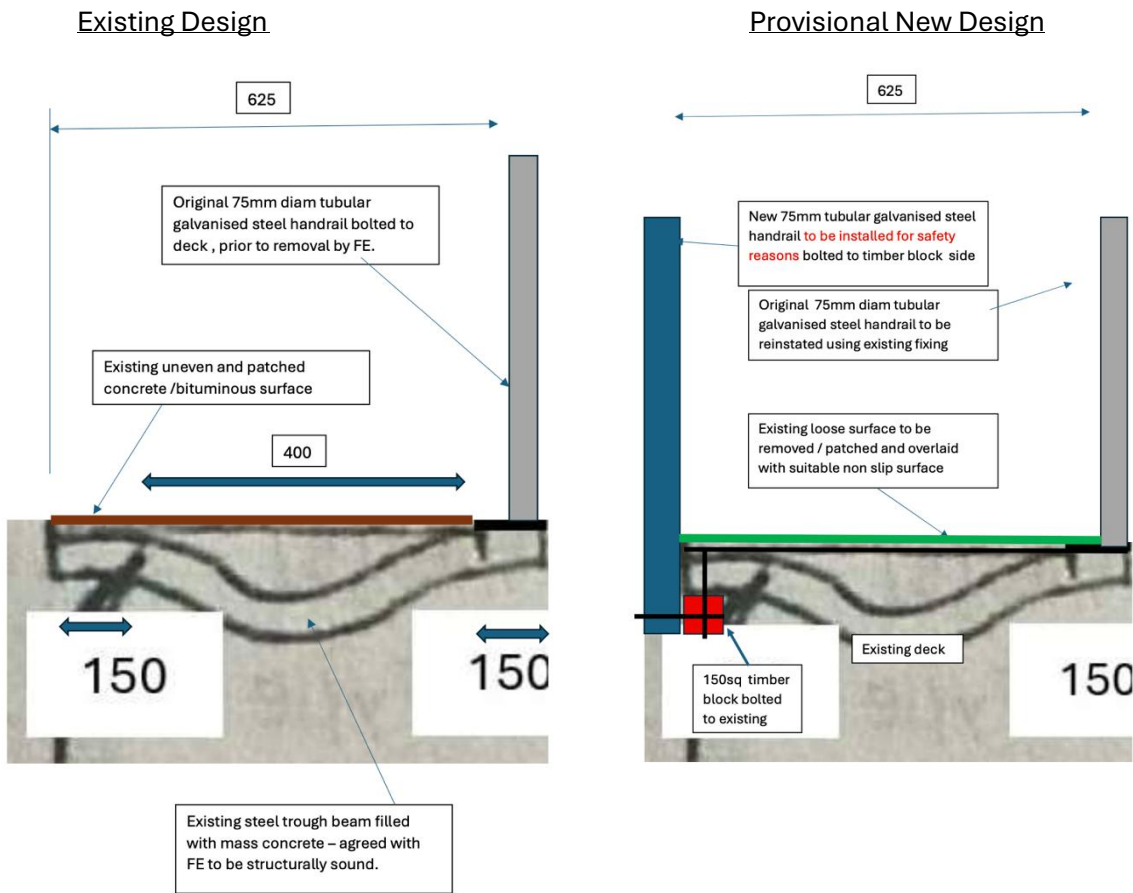
- FE pass the management of the bridge over to the Parish Council for a peppercorn rent.
- It is the responsibility of the PC to have appropriate insurance to cover all liabilities.
- The Community will restore the bridge to an agreed safe specification / condition, have an agreed inspection regime and maintain / repair thereafter.
- All costs of the above will be the responsibility of the Community.
- When the bridge is no longer managed as per the above (likely to be when repair / maintenance costs are excessive), FE will remove the bridge and there won’t be a replacement.

Validating the structural integrity of the bridge was a major milestone. The Community raised circa £4,500 towards the structural survey with FE offering to co-fund what was expected to cost about £10,000. However, prior to initiating the Survey, further historic information was requested and received from HCC under a FOI request. With this additional information, FE agreed for their national bridge engineer to visit from the Lake District and meet the BCAG team. Upon constructive on-site

discussions, it was agreed that whilst the bridge isn't safe it is structurally sound and therefore bypassed the need for an expensive structural survey.

**Bridge Design**

The BCAG team (led by local engineer Dave Darnell) is working on the design of a simple bridge repair to make it safe. This involves two handrails and a new surface as outlined in the image below. This is a similar design to what is already in place on Culverley Green.



Initial discussion with NFPA Planning indicates that the works of repairing and making the bridge safe as proposed do not constitute development and consequently, under the Town and Country Planning Act, will not require planning permission. However, due to the location an environmental impact assessment study and report will be required to be undertaken and submitted to Forestry England by a professional ecologist. In addition. We have received positive advice on these requirements from FE (Recreational Management Richard Burke and Senior Ecologist Leanne Sargeant).

The proposed design will have to be underwritten by a professional civil/structural engineer with the required level of professional indemnity. As proposed the works for the bridge have been designed such that they can be undertaken with handheld manual and power tools and approved materials that can be manually brought to the bridge and installed from a work site based in the car parking area adjacent to Martin's Road properties.

The team is confident that a feasible solution can be found to make the bridge safe.

## **Fund Raising / Financial Management**

Funding is required to complete the approval process (including environmental impact assessments), carrying out the modifications to the bridge and to setting aside some funds for future repairs. The final estimate of the required funds is still to be ascertained, but it is felt that when combined with funds already raised enough additional funds can be raised to cover all the costs. This will involve significant publicity.

BCAG is part of Brockenhurst Village Trust (BVT) and it is agreed that BVT holds all funds raised and releases these as required following agreed approval processes.

### **What is being asked from the Parish Council?**

Prior to initiating further fund raising (including widespread media coverage), BCAG are seeking alignment from the Parish Council that they are willing to enter into discussions for a formal agreement with FE along the lines outlined above.

This will include the Parish Council taking on the on-going management of the bridge including liabilities for a peppercorn rent. Once the bridge comes to the end of its economic life it will revert to FE who will remove the bridge at their cost.

The costs associated with both the repairs and maintenance of the bridge will be raised by the community and held by BVT. These funds will come from a combination of public donations (residents and further afield) and grants from various bodies. Payments will be processed via the PC to contractors with the funds coming from BVT.

If enough funds can't be raised to cover the costs of making the bridge safe, then the project will be cancelled and the bridge removed by FE. Funds will either be returned to the donors or retained for future community projects. This will be managed via BVT governance.

This proposed outline arrangement, involves the Parish Council working in partnership with the Community (BCAG) to safeguard Martin's Road Bridge for future generations. Funding will be provided by the community and therefore the solution is less onerous than the previous approach agreed by the Parish Council where HCC were to repair the Bridge and then the Parish Council would manage it on an on-going basis including paying for maintenance.

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## ITEM 2 – BCAG RESILIENCE CULVERLEY GREEN FLOOD MITIGATION PILOT

### Parish Council Decision Requested:

- To formally support the **scoping phase** of the Culverley Green flood mitigation project as a practical and proportionate step towards strengthening community resilience.

**Proposer: Roger Gomm (PC Resilience Working Group Member, BCAG Committee Member, BVT Trustee))**

### Project Background

Recent events have again demonstrated that flooding remains one of the most significant civil contingency risks affecting Brockenhurst, as identified in both national and local risk assessments. Prevention—reducing the impact of flooding before it occurs—is central to effective resilience.

Earlier in 2025, volunteers cleared a ditch adjacent to Culverley Green near the school, with the landowner’s agreement and following confirmation from Peter Hibbard that the works were consistent with riparian responsibilities. This intervention restored drainage and resolved prolonged footpath flooding and enabled dry access across Culverley Green for pedestrians and cyclists.

Recent heavy rainfall has shown that a broader, more systematic approach is needed. The footpath, remaining ditches and culverts across Culverley Green are now in urgent need of maintenance, with the objective of doing our best to mitigate flooding peaks, longevity and environmental impact being mindful of taking a systematic approach to the village. Without intervention:

- Surface water flooding and erosion of the main footpath will continue, affecting schoolchildren, parents, commuters, and cyclists.
- Increased risk of contributing to downstream flooding on Burley Road.
- Ongoing soil erosion resulting in ecological harm.

After discussions with NFFAG, a BCAG-led community pilot project is proposed, with the following aims:

- To work in partnership with the landowners (predominantly Forestry England).
- To reduce surface water flooding and maintain safe access across Culverley Green.
- To restore the footpath, ditches and culverts to effective operation.
- To minimise ecological damage.
- To ensure full compliance with SSSI protections, health and safety requirements, and any necessary Natural England approvals.

It is important to recognise that Culverley Green is part of a wider network with other major considerations including the capacity of outfall downstream and the importance of holding water upstream (eg the Weirs Project). Therefore, any interventions on Culverley Green need to be carefully considered to ensure no negative unforeseen consequences elsewhere.

The project will start with a **scoping phase**, with engagement with Forestry England to ascertain their interest in working in partnership with the Brockenhurst Community to develop a sustainable solution for flooding and public access on Culverley Green.

The scoping phase will lead to either the project being cancelled or formalising a community project for deployment. The scoping phase will define more details, but it envisaged that deployment would include:

- A joint working group including FE, BCAG, and PC

- Engagement as required with other authorities such as Hampshire Highways, New Forest District Council, Natural England, and the New Forest National Park Authority.
- Technical advice from a range of experts including BNNFAG
- Involvement from local volunteers to repair and maintain waterways & footpaths (following appropriate health & safety guidelines)

While winter conditions limit the scale of works currently possible, appropriate mitigation measures will be undertaken where agreed, with more substantial maintenance planned when conditions allow. Long-term resilience will depend on an annual, community-led preventative maintenance approach working in partnership with local authorities.

Importantly for the community, this pilot is intended as a focused first step, establishing effective governance and partnership working before considering wider application across the village. Community members have already requested assistance in developing similar community-led initiatives on North Weirs, Martins Road, Waters Green, and Rhinefield Road.

The scoping phase of the project has been approved by the BVT and will operate under BVT/BCAG governance and established BCAG principles. A working group will be set up to coordinate the project, with the Parish Council welcome to participate. Regular progress updates will be provided to both the Parish Council and the BVT.

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### **Roger Gomm Personal Statement**

For transparency, I am both a Trustee of the Brockenhurst Village Trust and a member of the Brockenhurst Community Action Group.

My professional background spans a career in the Metropolitan Police Service, including 14 years in operational command during major incidents in London. I played a key role in the development of *London Resilience* following 9/11, with a focus on strategic partnerships, shared risk awareness, and clear roles and responsibilities across agencies. This was followed by consultancy work in the UK and overseas, including working for the UK Cabinet Office supporting governments and partner organisations to design, strengthen, and embed resilience at local, regional, and national levels. Across these roles, I have combined practical experience, formal training, and strategic leadership to help organisations and communities anticipate, assess, prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disruptive events. A core part of this work has been translating complex risk and resilience concepts into clear, community-focused arrangements that are realistic and sustainable.

I am a Fellow of the Institute of Civil Protection and Emergency Management (ICPEM) and previously served as Vice Chair and Head of Training, bringing together educators, academics, and practitioners.

At a time of increasingly constrained public sector resources, I believe the case for strengthening community resilience is compelling — particularly in empowering communities to take a more active role in preparedness, prevention, and mutual support.

