

MINUTES of the WONSTON PARISH ASSEMBLY

Held at the Victoria Hall, Sutton Scotney

At 8.00pm on Thursday 15th May 2025

PRESENT

Parish Councillors: Pauline Maunder (Chairman), Kevin Maunder, Rob Parker, Georgina Tibbets, Matthew Bessant-Gore.

Residents: 1 resident attended the meeting.

Special Guests : Brian Lloyd and Bob Denny of Popham Airfield Matters.

WCCllr Caroline Horrill.

Apologies: Cllr Judith Polak, Cllr David Price, WCCllr Stephen Godfrey.

Minutes Jocelyn Jenkins (PC Clerk).

1 MINUTES The Minutes of the Parish Assembly of 9th May 2024 were **agreed** and signed.

2 CHAIRMAN Pauline Maunder, as Chairman of the Parish Council, formally opened the meeting by welcoming residents and visitors.

3 POPHAM AIRFIELD MATTERS- BRIAN LLOYD and BOB DENNAY

Popham airfield was built in the 1970's, possibly without planning permission. It is currently home to around 150 aeroplanes and is regularly included in the top 5 UK airfields to visit. The airfield is seeking to be more environmentally friendly and now has one electric aircraft.

Popham has been included as a SHELAA site for a number of years but has never been popular due to the number of site constraints. It was therefore a surprise when it appeared in the Basingstoke Regulation 18 Local Plan as 'Popham Garden Village' with an allocation of 3000 homes. When the flying club found out, help was provided by another airfield near Stratford upon Avon, on how to organise preservation of the airfield and Popham Airfield Matters (PAM) was formed.

PAM have attended parish council meetings, village fetes and other events seeking new members (at a £1 membership fee), as the size of membership can then be used to have greater influence.

Key points are:

- The potential loss of an active and popular airfield which is also strategically important as it is not close to controlled air space.
- Loss of a well used community hub and café.

- Site previously used for a number of community events but from this year the landowner has limited events to those which are aviation related (perhaps following pressure from the developer?).

More than 2100 objections were made to the inclusion of Popham in the Regulation 18 (out of a total of 7000 objections over the whole plan). The site was removed from the plan but the Leader of Basingstoke Council has stated that the pressure of new increased housing targets may lead to future inclusion.

PAM have put forward an alternative proposal, as a centre for high tech industry, creating employment locally whilst protecting the environment and airfield.

Basingstoke and Deane did not meet the deadline for submitting their Local Plan under the old allocations and are therefore now holding another SHELAA and going back into Regulation 18 and public consultation. PAM are more organised this time and have support from Sport England along with other national organisations.

4 DEVOLUTION & LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION – WCCLLR CAROLINE HORRILL

WCCLlr Horrill noted that the Labour Government committed to devolution and strategic mayors in their manifesto.

The Hants and Solent area, for which a strategic mayor is proposed, is made up of Hampshire County Council, Southampton City Council, Portsmouth City Council and the Isle of Wight.

The mayoral election will be held in May 2026. The Mayor will replace the Police and Crime Commissioner. They will have funding from Government and responsibility for strategic planning and some public health responsibilities. The May 2025 Hampshire County Council elections were cancelled which was unpopular but there seems to be general support for a mayor.

Local government reorganisation will remove the current two tiers of county and district councils and replace this with one tier unitary authorities. The new unitary authorities will have approximately 500,000 residents each (HCC has 1.2 million residents).

Local authorities have reached no agreement as yet, the Government have said that they will decide if no agreement is reached. The split to unitary authorities needs each authority to be financially viable in order to pay for social care etc which HCC can currently not afford.

A public consultation needs to be held once any agreement is reached and before the submission deadline in September.

The gap between the unitary authorities and residents will be much bigger. District councillors currently represent less than 3000 residents each, this would rise to 5000 in the new authorities.

It is thought that parish councils will be expected to do more and take over some responsibilities from district councils.

The new unitary authorities will shadow from 2027 and go live in 2028. It is not known what will happen about other elections due before 2027.

There is no extra money for the reorganisation but services are expected to be maintained and council tax is therefore certain to rise.

5 IN CONCLUSION

The Chairman thanked Popham Airfield Matters and WCCLr Horrill for their presentations.

Refreshments and informal conversation followed and the meeting closed at around 9.00pm.

1. Chairman's signature at WPC meeting Date
2. Chairman's signature at 2026 Parish Assembly Date