

WANBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes of an extraordinary meeting of WANBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL held at
Hoopers Sports Pavilion, Hoopers Field, Wanborough,
on Tuesday 8th September 2026 at 7pm

Cllrs present: Richard Bellamy, John Emmins, David Hayward, Colin Offer and John Warr
(Chair of this meeting)

In attendance: Laura Evans (Clerk) and one member of the public

Minute Ref: EO/ FC/08.09/26

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Gary Sumner, Kathy Glanville and Nathan Morse
Cllr David Hayward requested that a formal message be sent on behalf of the Parish Council to Cllr Kathy Glanville.

Resolved: The Council agreed that a formal note should be sent to Cllr Kathy Glanville conveying the Council's best wishes for a speedy recovery. Members expressed their support and stated that they look forward to welcoming her back to Council duties when she is well enough to return.

2. Declarations of interest

No members declared an interest.

3. Public Questions

Cllr Colin Offer advised that he had received a request from a member of the Cricket Club to dial into the meeting and listen to Agenda Item 5.

Resolved: The Council considered the request and agreed that the member of the Cricket Club could dial into the meeting for the purposes of listening to Agenda Item 5 only.

4. Hoopers Field

The Council considered the potential extension and alteration of the pavilion and held a wide-ranging discussion regarding the future management and development of Hooper's Field and its facilities.

Cllr Richard Bellamy advised that he was not yet ready to discuss specific extension and alteration proposals, stating that it was first necessary to determine what the Parish Council wishes to achieve at Hooper's Field. Cllr John Warr thanked Cllr Richard Bellamy for the considerable work undertaken to date in researching the matter.

Cllr Richard Bellamy raised concerns regarding the proportion of the Parish Council's precept currently spent on Hooper's Field and explained that he had researched comparable facilities across England and Wales. His findings suggested that there are only seven similar multi-sport, multi-surface facilities, of which three are located in Wiltshire. He noted that other organisations operating comparable facilities face similar challenges and generally adopt one of four basic management models. He advised that Wanborough's current operating arrangements appeared to be unique, with sports clubs using the facility under arrangements that do not fully align with the current licence structure.

The possibility of establishing a management committee, similar to the model used for village halls, was discussed. It was noted that whilst there was no clear solution at present, there was an opportunity to learn from the experiences of other facilities. Cllr Richard Bellamy suggested that the current licence could be renewed for a further year whilst investigations continue.

Cllr John Emmins commented that future decisions would depend on whether Wanborough wished to continue to be regarded as a sporting village. It was noted that Swindon Borough Council appeared to have reduced its direct involvement in sporting facilities, with some provision now operated through Better UK.

Cllr Colin Offer highlighted that the facility has existed since 1998 and has relied heavily on volunteers to run clubs and secure funding. He noted that Ramsbury had previously been contacted as a comparator, although the circumstances were not directly comparable. He also referred to

examples where parish councils retain ownership of facilities whilst appointing a separate management company to oversee day-to-day operations.

Cllr Richard Bellamy recommended that the Council take sufficient time to fully investigate the available options, suggesting this process could take between three and six months. He noted that residents had expressed concerns regarding the level of expenditure funded through the precept and that the results of the resident survey should help inform future decisions.

Members discussed the importance of considering a range of resident views. While some residents may favour developing facilities and increasing usage, others may value the current arrangements and wish to avoid increased traffic and activity. It was noted that the sports clubs contribute positively to the site and that there have been minimal issues with anti-social behaviour. The significant contributions made by the Bowls Club and Tennis Club were recognised.

Concerns were raised regarding the administrative and governance responsibilities associated with running the facility, including activities which could expose the Clerk and Council to additional risks. The discussion also considered the future requirements of the pavilion itself. Members noted that a room of approximately 100-140 square metres would align with Sports England minimum facility guidance.

It was also recognised that a larger facility could provide significant wider benefits by supporting community events, activities, and local initiatives. The potential for the building to serve both sporting and broader community purposes will be an important consideration as part of the future long-term management and development of Hooper's Field.

Cllr John Warr highlighted the need for future investment in the facilities, noting that the Bowls Club roof is approaching the end of its operational life. He suggested that any future consideration of extensions should first be informed by a clear understanding of management arrangements and long-term expectations.

Members also reflected on the significant officer and volunteer time currently spent managing the Council's various functions, including allotments, Hooper's Field and general administration.

Cllr David Hayward referred to the previously considered expansion project and advised that a draft business plan had been prepared at the time, following requests from councillors. He noted that any option appraisal should include a "do nothing" option alongside alternative proposals. Cllr Hayward expressed the view that the Council did not currently possess all the expertise necessary to undertake such a significant review and suggested that appointing a project manager could assist with developing a robust business plan, identifying objectives and supporting future grant applications.

Members discussed the possibility of allocating funds to investigate the available management and operating models and agreed that consideration should also be given to the future of the playing field surface in the short, medium and long term.

Further discussion took place regarding changes within the community over time. It was noted that the population of Wanborough has increased significantly, from approximately 800 residents when the facilities were originally established to around 3,000 residents today.

Next Steps

- The resident survey results will be reviewed once the consultation period has concluded.
- A further meeting will be convened in approximately 4-6 weeks to consider the findings and next steps.
- Cllr Richard Bellamy will continue researching alternative operating and management models.
- A working group will be established, with draft Terms of Reference to be prepared. All councillors will be invited to participate, alongside representatives from the sports clubs.
- Members agreed that progressing one action each month would help maintain momentum and support measured progress towards identifying a sustainable long-term solution.

5. Storage Containers

The Council considered the proposed design and arrangements for the provision of permanent storage facilities at Hooper's Field.

Members were advised that storage racks could be installed along the rear wall of the proposed building, with the cost of three racks for the cost of £850. Cllr Colin Offer confirmed that he would construct the racks and advised that representatives from the Football Club had committed to assisting with the work.

It was proposed that the Council approve the provision of the storage racks.

Proposed: Cllr Colin Offer

Seconded: Cllr John Emmins

Resolved: Agreed unanimously.

The proposed building design was reviewed. Members noted that the current design was broadly the same size as previously discussed and that the proposed materials remained largely unchanged. It was reported that only a minor amendment would be required to ensure full compliance with planning requirements, and it was anticipated that this could be progressed without significant difficulty.

Members also discussed the potential inclusion of solar panels as part of the project. It was noted that indicative costs suggested there would be little difference between prefab and steel construction options. The proposed location remains adjacent to the cricket nets.

The Council reviewed the current project cost estimates, which indicated a total project cost of approximately £45,000. It was noted that there had been funds allocated within the reserves and precept, leaving an anticipated funding shortfall of approximately £20,000.

Members considered potential external funding opportunities. It was noted that the Movement Fund could provide up to £15,000 towards the project; however, applications could not be submitted until after 3 October.

Cllr Colin Offer asked whether the Parish Council would be willing to support the project in principle whilst a full funding package was developed.

Following discussion, Members agreed that a fully costed proposal should be brought to the next meeting. This should include:

- A detailed breakdown of project costs.
- Funding sources and anticipated contributions.
- A spreadsheet comparing the available construction and funding options.
- Confirmation of any grant opportunities and application timelines.

Resolved: A full proposal, including funding arrangements and option appraisal, will be presented to the Full Council meeting on 28 September for consideration. Members agreed with this approach.

6. **Resolved:** In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press were excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted

Reason: Potential Operating Models

Members discussed the future operating arrangements for Hooper's Field and associated facilities. The meeting considered the current licence arrangements and the implications of granting a long-term licence. Members expressed the view that it would not be appropriate to issue a longer-term licence at this stage. Instead, it was agreed that a further 12-month licence should be issued to provide continuity whilst a broader review of management and operating models is undertaken.

Members also discussed the licence documentation and agreed that the existing licence should be reviewed in detail to identify any areas requiring amendment or clarification.

It was agreed that the proposed **Hooper's Field Working Group** should meet on a monthly basis to progress the review. The ongoing licence arrangements will form a standing agenda item for the group, alongside consideration of alternative management and operational models for the facility.

Resolved:

- A further 12-month licence will be issued rather than entering into a long-term licence arrangement.
- The licence documentation will be reviewed and considered as part of the wider review process.
- The Hooper's Field Working Group will meet monthly.
- Future licence arrangements will be a key topic for the Working Group's consideration.

The meeting closed at 8:56pm.

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