

NEW FOREST ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (NFALC)

**Minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting of NFALC held at NFDC
Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Wednesday 25 March 2026 at 6.00pm**

Parish/Town Council

Name

Ashurst & Colbury	Sue Robinson (on-line)
Bramshaw	Sue Bennison (on-line)
Bransgore	Jacque Lay (on-line)
Brockenhurst	John Korbey & Russell Horne Gale Pettifer (on-line)
Copythorne	Graham Chillcott & David Rigby
Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley	Sarah Pinfield (on-line)
Exbury & Lepe	Emma Page (on-line)
Fawley	Steph Bennett / Robert Green (on-line)
Godshill	Richard Fall
Hordle	Maggie Hill (on-line)
Landford	Mary Davies – Vice Chair
Lymington & Pennington	Tom Brindley (on-line)
Lyndhurst	Brice Stratford – Chairman
Marchwood	Tina Dudley (on-line)
Minstead	Helen Bennett
Netley Marsh	Adrian Johnstone
New Milton	Graham Flexman – Coordinator Rob Maynard (on-line)
Sway	Katie Walding/Justine Thurgood(on-line)
Totton & Eling	Alison McGowan (on-line)
Wellow	Mike Richardson
NFNPA	David Illsley, Head of Planning & Place
NFALC Commoning Rep	Sami Blastock
NFDC	Richard Knott - NFDC Chief Operations Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Daniel Reynafarje – NFDC ICT Officer Joanne McClay, NFDC Service Manager Environmental and Regulation Geoff Blunden, NFDC Portfolio Holder Environment & Sustainability (on-line) Dan Poole, NFDC Portfolio Holder for Community, Safety & Wellbeing (on-line)
<u>Guests:</u> Peter Hebard Sophie Sajic (on-line) Sarah Nield (on-line)	Brockenhurst & NF Flood Action Group BCP Council, Head of Public Protection Professor of Property Law - Soton Uni
<u>Apologies:</u> David Orme	NFALC Cycling Rep

1. **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman welcomed 37 attendees to this hybrid meeting with 17 on-line from local councils in and around the New Forest district, with two on-line guests and Peter Hebard, Guest Speaker from the Brockenhurst & New Forest Flood Action Group.

The Chairman referred to quite a full dance card this evening and was confident all had heard the government has indeed confirmed today its choice with regards to a local government reorganization. The Waterside is intended to be split off, joined with the bottom portion of Test Valley, Eastleigh and Southampton, with the rest of the New Forest connecting with the rest of Test Valley, Winchester and East Hampshire. That big belt will be called Mid Hampshire.

2. **Minutes**

The Chairman referred to Appendix 1 Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 26 January 2026 and asked Vice-Chair to go through them page by page as Mary Davies chaired that meeting. Minutes of the meeting were agreed as a correct record by those present and duly signed.

3. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising apart from the updated LCWIP Joint Response Document that David Orme, NFALC Cycling Rep had sent to HCC earlier this month.

4. **New Forest Flood Action Group**

The Chairman referred to Appendix 2 and welcomed Peter Hebard from Brockenhurst & New Forest Flood Action Group who gave an illustrated presentation on managing flooding, drought and climate change effects for the New Forest. The presentation slides are attached.

Peter Hebard explained the role of the New Forest Flood Action Group after a recent meeting with the Environment Agency and Forestry England on implementing NFM Natural Flood Management for the New Forest National Park as well as our current attempts to get all parties to recognize their responsibility to help manage the effects of Climate Change on the Forest now they are so evident, on ecology and livestock, as well as communities and the overall economy of the Park.

The aim of requesting a meeting was to discuss holding more water on the Forest upstream of villages our New Forest Flood Action Group already had a similar initiative, the EA and other Forest authorities, running several years ahead, in collaboration with Brockenhurst PC.

Wessex River Trust had already completed a £45k feasibility study 2 years ago and following on from that, and last Wednesday we had a meeting with all parties to discuss a pilot demonstration of Natural Flood Management (NFM) on the Weirs, a tributary of the Lymington River that runs through the Village.

In the light of the recent storms, particularly Jan 27th, which was the worst in EA records, we have a window of opportunity to get action underway to protect all Forest villages from CC-induced floods, as well as the Forest ecology and livestock from CC-induced droughts. The solutions are the same and we need to act before we have a serious incident like Boscastle or Carlisle.

Storm intensity this winter has been over 7 times what it was just a decade ago, when our Flood Action Group was first set up, but the government has just allocated major funding for NFM, which could make a huge difference. It could allow us to control the huge amount of water that falls on the 566 sq km of Forest catchment.

In contrast, the current wetland projects are all on headwaters with tiny catchments. The latest is only 0.1% of the Forest area! We could make a major difference to the protection of forest wetlands from CC effects and supplement their efforts with benign and cost-effective measures on far larger areas further downstream. As well as Brockenhurst and the Lymington River, we have already looked at the catchments of other Forest rivers and with other councils. Peter thanked everyone for listening and was ready to take any questions.

Before going to questions, the Chairman invited Joe McClay and then David Illsley from NFDC and NP respectively to offer any kind of response to any of the things raised.

Jo McClay, NFDC Service Manager for Environment & Regulation and the lead for emergency planning explained the role of NFDC is to support in preparing, responding and recovering from adverse incidents and NFDC were one of the agencies that attended the Flood Action Group meeting at the beginning of March because they see it's really important to work with partners and communities to support in responding to any impacts of adverse weather. So NFDC obviously work with the Environment Agency, Hampshire County Council, who are the lead flood agency and the highways function, Forestry England and also other partners and it's important to have this collaborative approach and the point of the meeting there was actually to look at how we could reduce flooding and how we could work together, trying to reduce impacts before they occur rather than dealing with them afterwards and recovering.

From a National Park Authority perspective, as a local planning authority for the areas that Peter set out, David Illsley pointed out the NPA are not the lead flood authority, that rests with Hampshire County Council for this area of the National Park. Referring to Peter's point looking at planning applications across the New Forest, but certainly around Brockenhurst, the NPA are aware of flooding through successive local plans. The National Park Authority hasn't allocated new development within Brockenhurst, and flood risk is a big factor within that. David Illsley was interested in the interaction of site improvement plans and Forestry England looking at resurrecting their wetland restoration works. They act as a bit of a buffer, but the public response to the Latchmore scheme and some of the schemes around Burley, which attracted a lot of local opposition, were to David's eyes schemes to actually keep more water in the catchment and use the floodplain to deliver some of the benefits Peter talked about.

5. **New Forest Cultural Council**

Brice provided a brief update, as follows. The dialect survey is progressing. It's got some funding. Brice is working with someone from Winchester University on Arts and Crafts Project.

There are courses continuing every other Wednesday in Brockenhurst at the hub there. And we actually had attendance from Paul Walton of the National Park Authority a couple of times. Paul's role as Head of Environment & Rural Economy is to lead the Authority's work in conserving the landscapes and habitats of the National Park and foster a healthy local economy that can sustain the Park's special qualities.

There's talk that on April 22nd St. Arwald will be officially recognised as the New Forest Patron Saint, as he's the only St. who's got anything whatsoever to do with the New Forest. Arwald (died 686) was the last pagan Anglo-Saxon king and the last king of the Wihthara, a people that inhabited the Isle of Wight. He was killed by Cædwalla of Wessex during an invasion of his kingdom, at which point the island was Christianised. During the invasion, his two brothers (heirs) were baptised before also being killed, and are now venerated as saints.

Finally, there is talk with the Cultural Council and the New Forest Marque and Go New Forest about the supposed changing boundaries of the New Forest as a result of LGR. Brice pointed out regardless of boundaries shifting from a local governance perspective, the Waterside will remain within the New Forest boundary, both culturally and geographically.

6. New Forest District Council

Richard Knott, NFDC Chief Operations Officer and Deputy Chief Executive, referred to local government reorganisation, details of the phase 3 waste rollout and Local Plan review update.

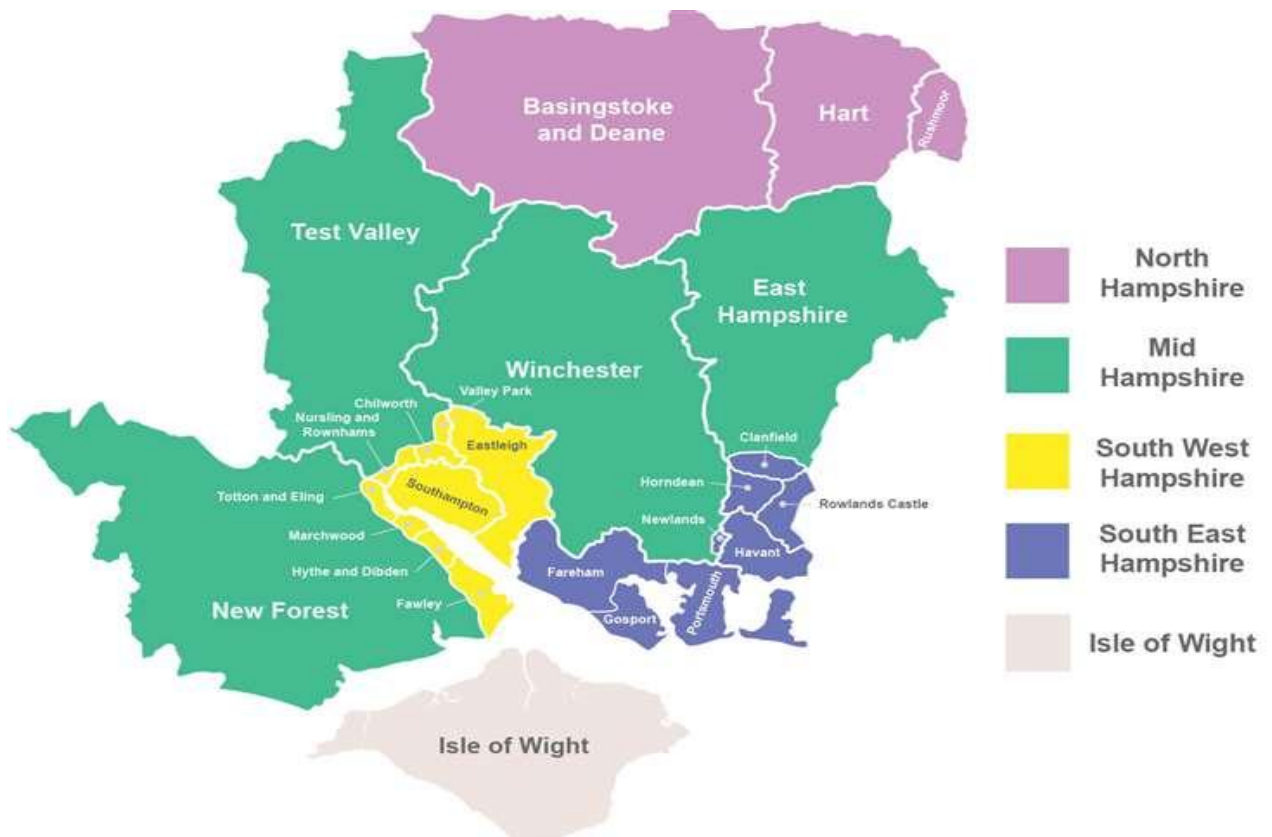
Local Government Reorganisation

The government decision has chosen option 1A of the four options that were put forward and 1A, if you recall, is the boundary change option. What that means is that there will be one council that represents Test Valley, Winchester and East Hampshire. Another one with Southampton, Eastleigh, parts of Test Valley & New Forest with new councils from April 2028.

So there we are in map form of the outlines of all the new councils that the government has announced today that will be created. So, the Isle of Wight will remain as its own authority. With the majority of the New Forest, Test Valley, Winchester and East Hampshire creating a new Mid-Hants model. In the north you've got the North Hampshire model of Basingstoke, Hart and Rushmore and then the South-East Council which contains Fareham, Gosport, Portsmouth, Havant and the bottom chunk of East Hampshire, so a few parishes there. And then you have the South-West Council, which includes the Waterside strip, Southampton, Eastleigh and some other parishes taken from the southern part of Test Valley.

In summary, there will be:

- A new North Hampshire authority taking in Basingstoke, Hart and Rushmore
- A Mid-Hampshire authority covering most of the existing New Forest, Test Valley, Winchester and East Hampshire.
- A South-West Hampshire authority taking in Eastleigh Southampton and newly added Waterside parishes of Totton, Marchwood, Hythe & Dibden and Fawley
- A South-East Hampshire authority taking in Portsmouth, Havant, Gosport and Fareham.



Phase 3 Waste Rollout Update

We are now into the middle section and that is the distribution of containers to 18,500 households that began a couple of weeks ago. We are well into that program ahead of a Phase 3 service start commencing on 11 May in the East and North-east of the New Forest.

Phase 3 covers East & Northeast of the New Forest including Applemore, Ashurst, Colbury, Bartley Park, parts of Beaulieu, Blackfield & Langley, Bramshaw, Butts Ash, Calmore, Totton, Copythorne, Denny Lodge, Dibden, Dibden Purlieu, Eling, Exbury & Lepe, Fawley, Furzedown, Holbury, Hythe, Langdown, Lyndhurst, Marchwood, Minstead, Netley Marsh, Rushington and Testwood.

The following figures are probably 2-3 weeks old now, but it's just worth understanding the scale of the operation across the whole of the forest and the geography as we've already explained how large and rural that is. So, 171,500 containers were delivered across phase one and phase two properties. Remember we started from just bags so this is a first for the New Forest area. Already 4 million collections have been made and that that is just since June of 2025, so a significant number of collections across those properties and first 2 phases.

We've managed large influx of customer service contact as you can imagine with a new service becoming operational, with lots of challenges, lots of differences and lots of changes. The volume on customer services has been significant, but we have managed that. I know there were some early demand pressures that meant people were waiting in queues for a long time, but we've now managed those and call volumes and call waiting time are now just in a few minutes and interestingly the tonnage of food waste that previously went to landfill is significant and you know, is a real boon for the district in terms of what is going to be recycled.

In terms of food waste tonnages, this is the amount collected per household per week. On average just under 2 kilos per household per week. You can judge for yourself whether that's too much or about as expected. We are doing work to target the amount of food waste, but in this initial phase, it is good to see just how much is not going to landfill. It is approximately about 70 tonnes per week. And not surprisingly, there was an extra peak around Christmas with extra food waste. But hopefully this data we can use to inform residents and show that the amount being thrown away and maybe change some habits in due course as we get to the other side of the waste roll out and then can focus on recycling and waste habits.

As we all know, we had a number of challenges within the district in terms of rolling out a new waste service, not least those donkeys you've seen in the press. What was maybe more than atypical example of a photo in the early days which has led to some significant changes backed by the Cllrs of the New Forest to pump in some extra resources and extra funding for those in the perambulation, of the forest area, to put all of their food waste bins behind gates. So that has obviously impacted on the cost of services there, which means extra vehicles and extra resources to do so that has largely been successful in reducing the amount of animal interactions.

Although they are still in a minority of cases, phase three does contain roughly 2,000 properties remain in the perambulation and those residents will need to put food waste behind the gates.

In summary:

Bin deliveries for phase 3

- you do not need to be at home for the deliveries; bins and caddies will be left outside properties
- bins and caddies may be delivered by different vehicles — they may not arrive at the same time
- bins and caddies will be delivered by our delivery contractor, using their vehicles and crews
- check inside your bins — your caddies may be delivered inside your wheelie bin, and your indoor caddy may be nested inside your outdoor caddy.

Check bin deliveries

Bin deliveries for phase 3 properties have now started with deliveries continuing through to the end of April 2026. We're not able to give an exact delivery date for your address in advance, as schedules may change. However, we will soon publish a regularly updated list of the areas we've completed so far, so you can check our website when we've been in your area.

What to do when bins and food waste recycling caddies arrive

- bring your bins and caddies inside your property boundary when they arrive — store them safely until your new collections are due to start
- do not put the wheelie bins or brown outdoor caddy out for collection until your start date as they will not be collected — you can continue to use sacks until the new collections start
- look inside your food waste caddy for your 'Get Set' information leaflet, starter roll of caddy liners, and a chance to [win a golden ticket](#)
- remember to add your property name or number to the front of your wheelie bins and the top of your brown outdoor caddy, in the space provided — this will help identify your bins to you, and to our crew when they're returning it after it's been emptied.

Lost, damaged or stolen bins

Due to bins being in storage before delivery, the bin lids may look slightly different to their usual shape when they are delivered to you. These bins do not need to be replaced - they will return to their usual shape after a few weeks. Put them out in natural daylight for quick result.

Report a problem with your bin delivery

If your bins have arrived but are damaged, or we have delivered the wrong containers, fill in the [Report a problem with your bin delivery](#) form. This form is for bin deliveries as part of the new waste service. If you haven't had a collection, you can [Report a missed collection](#) instead.

If your property will use communal bins

Some properties, including most flats in the district, will use communal bins for new waste collections. If this applies to you, your property will use communal bins instead of wheelie bins and the brown outdoor food waste caddy. We will provide a brown communal wheelie bin for food waste recycling. This bin will be installed in your shared bin store area before new waste collections start. It will be clearly labelled 'food waste only'. Do not use the bin before your start date; it will not be emptied. For some properties, new communal bins for recycling, rubbish and glass may be installed before the new waste collections start. NFDC will write with more info before new service starts.

If your property will use sacks instead of wheelie bins

If your property has been assessed as unsuitable for wheelie bins and will use sacks instead, we will deliver your 2 food waste caddies before your first collection starts. Once your new waste collections start, we'll deliver NFDC clear recycling sacks to your property every 12 months. NFDC will write to you with more information before your new service starts.

Support and advice

If you, or someone in your household, may need support to understand this information and the new waste service, or manage the new service when it begins, please get in touch. This may be due to age, disability, or other personal circumstances. NFDC will do its best to consider individual needs.

Local Plan update

We have recently completed a consultation on the Regulation 18 Spatial Options and Policy Direction which concluded on the 20 March 2026.

We held drop-ins, we put information out and we had an online form for people to respond to. We had over 1,000 responses to that. Lots of good social media engagement and we held ten events around the district and probably had around 1,400 people attend those. Some more popular than others depending which way you look at it and particularly the Hordle area experienced. A good number of local residents came out to inform us of their views on their proposals, and it is fair to say those southern coastal towns would be taking the brunt of the proposals for new housing, but likewise Fordingbridge as well, as you can imagine.

The core themes in the feedback, probably not surprisingly, centred around flooding, drainage, the housing numbers and it is fair to say that the proposals in the Regulation 18 consultation still do not meet the government's target. So, we are still low on that number. Even with those opposed in that consultation, environmental constraints, infrastructure pressures, comments around numbers of GPs, schools and traffic on roads and the ability for roads to carry that amount of traffic. So, no surprises in an area of this character.

We are currently reviewing the responses received and we thank everyone who has submitted a response and the response to this will be published in due course. A further consultation on a Regulation 19 Plan will take place in Autumn 2026, with the intention to submit the plan for examination by the end of 2026.

The Chairman asked Sophie Sajik from BCP, attending on-line, to say a few words: "Hello everybody, I'm Sophie Sajik, the new Strategic Director for Housing & Communities and I will be starting at NFDC on the 11th of May. I've been invited this evening to meet you all virtually and I will be there with you in person at the next meeting. I'm coming across from BCP, so have experience in LGR and I've been in the housing and communities for 16 years, hopefully bringing with me some good experience and I look forward to meeting you all".

The Chairman asked Sami Blastock, NFALC Commoning Rep, to brief members about proposed Forestry England car park charges from 1 April 2026 as discussed at the NPA Southeast Quadrant meeting on 28 January. Basically, Beaulieu Parish Council is raising a last-minute bid to stop the introduction of charges at Forestry England car parks across the New Forest. Beaulieu Parish has written to the chief executive of Forestry England Mike Seddon and the government's rural affairs minister Mary Creagh, claiming that FE has failed to undertake all necessary assessments to satisfy requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

It says the planned introduction of charges at 129 New Forest car parks on 1st April should be halted because FE has not fully considered the needs of the disabled and those on low incomes, in line with its Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The council has requested reports, assessments and analyses conducted by FE in relation to its obligations under PSED. It is claimed that by failing to make any charging concessions for disabled Blue Badge holders, FE may be disproportionately penalising disabled people.

It has also formally requested copies of key documents under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR), which requires public bodies to make information available for public scrutiny. These include risk assessments of displacement parking, the business case and supporting analysis underpinning the proposal. These have not yet been made available to local communities, the parish council says, despite a previous Forestry England commitment.

Beaulieu Parish Council therefore asked Forestry England to pause the implementation of this

To deter "displacement" verge parking, HCC have made an order for 116 roads adjoining FE car parks within the New Forest to be temporarily restricted sometime during the next 18 months, with an approximate start date of 1 April 2026. **See TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF WAITING ORDER – VARIOUS ROADS, VARIOUS PARISHES, NEW FOREST** as below:

www.hants.gov.uk/community/publicnotices/publicnoticedetails?id=21574&sfnsn=scwspmo

Re LGR, Chairman confirmed NFALC membership will not be an issue because when NFALC re-constituted it foresaw something like this, so there won't be any impact on membership of NFALC from the Waterside parishes, which I think is appropriate because they are remaining in the National Park to some degree. Thus, they will be in a similar position to Landford and a lot of our Wiltshire parishes. David Illsley explained more with a fairly brief update on LGR and Local Plans, as below:

7. New Forest National Park

"I think we've largely covered everything, probably one thing I should have said right at the beginning and I'm sure you all know this LGR doesn't change National Park boundaries. I've had a few queries about this on the phone today, National Park boundaries can only be changed by Natural England and the Secretary of State following a detailed public inquiry. The boundary changes we've looked at are local authority administrative boundaries, rather than the National Park boundary that was established in 2005, covering 220 square miles that is unaffected.

I have had a number of conversations with the North York Moors, the Yorkshire Dales and the Lake District National Parks, the rural national parks that have gone through LGR quite recently. The Lake District is now just covered by two "unitaries" the Yorkshire Dales and the North York ones, as I said, that all sit within a single huge North Yorkshire Unitary Authority. I believe it's the biggest local authority in England now so that probably covers off LGR.

Just moving on briefly on to Local Plan review for the National Park. Exactly as Richard said, the District Council prepared the Local Plan for the district outside the National Park. The NPA prepares theirs for the land within the National Park. We have broadly similar time scales. You may recall we had a consultation that closed in December. A bit like the Hordle event, we had some well attended drop in events, and 3 months later we've just about recovered from them. So, our next round, our next milestone in the local plan making process will be presenting a report to our members in July 2026, so this summer pending their approval, it will then go forward to a further period of consultation.

I would highlight all local town and parish councils in the National Park and constituent local authorities are statutory consultees. So that means you're all directly notified of the consultation. Plus, the fact anybody who made a comment on our local plan in November and December 2025 will be directly notified of the next stage. You will see stuff on social media, but you will also be directly notified. As Richard said, it's a really tight timetable for both planning authorities.

That December 2026 deadline is an absolute from the government. If we miss that deadline, we have to start our local plan all over again under the new local plan system and in the meantime, we will have years of speculative development proposals. I'm sounding a bit negative here, but it is an absolute latest date thing and this is me laying the ground ahead, the foundation, for saying if we do go to our members in July, we're going to have to decide whether we go out as soon as we can for that consultation, which would be an August consultation start.

And probably the final headline I would say is at a few public meetings recently it's the comments you make next time round at Regulation 19 on the submission draft plan that are the comments that go off to the government planning inspector. All the comments that people may have made in November and December on our plan or in January to March on the district council's local plan are not the comments that go to the government.

The logic being that the plan gets refined from one to the other. So, it would be slightly perverse to send them some comments on an earlier iteration of the plan, but it does mean if you're a consultee and there's an element of either of our local plans that you don't like in the autumn, you do have to remake that comment. You can't fall back on what you said at an earlier stage."

8. **Community Governance**

The Chairman read Appendix 3, being the HALC update on LGR Neighbourhood Governance, saying he had attended a NALC meeting yesterday when this matter was discussed again.

Ahead of the Report Stage of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, peers expressed strong support for key amendments affecting local governance at the NALC latest Westminster Forum. The forum reflected on the wide range of issues raised and debated during the Committee Stages, agreeing to focus on a smaller set of priorities as the bill heads towards its final stages.

These amendments include requiring a community governance review in each new unitary authority area, with the expectation that new parish councils would be created where appropriate. They also aim to clarify the role of Neighbourhood Area Committees, including ensuring their members are elected and include representation from parish and town councils. Another proposal would extend the General Power of Competence to all local parish councils.

The forum also agreed to continue pressing the government to introduce legislation to reform the local government standards regime and allow parish and town councils to hold remote meetings. Looking ahead, the forum discussed other issues likely to arise in the coming months, including the King's Speech scheduled for 13 May 2026, where he will set out the government's legislative agenda.

The forum also considered proposals in the Representation of the People Bill, which would extend voting rights to 16- and 17-year-olds, improve voter registration, and strengthen transparency and enforcement around political donations and electoral rules.

Post Meeting Note: SLCC article attached explores the status of parish and town councils

9. **Next Meeting - Thursday 28 May 2026 6.00pm** NFDC Appletree Court Lyndhurst SO43 7PA

10. **Future Meetings** - All held at NFDC Council Chamber Appletree Court, Lyndhurst. SO43 7PA

AGM July (new date TBA) Tuesday 22 September Wednesday 18 November

The Chairman referred to a little ceremony to plant one of the seedlings from the Sycamore Gap tree that is being planted at Bolton's Bench in Lyndhurst tomorrow at 1:00pm. (Full story is attached)

The Chairman also referred to the split of commoners between two new local government authorities, with the Waterside joining a new authority which includes Southampton, and the rest of the Forest joining with Winchester, East Hampshire and parts of the Test Valley.

Described by the Commoners Defence Association as the worst possible scenario, the group is now demanding clarity on how it will be represented on the two separate authorities. (Full story attached)

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending in person+on-line and closed the Meeting at 8.00 pm.

Chairman

Date