



Annual Town Residents' Meeting

Hawley Leisure Centre, Hawley Green

Wednesday 16th April 2025 at 7.30 pm

Minutes

- 1. Chair's Welcome**
The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- 2. Apologies for absence**
There were no apologies for absence.
- 3. Minutes of The Annual Town Meeting 2024**
The minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on the 17th April 2024 were agreed as an accurate record by all present.
- 4. Matters Arising**
There were no matters arising.
- 5. Sara Grisewood, Southeast Communities Rail Partnership (SCRP)**
SCRP is an independent not-for-profit partnership that works along some of the lines on the rail network to encourage the use of local trains to ensure that access to local stations is easy and to enhance stations so they provide a safe and welcoming environment. SCRCP works with transport operators and local communities to help improve local rail services, organizing projects that give the community a sense of ownership and pride in their stations. They work with schools and local councils to give young people the skills to travel safely and independently by train and work with community groups to help remove barriers to travel.

The north downs line runs through the heart of the Blackwater valley and Rail to Trail is an initiative to use local train stations to open up parts of the valley normally only reached by car.
- 6. David Taeger, Blackwater & Hawley Neighbourhood Watch**
Neighbourhood Watch in Blackwater is a local, volunteer-led scheme where neighbours work together to share information, report concerns, and help prevent crime. It links residents with local police to improve safety and community awareness.
- 7. Adrian Collett, Former Hampshire County Councillor**
The Chair thanked Adrian for all that he has done for the residents of Blackwater & Hawley over the many years that he has been a Councillor and Adrian spoke about the highs and less highs of being a Councillor be it town, district or county council during his time as a Councillor.
- 7. Annual Report & Accounts**
The Chair explained that the Town Council provides and maintains a wide range of local facilities funded partly through the council tax precept. Despite its small size, the Council manages significant land and assets, including the Memorial Hall, Leisure Centre, sports facilities, play areas, and parts of the cemetery, while

also engaging with wider local organisations and representing residents' interests.

Over the past year, the Council has hosted community events, increased use of its venues post-Covid, and made improvements to facilities such as the leisure centre and coffee shop, which continues to grow in popularity. Local sports clubs and community groups are expanding, and new activities and organisations have been welcomed. Ongoing challenges include building maintenance, drainage issues, and deteriorating sports surfaces.

Notable developments include land ownership confirmation of the Monkey Woods, environmental improvements, and the formation of a new community events committee. Some decisions, such as tree removal in the cemetery, were initially controversial but aimed at long-term improvement.

An 11% increase in the council tax precept (around £12 annually for a Band D property) is mainly due to rising staff costs, particularly increased National Insurance contributions. The Council aims to continue improving services and facilities while balancing costs, with commercial activities helping to offset expenses.

The report concludes with thanks to staff for their essential role in the Council's progress and success.

Unaudited year end information was circulated for information at the meeting.

9. Residents Questions and Points Raised

A number of residents raised questions and discussion points which were discussed.

Members of the public were thanked for attending and invited to join Councillors in refreshments.