Parish Council Unitary Councillor's Report – January 2026

Let me start with some Winsley-specific' news.

- Winsley Hill has been resurfaced and has had new lines painted. However, the painting of safety lines on the cycle lane did not happen in December as planned due to weather factors. We will now have to wait until after the gritting season for this work to be done.
- We have received a licence application from LONDIS for the shop!

Financial Position Update

The Council continues to search for cost savings and increased revenue, and we are seeing success in both areas. In September last year, we were facing a forecasted overspend for 2025/26 of £6.6 million. The measures that the Council has taken will produce a balanced budget at year end. The challenge will be to continue to provide the services we all expect. We hope that all councillors will work together to achieve this.

It was disappointing that at recent Full Council meeting, a motion to increase the Council Tax for second homes, as two hundred other Local Authorities have done, was defeated by two votes. Similarly, a motion to save costs by offloading the liability that is St. Stephens multistory car park in Trowbridge was defeated by the Chair's casting vote.

New Local Plan

We still do not have one. Government Planning Inspectors have informed Wiltshire Council that more work needs to be done before the new plan can formally be adopted. This of course means we continue to be vulnerable to speculative housing development. However, the increasing challenge currently is to find Developers who are keen to build and sell houses. I sit on the Strategic Planning Committee, and four out of the last six meetings have been cancelled due to a 'lack of business.

Wiltshire council receives top rating from DFT for pothole repairs

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ckgj1m1ze8go

Waste Update

Key proposals agreed:

- Maintain the current kerbside system for dry recycling, as improvements at the Material Recovery Facility will boost recycling rates without changing household collections. This avoids extra containers, keeps things simple for residents, and saves unnecessary costs. Residents will be provided with extra single-use bags for flexible plastics to go into their existing recycling bin

- To seek public feedback in early 2026 on moving household waste collections from fortnightly to three-weekly in 2027. With food waste and plastic bags removed, black bin waste will drop significantly cutting carbon, reducing costs, and boosting recycling
- Introduce a phased rollout of a Household Recycling Centre (HRC) booking system.
- Kerbside collection services: Establishing a Local Authority Trading Company (LATCo) partnership to provide kerbside waste and recycling collections when the current contract ends in July 2026 and move \away from a monopoly supplier.
- Material Recovery Facility: Forming a LATCo partnership to manage Material Recovery Facility operations following the end of the existing contract in July 2026
- Variation in contract for the processing of materials via the Mechanical Biological Treatment facility in Westbury. This will ensure provision is in place for off-site Anaerobic Digestion of separately collected food waste and using alternative residual waste treatment processes to recover energy from the remaining waste.

As the Cabinet member responsible for Waste, Paul Sample stated last week, "Wiltshire Council remains committed to delivering waste and recycling services that are both environmentally responsible and financially sustainable."

Lime Down Solar Park

Whilst the Council fully supports the transition to renewable energy, this proposal, as it stands, does not strike the right balance. The scale and location of the Lime Down Solar Park raise serious concerns about landscape, ecology, heritage, the economy and the impacts on Wiltshire communities. We believe the applicant has failed to address a significant number of issues and that the application should not proceed as it is. We will continue to engage in the examination process to ensure Wiltshire and its residents' interests are protected."

The Council will submit its Relevant Representation to the Planning Inspectorate by 9 January and will participate fully in the DCO (Development Consent Order) examination. All submitted Relevant Representations will be published on the Planning Inspectorate's website.

2025 Newsletter - FINAL - High Res - Aug 2025.pdf

Nigel White, Unitary Councillor for Winsley and Westwood ward

January 9th, 2026