

Meeting	Council
Date and Time	Wednesday, 6th November, 2024 at 6.30 pm.
Venue	Council Chamber, Castle Hill, Winchester SO23 8UL

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that an Ordinary Meeting of the Council will be held at 6.30 pm on Wednesday, 6th November, 2024 in the Council Chamber, Castle Hill, Winchester SO23 8UL and all Members of the Council are summoned to attend.

Note: This meeting is being held in person at the location specified above. Members of the public should note that the meeting will be streamed live to the council's You Tube channel (www.youtube.com/WinchesterCC).

A limited number of seats will be made available at the above named location, however attendance must be notified to the council at least 3 working days before the meeting. Please note that priority will be given to those having registered to speak during the Public Question session over those wishing to attend and observe. Please note that Questions must be received in writing by Democratic Services (democracy@winchester.gov.uk) prior to **10am**, five working days preceding the day of the council meeting.

AGENDA

- 1. Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 18 September 2024** (Pages 7 - 12)
- 2. Disclosure of Interests**
To receive any disclosure of interests from Members or Officers in matters to be discussed.
Note: Councillors are reminded of their obligations to declare disclosable pecuniary interests, personal and/or prejudicial interests in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct.
- 3. Announcements from the Mayor, Leader and Chief Executive**
- 4. Questions from Members of the Public**



To receive and answer and questions from the public.
(Questions must be received in writing by Democratic Services –
democracy@winchester.gov.uk – no later than 10am on Wednesday 30
October 2024)

5. **Appointment of Monitoring Officer (CL172)** (Pages 13 - 14)

RECOMMENDATION:

That Gareth John, Director (Legal) is appointed Monitoring Officer for the Council with effect from 6 November 2024

6. **To consider and determine the following Recommended Minutes: Audit and Governance held 26 September 2024 - Committee Code of Conduct for Councillors (AG140)** (Pages 15 - 38)

RECOMMENDED (TO COUNCIL):

1. **That the Local Government Association Model Code of Conduct for Councillors be adopted as the Winchester City Council Code of Conduct to come into force on 1 January 2025.**

2. **That the recommendation for all councillors to attend training on the new code on the 14 November 2024 be endorsed.**

3. **That the Monitoring Officer advise all Parish and Town councils of the adoption of the Code.**

7. **Notices of Motion**

a) **To consider the following Motion to be proposed by Councillor John Tippett-Cooper (seconded by Councillor Kathleen Becker):**

Winchester City Council Motion: Request for Smartphone Ban Guidance in Hampshire Schools

This Council notes:

1. The growing body of evidence indicating that the unrestricted use of smartphones in schools can negatively affect academic performance, mental health, and social development. Research from 2023 highlights that smartphone distractions impair focus and exacerbate anxiety and cyberbullying among students.

2. The recent "Parent Pact" organised by the campaign group Smartphone Free Childhood in Hampshire received over 3,000 signatures. This involved parents of school students signing a "pact" that they will wait to

give their child a smartphone until at least the end of Year 9.

3. That Winchester City Council offers a wide variety of active opportunities for young people across the district, encouraging physical, mental, and social wellbeing. Examples include the successful School Holiday Activity Programmes, which promotes sports and physical activity, as well as support to a number of youth groups and funding of various outdoor facilities such as skate parks, play parks and multi-use games areas (MUGAs), providing valuable alternatives to screen-based activities.

This Council believes:

1. Schools should be safe, focused environments conducive to learning, free from the distractions and pressures associated with smartphone use during school hours.
2. Clear guidance from Hampshire County Council is necessary to support schools in managing smartphone use effectively.

This Council resolves:

1. To call on Hampshire County Council to develop and issue guidance for schools across Hampshire to consider introducing restrictions or bans on smartphone use during school hours, ensuring that students benefit from a more engaged and supportive learning environment. This request (and points 2 and 3) below are to be made to Hampshire County Council through a letter from the Leader of Winchester City Council.
2. To request that Hampshire County Council provide schools with resources, training, and consultation opportunities to ensure the effective implementation of these measures, including engagement with teachers, parents, and students.
3. To ask Hampshire County Council to monitor the impact of any smartphone restrictions on academic performance, pupil behaviour, and mental health, and to report back on the outcomes to enable informed decision-making.
4. Requests the relevant WCC Cabinet lead to engage with the Smartphone Free Childhood campaign to identify potential adjustments to WCC activities that support the aims of the campaign.

By passing this motion, Winchester City Council seeks to support the health, wellbeing, and academic success of school students in the district.

b) To consider the following Motion to be proposed by Councillor Neil

Bolton (seconded by Councillor Caroline Horrill):

MOTION: Changes to the Winter Fuel Allowance and protecting pensioners from fuel poverty

Council Notes:

- The Labour Government's recent decision to restrict the Winter Fuel Payment to only pensioners in receipt of means-tested benefits like Pension Credit, as announced by Chancellor Rachel Reeves.
- The estimated impact of this decision, which Age UK says will mean 2 million pensioners who badly need the money to stay warm this winter will not receive it.
- The significant role that Winter Fuel Payments play in helping older residents of the Winchester district and across the UK afford heating during the coldest months, thereby preventing 'heat or eat' dilemmas and safeguarding health.
- The criticism from Age UK, the Countryside Alliance and other charities, highlighting the social injustice and potential health risks posed by this sudden policy change.
- The additional strain this decision will place on vulnerable pensioners, many of whom do not claim Pension Credit despite being eligible, further exacerbating their financial hardship.

Council believes:

- That the Winter Fuel Payment has been a lifeline for many older people across the UK and that restricting its availability solely to those on Pension Credit risks leaving many pensioners in financial hardship.
- While some pensioners currently in receipt of the Winter Fuel Payment may not require it, many thousands across the Winchester district sit just above the cut-off for Pension Credit and will now lose their allowance.
- The decision to means-test Winter Fuel Payments, especially with such short notice and without adequate compensatory measures, is deeply unfair and will disproportionately affect the health and well-being of our poorest older residents.
- The government's approach fails to consider the administrative barriers and stigma that prevent eligible pensioners from claiming Pension Credit, leaving many without the support they desperately need.

Council resolves to:

- Bring forward a Council-led local awareness campaign to alert those eligible of Pension Credit which in some respects will help access to the Winter Fuel Payment for those most in need.
- Request that the Council Leader write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging a review of the decision to means-test the Winter Fuel Payment and asking the government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who do not claim Pension Credit, are protected from fuel poverty.
- Commit the Council to signing the 'Save the Winter Fuel Payment for Struggling Pensioners' petition being run by Age UK and write to all members offering them the opportunity to sign the petition themselves.
- Encourage local efforts to promote Pension Credit uptake through council services and partnerships with local charities and community organisations to ensure that all eligible pensioners in the Winchester district are supported in claiming their entitlement.

8. Changes to Committee Memberships

To receive any resignations from committees and to make any necessary re-appointments.

9. Questions from Members of Council

The total time for questions and the answer and supplementaries thereto shall not exceed 40 minutes.

LAURA TAYLOR
Chief Executive

All of the Council's publicly available agendas, reports and minutes are available to view and download from the Council's [Website](#) and are also open to inspection at the offices of the council. As part of our drive to minimise our use of paper we do not provide paper copies of the full agenda pack at meetings. We do however, provide a number of copies of the agenda front sheet at the meeting which contains the QR Code opposite. Scanning this code enables members of the public to easily access all of the meeting papers on their own electronic device. Please hold your device's camera or QR code App over the QR Code so that it's clearly visible within your screen and you will be redirected to the agenda pack.



29 October 2024

Agenda Contact: David Blakemore, Democratic Services Team Manager
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Quorum = 15 members

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Members of the public may ask questions of the Leader, Cabinet Members and Committee Chairs at Ordinary Meetings of the Council. The total time allocated for questions by the public shall normally be limited to 20 minutes.

A question may only be asked if notice has been given by delivering it in writing to Democratic Services no later than 5 working days preceding the Council meeting. For example, if the Council meeting is being held at 7pm on a Wednesday then the question would need to be received by 10am on the preceding Wednesday. Please email to democracy@winchester.gov.uk.

FILMING AND BROADCAST NOTIFICATION

This meeting will be recorded and broadcast live on the Council's website. The meeting may also be recorded and broadcast by the press and members of the public – please see the Access to Information Procedure Rules within the Council's Constitution for further information, which is available to view on the [Council's website](#).

DISABLED ACCESS:

Disabled access is normally available, but please phone Democratic Services on 01962 848 264 or email democracy@winchester.gov.uk to ensure that the necessary arrangements are in place.