

A new Parish Council for Westcott? Village Meeting 12 February 2026

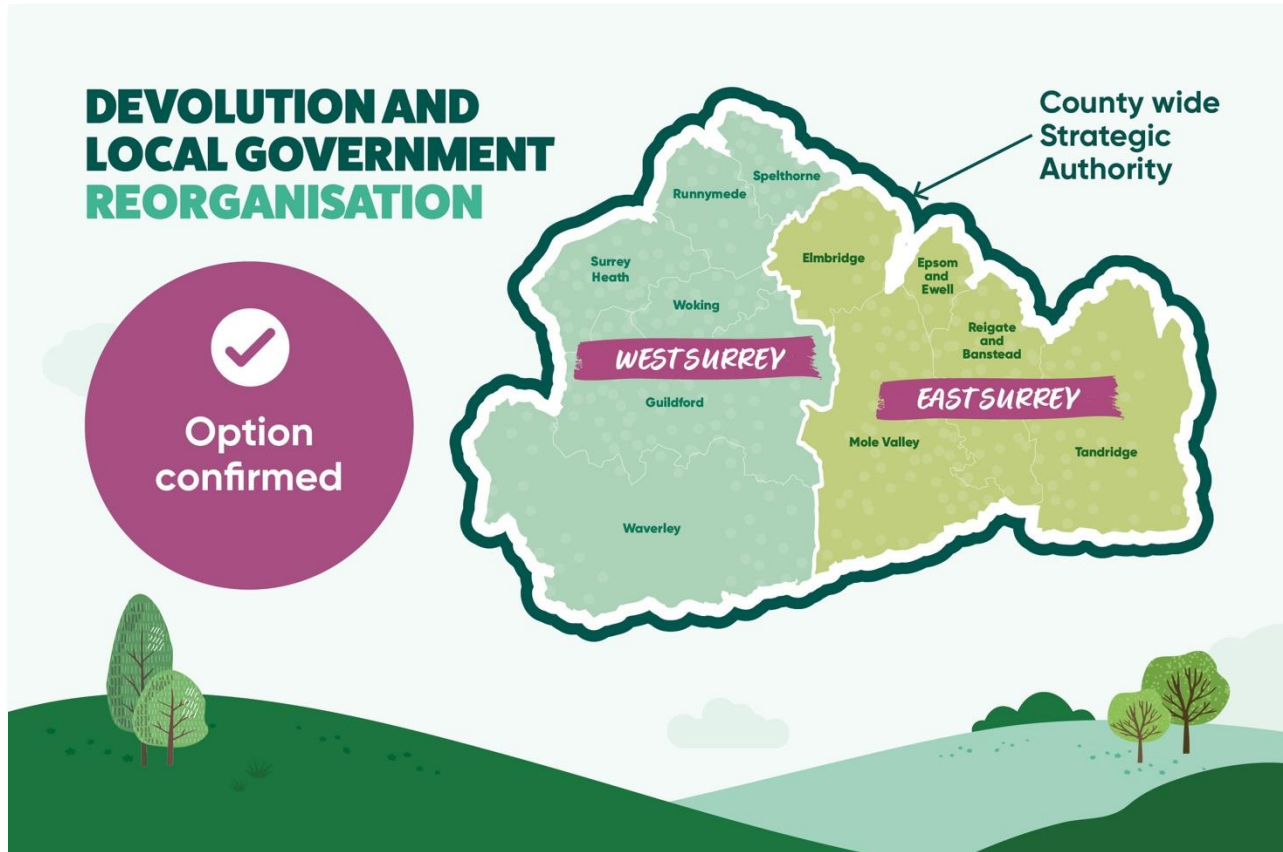


Agenda

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Context – Local Government Reorganisation
3. MVDC Community Governance Review
4. The benefits of a Parish Council
5. The cost of a Parish Council
6. Timescales
7. Some Questions
8. Open Discussion

Meeting also being broadcast by zoom for people to watch live on-line

Context – Local Government Reorganisation



West Surrey

- Spelthorne
- Runnymede
- Surrey Heath
- Woking
- Guildford
- Waverley

East Surrey

- Elmbridge
- Epsom & Ewell
- Reigate & Banstead
- **Mole Valley**
- Tandridge

MVDC Community Governance Review

- MVDC launched a Community Governance Review to consult on how local communities are represented. Stage One Consultation ran for 12 weeks (25 July to 17 Oct 2025)
 - WVA promoted the consultation online, in newsletters, village magazine articles and with posters on notice boards
 - Results informed MVDC's recommendations which includes new Parish Councils in seven areas including Westcott
 - Westcott responses:
 - 56 responses in total
 - 82% in favour of a new parish council
 - 14% against and 4% no opinion
- For context - at the last local election Westcott's turnout was 39%

Poster

Should Westcott have a Parish Council?

MVDC are holding a **Community Governance Review** to find out how communities wish to be represented in future. The WVA believes it is time for a change and that Westcott should have its own Parish Council with new democratically elected local Parish Councillors. What do you think?

Have your say by completing the MVDC consultation, it only takes 10 minutes and can be done online see link below, by emailing cgr@molevalley.gov.uk or in writing, pick up a paper copy from Dorking Library or Pippbrook council offices.

The consultation ends on 17 October 2025

Shape the Future of
Your Community



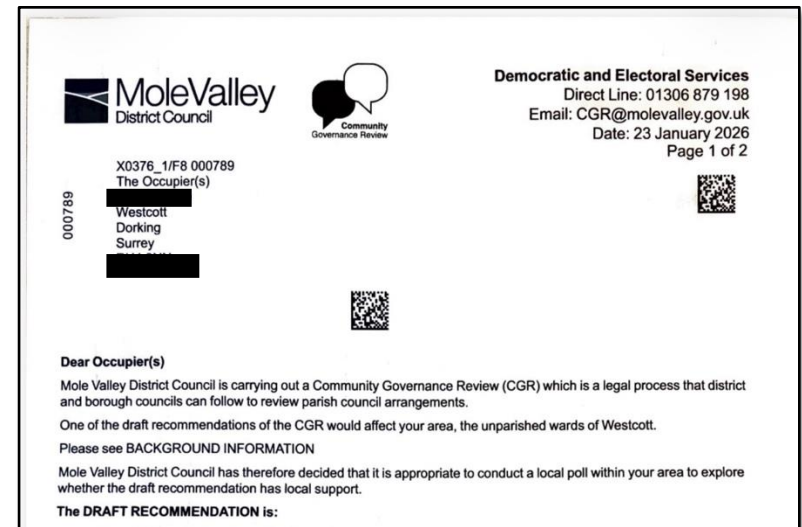
This is your opportunity to influence how local decisions are made.

<https://www.molevalley.gov.uk/cgr/>

MVDC Community Governance Review

- Stage Two Consultation now underway. Closes on 20 February 2026
- All 1,756 registered electors in Westcott have been sent ballot papers to vote Yes or No
- Can also make additional comments by email or by post
- MVDC's Devolution Group will review the results and make a recommendation to the MVDC Full Council in March 2026
- If the final recommendation is to implement a Parish Council the changes take effect from 1 April 2027

Stage Two Consultation Ballot papers



The benefits of a Parish Council

1. The first tier of local government, at the core of the community, made up of Councillors who live or work in the parish and are elected by the local community every four years. Proposal is for Westcott to have nine Parish Councillors
2. A statutory body with a clear set of rules on how it is organised and run
3. A statutory consultee for all planning applications in their area
4. Receives an automatic share of the Community Infrastructure Levy to spend on infrastructure projects in their parish.
5. Gives a stronger voice in light of local gov changes, should help bridge the democratic gap between Westcott and the new East Surrey Council
6. In time could take responsibility for delivering more local services
7. It is a fresh start for the village.

The cost of a Parish Council

- Collected from those who pay Council Tax by a “precept” (additional charge) usually equates to around 2% of the total Council Tax charge
- Precept covers the cost of running services and maintaining any assets owned by the Parish Council
- Parish Councillors are not paid but may claim limited expenses. The only paid position is a Parish Clerk
- The exact cost for Westcott is not known yet
- MVDC estimate in the first year the precept for all new Parish Councils will be between £20 and £80 a year.
- Current local examples:
 - Wotton Parish Council precept £7,700 a year (£23.22 Band D property)
 - Capel Parish Council precept £127,010 a year (£73.26 Band D property)



What we know so far about the cost

- In year one, it is believed the only incremental cost to be added to current Council Tax bills would be the salary for a part-time Parish Clerk and any admin expenses such as printers, training etc
- The newly elected Parish Councillors will review the services currently provided in their first year and decide what changes they would like to see in the future. Examples of current services provided by MVDC in Westcott incl. grass cutting and maintaining verges, the village green, Cradhurst Recreation Ground, bus stops, litter & dog poo bins, etc
- The new Parish Councillors will have to discuss their plans at open meetings with the village and then agree their proposals with East Surrey Council

Timescales

1. Stage Two Consultation closes on 20 February 2026.
2. The ballot result and other comments received will be considered by the MVDC Devolution Working Group
3. The Devolution Working Group's final recommendations will be presented to and discussed by the MVDC Full Council in March 2026 for decision and publication
4. If the MVDC decision is to form a Parish Council in Westcott the process thereafter needs to be confirmed but it is understood the first elections for Parish Councillors would be on the 6 May 2027.
5. The new East Surrey Council comes in to effect from 1 April 2027



Some other questions

1. *What happens if the result of the Stage Two Consultation ballot is not to have a Parish Council?*
2. *Who is eligible to be a Councillor?*
3. *What is the nomination process for someone willing to stand as a Parish Councillor?*
4. *What happens if not enough people put themselves forward for election?*
5. *Who decides who will Chair the Parish Council?*
6. *Is there a maximum to the precept that can be added to the Council Tax bill?*
7. *If the Westcott electorate vote no, could Westcott apply again for a Parish Council at a future date once the new unitary Council is established and its performance has been assessed?*
8. *How do we recruit a Parish Clerk and who sets the salary?*
9. *What help would MVDC provide in preparing for a Parish Council?*
10. *What happens to the Westcott Village Association if a Parish Council is created?*

Open Discussion