Hedge End, West End and Botley Local Area Committee Chair's Annual Review 2025/2026

This report provides an overview of the key achievements, investments, and partnership successes delivered across the Hedge End, West End and Botley (HEWEB) area during the 2025/2026 municipal year. It highlights continued collaboration with Town and Parish Councils, the delivery of community infrastructure projects, support for young people, and progress on major local initiatives.

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1. Grant Funding to Town and Parish Councils

The Committee has continued its strong and productive partnership with Hedge End Town Council, West End Parish Council, and Botley Parish Council.
This year, the Local Area Committee (LAC) awarded a total of **£344,435** in grants for community-led projects to Hedge End Town Council, West End Parish Council and Botley Parish Council.

With Local Government reform approaching, priority has been placed on allocating developer contributions to strengthen local infrastructure. In 2025/26, the Committee approved **£734,129** of developer contributions to support a wide range of community enhancements, including:

- Development of a new footpath linking Norman Rodaway and the Kings Copse Avenue development
- Creation of a new HEWEB Air Quality Action Plan
- Installation of new LED equipment at The Berry Theatre
- Improvement works at Botley Community Centre
- Footpath extensions linking Hedge End Station to the Bubb Lane cycleway
- A new mezzanine level at West End Parish Workshop
- Delivery of a new HEWEB Economic Development Plan, supporting local businesses, youth employment, Hedge End regeneration, and the Botley "Love Your Place" initiative

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2. Itchen Valley Country Park (IVCP)

Itchen Valley Country Park has seen another highly successful year, with exceptional performance in visitor numbers and income generation.

- Expected visitor numbers for 2025/26 exceed **390,000**
- Strong income across café operations, venue hire, events, and parking
- Continued positive feedback on the new dog walking area
- Over **530 volunteer hours** delivered across **31 sessions**

Major improvements completed or in progress:

- Completion of the **play trail** and **The Den** in early 2025
- Work underway on a new **fully accessible play area**
- Enhancements to the Remembrance Avenue

- Allocation of **£43,000** in March 2026 for new footbridges across the water meadows

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3. Public Art Vision for HEWEB

A collaborative vision for public art has been developed with contributions from Borough, Town, and Parish Councils, as well as local residents. This has created a clear framework for future public art commissioning, including:

- Agreed themes and principles reflecting local identity
- Mapped project locations and a pipeline for delivery

The first project—**"Seated in Nature"**—is already underway.
Artist **Nicola Henshaw** is working with local lunch clubs and students from Deer Park School and Wildern School to co-create bespoke seating celebrating *Our Past, Our Present, and Our Future*.

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4. Community and Youth Grants

The Committee received a significant number of community and youth funding applications this year.

- **£4,494** awarded to **10 community projects** in December 2025
- **£5,800** awarded to **10 youth-focused projects**

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5. Supporting Young People

The Committee continues to fund the **Young People's Wellness Survey (YPWS)**, enabling ongoing access to counselling and support services.

In mid-2025, clerks and partner agencies undertook a review of youth provision across the area. The review highlighted strong, diverse delivery models:

- **West End** – traditional youth club with paid youth worker
- **Hedge End** – multi-activity programme delivered with external providers
- **Botley** – combined youth outreach and a youth club at Boorley Park

The **Friday Night Football** programme in Botley continues to be the most established and consistently well-attended session in the Borough.

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6. Utilita Bowl Multi-Agency Review

The multi-agency partnership with the Utilita Bowl has now completed its third year. The seasonal review meetings have strengthened:

- Relationships between the Bowl, the Council, Parish Councils, Police, and residents
- Event management planning, including improved coning plans

- Communication with residents
- Efforts to tackle anti-social behaviour

The annual Residents' Forum continues to provide an important platform for community feedback and accountability.

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7. Telegraph Woods Improvements

Phase One of the Telegraph Woods improvement project began in Spring 2025. Key developments include:

- Installation of a new circular path
- Biodiversity-led improvements and protection of native tree species
- Location and clearance of the previously blocked culvert that had caused flooding and tree loss
- Establishment of regular maintenance arrangements to prevent future issues

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8. Conclusion

The Local Area Committee continues to ensure that decisions are made with—and for—the local community. Our achievements are made possible through the valued contributions of partners, volunteers, local organisations, Town and Parish Councils, and Council staff.

We extend our sincere thanks to all who support the work of the Committee, and we look forward to building on these successes in the coming year.

Councillor Cynthia Garton
Chair of the Hedge End, West End and Botley Local Area Committee
March 2026