



Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting on Tuesday 26th May 2026 no earlier than 7.15pm.

This meeting was held at Rusper Village Hall.

Present: Cllrs M Cooke (Chair), F Maitland-Smith, G Fleming, M Fenton, S White, G Sallows, D Halsey, G Hussey (Vice Chair), D Matthews.

There were two members of public for part of the meeting.

Apologies: Cllr M Fillmore, R Beckmann.

Clerk: L Wilcock (Clerk)

Meeting commenced 1919hrs

020-26/27 Election of Chair

It was RESOLVED to elect Cllr Michelle Cooke as Chair of the Parish Council for the ensuing municipal year. Cllr Michelle Cooke signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

021-26/27 Election of Vice-Chair

It was RESOLVED to elect Cllr Geoff Hussey as Vice-Chair of the Parish Council for the ensuing municipal year. Cllr Geoff Hussey signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

022-26/27 Apologies

- a) Apologies were received from Cllr Malcolm Fillmore and Cllr Richard Beckmann. Cllr Dan Halsay advised that he would arrive late.
- b) Council noted that no Councillor had exceeded six months' absence from meetings.

023-26/27 Declarations of Interest

Declarations of interest were received from Cllr Fenella Maitland-Smith regarding Agenda Item 17 in her capacity as Chair of Save West of Ifield.

024-26/27 Review of Appointments to Committees and Council Representation

The following appointments were considered and agreed:

- a) Planning Committee – Chair: Cllr George Sallows; Vice-Chair: Cllr Simon White.
- b) Roads, Footpaths and Open Spaces Committee – Chair: Cllr Fenella Maitland-Smith; Vice-Chair: Cllr Daniel Matthews.
- c) Accounts Verification – Cllr Malcolm Fillmore.
- d) Gatwick Representative, including GATCOM and all Gatwick-related meetings – Cllr Malcolm Fillmore. It was resolved not to appoint a substitute at this time and to appoint a member when required.
- e) Playground – Cllr Geoff Hussey.
- f) Village Hall Committee Representative – Cllr Marion Fenton.
- g) Winter Management – Cllr Geoff Hussey.
- h) Community Emergency Plan – Cllr Geoff Hussey.
- i) Technology and Communications – Chair.
- j) Public Rights of Way – Cllr Daniel Matthews.
- k) Trees – Cllr Geoff Hussey and Cllr Dan Halsay.
- l) Book Swap Volunteers – Cllr Gill Fleming and Cllr Marion Fenton.
- m) West of Ifield Liaison – Cllr George Sallows.
- n) Land North of Horsham Liaison – Cllr Malcolm Fillmore.
- o) Biodiversity / Environmental Representative – Chair.

- p) Procurement Representatives – Cllr Simon White and Cllr Richard Beckmann.
- q) AEF Representative – Cllr Malcolm Fillmore.

025-26/27 Policies and Code of Conduct

Council considered the updated policies and governance documents.

It was RESOLVED:

- a) To adopt the updated policies in line with current legislation.
- b) To adopt the Code of Conduct.
- c) To adopt the Financial Regulations, including the proposed amendment to Section 5.15.
- d) To adopt the Standing Orders.
- e) To adopt the updated Financial and Physical Assets Risk Assessments.
- f) To continue receiving agendas and reports via email.
- g) To adopt the new Investment Strategy.
- h) To adopt the new Statement of Internal Controls.
- i) To adopt the updated Website Accessibility Statement.

026-26/27 Review of Additional Council Appointments

The following appointments were considered and agreed:

- a) Complaints Panel – Chair: Chair of the Council; Vice-Chair: Cllr Geoff Hussey.
- b) Tree Wardens – Resolved not to appoint.
- c) Neighbourhood Plan Working Party – Members to be appointed when required.
- d) Streetlights Representative(s) – Cllr Marion Fenton.
- e) Defibrillators Representative(s) – Cllr Geoff Hussey.
- f) Salt Bins Representative(s) – Cllr Geoff Hussey.
- g) Noticeboards Representative(s) – Chair and Cllr Fenella Maitland-Smith.
- h) Speedwatch and SID Representative(s) – Cllr Simon White.
- i) Playground Inspection Representative(s) – Cllr Geoff Hussey.

027-26/27 Appointment of Members to Outside Organisations

The following appointments to outside organisations were agreed:

- a) Rusper Sports Club – Cllr Richard Beckmann and Cllr Simon White.
- b) West Sussex Association of Local Councils (WSALC) – Chair and Cllr Geoff Hussey.
- c) Horsham Association of Local Councils (HALC) – Cllr Fenella Maitland-Smith and Cllr Daniel Matthews.
- d) Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign (GACC) – Cllr Malcolm Fillmore. Item to be placed on the next agenda.
- e) Communities Against Gatwick Noise and Emissions (CAGNE) – Cllr Malcolm Fillmore.
- f) Save West of Ifield – Cllr Fenella Maitland-Smith.

028-26/27 Minutes of Previous Meeting

It was RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 28 April 2026 as a true and correct record.

029-26/27 Climate Crisis

Council considered whether to include a standing agenda item entitled “Climate Crisis” for future meetings. Following discussion, it was RESOLVED to include the standing item on future agendas.

030-26/27 Public Session

No members of the public were present.

031-26/27 Finance

Council considered the financial reports and associated recommendations.

It was RESOLVED:

- a) To approve the Bank Reconciliation, Budget Report and Unity Trust Bank Statements for April.
- b) To approve the Schedule of Payments.

- c) To consider the budget going forward and review Council spending on unexpected projects. Council noted the report and agreed that to carry the item to the next meeting.
- d) To approve the opening of the Hinckley Rugby account and the closure of the Nationwide account.
- e) To approve the Parish Council insurance policy renewal with Clear Insurance.
- f) To note the updated Section 106 and CIL reports as published on the website.
- g) To receive, note and adopt the Internal Auditor's Report 2025–26.
- h) To receive and discuss the Internal Auditor Recommendations Report.
Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025–26:
- i) It was RESOLVED to approve Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement, which was signed by the Chair and Clerk.
- ii) It was RESOLVED to approve Section 2 – Accounting Statements, which were signed by the Chair.
- iii) Council received notification of the dates for the Notice of Public Rights.

032-26/27 Direct Debits and Standing Orders

It was RESOLVED to approve the following direct debits and standing orders for the forthcoming financial year:

- a) HugoFox Gold website and email service.
- b) Zen Internet (Village Hall internet).
- c) SSE Variable (streetlight electricity).
- d) Horsham District Council – car park rates.
- e) Horsham District Council – dog bins.
- f) Three mobile phone – Parish phone.

033-26/27 Subscriptions

It was RESOLVED to approve the following subscriptions:

- a) West Sussex / National Association of Local Councils.
- b) SLCC.
- c) Horsham Association of Local Councils.
- d) Information Commissioner's Office.
- e) Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign.
- f) Communities Against Gatwick Noise and Emissions Parish Council Forum.
- g) Parish Online.
- h) Microsoft 365.
- i) Clerks and Councils Direct.

034-26/27 Grant Applications

Council noted that there were no grant applications to consider.

035-26/27 Playground

Council considered the Playground Report and related recommendations.

It was RESOLVED:

- a) To adopt the Playground Report.
- b) To note that any additional playground equipment would be funded from the agreed Earmarked Reserve for the Playground, subject to Council approval.
- c) To agree the recommendation from the Roads, Footpaths and Open Spaces Committee to complete works to the trees at a cost of £580. It was noted that work would commence on Monday.

036-26/27 Planning

Council considered planning matters.

It was RESOLVED:

- a) To agree the Council's response to the amendment on planning application DC/25/1312 – West of Ifield.
- b) To note that, where a response is required before the next scheduled meeting, the adopted Terms of Reference permit a response to be submitted on behalf of the Council by the Chair and the Clerk.

037-26/27 Rusper Sports Ground

Council received an update on repair works at the Rusper Sports Ground. This item was carried forward to the next meeting.

038-26/27 Community Governance Review

Council considered the district-wide Community Governance Review consultation.

It was RESOLVED:

a) To note the commencement of the consultation running from 9 May to 22 June 2026 and consider whether the Parish Council wished to submit a response regarding current governance arrangements or proposed changes. Council agreed to retain the current arrangements and retain the RM8 site.

b) To agree the Parish Council response to the Community Governance Review, with Cllr George Sallows to submit the response prior to the 22 June deadline via email to cgr@horsham.gov.uk.

Council noted that details of the consultation had been published on the parish website.

039-26/27 Reports from Representatives

Representatives provided updates on the following matters:

Cllr Daniel Matthews reported that Rusper Stores wished to upgrade its air conditioning.

040-26/27 Matters Arising

The following matters arising were discussed:

041-26/27 Date of Next Meeting

Council noted that, due to the Clerk's annual leave, there would be a combined Parish Council meeting on Tuesday 30 June 2026.

042-26/27 Exclusion of Press and Public

It was RESOLVED that, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of confidential business where publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest.

043-26/27 Confidential Session – Land Acquisition

a) The group met to discuss the land acquisition. Cllr Fenella Maitland-Smith provided a spreadsheet outlining the estimated impact of a PWLB loan on the precept. The Chair thanked Cllr Fenella Maitland-Smith for the information provided.

b) Council received an update regarding the land acquisition process and valuation. Following discussion, it was RESOLVED to spend up to £2,000 plus VAT on a valuation service. If no provider could be secured within that budget, the previous valuation provider, Bray, would be instructed by the Chair if no alternative was agreed by 5 June 2026.

c) Council agreed that it would subsequently determine an indicative price to enable the Clerk and Chair to approach the landowners for preliminary discussions, allowing the PWLB application process and community engagement to commence. It was noted that this process would be undertaken via the West Sussex Association of Local Councils.

Meeting closed: 2051 hrs

Signed Dated