



Rusper Parish Council
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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting on Tuesday 31st March 2026 at 7.00pm. This meeting was held at Rusper Village Hall.

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

County Councillor Sam Raby

District Councillor Hannah Butler

There were 6 members of public.

Apologies: Cllr G Fleming.

Meeting commenced 1900hrs

183-25/26 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from: Cllr G Fleming.

184-25/26 Co-option of a Councillor

The Council **noted** that a vacancy had arisen and that, following the statutory notice period, no requests for an election were received. Members considered the co-option of an eligible candidate. Resolved: That Richard Beckmann be co-opted as a Parish Councillor. The newly co-opted Councillor signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

185-25/26 Declarations of Interest

Members declared the following interests: Fenella Maitland-Smith interest in SWOI.

186-25/26 Climate Crisis Statement

The Council reaffirmed its acknowledgement of the climate crisis and confirmed that environmental considerations will continue to be taken into account in decision-making.

187-25/26 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 24th February 2026 were considered.

Resolved: That the minutes be approved as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.

188-25/26 Open Forum

Members of the public addressed the Council in accordance with Standing Orders.

The owners of Bonwyks Place have outlined proposals within a current planning application for the site, including the addition of a meeting hall. A query was raised regarding the potential sale of the field at Barnwood; it was confirmed that this is not presently under consideration unless a suitable future use for the land is identified. An offer has been made to the Parish Council should they consider the site could serve a community purpose.

The possibility of self-build plots at the Bonwyks site is also under consideration. Any manufacturing use of the site will be subject to planning conditions.

Questions relating to the backlands at the lower end of the site were addressed. It was confirmed that these areas, together with the footpath, will be retained and maintained. Horsham District

Council Planning has advised that no housing development is planned or considered necessary in this area.

The proposed hall will be single-storey but of notable height, designed to integrate with the surrounding environment. The next stage will involve submitting a pre-application. It is anticipated that the hall could accommodate approximately 300 visitors.

The meeting was closed to the public following this item.

196-25/26 Memorial Bench – Playground

Members confirmed the order of a Glasdon Phoenix bench at a cost of £671.42 including VAT. It was **agreed** that the commemorative plaque would be arranged by the donor, to be in stainless steel with black infill and engraved. The donor will also arrange the purchase of the concrete fixings. It was **noted** that the family will be contacted regarding the wording of the plaque, and that an article will be submitted to the Parish News by the family following installation. It was **resolved** that Cllr Geoff Hussey will liaise with the donor in respect of the bench.

189-25/26 Rusper Sports Club Discussion

The Council received a presentation from a representative of Rusper Sports Club regarding its current operations and future plans. A copy of the presentation is attached to the minute book. Members raised questions regarding the future use of the pitch. It was noted that the Club has experienced challenges relating to weather conditions and player injuries. The potential removal of two goalposts to facilitate the creation of youth pitches was discussed, and the Council **agreed to support the proposed future plans for the pitch.**

The Clerk reminded the Council that testing of the pavilion in accordance with Health and Safety Executive (HSE) requirements is a statutory obligation. As the deadline has now passed, this matter is considered a priority and must be addressed without delay. It was therefore **resolved** that the Clerk will instruct a contractor to undertake the necessary testing.

In addition, the Council **agreed** to formalise a relationship agreement with the Club (Appendix 1), review the Club's accounts, and ensure that the pavilion is inspected and tested in compliance with HSE requirements on an ongoing basis. The Clerk will develop a plan to address these matters and will place this on the agenda for the Roads, Footpaths and Open Spaces Committee for further discussion and recommendation to full Council.

190-25/26 Clerk's Report

The Clerk's report, including updates from two meetings and a short financial report, was received and **noted.**

191-25/26 Reports from Other Authorities

a) County Councillor's Report – Local government reorganisation was delayed in Sussex, and Central Government subsequently proposed an alternative plan. Although the model differs, Chichester has been added to Horsham, Mid Sussex, and Crawley for technical consultation following the election period. Arun, Adur, and Worthing have been grouped together; it is unclear how this will operate, and it is likely that a judicial review may be considered by other authorities.

b) District Councillor's Report – It is anticipated that a consultation on parish boundary changes will take place after Easter.

192-25/26 Financial Matters

a) Financial Reports – February. Members considered the reconciliation, budget report, and bank statements. **Resolved:** That the reports be approved.

b) Grant Application – Rusper Stores - Members considered the S137 grant application of £3,278.00 to install CCTV in and around Rusper Stores. It was **agreed** that the Parish Council will purchase the cameras and arrange their installation under power to spend Local Government Rating Act s37 *gives*

the power for the detection and prevention of crime in your area including the installation and maintenance of any equipment. **Resolved:** To approve the associated costs.

c) Schedule of Payments - Resolved: That the schedule of payments for March be **approved**.

d) Payroll Matters - Resolved: That payroll services be transferred to Mulberry LAS Ltd with immediate effect.

193-25/26 Consultation: Revised National Planning Policy Framework

The Council noted that its response to the NPPF consultation was submitted on 10th March 2026.

194-25/26 Planning Applications

Members considered planning applications received since publication of the agenda.

It was **agreed** to carry to Planning Committee.

195-25/26 Planning Appeals

a) The Council **noted** that the Planning Inspectorate had dismissed the appeal relating to the proposed development of nine dwellings on land to the rear of The Rectory, High Street, Rusper. Noted.

b) Planning Inspectorate Reference: 6006131 Application: Outline application for the erection of four dwellings, extension to existing cottage, alterations to access, and provision of landscaping. Site: Land adjacent to Pucks Croft Cottage, Horsham Road, Rusper, West Sussex.

Noted and to be carried forward to the Planning Committee meeting.

197-25/26 Annual Parish Meeting

Members confirmed arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting on 26 May 2026, to be held prior to the AGM.

198-25/26 Gatwick Report

The Gatwick report was received and noted.

199-25/26 Reports from Representatives

Councillors' Updates from External Bodies and Meetings Attended

- **Cllr Marion Fenton** – Advised the Council that the Environmental Agency had been visiting residents and noted a reported oil leak in Gardeners Green. Highlighted that Warnham Parish Council presents an annual accolade to a resident who has made a significant contribution to the Parish. Discussed including vulnerable residents as part of parish activities and noted the AiRS paid service, which should involve these individuals.
- **Cllr Fenella Maitland-Smith** – Reported knowledge of residents potentially facing eviction and enquired whether the Council could assist. It was noted that the Parish Council has no powers in this matter other than to refer residents to the appropriate higher authority.
- **Cllr Geoff Hussey** – Quotation of £560 to make trees safe was considered and **resolved**. Reported that the existing defibrillator had been decommissioned and the new unit recommissioned. Installation of the defibrillator at the Sports Club to be arranged by Cllr George Sallows.
- **Cllr Malcolm Fillmore** – Reported that the Gatwick DCO application is still pending.

200-25/26 Planning Inspector and Local Plan

The Council noted key dates for the Examination of the Horsham District Local Plan 2023–2040.

It was confirmed that:

- Cllr Fenella Maitland-Smith will present Matter 1
- Cllr George Sallows will present Matters 2 and 3
- A written response is required for Matter 4

Deadline for submissions: 10 April 2026 at 17:00.

Resolved: To approve the written statement for Matter 4 and for the Clerk to submit the statement, including a request for a speaker to attend on behalf of Matter 4. Cllr George Sallows will attend on

behalf of Rusper Parish Council. **Further resolved:** To delegate any subsequent comments to Cllr Fenella Maitland-Smith and Cllr George Sallows.

201-25/26 Matters Arising

Members reviewed outstanding actions and identified items for future agendas.
None noted.

202-25/26 Date of Next Meeting

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on 28th April 2026.

Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved: That, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed.

Confidential Session

203/25/26 Members considered the Clerk’s salary and allowances.

Resolved: To approve the proposed salary at Level 32, including the agreed increase and a payment of £26 per month for home office use in line with the contract of employment. It was **noted** that the other employees salary continues to receive automatic incremental increases as previously **agreed**.

204-25/26 Rusper Parish Council Policies

a) Adoption of Land Acquisition and Disposal Policy

Resolved: That the policy be formally adopted. It was noted that the policy will enable the Council to access all relevant funding sources in accordance with the Local Government Act and aligns with the adopted NALC model Financial Regulations and Standing Orders.

b) Clerk’s Report on Land Matters

Members received an update on land-related matters. The following was considered:

- **Available Land:** It was **resolved** to consider the purchase of the land.
- It was **agreed** that the Council’s current assets should be taken into account as part of the valuation.
- It was **agreed** an independent valuer will be appointed to carry out a formal valuation of the land.
- It was **noted** that legal fees will be met from the earmarked reserve set aside for this purpose.

Meeting closed: 2108 hrs

Signed Dated