



Warbleton Parish Council

THE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY 2025

Minutes of the Warbleton Annual Parish Assembly held on
Thursday 1 May 2025 at the Dunn Village Hall, Rushlake Green 6.30pm

Present: There were 9 people in attendance:

Councillors Andrew Long (Chairman), Katy Waterman, Bob Bowdler, Chris Wells, Buster Ansell, and Jeanne Peterson (Parish Clerk)

Two members of the public

President of Bodle Street Green Village Hall Committee

Jonathan Austin – Guest Speaker from the Local History Society

1. Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman of the Parish Council welcomed those attending the meeting. The Parish Assembly is a statutory meeting for all parishioners which allows the parish council to give an account of what it has done over the last year and to listen to any comment or concerns raised by the community.

2. Update from the Chairman Andy Long, Warbleton Parish Council

Since 21 March 2024 the council has convened 30 times, made up predominantly of full council and planning & development committee meetings.

There have been two Strengthening Local Relationships (SLR) meetings with East Sussex Highways in an attempt to forge a better working relationship with highway partners and to hold them to account.

Councillors have also attended numerous outside body events and attended meetings of both village halls.

The council has seen three councillors leave since March 2024 and a further two come on board.

The council also saw a change in chairmanship with the election of Cllr Charlie Saunders in May 2024. When Cllrs Charlie and Bev Saunders left the council, Cllr Waterman, as standing Vice-Chair, took over as Chair until the council elected Cllr Andy Long.

Cllr Waterman was thanked for her hard work and dedication to the role as Vice-Chair since May last year.

At the beginning of this year, it was announced that central government would be re-organising the way local government will work. Details are still emerging but it looks likely that the District and County Councils will disappear and Unitary Authorities to be the replacement. Local county elections were postponed and mayoral elections are due to take place in 2026.

During the course of the last council year the following has been achieved:

- Notice board construction and installation has taken place on Rushlake village green – thanks were noted to Procter Taylor for his sterling efforts.
- An emergency electrical change-over switch has been installed in the Bodle Street Village Hall thanks to Cllr Jarrold for his assistance. Dunn Village Hall is to receive one shortly.
- Water testing has taken place at Spring Hill, Punnetts Town for potability and potential use of the water in case of emergencies – thanks were noted to Cllr Waterman for her efforts.
- A leaning tree had been cleared at Spring Hill thanks to Cllr Bowdler with his assistance to this.
- The adoption of the listed BT telephone box at Warbleton has completed.
- The council has been challenging Southern Water over the discharge of untreated sewage into local water courses from the treatment facility in Back Lane, Rushlake Green.
- Finger post renewals and up-keep has continued within the parish. Thanks were noted to Cllrs Wells and Waterman who undertook the annual review of these. The aim is to repair or replace two fingerposts per year in a 50% part funded programme with East Sussex.
- Through the SLR meetings the council has attempted to hold to account East Sussex Highways. A programme of the renewal of road markings is under way and a constant battle of keeping the roadway clear of overhanging trees and hedges continues.
- Progress is being made with the delineation markings between the public highway and Osbourne House car park.
- The council is working in partnership with Heathfield & Waldron over the Punnetts Town school crossing. Data is currently awaited from the automated signage at either end of the village.
- It has been agreed to plant a replacement tree at Spring Hill, a Black Tulip Magnolia.
- VE Day 80th Anniversary – A decision was taken earlier in the year to acknowledge the sacrifice made by local servicemen. To that end the council is joining, like so many others around the country, in commemorating the end of WW11. A beacon has been commissioned and will be installed on Rushlake Green for 8 May 2025, and will be lit at 9.30pm in time for the nationwide event on that evening. A whole programme of events to start at 6pm has been organised by the council's Vice-Chair Cllr Waterman.

3. Report from East Sussex County Councillor Bob Bowdler

The latest full report on county activities was only just available and will be published with the next full council meeting papers.

There remains no real detail about the devolution process, and it has been reported that government, until recently, was unaware that parish councils can be recruited via co-option without the full electoral process.

The ESCC Highways Steward, who attended the SLR meeting, has been promoted,

therefore another change and loss of continuity. This will be followed up as an issue. The crossing at Punnetts Town school remains a problem and discussions will be ongoing with the leader of the campaign for improvements.

4. Report from Bodle Street Green Village Hall President

2024 was a good year, with a whole range of hall users; regulars included the gardeners club and the villages lunch club who provide a monthly meal at excellent value.

Other included; indoor bowls, pétanque, yoga and dog training. The venue is also used for all sorts of group occasions such as parties, events, funeral wakes, and by the church and parish council for their meetings.

The hiring fees are designed to always cover the running costs of the hall, but for extra works and maintenance the committee organises a programme of fundraising events, they were also the beneficiary two years ago of a legacy.

There is currently a budget surplus, which is allowing the committee to look at potential new projects, and would also enable them to apply for match funding from grant awarding bodies.

It was noted that there will potentially be a fund via the District Council available on application for local good causes. The clerk will circulate details when received.

5. Questions/Comments –

Q/C: Capacity was not built into the Back Lane sewage plant to manage excess water/rain in addition to residential waste.

A: There is annual discharge data which documents when inclement weather pushes the system into overflow. But the question remains as to why the water is getting into a supposedly sealed system, releasing into local water courses to prevent problems at the plant. Warbleton Parish Council will be following up these questions with Southern Water,

Q: There are problems with reliable broadband within the parish and with some providers turning off various options, updated mast infrastructure could potentially provide 5g capacity.

A: It was agreed that provision had not covered all areas in the parish, but that an upgrade to the mast had taken place the previous week.

Q: Cllr Waterman asked who the best person would be to contact about raising the VE Day flag at Bodle Street Village Green on 8 May 2025.

A: It was agreed that the clerk would forward contact details of the hall caretaker.

4. Guest Speaker Jonathan Austin from the Warbleton History Society was welcomed to the meeting.

Jonathan shared background information as to how the Society was founded on 1 May 1979, exactly 46 years ago to the day of this meeting, and that his parents had been founding members.

Initially the society members gathered information by visiting the Records Office, recording details by hand on index cards to support research into family and house history. Four

decades on and access to information is readily available online which changed the nature of the group to less research time, but continuing regular meetings on a monthly basis and organising field walks and local trips.

The group meets on the second Monday of the month at Dunn Village Hall, Rushlake Green 7.30pm for 8pm start. There is an annual fee for members of £15, but visitors can attend for a one off fee of £4. Meetings usually attract 30/40 members and there is an ongoing programme of speakers.

There is a World War 11 project currently underway to commemorate those soldiers from the parish who gave their lives or were affected, and to look into what parish life was like during the war. The Peter Croft Memorial was noted, and the bombing of a bus in Middle Lane killing five people. A visual presentation was shown, and reference made to three local publications which illuminated local village life at the time; War in Warbleton Volumes 1 and 2, and Warbleton Between the Wars.

The Chairman thanked the speaker for such an interesting talk which had brought back many memories to those attending, and some local anecdotes were shared.

The meeting closed at 7.35pm