



To All Councillors,

You are summoned to the Annual Meeting of Billingshurst Parish Council on **Wednesday 7 May 2025 at 7pm** at the Billingshurst Centre.

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting and speak for a maximum of three minutes about an item on the agenda for this meeting during the Public Session at the discretion of the Chairman. They must give their name.


G.C. Burt
Clerk to the Council

30 April 2025

Please note that all supporting papers can be found on the Councils' website.

A G E N D A

1. Election of Chairman.
2. Chairman's Announcements.
3. Election of Vice Chairman
4. Apologies for Absence.
5. To Receive Declarations of Interest and consider any requests for a dispensation.
6. Council Structure 2025-26
 - a. To Review Committee Structure – Appendix A. (No amendments suggested.)
 - b. To Review Committee Terms of Reference – Appendix B. (No amendments suggested.)
 - c. To Appoint *en bloc* Committees, Working Parties and representatives on outside organisations - Appendix C.
 - d. To Appoint Chairs & Vice Chairs to Committees. (The Chairman will invite only those members of each Cttee to vote for these.)
7. To refer *en bloc* the following to the Finance & General Purposes Committee:

Annual review of inventory of land and other assets including buildings and office equipment; Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks; review of the Council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies; review of arrangements (including legal agreements) with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies and businesses; review of the Council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972.
8. To refer *en bloc* to the Working Practices Committee:

Ongoing review of all of the Council's policies, including disciplinary, freedom of information and Data Protection etc.

9. To review and readopt Standing Orders (In Members Handbook / on website)

End of Annual Meeting business / Short Adjournment / Resume ordinary business

Adjournment for

10. Public Session (Members of the Public may speak for up to 3 minutes at the discretion of the Chairman). They must give their name.
11. Reports from:
 - a. County Councillor
 - b. District Councillors
 - c. Council Representatives on Outside Bodies.

Resume Meeting

12. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 March 2025. (Previously sent)
13. Clerk's Report.
14. 2024-25 Accounts
 - a. To receive the Final Internal Audit Report - Appendix **D**.
 - b. To consider suggested responses to *Action Plan* comments - Appendix **E**.
 - c. To approve the Annual Return Governance Statement - Appendix **F**.
 - d. To approve the Annual Return Accounting Statement - Appendix **G**.
 - e. To reappoint Mike Platten T/A *April Skies Consulting* as Internal Auditor for the year 2025-26.

[Explanatory note: Under the new Model Financial Regulations, both interim and final Internal Audit Reports, plus any actions, must be considered by the whole Council. F&GP Cttee can still look at the details i.e. *budget v actuals* etc.]

15. To receive an update on the *Better Billingshurst Fund* and agree that proposed projects on Council land can go to public consultation prior to final consideration of Landlord's Consent - Appendix **H**.
16. To consider recommendations from Committees:
 - a) From F&GP Committee of 26 March 2025: That the revised new draft Financial Regulations be approved by Council accordingly, following further final grammatical and numbering changes to be made by the Clerk in liaison with the Committee Chair. (Min 41/25 refers) [These can be found on the website under Council Documents.]
 - b) From the Property Committee of 19 March 2025: That Financial Regulations be waived on this occasion as the work (to repair play equipment at Cherry Tree Close play area) is of a bespoke nature, in accordance with Financial Regulation 11.1d, and that Option 1, in the sum of £19,769.27 from Sutcliffe Play, be accepted accordingly. (Min 19/25 refers)
17. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 March 2025. (Previously sent)
18. Clerk's Report.
19. To receive Minutes as approved by the following Committees:
 - a) Planning & Environment 4 March, 1 & 15 April 2025.
 - b) F&GP 26 February & 26 March 2025.

- c) Property 15 January 2025
- d) Working Practices 12 February 2025

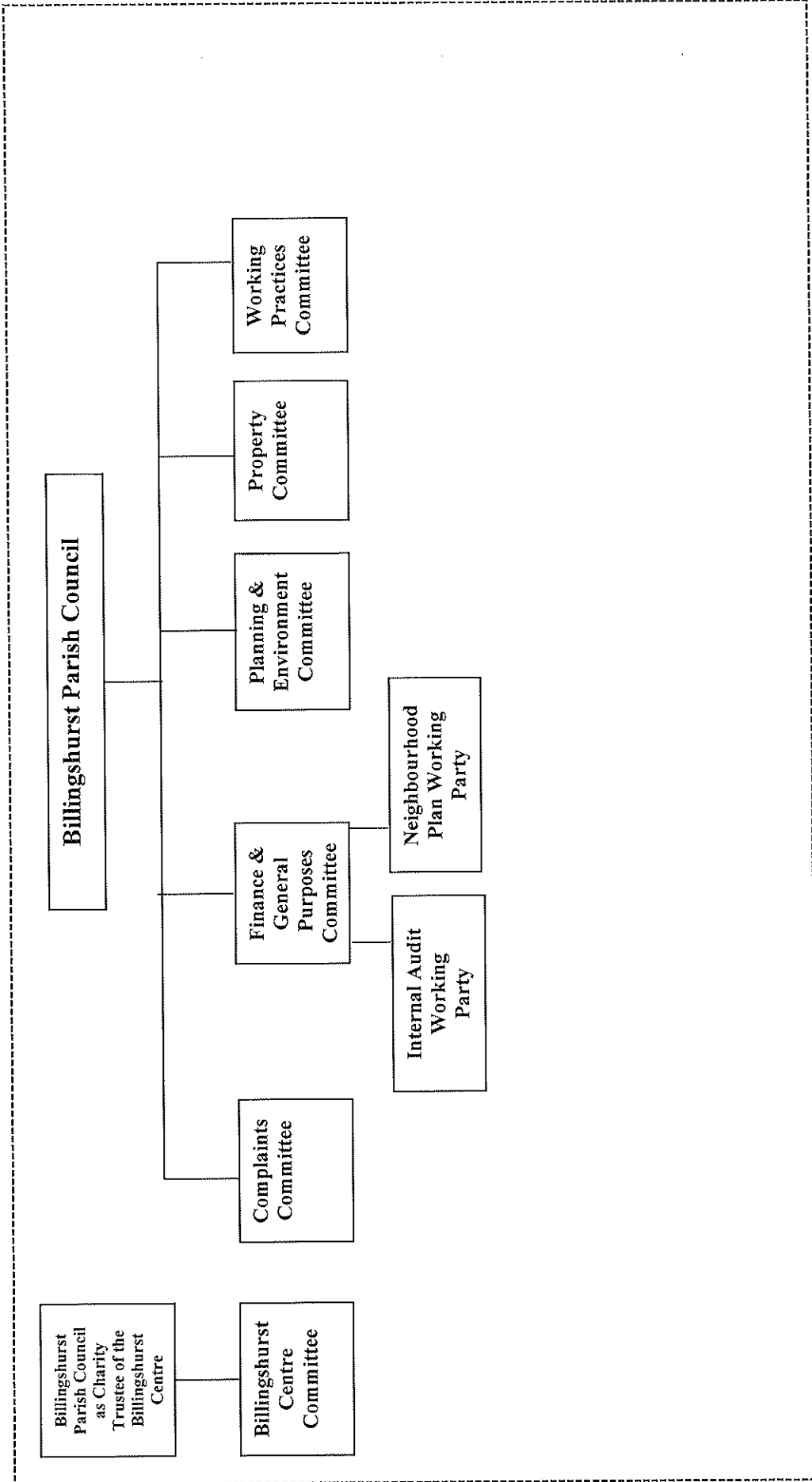
(all previously circulated / on website.)

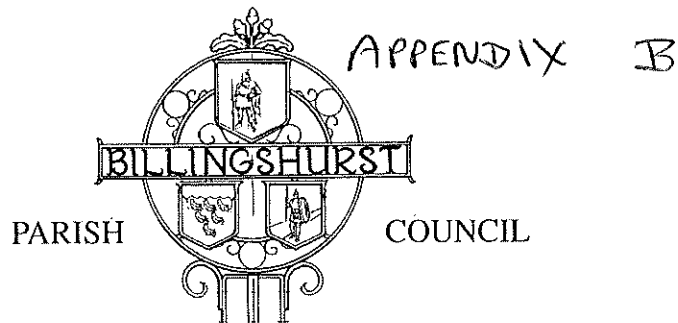
- 20. Neighbourhood Wardens - to receive Wardens' Reports for March & April – previously circulated / on website.
- 21. To receive the minutes of the 2025 Annual Parish Meeting of Electors and to consider any matters requiring the attention of the Council - previously circulated.
- 22. Date of Next Meeting – 2 July 2025

Members of the public should be aware that being present at a meeting of the Council or one of its Committees or Sub-Committees will be deemed as the person having given consent to being recorded (photograph, film or audio recording) at the meeting, by any person present.

APPENDIX A

Billingshurst Parish Council Structure May 2025





TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR COMMITTEES

MAY 2025

PREAMBLE

All Full Committees have delegated authority on all matters within their remit, except

- a) For those items where the law prescribes that such decisions are taken by Full Council (in which case a Committee may make recommendations to Council as appropriate.)
- b) Where a Committee consider that the matter should be resolved by all Councillors.

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Main Function:

The undertaking of all financial matters and other miscellaneous matters. The efficient and effective administration of the Council's affairs with specific attention to resource allocation and financial well-being.

Terms of References:

- (a) To approve monthly accounts for payment.
- (b) To review the monthly bank reconciliation
- (c) To prepare a budget for each year and to monitor the Parish Council's expenditure.
- (d) Dealing with matters specifically referred by the Council or any other Committee and with matters not specifically referred or delegated to any other Committee.
- (e) To consider all grant applications.

- (f) Giving consideration to, agreeing and making appropriate recommendations in respect of the Council's revenue estimates, including reimbursable expenditure.
- (g) To ensure the Council is meeting its obligations to HMRC.
- (h) To ensure that the Council has appropriate insurance policies and reviews annually the Council's Risk Assessment.
- (i) To review annually the Council's Fixed Asset Register and ensure that property valuations and insurance cover are adequate.
- (j) To maintain bi-annual Internal Audits of the Council using a suitable independent Internal Auditor.
- (k) To review the year-end accounts and annual return for the External Auditor and recommend to the full Council for approval.
- (l) To consider all highway (excl. footpath/ROW) matters and public transport issues.
- (m) To consider matters relating to crime and disorder including the provision of CCTV.
- (n) The maximum membership of this Committee is 10.

Policy:

The Committee will:-

- (i) Look to provide the Council's services at the minimum cost, commensurate with full and effective fulfillment of the Council's operational role and policy aims.
- (ii) Seek to ensure the most profitable and efficient investment management policies.
- (iii) Recognise the need for good business management in operating its services, and will, as appropriate, undertake performance and systems reviews to ensure an economic, effective and efficient Council. Where beneficial, consider opportunities for the introduction of new technology within the Council's office systems.
- (iv) Recognise the need for, and benefits of, Member and staff training. Initiate and react to positive and appropriate opportunities within the context of overall budget resources.

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Main Functions:

The management of all Council property including playing fields and open spaces, together with provision and maintenance of playground equipment. The upkeep and repair of Churchyard and provision and maintenance of parish street lighting.

Terms of Reference:

- (a) Dealing with the maintenance of the Adversane Hall, Public Conveniences, Jubilee Fields Sports Pavilion, Council-owned open spaces and play equipment within the Committee's approved budget and the making of recommendations annually to the Finance and General Purposes Committee to rents and charges.
- (b) Dealing with the provision of:-
 - i. Bus shelters
 - ii. War Memorial
 - iii. Public Notice Boards
 - iv. Public Seats
 - v. Christmas Lights
- (c) Dealing with the maintenance of the Churchyard.
- (d) Dealing with Parish footway lighting and all up-grading schemes.
- (e) Review the schedule of inspection of Council property and open spaces including five yearly electrical safety inspections.
- (f) Review the Risk Assessments for individual property, open spaces and working practices in relation to property matters.
- (g) The maximum membership of this Committee is 10.

Strategy:

The efficient and effective administration and maintenance of all Parish property.

Policy:

- (h) Seek to maintain and enhance the appearance of all its landholdings recognizing the significance and importance of such standards.

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Main Functions:

The consideration of planning and licensing applications and other planning issues relating to the Parish.

Terms of Reference:

- (a) To consider all planning and licensing applications for the Parish.
- (b) The making of representations in respect of appeals against the refusal of planning permission.
- (c) To make recommendations regarding street naming.
- (d) To consider and monitor Parish development plans (Local Development Framework).
- (e) To seek to ensure that the general environment within the Parish is monitored, so far as is possible and to report to the appropriate authority any potential hazards, breaches, etc.
- (f) To bear in mind environmental aspects when considering planning applications.
- (g) To seek to ensure that appropriate landscaping is incorporated sympathetically in planning applications, when appropriate, to enhance the environment.
- (h) To consider and respond to various environmental statutory documents.
- (i) Public Footpath and R.O.W. matters.
- (j) To co-ordinate the investigation of the incidences and cause of flooding in the parish.
 - i. To gather and document evidence of flooding.
 - ii. To work with stakeholders in a joined-up approach to investigate and seek to resolve parish flooding issues.
 - iii. To submit applications to Operation Watershed for funding for works to alleviate flooding.
- (k) The maximum membership of this Committee is 10.

Strategy

To seek to ensure high standards to planning for all new developmental activity within the Parish boundary with specific attention to all appropriate

local and statutory plan policies and to seek to ensure that any development is commensurate with the character of the Parish.

Policy:

- (i) To ensure positive and constructive input to Horsham District Council in respect of all planning applications submitted.
- (ii) To monitor the Conservation Areas and ensure that the style of development and general decoration, including signage, shop fronts and street furniture, is in keeping with those Listed Buildings situated therein, in accordance with any Conservation Area documents.
- (iii) To monitor and review the success of the Parish Design Statement and Neighbourhood Plan in influencing local planning authority decisions.
- (iii) To seek to ensure, within overall resources, maximum publicity and awareness of planning applications by means of public notices.
- (iv) To give due consideration, where possible, to sustainable development policies.
- (v) To positively contribute to discussions, evaluations and consultations in respect of major or contentious new development activity, including the establishment of formal meetings with professional planning staff, to exchange views and consider details proposals whenever necessary.
- (vi) Work to retain public open space, including playing fields whenever possible.
- (vii) To seek at least a like-for-like replacement of TPO/Conservation Area trees where they are felled, on or off site, as appropriate.

WORKING PRACTICES COMMITTEE

Main Function:

The consideration of all employment-related matters and Council policy and procedure documents.

Terms of Reference:

To make recommendations to the Council on all employment related matters including contracts, salary reviews and superannuation.

To review Council policy documents in accordance with statutory advice: Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct, Scheme of Members Allowances, Discipline and Grievance Procedure.

To ensure there are policies to maintain good working relationship with Councillors, staff and the general public including Dignity at Work, Councillor/Staff Protocol and Code of Practice for Handling Complaints.

To ensure the Council's Health and Safety Policy is reviewed and updated in accordance with latest legislation.

Adopt positive staffing policies and ensure compliance with national conditions of service, welfare and health and safety at work legislation, and any other legal requirements.

The maximum membership of this Committee is 10.

Billingshurst Parish Council as Trustee

Accounts

- To review the twice yearly internal audit report.
- To set the budget annually.
- To review the year-end accounts and Trustees report.
- To review the submission of the annual return to the Charity Commission.

Health and Safety

- To review the Centre's insurance.

Marketing

- To approve the Business Plan and market the Centre and its facilities.

Hiring

- To approve the annual review of the schedule of hire charges.
- To approve the review terms and conditions of hire.

Licensing

- To approve the licensing policy.

Billingshurst Centre Committee

Committee Size: Maximum 10 Councillors

Terms of Reference

Management

- To consider queries relating to the day to day operation of the Centre raised by the Clerk.

Accounting

- To approve monthly accounts for payment.
- To review the monthly bank reconciliation, profit and loss account and balance sheet.

- To make a recommendation to the Council as Trustee:
 - To review the twice yearly internal audit report.
 - To set the budget annually.
 - To review the year-end accounts and Trustees report.
 - To review the submission of the annual return to the Charity Commission.

Health and Safety

- Annual risk assessment for the Centre.
- Annual Health and Safety check.
- Fire risk assessment and compliance.
- To make a recommendation to the Council as Trustee on insurance.
- Food Hygiene.

Maintenance

- To review the Fixed Asset Register for the Centre.
- To create and operate a program of maintenance.
- To consider maintenance issues as they arise.

IT/Audio

- To review and update IT facilities at the Centre.
- To review and update stage facilities at the Centre.

Marketing

- To create a Business Plan for the approval of the Council as Trustee and market the Centre and its facilities.
-

Hiring

- To formulate and review annually the schedule of hire charges and make a recommendation to the Council as Trustee for approval.
- To produce and review hiring agreements.
- To produce and review terms and conditions of hire and make a recommendation to Council as Trustee for approval.
- To review debtor list.
- To consider hirers' complaints, that cannot be dealt with by the Manager or Clerk.

Licensing

- To ensure the Centre meets the Licensing Act requirements.
- To formulate policy for licensing and make a recommendation to the Council as Trustee for approval.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN WORKING PARTY

Main Function:

Consultation with the community and stakeholders for the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan for Billingshurst.

Membership:

6 Councillors (max), plus non-Councillor members and District and County Councillors as appropriate.

Terms of Reference:

- To define a timetable for the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- To produce a statement of community and stakeholder engagement.
- To implement the statement of community and stakeholder engagement at the earliest opportunity and throughout the process.
- To apply for grant funding for the Neighbourhood Plan process.
- To prepare a brief to seek quotations for specialist help in the creation of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- To prepare a brief detailing quotation obtained for specialist help to prepare the Neighbourhood Plan and recommendation of selection of specialist for approval and appointment by the Council.
- To work with the specialists and the community to develop a vision for the parish for approval by the Parish Council.
- To appoint focus groups to develop further the different aspects of the vision for the parish.
- To build an evidence base to support the Neighbourhood Plan.
- To develop policy, guidance and proposals for the Neighbourhood Plan.
- To call for site allocations.
- To present the pre-submission consultation Neighbourhood Plan to the Council for approval.
- To present the submission Neighbourhood Plan and consultation statement to the Council for approval.
- To consider any modifications recommended by the Independent Examiner and make a recommendation to the Council.

Secretariat

Billingshurst Parish Council to provide full secretariat support to the Working Party in accordance with Standing Orders. The Neighbourhood Plan agendas, minutes, consultations and updates can be added to the Council's website.

Financial

Billingshurst Parish Council to retain full responsibility for the administration of the finances of the Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with Financial Regulations.

Focus Groups

- The Neighbourhood Plan Working Party may appoint Focus Groups to investigate specific Neighbourhood Plan issues.
- These Focus Groups may be comprised of all non-Councillor members.
- Their role will be to investigate and make a report to the Steering Committee.
- Members will have no voting rights, as they are an advisory group only.

Footnote

As a Working Party, it has no delegated powers as per an ordinary Committee, thus, all significant decisions must be made in the form of a recommendation to the parent committee, F&GP.

Approved May 2025

APPENDIX C

BILLINGSHURST PARISH COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 7 MAY 2025

APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES ETC

REPORT BY CLERK

FOR DECISION

At the Annual Meeting of the Council, the Council reviews the membership of all committees, working parties and appointments to outside bodies etc.

All Councillors were invited to inform the office of their intentions regarding these positions and the attached sets out members' preferences. Where Cllrs did not respond, I have assumed that they had no changes

Cllrs are asked to check that it is accurate and inform the meeting of any corrections required.

I would specifically ask Members to consider if they can assist where vacancies still exist, drawing specific attention to the request for a representative to the Billingshurst Community Partnership:

Dear Greg,

Following our conversation today, I would be glad if you would ask the Councillors whether they would like to send a representative to the BCP management committee meetings in future. These happen roughly quarterly, and last about two hours. We discuss new and ongoing projects and other matters of interest to our locality. Councillor John Trollope attends in a similar non-voting capacity. It would be good to share thoughts and ideas between the two bodies which have the welfare of Billingshurst and its residents at their core.

Yours sincerely,

Gillian Knight

Co-Chair Billingshurst Community Partnership

Members are also invited to offer themselves for membership of a Working Party to look at taking forward the Council's decision to formulate a *Mission & Vision* to guide its future work. This is only like to meet a few times (probably via ZOOM) so there is no long term commitment.

The Council is invited to appoint committees, working parties and representatives to outside bodies etc. accordingly.

[Where there are more offers than there are vacancies for a particular role, members may need to vote on those.]

BILLINGSHURST PARISH COUNCIL

COMMITTEES, WORKING PARTIES AND REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

2025-26

(The Council has set the max. membership for Committees to 10 members.)

COMMITTEES	
Planning & Environment	JM, DW, FA, KR, DH, AR, JH
Property	PB, SD, PD, ST, EB, CG, CJ, DW
Finance & General Purposes	PB, PD, EB, CG, ST, JH, CJ
Working Practices	DW, ST, CG, KR, AR, CJ, SD, JM,
Billingshurst Centre	PB, SD, PD, EB, JH, CJ, TL
Complaints (5 members Max)	PB, SD, TL, CG
Complaints Chairman	SD
WORKING PARTIES	
Neighbourhood Plan	In abeyance
Internal Audit	PD, CG
Traffic Calming	PB, JM, TL, ST
Centre Heating	PD, FA
Mission & Vision	NEW!!

***Bold** indicates Chairman/Vice Chairman*

REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES	
Billigreen & Climate Change liaison	PD, JM, TL
B'hurst Sports & Recn. Assn. (BSRA) x2	CG, SD, ST (This is helpful as it means there should always be 2 in attendance.)
CPRE	NEEDED. Ideally should be a member of the P&E Cttee.
Friends of Station Road Gardens x1	SD
HALC (H'ham Assn Local Councils)	PD, SD
N'hood Warden Steering Group x2	SD, KR
Parish and Neighbourhood Climate Action Network	PD
Rural Market Towns Group (RMTG)	SD
Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) W/Group + S106 meetings. This will wind-up once the BIF is operational.	CG, SD
Better Billingshurst Fund (BIF) x3 + officer.	PB, PD ANOTHER NEEDED
Trustee of Adversane Hall x1	SD
Trustee of Dauxwood Pre-School x1	SD
West Sussex Association Local Councils (WSALC) AGM x2	PD, SD
Community Partnership x1	NEEDED
Youth liaison - all matters	CG

Updated 01/05/2025

APPENDIX D

Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

BILLINGSHURST PARISH COUNCIL

<http://www.billingshurst.gov.uk/> (If available please provide webpage address)

During the financial year ended 31 March 2025, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2024/25 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2023/24, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2023/24 AGAR tick 'not covered')			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2024-25 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2023-24 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2023/24 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
O. (For local councils only)	Yes	No	Not applicable
Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	✓		

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

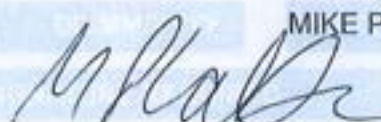
Date(s) internal audit undertaken

15/01/2025 24/04/2025

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

MIKE PLATTEN CPFA (Final Auditor)

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit



Date

25/04/2025

*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Greg Burt
Clerk to Billingshurst Parish Council

25 April 2025

Dear Greg

Billingshurst Parish Council
Final Audit 2024-25

The internal audit for the 24-25 financial year is now complete. I am pleased to report that I have signed off the internal audit section of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for with no comments.

However, the Council must mark box 4 on the Annual Governance Statement as “No” – see section N for details. A short note will need to be sent to external audit to explain how the Council has responded to the point raised.

As stated in the engagement letter, the scope of our work is limited to completing the audit testing and enquiries we deem necessary to complete Section 4 of the Annual Report for Local Councils in England. We do not provide assurance over or accept responsibility for areas of work not included in this scope, unless specifically agreed with the Council during the financial year.

In providing internal audit services we are not conducting a financial statement audit in accordance with standards and guidelines issued by the Audit Practices Board and our procedures are not designed to provide assurance over the reliability and quality of your financial statements and management information – that is the job of external audit.

We are required by the Annual Internal Audit Report included in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) to review controls in place at the Council against predefined control assertions. These control assertions are set out below, together with the results of my internal audit work for 24-25. Recommendations are set out at Appendix A. I set out a schedule of tests not completed at this audit at Appendix B, these tests are not relevant to this Council.

The audit was carried out in two stages. The interim audit was carried out remotely on 15 January, this concentrated on in year financial transactions and governance controls. The final audit was carried out on 24 April and concentrated on the statement of accounts and balance sheet.

☎ 07958 990310

✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road, Farnham GU9 8BP

April Skies

Accounting

A - Appropriate books of account have been kept properly throughout the year

Interim Audit

The Council continues to use RBS, an industry specific accounting package. The RBS system is used to report and record the financial transactions of the Council. A review of the cashbook shows that all data fields are being entered, supporting documentation is easily located from references recorded on the general ledger. Reconciliations tested were up to date at the time of the audit.

I confirmed the opening balances were correct. Box 7 on the 23-24 audited accounts was £598,365. This has been agreed to the period 0 balance sheet on the RBS Omega Accounting system.

I have confirmed that the Council's VAT returns are up to date, with the most recent claim, for the quarter to 30 September 2024 submitted to HMRC in October. This has been agreed to VAT figures produced by the RBS accounting system. VAT owed has been repaid to HMRC – this has been checked to the bank account.

Final Audit

The accounting statements have been agreed back to year end reports produced from the RBS accounting system:

- Balance sheet
- RBS Annual Return Report
- Cash and bank reconciliation report

All comparatives reported in the financial statements have been agreed back to the audited 23-24 accounts, as published on the Council website.

I confirmed that the VAT return for period January to March 25 has been completed and submitted to HMRC. This has a submitted date stamp of 15 April. VAT of £36,353 was reclaimed. VAT reclaimed agrees to the VAT control account balance on the balance sheet at 31.3.25.

My interim report was considered at the December Council meeting (minute 123/23), after review at F&GP Committee on 29 January. Going forward all audit reports will be presented to Full Council, as required by new financial regulations.

☎ 07958 990310

✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road, Farnham GU9 8BP

April Skies

Accounting

B - The Council's financial regulations have been met, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved, and VAT was appropriately accounted for

Interim Audit

Financial Regulations have not been updated following the issue of the new template by NALC last May. This should be actioned before the annual meeting in May 25 as Financial Regulations are now out of date.

The Council is still using cheques to pay suppliers, and the move to electronic banking has not progressed since my last audit, although this is now in place at the Centre. I would like to see progress towards phasing out cheques by the time of my next audit.

Council is given authority to spend via the annual budget process. The Council has a robust procedure in place to ensure that all expenditure is authorised in line with financial regulations. I selected a sample of 8 transactions from the cashbook for the first 9 months of the financial year. I was able to confirm for all transactions that:

- Cashbook entry could be agreed back to invoice
- Payment approval in place, in line with financial regulations – 2 councillor sign off in each invoice
- VAT accounting correct
- Expenditure appropriate for the Council
- Payment approval correctly set out within minutes
- Councillor signatures viewed on cheque stubs

I checked one standing order to the schedule of Direct Debit and Standing Order payments approved at the Finance Committee in January 2024.

I confirmed that the contract for the renewal of the skate park was advertised on the Contracts Finder website, as required by financial regulations.

Final Audit

Non pay expenditure per box 6 to the accounts amounted to £ 507,456, up from £400,341 in 23-24 .

New Financial Regulations have been drafted and will be reviewed at Full Council on 10 May – these reflect the new template introduced by NALC last year.

I tested 5 further payments from the final 3 months of the financial year, and repeated the tests set out at the interim audit. For all payments tested I was able to confirm that financial regulations had been followed, and that expenditure was appropriate for the Council.

☎ 07958 990310

✉ mike@apriskies.co.uk

Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road, Farnham GU9 8BP

April Skies

Accounting

The Council still makes payment by cheque, but the Clerk is confident that the move to online banking is imminent, an application has been lodged with the bank and is awaiting final receipt of ID documents from Councillors. The Billingshurst Centre has moved to online banking.

I discussed VAT matters with the Clerk, and it would be beneficial for the Council to commission a short VAT review, to ensure it is treating VAT on all transactions correctly, particularly with regard to charges to and from the Billingshurst Centre Charity Account.

C - The Council assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.

Interim Audit

The Council has a risk management strategy in place and monitors and reviews risk on an ongoing basis. The Clerk has confirmed that the risk assessment will be reviewed at the January F&GP with formal approval due at Full Council in March. I will review the risk assessment at my next audit. I have suggested that the Council may wish to complete a cyber risk assessment as part of risk processes going forward, with the assistance of the IT provider.

I checked the Council's insurance policy. The policy with Hiscox Insurance was in date at the time of my audit, with cover in place until the policy is cancelled, start date of 15.11.24

Asset cover appears consistent with the asset register. 9 buildings are insured, with an insurance value of £5.4m. The Billingshurst Centre is insured at a value of £3,528,000

Asset insurance is set out below:

Item description	Excess	Amount Insured
Total Buildings	£250	£5,485,656
Gates and fences	£250	£12,912
Fixed outside equipment	£250	£14,597
Street furniture	£250	£151,030
War memorials	£250	£54,899
Playground equipment	£250	£470,694
Sports surfaces	£250	£0
Other surfaces	£250	£0
Rent receivable	£250	£10,800

The Council has a well-established process for backing up computer data, with backups held at remote locations. I have confirmed that the Council backs up computer data to a cloned server in the Community Centre, and to a cloud-based solution hosted by an external provider. I recommend that the Council obtains annual confirmation from the ICT contractor that a test restore of backed up data has been successfully completed.

☎ 07958 990310

✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road, Farnham GU9 8BP

Final Audit

The corporate risk assessment was considered at the March 25 meeting of Full Council (minute 21/25), after review by F&GP Committee. I have reviewed the risk assessment and it appears sufficient for a council of this size, there is evidence of review in year. The risk assessment is published on the Council website. It includes notes on Council's cyber security controls.

D - The annual precept requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.

Interim Audit

The Council has completed budget and precept setting for the 25-26 financial year, approved at Full Council in January 2025. (Minute 8/25). A precept of £533,816 was approved. All precepting authority deadlines were met.

Budget monitoring reports continue to be presented to meetings of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, this is completed quarterly. I reviewed the period to end of October report, this was presented to F&GP on 18 December. I checked one significant overspend (general repairs – overspend of £50K). This is being funded from the general reserve, but this information is not clear from the Finance Report. I recommend a short narrative report is appended to each quarterly finance report, setting out details of any significant variances, and how these will be funded.

Final Audit

Reserves at 31 March 2025 were £594,045 (23-24 £598,365).

Earmarked reserves at 31.3.24 were £415K. The largest reserves are restricted reserves related to developer contributions or land transfers:

- £16K - CIL
- £394K - Commuted sum – Kingslea Farm

I have 2 comments on earmarked reserves:

- At 31.3.25 there is a negative balance of 14K on the Allotment Fence Reserve. The Clerk confirmed this will be cleared on receipt of section 106 monies from the District Council, these are expected early in 25-26.
- £394K Kingslea Farm commuted sum. The Clerk confirmed that there are no restrictions on the use of this fund, as long as the Council maintains land linked to the commuted sum. It is planned that some of this fund will be used to purchase CCTV equipment in 25-26. The Clerk must demonstrate that this is permitted to councillors and retain records for internal audit, before this funding is used in this way.

☎ 07958 990310

✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road, Farnham GU9 8BP

April Skies

Accounting

General reserves at year end were £178K. This represents 33% of precept, which is at the lower mid-point of recommended levels set out in the NALC Practitioners' Guide. This is an appropriate level of reserve for a larger parish council with well-developed earmarked reserves.

E - Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.

Interim Audit

I tested a sample of income transactions. I was able to agree credits on the cashbook back to third party documentation, such as remittance notices from district council (CIL income) or recharge calculations for staff costs for Billingshurst Centre. I will test precept at year end.

I reviewed the sales ledger as at 15 January 2025. There are a number of debts on this ledger that are more than 60 days old, the value of these debts is £47K. These need to be examined to ensure they are genuine debtors, and pursued if this is the case. However, these transactions may be duplicate accounting entries, in which case the accounts should be amended, as these transactions will have an impact on the accuracy of the management accounts. I also recommend that the sales ledger should be reviewed quarterly as part of routine finance reporting.

The Council receives income from the local shopping centre for litter collection. There is no contract in place for this work, this arrangement should be formalised.

Final Audit

Precept per box 2 to the accounts was £513,010 (23-24 £490,586). This has been agreed to third party documentation provided by central government.

Income per box 3 to the accounts was £295,984 (23-24 £180,881)

I followed up the issue of older debts raised at my interim audit. The Council has reviewed these balances since my last audit, and a number of debts were written back – they had been raised in error or were duplicates. The debtor balance at 31.3.25 was £7,810, this is made up of 3 debts owed by the Community Centre and Recreation Association. All debts were current. I recommend that the aged debtor report is added to the quarterly finance pack reported to councillors.

F - Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.

Final Audit

The petty cash held by the Council has been counted and reconciled to the accounting system. Petty cash held is £100 – supported by £75 cash and £25 vouchers. Count signed by clerk and assistant clerk.

☎ 07958 990310

✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road, Farnham GU9 8BP

G- Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with council approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.

Interim and Final Audits

Staff costs per box 4 to the accounts were £263,938 (23-24 £249,802).

Payroll is processed by West Sussex County Council. I tested the payroll for January 2025 for three officers. I agreed the payment from the cashbook back to summary payroll report produced by WSCC. Gross pay was checked to rate of pay approved by Council (NJC salary scale or minimum wage) – this was approved at Working Practices Committee.

The Council issues annual pay award letters to staff, however these are not that clear. As a minimum, annual pay award letters should include:

- Working hours
- Hourly rate of pay
- Scale point for the member of staff.

At the final audit I confirmed that box 4 to the accounts only included costs relating to the employment of staff, as required by regulations .

H - Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.

Final Audit

Fixed Assets per box 9 to the accounts were £1,907,559 , after internal audit amendments (23-24 £1,791,483)

The figure in the accounts has been agreed to the fixed asset register. The asset register correctly accounts for all assets at cost. This follows accounting rules set out in the Practitioners' Guide. I carried out arithmetic checks on the original asset register, and found a number of deleted assets that still held asset values in asset register calculations.

Assets have increased by £116K in 24-25. The Skate Park has been added at a value of £140K, and a number of deletions of old assets have been recorded on the asset register to reflect the fact that these items are no longer used or held by the Council.

I have recommendations relating to the asset register:

- The Council should ensure that the correct balance is entered into the AGAR - £1,907,559, to reflect arithmetic errors identified
- There are no asset values for office content assets (group value £27,055). Values should be added to individual assets in 25-26
- The Council should consider installing the fixed asset module on the RBS system, to reduce the risk of error in fixed asset accounting.

☎ 07958 990310

✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road, Farnham GU9 8BP

I – Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.

Interim Audit

Reconciliations for all bank accounts are carried out regularly and in accordance with regulations. This is clearly evidenced in the Council's bank reconciliation file. The October 24 bank reconciliation was tested in detail. I confirmed the following.

- All balances on the bank reconciliation were agreed back to bank statements / cashbooks
- Bank reconciliations were reported to a meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee, and this review was minuted.

The face of the bank statements and the bank reconciliations had been signed off by the reviewing councillor.

The Council has an investment policy. This was reviewed at F&GP Committee in July 2023 (minute 78/23). There is scope for the Council to review where cash balances are currently held. At the time of my audit there was £590K in the current account, no interest is earned on this money.

Final Audit

Cash per box 8 to the accounts was £585,854 (23-24 £573,198)

I reperformed the year end bank reconciliation. For all bank accounts I was able to agree the balance on the bank reconciliation back to bank statements and cashbook balances recorded on the accounting system. The bank reconciliation was has not yet been reviewed by a councillor, this will be actioned at the next council meeting

Unpresented cheques were £131K – I have not been able to test these to subsequent clearance at bank in the new financial year. The Clerk does not have online bank access at present. This must be actioned as a matter of urgency as part of the process of setting up online banking. Council officers should be able to check on the bank account more regularly than by reviewing the monthly bank statement.

J - Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, were supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records, and

Satisfactory – Accounts have been produced on the income and expenditure basis, this is appropriate as income and expenditure at the Council is below £200k.

☎ 07958 990310

✉ mike@aprilsides.co.uk

Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road, Farnham GU9 8BP

L: : The Authority publishes information on a free to access website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with any relevant transparency code requirements

As a larger Council, with income / expenditure in excess of £200K, Billingshurst is required to follow the 2015 Transparency Code. I was able to confirm that data required by the Code could be located at various pages on the Council website, and specifically confirmed that the following information was up to date

- Grants awarded – published to end 24-25
- Payments over £500 – published to end of March 25
- Contracts – needs to be updated - this should be done before the agar is submitted to external audit.

M – Inspection Periods

Inspection periods for 23-24 accounts were set as follows

Inspection - Key date	23-4 Actual
Accounts approved at Full Council	18 June - Full Council
Date Inspection Notice Issued and how published	26 June – website and notice boards
Inspection period begins	27 June
Inspection period ends	7 August
Correct length	Yes

All regulatory requirements were met in this regard.

N – Compliance with Publishing Requirements 23-24 Accounts

The Statement of Accounts, Annual Governance Statement and the external audit certificate are published on the Finance page on the website. The external audit certificate was clear, so there are no matters to take into consideration in the 23-24 accounts. The Conclusion of Audit certificate has been published on the website, with an announcement date of 7 November. This is after the date of the audit certificate (27 August), and after the deadline (30 September). The external audit certificate was reported to the meeting of Full Council in November (minute 103/24). The Council has not published the conclusion of audit certificate before the statutory deadline, and I cannot therefore sign off that the Council has complied with the requirements of this control objective.

☎ 07958 990310

✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road. Farnham GU9 8BP

External audit raised the following point in their certificate:

On review of the minutes where the approval of both Section 1 and Section 2 was made, it was noted that the meeting took place on the 18th June 2024 and not the 11th June 2024 as was recorded on the AGAR. Therefore, whilst the form was approved before the public rights period was announced and commenced, the form has been completed incorrectly. We would anticipate this being taken into account when the 2024-25 Annual Governance Statement is prepared.

The Council should mark box 4 on the Annual Governance Statement as NO to avoid further comment from external audit .

O- Trust funds (including charitable) The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.

The Billingshurst Community and Conference Centre is a charitable trust of which the Parish Council is the sole managing trustee. The 23-24 accounts and annual return were submitted in advance of the statutory deadline of 31 January. An independent examination has been completed as required for a charity of this size.

I attach my invoice for your consideration together with the internal audit report from the AGAR. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your help with the audit. I look forward to working with you again next year, in the meantime please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance.

Yours sincerely



Mike Platten CPFA

Appendix A

Points Forward – Action Plan - Interim Audit

☎ 07958 990310

✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road, Farnham GU9 8BP

April Skies

Accounting

Matter Arising	Recommendation	Council Response – Final Audit
Financial Regulations have not been updated following the issue of the new template by NALC last May.	This should be actioned before the annual meeting in May 25 as Financial Regulations are now out of date.	To be done in May 25
The Council is still using cheques to pay suppliers, and the move to electronic banking has not progressed since my last audit, although this is now in place at the Centre.	I would like to see progress towards phasing out cheques by the time of my next audit.	Action in hand
Test restore – data back up	I recommend that the Council obtains annual confirmation from the ICT contractor that a test restore of backed up data has been successfully completed.	Added to risk register
Budget monitoring reports	I recommend a short narrative report is appended to each quarterly finance report, setting out details of any significant variances, and how these will be funded.	Noted
I reviewed the sales ledger as at 15 January 2025. There are a number of debts on this ledger that are more than 60 days old, the value of these debts is £47K.	These need to be examined to ensure they are genuine debtors, and pursued if this is the case. However, these transactions may be duplicate accounting entries, in which case the accounts should be amended, as these transactions will have an impact on the accuracy of the management accounts	Cleared and reviewed by internal audit in April
Sales ledger	I also recommend that the sales ledger should be reviewed quarterly as part of routine finance reporting	Recommendation reraised

☎ 07958 990310

✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road. Farnham GU9 8BP

April Skies

Accounting

The Council receives income from the local shopping centre for litter collection.	There is no contract in place for this work, this arrangement should be formalised.	To test in 25-26
There is scope for the Council to review where cash balances are currently held.	At the time of my audit there was £590K in the current account, no interest is earned on this money.	Reduced at March 25 to £190K, an appropriate working balance
The Conclusion of Audit certificate has been published on the website, with an announcement date of 7 November	The Council has not published the conclusion of audit certificate before the statutory deadline	Noted

☎ 07958 990310

✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road, Farnham GU9 8BP

April Skies

Accounting

Appendix A

Points Forward – Action Plan - Final Audit

Matter Arising	Recommendation	Council Response – Final Audit
I discussed VAT matters with the Clerk,	It would be beneficial for the Council to commission a short VAT review, to ensure it is treating VAT on all transactions correctly, particularly with regard to charges to and from the Billingshurst Centre Charity Account	
£394K Kingslea Farm commuted sum. The Clerk confirmed that there are no restrictions on the use of this fund, as long as the Council maintains land linked to the commuted sum.	It is planned that some of this fund will be used to purchase CCTV equipment in 25-26. The Clerk must confirm that this is permitted to councillors and to internal audit before this funding is used in this way	
Aged Debt Report	I recommend that the aged debtor report is added to the quarterly finance pack reported to councillors.	
The Council issues annual pay award letters to staff, however these are not that clear.	As a minimum, annual pay award letters should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working hours - Hourly rate of pay - Scale point for the member of staff. 	
The Clerk does not have online bank access at present. This must be actioned as a matter of urgency as [part of the process of setting up online banking.	Council officer should be able to check on the bank account more regularly than by reviewing the monthly bank statement.	

☎ 07958 990310

✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road. Farnham GU9 8BP

April Skies

Accounting

Fixed Assets 1	The Council should ensure that the correct balance is entered into the AGAR - £1,907,559, to reflect arithmetic errors identified	
Fixed Assets 2	There are no asset values for office content assets (group value £27,055). Values should be added to individual assets in 25-26	
Fixed Assets 3	The Council should consider installing the fixed asset module on the RBS system, to reduce the risk of error in fixed asset accounting.	

☎ 07958 990310

✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road, Farnham GU9 8BP

Appendix E

BILLINGSHURST PARISH COUNCIL 2024-25 Final Audit ACTION PLAN

Matter Arising	Recommendation	Council Response – Final Audit
I discussed VAT matters with the Clerk.	It would be beneficial for the Council to commission a short VAT review, to ensure it is treating VAT on all transactions correctly, particularly with regard to charges to and from the Billingshurst Centre Charity Account	TO ACTION
£394K Kingslea Farm commuted sum. The Clerk confirmed that there are no restrictions on the use of this fund, as long as the Council maintains land linked to the commuted sum.	It is planned that some of this fund will be used to purchase CCTV equipment in 25-26. The Clerk must confirm that this is permitted to councillors and to internal audit before this funding is used in this way	THIS HAS PREVIOUSLY BEEN EVIDENCED TO COUNCILLORS BUT WILL DO SO AGAIN.
Aged Debt Report	I recommend that the aged debtor report is added to the quarterly finance pack reported to councillors.	TO ACTION
The Council issues annual pay award letters to staff, however these are not that clear.	As a minimum, annual pay award letters should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working hours - Hourly rate of pay - Scale point for the member of staff. 	FUTURE PAY AWARD LETTERS TO INCLUDE THIS INFORMATION.
The Clerk does not have online bank access at present. This must be actioned as a matter of urgency as [part of the process of setting up online banking.	Council officer should be able to check on the bank account more regularly than by reviewing the monthly bank statement.	THIS IS NOW PROGRESSING FOLLOWING THE ADDITION OF SEVERAL NEW BANK SIGNATORIES

Fixed Assets 1	The Council should ensure that the correct balance is entered into the AGAR - £1,907,559, to reflect arithmetic errors identified	ALREADY ACTIONED
Fixed Assets 2	There are no asset values for office content assets (group value £27,055). Values should be added to individual assets in 25-26	TO ACTION
Fixed Assets 3	The Council should consider installing the fixed asset module on the RBS system, to reduce the risk of error in fixed asset accounting.	CLERK SUGGESTED THIS!

APPENDIX F

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

BILLINGSHURST PARISH COUNCIL

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025, that:

	Agreed		
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.		✓	<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A <i>has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>
	✓		

***Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

DD/MM/YYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

www.billingshurst.gov.uk PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

APPENDIX G.

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

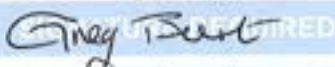
BILLINGSHURST PARISH COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	
1. Balances brought forward	618,961	598,365	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	490,586	513,010	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	180,881	295,984	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	249,802	263,938	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	41,920	41,920	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	400,341	507,456	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	598,365	594,045	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	573,198	585,854	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	1,791,483	1,907,559	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	345,761	314,551	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	✓			The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	✓			The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2025 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval


 Date 29/04/2025

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

APPENDIX H

BILLINGSHURST PARISH COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 7 MAY 2025

BETTER BILLINGSHURST INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT FUND (BBIDF)

FOR DECISION

REPORT BY CLERK

The Council has been having regular meetings with Horsham District Council (HDC) and BSRA (Billingshurst Sport & Recreation Association) for some time, in an effort to progress improvements initially at Jubilee Fields utilising existing (primarily S106) funds held by HDC.

Following the local elections in 2023, the new administration at HDC was keen to address a perceived deficit in infrastructure caused by new housing in the parish. As a result the work mentioned in the above paragraph was expanded to look at other areas and issues across the parish, resulting in the Better Billingshurst Infrastructure Development Fund (BBIDF) to which HDC had added an additional £1 million from its own reserves.

Spending of the BBIDF will be by an HDC-led panel to which the Parish Council will have three voting representatives.

HDC has since consulted with numerous groups and stakeholders asking for their views on community infrastructure deficits, requirements and solutions. The Parish Council separately submitted its own wish list in May 2024 (min 31/24 refers.)

Much of the deficits are in the sphere of public open space (POS) including facilities hosted thereon. As the Parish Council owns the most popular and central POS in the parish, it was inevitable that any improvements / new facilities might involve such land.

HDC has suggested some improvements to three Parish Council sites which could be delivered in the short term as it would be one council improving another council's property. See attached proposal.

HDC is keen to undertake a public consultation on this and other projects in the parish this summer.

The Parish Council as landowner has the final say on what happens on its land and ordinarily, would initiate a consultation before taking a decision. However, rather than the Parish consulting the public and then HDC consulting the public, it would be more pragmatic on this occasion to allow HDC to conduct the one consultation, and then the Parish Council to consider the proposals in the light of comments made. Officers do have concerns about some elements of the proposals plus ongoing maintenance responsibilities and costs, but these can be considered later.

Thus, the Council is invited to welcome the investment in its open spaces and consider in detail the proposals following the public consultation, prior to giving any landlord's consent.



Better Billingshurst:

Playgrounds & Recreation

Feedback from the Early Stakeholder Engagement

“Upgrade the children’s play area in Station Road Gardens and recreation ground.”

“Would like play parks improved to take children to for outdoor play.”

“There is a lack of a central, well equipped children’s play area, like dinosaur island in Southwater for example. The existing playgrounds are small, remote and ‘tucked away’, leaving them vulnerable to vandalism and can feel unsafe.”

“Playgrounds need updating and need to be enclosed.”

Billingshurst Parish Neighbourhood Plan (2019-2031)

- The Local Green Space (LGS) designation is a powerful tool for neighbourhood planners to protect community assets such as open space.
- Once allocated, the level of protection afforded to LGS is akin to 'green belt'.
- The national policy on LGS refers to treating such spaces as green belt which carries an 'exceptional circumstances' test.

POLICY BILL15: LOCAL GREEN SPACES

A. The following 15 areas shown on the Policies Map in Section 12 are designated as a Local Green Spaces:

1. Manor Fields
2. Cherry Tree Close Play Space
3. Wood at Bypass
4. Bowling Alley
5. Green at Frenches Mead
6. Carpenters Green
7. Cleveland Gardens
8. Forge Way Green
9. Green, fronting Carpenters
10. Green north of Ostlers View
11. south of Ostlers View
12. Maple Road Green
13. Green at Broomfield Drive (South)
14. Station Road Gardens
15. Lower Station Road Recreation Ground



Figure 9.1: Local Green Spaces

POLICY BILL 4: PROVISION OF LEISURE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

A. In order to provide for the increased need for leisure provision to support the growing population of Billingshurst, development proposals that deliver the following shall be strongly supported:

i. The improvement in the quality of existing play areas to conform to HDC standards¹¹.

ii. The provision of additional play areas to serve the needs of children of all ages, in line with the HDC's Quality Standard¹¹. Where possible, this should incorporate areas for 'natural play'¹². New residential development should demonstrate how it has actively provided for natural play through the design of public green spaces.

iii. The modernisation of facilities serving Jubilee Fields, including the provision of a 4G astro turf pitch.

iv. The provision of additional and improved youth facilities, including improvements to the facilities at the existing skate parks.

x. The provision of a Multi-Use Games Area, incorporating a 3G pitch and appropriately designed and sensitive floodlights, as well as improvements to existing artificial turf pitches.

ii. The delivery of new facilities or improvements to existing facilities – including the Sports Hall at Billingshurst Leisure Centre – will be secured through Section 106 contributions or Community Infrastructure Levy funding or provided on site.

Policy conformity: NDP Objective 2; NDP Policy 43; NDP para 11, 12, 16, 17



Billingshurst Parish Neighbourhood Plan (cont.)

- Policy Bill 4 of the Billingshurst Parish Neighbourhood Plan does make provision for play areas to serve the needs of children of all ages and also the provision of additional and improved youth facilities.
- The LGS designation background information prepared by the Neighbourhood Plan team identified the recreational value of the sites and the existing play and activity areas.
- Given the LGS designations of these two sites and that the proposed improvements are on Parish-owned land, the Parish Council's feedback on the proposals will be critical.

Lower Station Road Recreation Ground



Lower Station Road Recreation Ground



Potential Improvements - Lower Station Road Recreation Ground

Sensory and natural play



Lamb's Ear: Fuzzy and soft to touch.

Photo



Golden-rain Tree: Fruit capsules clatter in the wind and are fun to play with.

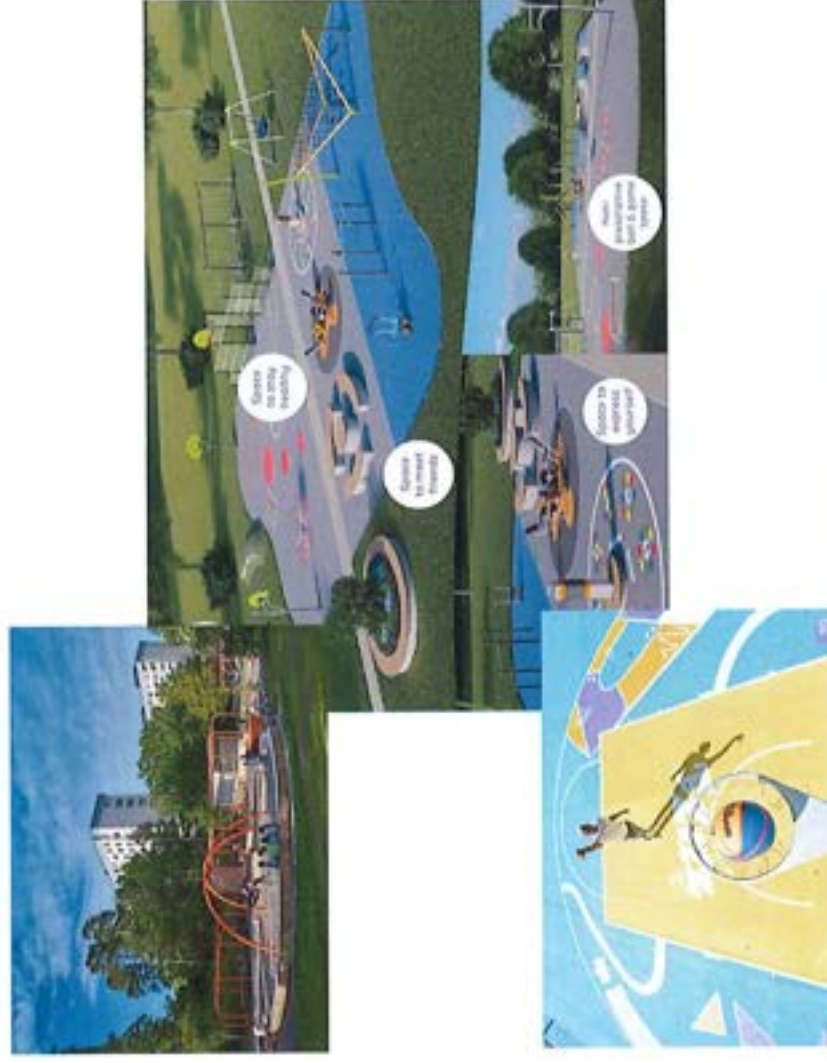


Lavender: pleasant and calming fragrances.



Potential Improvements - Lower Station Road Recreation Ground

Multi sports area



Potential Improvements - Lower Station Road Recreation Ground

Seating areas



Potential Improvements - Lower Station Road Recreation Ground

Pump track and skatepark



Potential Improvements - Lower Station Road Recreation Ground

Perimeter path



Potential Improvements - Lower Station Road Recreation Ground



Horsham
District
Council

Perimeter path





Station Road Community Gardens



Potential Improvements - Station Road Community Gardens

Ground level lighting



Potential Improvements - Station Road Community Gardens

Seating area



Potential Improvements - Station Road Community Gardens



Ball court resurfacing

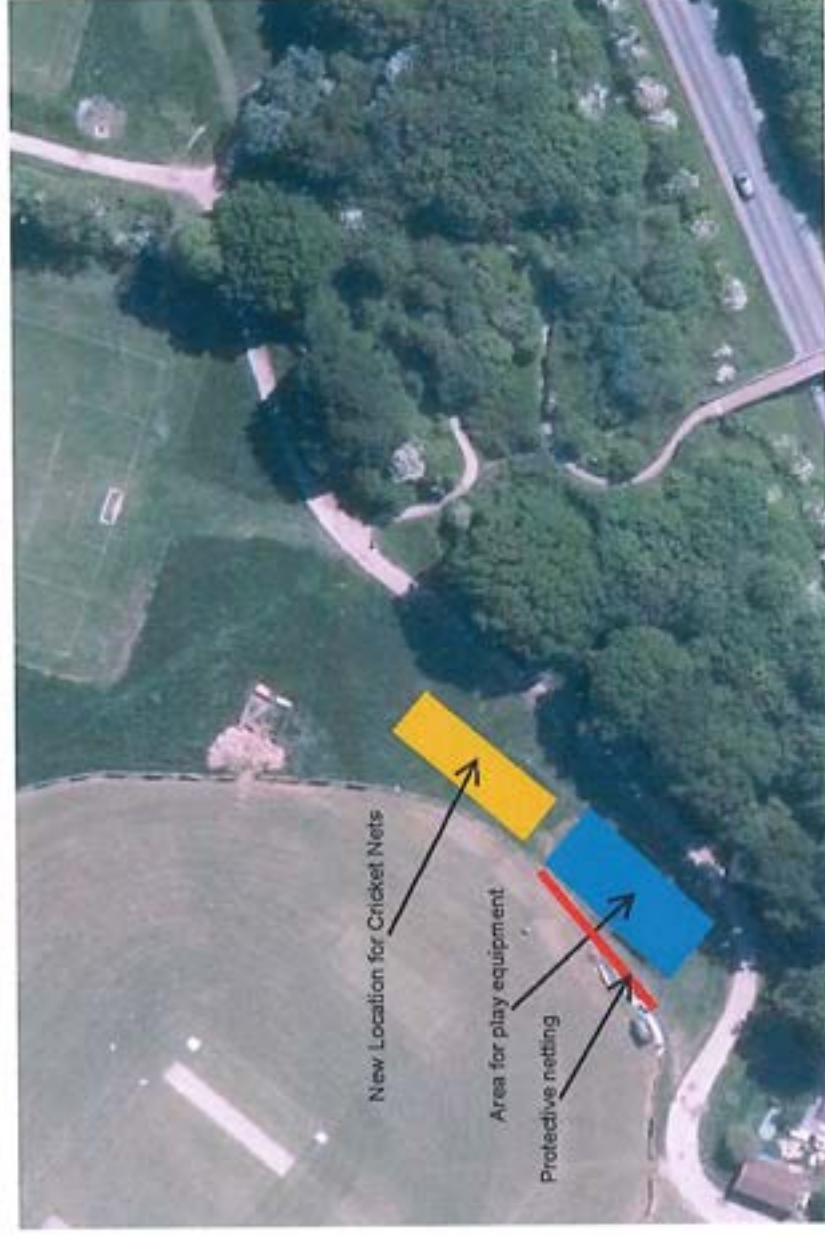




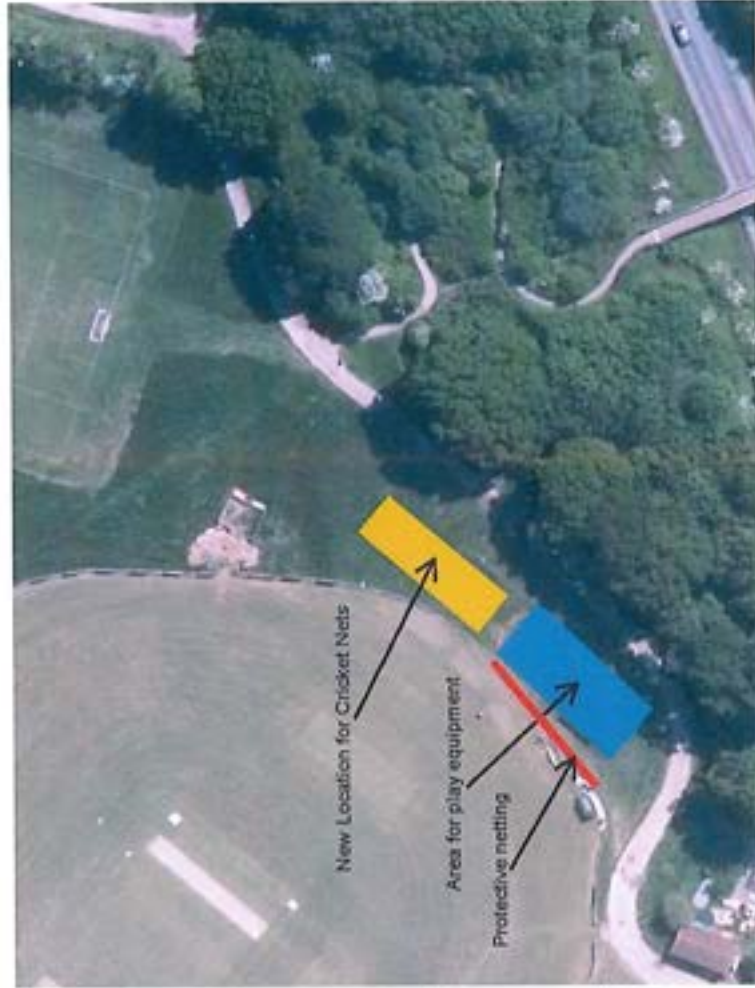
Jubilee Fields



Potential Improvements - Jubilee Fields



Potential Improvements - Jubilee Fields





Discussion

