



To All Councillors on the Property Committee,

You are hereby summoned to attend a Meeting of the Property Committee to be held in the Billingshurst Centre, Roman Way, Billingshurst, on Wednesday 15 January 2025, at 7pm.

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.

*Greg Burt*

**G.C. Burt**  
**Clerk to the Council**

9 January 2025

## **AGENDA**

1. Chairman's Announcements
2. Apologies for Absence.
3. To receive Declarations of Interest and notification of change to members' interests.
4. Approval of the Minutes of the Property Committee meeting held on 13 November 2024, previously circulated, to confirm and sign the minutes as a correct record.
5. Clerk's Report
6. Public Session. 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 the meeting, at the discretion of the Chairman. They must give their name.
7. To consider improvements to Christmas Lights - Appendix A.
8. To receive property updates, for information only - Appendix B.
9. Next Meeting: **19 March 2025**

**Committee Members:** EB, PB, PD, SD, CG, ST, CJ

**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**

**PROPERTY COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY 15 JANUARY 2025**

**CHRISTMAS LIGHTS IMPROVEMENTS**

**FOR DECISION**

**REPORT BY CLERK**

- a. At the November meeting of the Committee, Members supported a plan to install solar-power Christmas Trees on lampposts in Lower High Street, pending the installation of permanent sockets which would allow the continuation of the existing displays.

Sadly the obligatory column-testing was not completed until well into December meaning that it was not possible to light that end of High Street in time for Christmas. However, all columns passed their structural test.

This means we can now proceed to install permanent supplies to sockets on the columns.

The Committee is invited to RECOMMEND the F&GP Committee the release of £2,261 of CIL funds to allow the installation of infrastructure on eight lampposts in lower High Street.

- b. The Council funds the provision of Christmas Lights including tree outside the Billingshurst Centre. The tree sits in a temporary steel stand weighted with sandbags. Last year the tree fell forwards into the car park, fortunately around 12<sup>th</sup> Night meaning it was due to be removed anyway. This season, despite being strapped to the Centre's railings, it still tilted backwards twice in very high winds.

To overcome this problem, quotes have been received to install a tree socket/pit into the ground. This consists of a large steel pipe concreted in plus cover lid, similar to that on the Village Green.

I have received two quotations:

Thomson Civil Engineering	£1,350
Leith Hill Plant Hire	£930

The Committee is invited to RECOMMEND the F&GP Committee the release of £930 of CIL funds to allow for the installation of a Christmas tree pit outside the Billingshurst Centre.

[Note there is £5772.45 remaining in the CIL fund.]

## **APPENDIX B**

### **BILLINGSHURST PARISH COUNCIL**

#### **PROPERTY COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY 15 JANUARY 2025**

#### **PROPERTY UPDATES**

#### **FOR INFORMATION**

#### **REPORT BY OFFICE MANAGER**

1. **ENVIRONMENTAL OPERATIVES (EOs) & GARAGE**
  - The Council has now employed a third staff member Mike Ellis who started back in December, officers are gratified to find that he has already proved himself to be a very capable member of the team and Mike's engagement will mean that the remaining members of the team will be able to better concentrate on areas which were unable to have regular cover whilst staff levels were low.
  - An Annual Inspection of Council play equipment took place last autumn and the issues identified are currently being actioned by staff.
  
2. **MANOR FIELDS**
  - The fencing has now been finalised on site and the raised beds are due to be completed in the next few weeks. Once the contractor has provided his invoice, the s106 funding towards the project will be drawn down.
  - Replacement swing seats will be fitted in early spring.
  
3. **LOWER STATION ROAD RECREATION GROUND**
  - Replacement swing seats will be fitted in the early spring.
  - Environmental Operatives will be finalising the work required to fully fix the gate nearest the Parbrook bridge over the course of this month.
  
4. **JUBILEE FIELDS**
  - We continue to offer help to the Angling Society with their projects.
  - A large section of hedgerow has been cut back along the access road into Jubilee Fields so that the island and around the pontoons are better able to be seen from the access road offering natural surveillance in an attempt to prevent antisocial behaviour around the fishing lake.
  - Last autumn, following the annual inspection of play equipment, it was necessary for officers to engage an inspector to carry out a report on the fishing lake pontoons and this is being worked through at the current time. The majority of the pontoons are in good condition given that several have been replaced in recent years. The Council must be mindful of budgets to replace the remaining pontoons over the next 3+ years.
  - The office manager has set up a new fishing pontoon check sheet for our new staff member to complete each week.
  - There was no further update from BSRA regarding the possible event on site in December.

5. **STATION ROAD COMMUNITY GARDENS**

- Some works are due to be carried out again to the train play equipment due to repeated vandalism. An update will be brought to a future meeting.
- Sussex Land Services replaced a large amount of bark chippings around the children's play area before Christmas.
- Sussex Land Services have also placed bark chippings to the rear of site near the pedestrian access gate to assist with safe passage.
- Men's Shed Members are still persisting in parking on the access road near the pedestrian access despite being asked not to. There are also signs on the fencing asking people not to park and yellow lines along the access road, so it is difficult to know how to proceed. Could the committee agree a way forward?

6. **PUBLIC TOILETS**

- The Council's certificate for the Platinum Award in the *Loo of the Year Awards* should arrive soon and will be displayed on site as in previous years.

7. **CHERRY TREE CLOSE**

- Some replacement black caps for equipment and swing seats have arrived and are due to be fitted soon. Now that we have a third staff member, it will be easier to get up to date with outstanding items.

8. **BILLINGSHURST IN BLOOM**

- An article was written last autumn about the Council's success in the South & South East in Bloom Awards for publication in the Local Clerks & Councils Direct magazine; it is hoped this will feature in the next issue due this month.

9. **TREES**

- The Annual Tree Survey of council tree stock was received in early November and has been actioned accordingly. Contact was made with the Council's tree surgeon G. Nye and also the HDC Arboricultural Department who confirmed that the trees requiring works, were not subject to Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).
- As mentioned at the last meeting, during National Tree Week (23<sup>rd</sup> November to 1<sup>st</sup> December), the Council planted 13 trees on land owned/maintained by the Parish Council. There were also a further 8 trees funded by the Parish Council which were planted on highway land managed by West Sussex County Council under their *Donate a Tree Scheme* with some trees sponsored by residents. Native species such as Black Poplar, Pink Horse Chestnut, Oak, Lime, Ginko, Dutch-Elm disease resistant Elm, Walnut, Liquid Amber and Red Norway Maple were planted following the advice of HDC's Arboricultural Officer Andy Bush on locations and specimens. The Parish Council issued a press release in early December which included comments from the Clerk and the following statement from Cllr. Gale as Chairman of the Property Committee. "The Council is responsible for a considerable number of trees across its sites, and occasionally some have to be removed due to disease or ill health, so it's great that we are planting new ones to take their place."

10. **LONGHURST DRIVE**

- Unfortunately, the native hedgerow planted on site in the spring of 2024 was unsuccessful, so officers arranged for Sussex Land Services to replant decent specimens

on site and provide fencing to try to stop the specimens being damaged. The works were carried out in early December and will be monitored by Sussex Land Services whilst on site carrying out grounds' maintenance. An enquiry from a local resident in Longhurst Drive has prompted officers to put an update in the Village Tweet magazine to apprise residents accordingly.

11. **MISCELLANEOUS**

- There has been no further update yet from Whistlestop Arts, but they are likely to be in touch with the Council in due course submitting a grant application for their project.
- Council contractors and other lease or licence holders have been asked to provide a copy of their Public Liability Insurance Certificate as part of the usual annual check.
- The Best Dressed Christmas Window Competition was held in early December and the anonymous judges chose Pride & Groom as warranting first place, Chestnut Tree House came second, and once again, In Clover took third place. The Council's shield is being updated at the current time and certificates were handed out to the top three choices just before Christmas.
- Another excellent scheme of Christmas lighting was displayed by Light Angels, and the tree on the village green was once again sponsored by Highwood Group.
- There has still been no response from HDC with regards to funding lines which may be able to be applied for towards future tech/multi-media opportunities at the Billingshurst Centre.
- Officers have chased for a response from WSCC as to what the next steps are with the paving around the tree outside Park & Brown optometrists where the paving stones are extremely uneven.
- The defibrillator cabinet for Adversane Hall was fitted by ICA Electrical in late November and the defib set up and registered on *The Circuit* which is a link between the defib and the local Ambulance Service, in our case SECAMB; officers thank Cllr. Berry for his assistance with this matter. The installation of this new defibrillator means there are now two items of equipment available for Adversane residents, one on either side of the A29.
- Several streetlights which were not working correctly have been reported to Enerveo via the *Lights on* in West Sussex website.

The Committee is invited to note this report.