



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 16 July 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.

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

G.C. Burt
Clerk to the Council

8 July 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 20 May 2025, 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 results of public consultation on future of play area at Cranham Avenue - Appendix A.
8. To receive property updates, for information only - Appendix B.
9. Next Meeting: **8 October 2025**

Committee Members: EB, PB, PD, SD, CG, ST, CJ, DW, DH

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

16 JULY 2025

CRANHAM AVENUE PLAY AREA

REPORT BY ASSISTANT CLERK

FOR DECISION

At the March meeting of the Committee, Members considered an expression of interest from a resident of Cranham Avenue to include part or all of an adjoining small play area into their garden. Officers had for some time been pondering the future of the site which was very small and appeared to be little used. The Committee **RESOLVED** that the Council survey local opinion on the future of the facility and report back accordingly. (Min 20/25 refers.)

Leaflets were hand delivered to all 60 houses in the Avenue on 1 May requesting a response by 16 May. Late responses were accepted for up to another week to allow for delayed postal responses. The last response was received on 19 May. No further responses have been received since.

Background and relevant play area policies

The play area was built as part of the Cranham Avenue development by Westbury Homes in 1998 under planning application BL/68/97. Cranham Avenue was designed as a collection of 39x 3-bed, 14x 4-bed, and 7x 5-bed houses for starter, growing and established families. The play area is approximately 138m² of mostly tarmac with wet pour rubber safety flooring surrounding three pieces of play equipment; a swing, a climb and play unit, and a sit-on-swingie. There is also a strip of raised land to the rear of the play area (67m²) currently under licence to no.27 Cranham Avenue.

Were the play area be built now under the current NPPF/Fields in Trust guidelines it would be classed as a Local Area for Play (LAP).

LAPs are areas primarily laid out for very young children to play close to where they live, focusing on children of 0-6 years. LAPs have a minimum activity zone of 100m² and a 5m buffer between this area and the surrounding properties. It would not be classified as the next size up, a Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) as these start at a recommend minimum 400m² activity zone with a 10m buffer between the area and house boundary, for which there clearly isn't space on this site.

These LAPs are to be included in areas that give a short walk for residents, and as demonstrated in Figure 1, not only does this include those living in Cranham Avenue, but also many residents outside the Cranham Avenue area who are still within a reasonable walking distance.

The screenshot shows a web application interface for a map. At the top, there is a search bar with the text "Cranham Avenue, Andromeda's Hill" and a location pin icon. To the right of the search bar, there is a dropdown menu showing "Walking" and a date/time range "06/15/2025 - 11:32". Below the search bar, there is a red button labeled "Add shape". The map itself shows a residential area with streets like "Cranham Avenue", "Andromeda's Hill", "Turner Avenue", "Rough Hill", "Groombridge Drive", and "Honeycomb Hill". A large blue polygon is drawn on the map, covering a significant portion of the residential area. A red dot is placed on the map, near the center of the blue polygon. The map is surrounded by a light blue border. In the bottom right corner, there is a small text area that says "Problem with the data?".

The current play equipment, as shown in the attached photos, focuses on younger children, as would be appropriate to LAP use. The equipment is in reasonable condition for its age and is checked routinely by the Parish Council's environmental operatives. It also annually undergoes a RPII¹ inspection.

¹ The Register of Play Inspectors International (RPPI) is the official UK body for examining, accrediting and certificating inflatable, indoor and outdoor play inspectors

Visual Assessment



Figure 2: Cranham Avenue Play Area looking east (April 2025)



Figure 3: Cranham Avenue Play Area looking west (April 2025)

Overview of Responses

A total of 43 responses were received (29 via online survey, 7 via post, 7 via e-mail) from 36 of the 60 properties on Cranham Avenue.

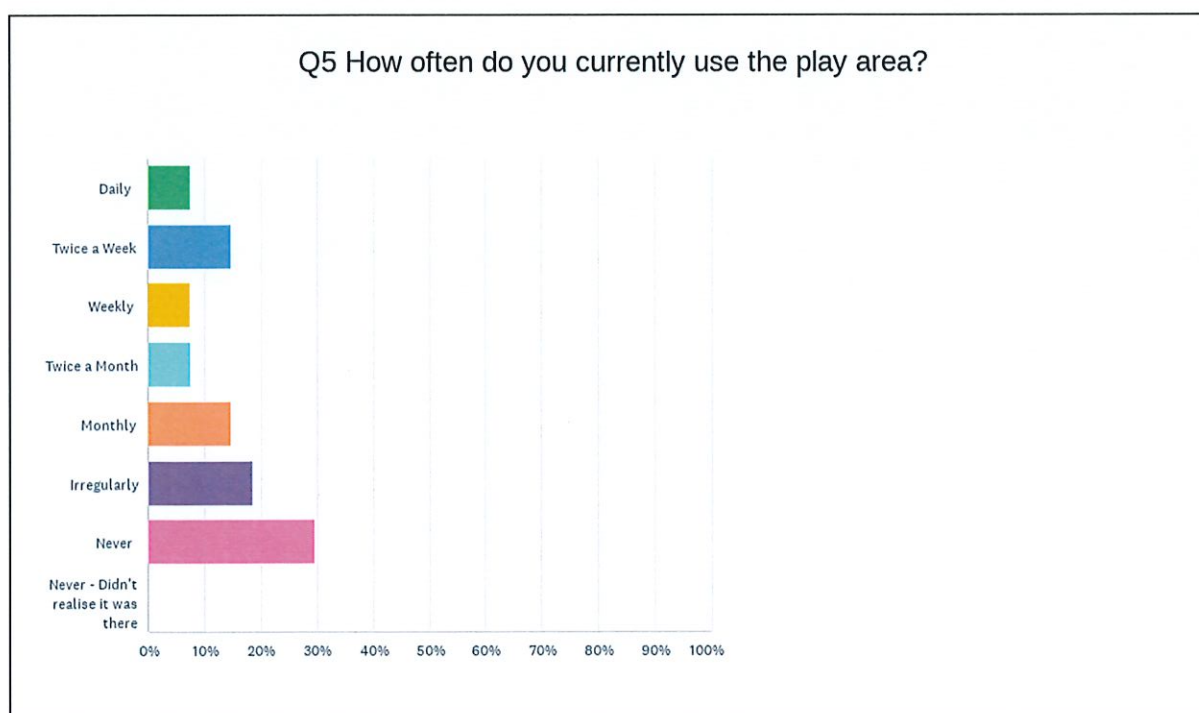
Some residents responded across more than one response channel.

- **35 total responses in favour of maintaining the play area** (33 when duplicates are removed)
- **6 responses in favour of selling the play area** (3 when duplicates are removed)
- 1 online survey respondent provided answers to each survey question but failed to complete the final question on whether to maintain or sell the play area
- 1 online survey respondent entered their house number and postcode then didn't complete the remainder of the survey

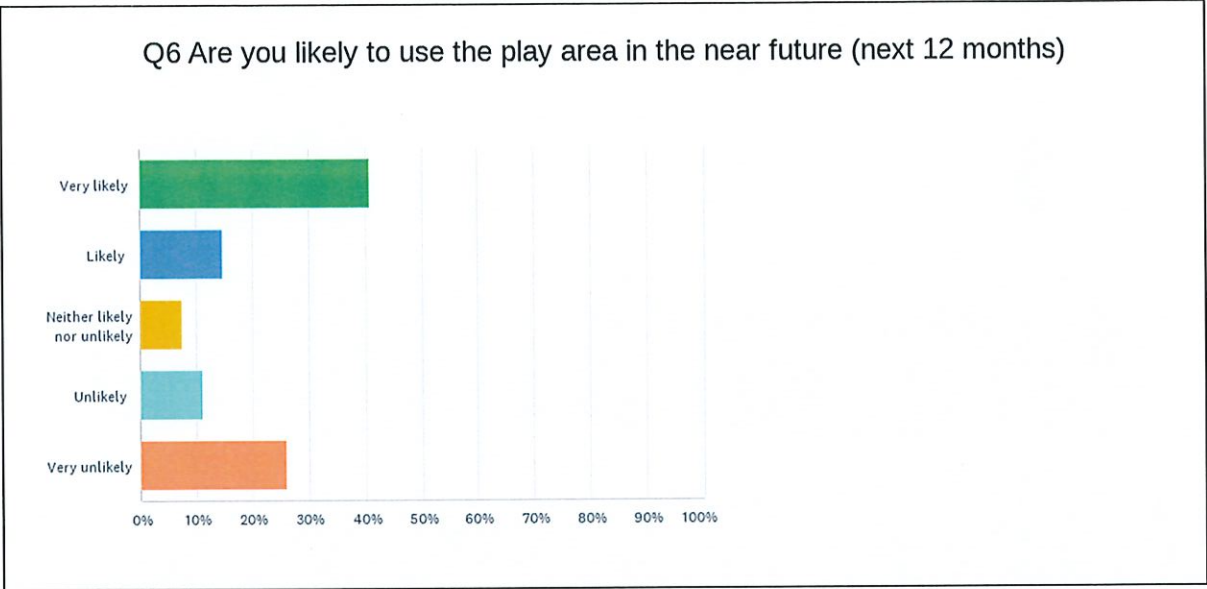
Online Survey Detail

Questions 1-4 asked for the respondent's house number and postcode, number of children at the address and of those, how many were aged 0-5. This data was not completed in all cases. Feedback comments highlighted that these questions didn't include the option for grandchildren, or visiting children who also use the play area. Some respondents included the number of grandchildren or visitors in their Q3 and Q4 response skewing the data slightly for these questions.

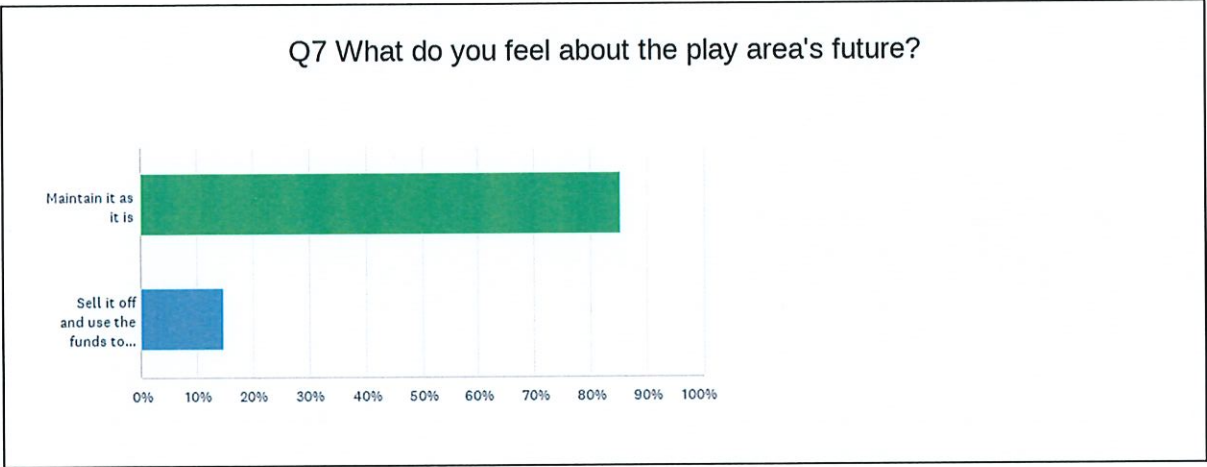
Residents were asked if they were currently using the play area, and whilst 48.15% replied that they weren't currently using the playground (Early-May 2025), more than half, (51.85%) of respondents reported that they were using the play area monthly or more often, including 7.41% who responded that they used it daily.



Of the online survey responders, 55.55% of respondents (40.74% very likely and 14.81% likely) indicated that they intended to use the play area again within the next 12 months. This may indicate more seasonal use over the summer rather than all year round given the time of the year that the survey was completed.



At the end of the survey, a strong 85.19% of total online responses opted to maintain the playground. This ratio was closely matched by the responses through other channels.



Question 8 allowed for open comment feedback. A summary of these responses is included attached.

The owner of the house next to the play area who has expressed an interest in acquiring all or part of the site, has since advised that if the Council is not willing to dispose of the whole site to her, then would it be willing to sell a strip adjoining her house to give her a rear access to her property, which she doesn't currently possess. It would she suggests, give the Council a capital sum which it could reinvest into the play area.

The Committee is invited to

- a. Note the results of the public consultation.
- b. Consider whether it wishes to dispose of
 - i. All of the play area;
 - ii. A thin strip to the RHS of the play area;
 - iii. None of the play area.

Q8 Any other comments

Answered: 23 Skipped: 6

| # | RESPONSES | DATE |
|----|--|--------------------|
| 1 | The current play park has poor equipment and doesn't appear to have been maintained or upgraded in recent years since my children have grown up. The last thing we need is the local parish council selling the land to put in a house, taking away a local facility for children. Otherwise the nearest play park is in Penfold Grange which is currently undergoing construction on Natts Lane. Why should our children have to cross busy roads to get to a play park when we are not a small road with 60 houses. The other alternative would be to create a green space instead. To make it clear we are objecting to this as it will also cause significant disruption to the houses alongside the play area if construction work starts taking place. | 5/19/2025 8:07 AM |
| 2 | I don't feel like this is a fair survey as the play area clearly needs some money spent on it, so it shouldn't be left as it is. But the only alternative given is to sell it off with no indication of what will be put in its place - presumably to be bought by a neighbouring house owner and built on? There is not enough information to make an informed comment. For example, if the house next door wants to simply buy it to increase their garden size, with no building plans then I would be far more agreeable to that than a for instance a developer wanting to cram other property onto that plot. | 5/15/2025 11:50 AM |
| 3 | Future children will enjoy it when we move on | 5/14/2025 1:24 PM |
| 4 | Lots of children and families use it | 5/10/2025 11:04 AM |
| 5 | Can you advise what the space will be used for if it is sold | 5/6/2025 9:53 AM |
| 6 | My children used to play in the existing play area and other children still do. However, the play area could be improved. | 5/5/2025 12:08 PM |
| 7 | My grandson visits us and uses it I would love to see this park get tlc and a bit of an update please he would love a bigger climbing frame with 2 swings and adult swing and baby swing to ensure older children can use this area longer. | 5/4/2025 1:00 PM |
| 8 | Not long moved here, the play area is important to us as we have 2 very young grandchildren who spend time with us. Haven't used it much until now as they are only 18 months old and we're just coming out of constant wet weather, but fully intend to make good use of the play area. | 5/3/2025 6:03 PM |
| 9 | I would like it redesigned with better play equipment to cater older children as it currently stands its not great for little ones and boring for older ones! It's not been changed since I was installed over 20 year's ago it's time for change Please don't sell the land off | 5/3/2025 11:23 AM |
| 10 | I would definitely vote to keep the play area. Our kids and a lot of the young families on the estate use it regularly. We were going to email about it needing improving as, compared to the other play areas, is lacking and needs updating. So not only would I vote to keep it, I would vote to improve it. | 5/2/2025 10:30 PM |
| 11 | Please keep it | 5/2/2025 10:29 PM |
| 12 | The play area is used for anti social behaviour. The fence is often broken and attempts have been made to enter the garden of number 27 via the play area. Therefore it should be sold. | 5/2/2025 5:52 PM |
| 13 | Though we no longer have young children at our address, we frequently have young visitors and having the playground so close is a great facility. | 5/2/2025 9:27 AM |
| 14 | It's a great facility to have for parents with smaller children and an asset to this residential area. | 5/2/2025 8:14 AM |
| 15 | We have grandchildren that visit | 5/1/2025 7:12 PM |
| 16 | It's better to have a play park, even a little one, for the kids on the street to go to rather than nothing | 5/1/2025 6:45 PM |
| 17 | Both of our children enjoy using this park and often go after school. We would be very sad to see it go. | 5/1/2025 5:06 PM |
| 18 | Update with monkey bars as older kids swing on the swings why should we not have a park | 5/1/2025 4:30 PM |

for our children and those on the close to develop other areas ? In the new housing I assume ? Many kids on this street utilise the park daily.

| | | |
|----|---|-------------------|
| 19 | Very happy for play park to remain for those who have small children. | 5/1/2025 3:00 PM |
| 20 | We have over 15 children under the age of 10 that I personally know of that live close to us. I would like to see this play area upgrade, but with additional activities that the children can benefit from as they grow older. For example, my two daughters are obsessed with climbing and hanging and swinging on bars, so any form of monkey bars or parallel bars add to the park would be incredible. It's a really big space and we all feel it could be utilised better. I have no doubt that more children will come to Cranham avenue so please make this happen. We would over the moon if you updated this park | 5/1/2025 1:05 PM |
| 21 | As long as it will be used for much needed additional parking and not as an extension to someone's garden otherwise leave it as a play park! | 5/1/2025 11:57 AM |
| 22 | Who has determined that this is underused? From my observations, it is regularly used by residents. And what are we going to get if it's sold? Another house? This is not been clearly communicated in your leaflet! It most likely means more clutter that we don't need on our estate or a space that will eventually be left derelict and unsightly! Has the parish council considered reaching out to the Billingshurst Men's Club at Station Road Community Gardens for assistance with maintaining these local amenities? This group consists of retired skilled volunteers who would probably be willing to help, possibly for a small fee that could be more cost-effective than current expenses. Let's leverage the skills and labour available within our community to preserve these valuable resources and spaces. | 5/1/2025 11:06 AM |
| 23 | A full size swing would be good to add to it as I take my younger relatives and my children aged 8 & 10 would like to be able to play when there too | 5/1/2025 10:33 AM |

Cranham Avenue Consultation

E-mail Responses

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 2 May 2025 | <p>We live at no XX Cranham Avenue, we have used the small play area when our grandchildren come to stay with us. I don't know why in the leaflet it states under used, how do you know this? I live nearly opposite and it is often used.</p> <p>I would like to keep it, it was one of the reasons we chose to live in this road- if it is sold, what will replace it?</p> |
| 4 May 2025 | <p>Vote to keep and maintain the playground</p> |
| 8 May 2025 | <p>I am resident at no XX Cranham Avenue and wanted to email you directly regarding why I am in favour of the sale of the play area next to my property.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The play area equipment is old and would require replacement. 2) It is infrequently used by age appropriate children. I would estimate that it is empty over 90 per cent of the time. 3) It is often littered by passers by and I clear litter from the area frequently. 4) The playground area is used for unsociable behaviour. Attempts have been made in the past to enter my garden of number 27. The playground bench is situated next to the boundary fence of no 27 making a convenient place for people to stand and look into my garden and also try to access the garden. 5) The playground fence on the boundary is in disrepair and has been vandalised numerous times. I have replaced the individual fence slats when necessary to rectify this. The last occasion being January 2025. I can provide a photograph of the damage that was caused if you require. |
| 13 th May 2025 | <p>We received a letter advising of the plans for the playground opposite our home. My neighbour who lives adjacent to the park has advised us that she has been given the opportunity by the council to buy this plot, which we are happy with. However, the only concern we have is that if she is not the successful buyer then what sort of buyer would the council intend to sell too? And what would be their development plans for the park?</p> <p>We would only be happy if the existing land is utilised for the extension of her garden but would oppose to any plans for the land to be made into car parks or even a builders yard as this will be detrimental to our quiet, safe, clean, family residential close. The park's proximity is far too close to my home and many others.</p> |
| 13 May 2025 | <p>I was rather surprised receiving this survey with very little background information except about an opportunity to sell this community space.</p> <p>Where is the evidence that it is under-used? How was this ascertained? Very little Council attention has been given to this space and facilities have not been updated for a while. Why has nothing been done about the development adjoining the playground (high shed right on boundary) spoiling the space and not enhancing it at all.</p> <p>This area was set aside for community use when the estate was built and it should remain available for all. Selling it off will remove it forever. One can only presume that it is only the neighbouring property that will benefit if it comes up for sale.</p> <p>Will they build on it and what will be built?</p> <p>We need our spaces and it is extremely important for the present young families and those in the future who will move into Cranham Ave to have a place to take their toddlers and meet others. It was thoughtful of the planners that the playground was placed in close proximity to the smaller houses, usually bought by younger families.</p> |

| | |
|-------------|---|
| | <p>It is totally unacceptable to even consider removing community spaces from the residents especially when we are all aware of the benefits they have on people's mental health and well being. Nearby facilities are not so nearby as made out on the leaflet, especially for young parents and toddlers!</p> <p>I would like the playground to be maintained and NOT sold.</p> |
| 14 May 2025 | Maintain the play ground |

APPENDIX B

BILLINGSHURST PARISH COUNCIL

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 16 JULY 2025

PROPERTY UPDATES

FOR INFORMATION

REPORT BY OFFICE MANAGER

1. ENVIRONMENTAL OPERATIVES (EOs) & GARAGE

- Mike Ellis has now left the employ of the Council.
- The two remaining EOs are due to attend a play equipment inspection course in Southwater shortly.
- A weekly visit to The Depot has been arranged for staff to clear waste due to increased usage.
- The x5 new wooden bus shelters have been added to timesheets for the EO staff.
- Staff are continuing to proceed through the work outstanding from the annual inspection last year.

2. MANOR FIELDS

- The pipe attachment to a piece of play equipment has now been replaced.
- The s106 funding for the 3 raised beds for the disabled and final fencing project has now been reimbursed by Horsham District Council and this latest funding application means total funding of £21,454.47 has now been drawn down for projects on the allotments site.

3. LOWER STATION ROAD RECREATION GROUND

- A resident made contact drawing attention to a latch on the bridge near the Parbrook Bridge; one of the Council EOs went to site in mid-May and fixed this and a broken handrail accordingly.
- A large post between the link fence surrounding the play equipment has been repaired by Sussex Land Services.

4. JUBILEE FIELDS

- EOs have made a start on the works required to the fishing pontoons.
- Various repairs to the driveway are now all complete.
- The Office Manager has contacted Billigreen for an update on when they plan to put the owl boxes up on trees in Burnt Row Wood. This is likely to be early Autumn, and the Council will ask its tree surgeon G. Nye to assist with putting the boxes up.

5. STATION ROAD COMMUNITY GARDENS (SRCG)

- Unfortunately, it became necessary for the Clerk to speak yet again to members of the Men's Shed who continue to persist in parking along the access road to the rear of the Weald School and on one known occasion to have driven their vehicles onto the grassed

area at the rear of the SRCG site as well which brings to mind the serious safety implications of having vehicles on a site where young people gather. The inconsiderate parking not only causes issues for the Weald School, but it makes it very difficult for the Council's garden contractor to access the rear of the site to cut the grass.

- Minutes of the Directors meeting of the FOG which took place on 1 June were provided and sent through to Councillors.
- The Office Manager has been in touch with HDC to increase the large trade waste bin emptying to twice-weekly as the current regime is not enough.
- WSCC and HDC have now released funds in the sum of £30,550 enabling the Parish Council to finally complete the long-awaited Safer Routes to School pathway. A site meeting will take place in the next couple of weeks and the project, once started, is likely to take 3 weeks.
- A letter requesting the usual annual access across the rear of Station Road Gardens for the Billingshurst Bowling Club was received in early June and a signed copy of the Access Agreement document has been signed and returned.

6. **PUBLIC TOILETS**

- EOs are regularly repairing locks which continue to be damaged through misuse.

7. **CHERRY TREE CLOSE**

- The order was placed with Sutcliffe Play in late May to repair various pieces of kit, and a date to carry out work is due imminently.

8. **BILLINGSHURST IN BLOOM**

- Horticultural Society judges have now been out to carry out the judging of the front garden competition entries. The results are now in, and the presentation ceremony is booked to take place in the Council Chambers on Wednesday 1 October.
- EOs have been working hard weeding in and around the route for South & South East In Bloom in readiness for the judges' visit. An update report will be brought to a following meeting.
- The Officer Manager requested attendance of the road sweeper to cover the Southeast in Bloom route in time for the judges' visit.
- Each of the High Street sponsors have agreed to continue with their planter/flower bed sponsorships for a further year.
- The Billingshurst Community Partnership organised an Open Gardens Day which took place on Sunday 22 June and was really successful. Officers assisted with advertising the event on social media and via E-Newsletter on several occasions.

9. **TREES**

- There are only a few outstanding areas where works identified in the 2024 Tree Survey have not been completed. All works are non-urgent and have been left as access to the sites was difficult due to weather conditions and so that works do not interfere with the bird nesting season.
- Sussex Land Services has been asked to lightly trim back overgrown branches at the rear car park of the Billingshurst Centre.
- As Councillors are already aware, back in 2020 the Parish Council used £5,000 from CIL funds at its disposal to plant trees on highway verges and residents were asked to

send in suggestions of where they would like to see trees provided. 27 locations were checked and approved by WSCC and planted during the autumn/winter period of 2020/2021. Several more trees were added last autumn (2024) and in recent weeks, given that the Met Office has stated that spring 2025 has been the warmest and driest on record, officers have appealed to residents via social media and E-Newsletter posts to help water the highway trees. Location maps and tree species are also noted on the NEWSFEED page of the Council's website.

10. **LONGHURST DRIVE**

- Grass cutting on site is now up to date and the new native hedging to screen the play equipment is growing well. The Council received an email of thanks from one of the residents at Longhurst Drive thanking officers and the garden contractor for making the site look spruce.

11. **CHRISTMAS LIGHTS**

- Paperwork arrived from the Council's contractor Light Angels, and this is being processed at the current time, with a view to extending the lights further down the High Street southwards this season.

12. **EVENTS**

- The Horsham Royal British Legion band will be paying in SRCG from 7-8.30pm on Friday 15 August to mark the 80th anniversary of VJ Day. Refreshments will be available, and residents are being encouraged to bring a rug and picnic,
- Plans are progressing well for the Family Activity Day at Jubilee Fields on Saturday 9 August being held between 12 noon & 4pm.

13.. **MISCELLANEOUS**

- Following contact with HDC, the Council has been advised that any funding application towards future furniture/tech/multi-media opportunities at the Billingshurst Centre would not be supported.
- The Clerk has submitted the Road Closure Application for Remembrance Sunday.
- Officers continue to chase 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.
- Cranham Avenue play area – see separate agenda item.
- WSCC has advised there will be a road closure of East Street from the High Street (next to Meadows Wellbeing and Rosehill between the 2nd to 10th September. This is a total closure, and diversions will be in place. Full details are available on one.network
- There has unfortunately been more damage to the telephone box in the High Street next to the Sorting Office. This has been reported to BT Online and a job has been created for the repair.
- HDC has asked Parish Councils to provide some details of s106 non-financial planning obligations which officers may be aware of. The Asst. Clerk looked through the documentation and a response sent back to HDC earlier this month.
- The real time bus information for the bus stop in Adversane was damaged during June. This was sent to Highways, Transport & Planning at WSCC to action the necessary repairs.

- There have been various reports passed on to the parish office including streetlights not working, overgrown vegetation etc which have been reported to the most appropriate authority for action.

The Committee is invited to note this report.