



**Minutes of the Meeting of Billingshurst Parish Council
held at the Billingshurst Centre
Wednesday 4 January 2023
7.30pm**

Present

Cllrs Paul Berry (Chairman), Barry Barnes, Edna Bengier, Garry Commins, Phillip Day, Sandy Duck, James Marchant, Roy Margetts, Ken Peters, Caroline Beresford Pratt, and Doug Waller.

In attendance

G Burt, Clerk to the Council
County Cllr Mrs Amanada Jupp
District Cllr Nigel Jupp

01/23 Chairman's Announcements.

The Chairman advised that

1. The meeting was being streamed to the internet.
2. Cllrs wishing to speak should raise their hand and speak loudly and clearly.
3. Happy New Year to you all, both present this evening and watching online. As we enter 2023, it is worth reminding people that in May this year, the current council term comes to an end. Personally, I feel that democracy is much better served if more than 15 people put themselves forward, thus forcing an election. It seems inconceivable on the face of it, that given how much Billingshurst has grown in recent years and how many eligible candidates there now must be, that we wouldn't get more than 15 people stand, however history has taught us that elections at Parish Council level, not just in Billingshurst of course, are rare.
It is always difficult to get away from the fact people often, usually when being critical, simply refer to "the council". County, District and Parish Councils are all quite different animals all with different roles, responsibilities and powers. Unlike our principal authorities (i.e. County and District), Parish Councils are not political organisations, and certainly this is one thing that attracted me to the role.
I would urge any members of the public who are possibly interested in joining the Council to come to some of our meetings in the coming months, look at our meeting agendas and minutes, perhaps talk to the Clerk or any of the current Councillors about what the Council does and what being a Parish Councillor involves. And please, if you are considering standing, please do so. Being a Parish Councillor is a great way to put something back into your community and help shape it in the future and although it can sometimes be difficult and frustrating, a huge majority of the time it is incredibly worthwhile and rewarding.
4. I am sure that I speak on behalf of us all in congratulating Pam Goldsmith from the Billingshurst Macmillan Group for recently being awarded a British Empire Medal

for the enormous fund-raising she has done in the area for the past 27 years or so. It is lovely to see such an honour given to someone so very well deserving of it.

5. The Billingshurst Artisan Market seems to have been very well supported so far. Well done and thanks to all the organisers for bringing this very welcome event to Billingshurst each month; the next market is due to take place on Sunday 15th January from 9.30 to 1.30.
6. You may have seen in the Village Tweet magazine that the Council's application to see measures put in place to reduce the volume and speed of traffic passing through the village was turned down by West Sussex County Council (WSCC), this being despite the fact there is an enormous amount of money available resulting from the huge amount of development Billingshurst has had to endure in recent years and the fact the plans were well supported by parishioners. I would like you assure you that our County Councillor is just as frustrated as we are regarding WSCC's decision and we will continue to look at other avenues to achieve our objectives but there is so little we can do without the support and help of the County Council.
7. The Council and Centre will jointly be hosting a Warm Hub at the Centre, on Fridays from late January until the end of March.

02/23 Apologies for Absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Craig Gale, Dave Homer, Steve Thomas and Sarah Wilson, due to prior engagements. On the proposal of Cllr Paul Berry, seconded by Cllr Doug Waller, **RESOLVED** that the apologies and reasons given be accepted.

03/23 To Receive Declarations of Interest and consider any requests for a dispensation.

None.

Adjournment for...

04/23 Public Session (Members of the Public may speak for up to 3 minutes at the discretion of the Chairman).

None.

05/23 Reports from

a. County & District Councillors

County Cllr Mrs Amanda Jupp had circulated a report in advance, attached Appendix A. In answer to questions, she then went on to discuss the pothole on the bridge at Coneyhurst, the proposed footway extension in Marringdean Road and the flooded footpath leading from Myrtle Lane to Station Road Community Gardens.

District Cllr Nigel Jupp advised that he hoped the application for a gypsy & traveller site would go to Committee for decision. A cabinet item on the Local Plan had been postponed yet again, due to ongoing discussions with ministers on housing numbers.

b. Council Representatives on Outside Bodies.

The Clerk reported that the sculptures to be sited on open space to the east of the village were currently being made. Cllr Beresford Pratt asked for details of the sites – Clerk to advise.

Resume Meeting

06/23 Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 November 2022.

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2022, previously circulated were taken as read. On the proposal of Cllr Paul Berry seconded by Cllr Doug Waller, **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted and signed as a correct record accordingly. Cllr Doug Waller asked that fewer acronyms be used in minutes.

07/23 Matters Arising – that are not separate agenda items.

None.

08/23 To consider RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. From the Finance and General Purposes Committee of 14 December 2022 to approve a revenue budget of £607,723 for 2023-24 (Minute 129/22 (b) refers)
On the proposal of Cllr Garry Commins seconded by Cllr Ken Peters, **RESOLVED** to approve a revenue budget of £607,723 for 2023-24.
- ii. From the Finance and General Purposes Committee of 14 December 2022 to approve a precept of £490,586 for 2023-24 (Minute 129/22 (c) refers)
On the proposal of Cllr Garry Commins seconded by Cllr Ken Peters, **RESOLVED** to levy a precept £490,586 for 2023-24 upon Horsham District Council (HDC) accordingly.

Note

This represents an increase on the overall precept of £53,608 = 9.67%.

For an average Band D property this equates to:

£109.39 per year = £2.10 per week.

a rise of 7.49% per annum

a rise of £7.62 per annum

15 pence extra per week.

09/23 To consider a proposal on Climate Change from Cllr Phillip Day

Cllr Phillip Day had attended a seminar at HDC on what parishes could be doing to help mitigate climate change. He felt that the Parish Council ought to be more proactive on the issue and had tabled a discussion document about what the Council might do. Members were supportive but felt more information was required on what it could do over and above what it was already doing. It was agreed that as a starting point, the Council should meet with those already working hard on some of these issues in the Parish, such as the group

Billigreen, and see what the Council could do in addition to, or in support of them. Cllrs James Marchant and Phillip Day together with the Clerk, would meet accordingly.

10/23 To receive Minutes as approved by the following Committees:

- a) On the proposal of Cllr Doug Waller, seconded by Cllr Caroline Beresford Pratt, **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee of 6 October and 3 November 2022 be received.
- b) On the proposal of Cllr Ken Peters, seconded by Cllr Doug Waller, **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the F&GP Committee of 26 October 2022 be received.
- c) On the proposal of Cllr Barry Barnes, seconded by Cllr Paul Berry, **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Property Committee of 6 October 2022 be received.

11/23 Neighbourhood Wardens - to receive Wardens' Reports for October and November 2022.

NOTED.

12/23 Any other matters for information only.

None.

13/23 Date of Next Meeting – 1 March 2023.

Meeting finished at 8.19pm.

Chairman

Date

Advice and Support through the Community Hub, Libraries and other Partners

The County Council is using its £4.8m Household Support Fund from Government to provide a package of financial and practical assistance for residents this winter. These Household Support Funds will be available through a range of different distribution methods, including District and Borough Councils, through applications via the Community Hub as well as in partnership with other organisations such as Citizens Advice and Food and Fuel Banks.

Our Community Hub (033 022 27980) continues to offer direct support to vulnerable households, providing essentials such as food and supplies, as well as grants to those who are eligible.

Our 36 West Sussex libraries also offer a warm welcome to all visitors and library staff are on hand to help and advise people on a range of topics, from money management to energy saving, job seeking and benefits guidance. Regular library events like Story Time are free for families of young children.

On the Council's 'Here to help - Cost of living' webpages, people can find practical advice and information about how to apply for extra local and national support.

Part of the £4.8m Household Support Fund has been used during the school holidays to provide food vouchers for every West Sussex child who receives benefits-related free school meals.

Over 17,000 children will be given a £15 supermarket voucher through their school.

During the Christmas school holidays, the Council ran its popular Holiday Activities and Food programme for children who receive benefits-related free school meals. This Christmas a range of free holiday club places were on offer together with a nutritious meal for each child.

Highways

Highways have been very busy during the last few weeks with the adverse weather conditions. There continues to be a number of places where blocked ditches and culverts are causing flooding so please report any in your area.

The revised West Sussex Speed Limit Policy has now been implemented following the decision taken at the end of December by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport. The aim of the revision is to support recent changes made to the Highway Code, assist in the national drive for increased levels of active travel and to help improve road safety for vulnerable road users. The proposed amendments are also in support of the West Sussex Transport Plan and the West Sussex Road Safety Framework.

A total of £7.4m worth of road surface improvement schemes were completed at 197 sites countywide from April to October 2022. 138km of roads were either completely resurfaced or had surface dressing or micro-asphalt treatments.

Winter Maintenance

There is a salt stock of 8,500 tonnes for the season and we treat in the region of 42% of our network in advance of forecasts of freezing weather.

To find out more about salt bins, please visit [Salt bins - West Sussex County Council](#).

There are 19 gritting routes across the county and these can be found on our website [Gritting routes - West Sussex County Council](#).

Changes to Community Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs)

TROs are legal orders that support the enforceable restrictions and movements on the public highway. In West Sussex, requests for TROs are received from communities to deal with matters such as speed limits, parking controls and moving offences. For example, width restrictions and Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV) restrictions. These requests are known as Community TROs.

Some examples will include the use of double yellow lines for junction protection, reduction in speed limits along short stretches of highway, or the introduction of HGV restrictions.

Following a review of how the County Council processes and delivers applications for Community TROs, applications will be considered as they are submitted rather than once a year. This will allow more TROs to be delivered, more quickly - typically within 7 to 11 months, previously it could take well up to two and a half years.

It is important that Community TROs are supported locally, so the County Council has made it a requirement for any applications to evidence support from their County Councillor and Town/Parish Council.

[Click for more information about TROs](#)

Ash Dieback

For the sake of public safety, action continues to be taken to remove trees affected by ash dieback along our West Sussex major road network.

Ash dieback is a highly destructive disease, predicted to kill up to 95 percent of our Ash trees in this country. Leaves start to wilt/die, trees become weak and brittle and have the potential to shed branches or even fall.

Last year, 1,500 Ash trees were felled on A and B roads in West Sussex. Now, on high-speed and high traffic-flow routes, we plan to remove more than 2,000 trees per felling season - outside of the main bird nesting season.

To continue to keep the road network safe, the County Council needs to fell severely infected trees. Their removal will open the area to light and allow natural regeneration of trees from the existing seed source. Felling works have been ongoing across West Sussex, with new dates now scheduled, all subject to factors such as severe weather:

Further details of the County Council's Ash Dieback action plan can be found on our [website page](#).

More information on how we manage and maintain trees on the highway can also be found [online](#).

Aboriculturists are also currently doing surveys on C and D classified roads.

The Tree Council has produced a downloadable [Ash Dieback Guide](#), with pictures, for homeowners and those with Ash trees on their land. For people without online access, the Tree Council can be contacted on 0207 4079992.

If still concerned or unsure, ash tree owners should seek advice from a [qualified arboriculturist](#). People without online access can contact the Arboricultural Association on 01242 522152 for a list of approved contractors in the local area.

Signs and Lines Update

Additional funding allocated to Highway Operations for 2022/23 has enabled more sign cleaning, bollard cleaning and localised vegetation cut back (so that existing sign faces are visible).

This is a Countywide project and the sites have been identified through the Local Highway Teams.

All signs and highways furniture on each identified route will be cleaned and vegetation cleared.

The work has been planned in batches and in the first seven week batch, approximately 500 signs were cleaned and made more visible. In addition to this resource, we were able to divert some of the grass cutting teams during the dry summer to temporarily support sign cleaning and vegetation clearance. This enabled us to attend to another 1000 signs.

[For more information about road markings and signs, including how to report problems, click here](#)

Signs and Lines Improvements

We are in the final year of a three year improvement to the public realm on selected routes, using a 'fence to fence approach'. This means we work to improve and enhance the highway corridor, focusing on the following:

- Replace worn, damaged, faded, illegible signs
- Replace damaged or rusty signposts
- Clean and cut back localised vegetation around existing sign location
- Refresh all road markings on the selected route, where this is required
- Replace all road studs, where intervention is required, and they are present on the selected route
- Replace black and white hazard marker posts, where present and still required on the selected routes.

Road marking work has started across 27 locations, with signs soon to follow. The overall project cost will be in the region of £1.6m and the locations split evenly across the county.

Changes to the process for reporting road and pavement issues

From November 2022 the process for reporting road and pavement issues changed, replacing it with mobile device friendly eforms.

The benefit of the new process will be that reports will be automatically uploaded into the Highways Case Management System and assigned to the right team.

Customers who would normally make reports using Love West Sussex will receive a pop-up message signposting them to the correct eform for the issue being reported.

Other benefits include a more detailed and accurate interactive map to improve location reporting. The map will feature all current reported issues and status for the type of issue you are reporting for example potholes, flooding or overgrown vegetation. Customers can receive status updates by providing their email address.

WSCC Public Rights of Way Volunteer Rangers

Vegetation clearance, the installation of a new concrete culvert pipe to improve drainage and the addition of two tonnes of stone to repair a damaged surface was completed in Coneyhurst.

Public Rights of Way - what landowners and managers need to know

Landowners and land managers are responsible for maintaining public rights of way that cross their land, making sure that the paths are clear, accessible and do not pose a risk to footpath users.

For more information visit the [Countryside Code](#) and the [West Sussex County Council](#) website.

Community Road Verge (CRV) Project Update

During 2022 the Council added 10 new nature friendly CRVs to make the total 20 across the county.

For the next year we will focus on maintaining and improving the existing CRVs, rather than taking on any new ones.

A key part of the CRV project for 2023 will be working with local communities to monitor increases in biodiversity and make sure that the ongoing conversations about CRVs in local neighbourhoods continues, communicating positive messages about improving habitats pollinators.

An interesting development during 2022 has been the emergence of 'unofficial' CRVs, where local people have created signage and started their own wildflower verges. We are keeping a watching brief on those to see how they develop and gathering feedback from local people.

Nature verges and CRVs that exist and have been developed in the past with WSCC showing the desire to manage our green spaces in a different way has existed for a while.

Road Safety

Following reduced traffic flows in 2020 and 2021 there has been an increase in vehicle journeys in 2022 and unfortunately this has also led to a rise in road traffic collisions and casualties.

Of particular concern is the upward trend in fatal collisions and those involving motorcyclists or pedestrians - especially at the time of good weather which encourages more motorcycling, walking and cycling.

Contact Number for Adult Services

Adult Services can be contacted on 01243 642121 Mondays to Fridays, 9am to 5pm.

The service provides emergency only cover outside these office hours, covering evenings and overnight, weekends and bank holidays and the number for this is 0330 222 7007.

Residents can phone for urgent referrals for adults, including safeguarding, or to contact an Approved Mental Health Professional, who will consider an urgent Mental Health Act Assessment for all age groups.

Further information can be found on the County Council's website.