



**Minutes of the Meeting of Billingshurst Parish Council
Wednesday 12 March 2025
7pm at the Billingshurst Centre**

Present

Cllrs Doug Waller (Chairman), Faye Algar, Paul Berry, Phillip Day, Craig Gale, Jeremy Harris, Craig Jones, Trevor Leonard, Anna Rhodes, Kate Rowbottom and Steve Thomas.

In attendance

G C Burt, Clerk to the Council
R Plant, Assistant Clerk to the Council
Cty Cllr A Jupp
Dis Cllrs, S Bateman, M Baynham, J Trollope.
2 Members of the Public.

13/25 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman advised that

1. The meeting was being streamed to the internet, incl. Facebook, YouTube and Instagram.
2. Cllrs wishing to speak should raise their hand and speak loudly and clearly.
3. Mobile phones should either be switched off or silenced.

He asked that a minute's silence be observed following the sad death of Barry Barnes, who had been on the Council for 55 years and had been dedicated to the parish.

14/25 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Edna Bengier, Sandy Duck and James Marchant for approved reasons. On the proposal of Cllr Doug Waller, seconded by Cllr Craig Gale **RESOLVED** that the apologies and reasons given be accepted.
No apology received: Cllr David Hingamp.

15/25 To Receive Declarations of Interest and consider any requests for a dispensation
None.

16/25 To receive a presentation from the Leader and Chief Executive of Horsham District Council (HDC), Cllr Martin Boffey and Jane Eaton on possible transfer of some non-statutory assets to existing or new parish and town councils, prior to or in conjunction with, any future local government reorganization

Cllr Martin Boffey and Jane Eaton gave an overview on the steps being taken to reorganise local government across Sussex into 3 or possibly more new unitary authorities replacing all existing District/Borough and County Councils. In advance of this, HDC, aware that a new more remote unitary authority might not be keen to take on the ongoing maintenance of some discretionary services, was looking at transferring some such assets to parishes

and towns in advance. They were keen to establish which parishes were willing to discuss such transfers.

They then took questions from Parish Councillors and officers. Cllr Paul Berry said that the additional cost would fall to Parish Council Council-Tax payers; however Jane Eaton said that there may be a possibility of transferring some revenue-generating assets (e.g. a car park) alongside any assets to help meet ongoing costs.

The Clerk asked if transfers were to be leasehold or freehold, as previously HDC had only granted leasehold, e.g. the public toilets at Mill Lane. Jane Eaton said that HDC were still compiling a list of HDC assets in the parish and looked forward to having further discussions.

Adjournment for

17/25 Public Session (Members of the Public may speak for up to 3 minutes at the discretion of the Chairman).

Nigel Jupp commented that he was disappointed that the HDC Chief Executive did not have a complete list of transferable assets available for the meeting.

18/25 Reports from:

a. County Councillor.

County Cllr Amanda Jupp reported on several matters, as set out in Appendix A, and took questions. She commented that any new unitary councils created in the County would be completely new councils adding that the election for the new Sussex Mayor would be in 2026 with the shadow unitaries being elected in 2028.

b. District Councillors

Dis Cllr Sam Bateman reported that she had been: working with the developer of *Land at Duckmoor* on new play area provision; looking at footway and other improvements in the Natts Lane area; continuing to be involved in the development of the *Better Billingshurst Fund*; looking at additional indoor community space needs; had proposed a *White Ribbon* motion at an HDC meeting; chaired a working party at HDC looking at improving the inclusiveness of parks and play areas.

Dis Cllr Mark Baynham commented on HDC being forced to find space for even more houses than before, due in part to not being able to give permission for so many in recent years thanks to the moratorium imposed by *Natural England*. There was still no word from Planning Inspector Luke Fleming who halted the Local Plan Inquiry in December.

Cllrs Paul Berry and Craig Jones queried the allegation that additional community space was needed. Dis Cllrs said the call had come from the Community Partnership which represented several organisations. It was questioned whether the purchase of an additional community building would be sensible given the potential for questions over long term ownership and costs in the years following the aforementioned local government reform and the costs previously spent on local youth projects.

c. Council Representatives on Outside Bodies.

Cllr Craig Gale reported from the Billingshurst Recreation and Sports Association that due in part to the offer of sponsorship from the Parish Council, the annual fireworks in October would be held. Recent dry weather had meant that senior football fixtures were not being postponed and in fact matches had seen an increase in spectator numbers.

Resume Meeting

19/25 Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 January 2025.

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2025, previously circulated, were taken as read. On the proposal of Cllr Doug Waller, seconded by Cllr Trevor Leonard **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted and signed as a correct record accordingly.

20/25 Clerk's Report.

None

21/25 To consider RECOMMENDATIONS

- a) from the F&GP Committee of 29 January 2025 that the Council's Corporate Risk Assessment be approved. (Minute 15/25 refers). On the proposal of Cllr Craig Gale, seconded by Cllr Paul Berry **RESOLVED** that the Council's Corporate Risk Assessment be approved accordingly
- b) from the F&GP Committee of 26 February 2025 that the Council undertakes steps to having Mission and Vision Statements accordingly. (Minute 29/25 refers). On the proposal of Cllr Craig Gale, seconded by Cllr Craig Jones **RESOLVED** that the Council undertakes steps to having Mission and Vision Statements accordingly.

22/25 To consider responding to consultation on proposal for a Mayoral Combined Authority for Sussex and Brighton.

Agreed to encourage Cllrs to make their own individual comments. Cllr Paul Berry did suggest it was often helpful if Cllrs were invited for their comments in advance, so that a combo response could be put to Council for deliberation. The Clerk said that as many modern consultations were online with many questions, this was not always easy.

23/25 To consider provision of public realm CCTV in Billingshurst.

The meeting considered a report giving an overview of the project to date, and setting out details of the tender process which despite having much interest, only attracted one tender. Members spoke of the need to progress with this long-awaited project. On the proposal of Cllr Doug Waller, seconded by Cllr Anna Rhodes **RESOLVED** that the Council

- a. Accept the tender from TYCO in the sum of £156,358.(*1)
 - a) Agree to sites proposed, except Cranham Avenue play area, and substitutes a different location at Amblehurst Green for another nearby.
 - b) Meet the cost from the remaining funds pertaining to *Land at Kingslea Farm*.
 - c) Seek ongoing revenue contributions where cameras cover land owned by third parties.

(*1 This sum will be adjusted due to the deletion of one camera and relocation of another.)

24/25 To receive Minutes *en bloc* as approved by the following Committees:

- a) On the proposal of Cllr Doug Waller, seconded by Cllr Faye Algar, **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee of 7 & 29 January & 4 February 2025 be received.
- b) On the proposal of Cllr Phillip Day, seconded by Cllr Craig Gale, **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the F&GP Committee of 18 December 2024 and 29 January 2025 be received.
- c) On the proposal of Cllr Craig Gale, seconded by Cllr Phillip Day, **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Property Committee of 13 November 2024 be received.
- d) On the proposal of Cllr Steve Thomas, seconded by Cllr Craig Gale, **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Working Practices Committee of 23 October 2024 be received.

25/25 Neighbourhood Wardens - to receive Wardens' Reports for December, January and February – previously circulated / on website. NOTED. Cllrs expressed their appreciation of the Wardens' hard work.

26/25 Date of Next Meeting 7 May 2025

The meeting finished at 8.43pm

Chairman

Date

APPENDIX A

County Councillor Report – March 2025

The Streetlighting LED Conversion Project aims to convert all the County Council owned Street Lighting Asset Luminaires to LEDs and introduce a central monitoring system to allow the remote operation of lighting. The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport has approved an additional £3.282m capital allocation, to increase the total budget allocation to £24.222m, to facilitate implementation of this programme in West Sussex.

The County Council, as the minerals planning authority and the waste planning authority for the parts of the geographical county of West Sussex outside the South Downs National Park, is required to prepare mineral and waste local plans. In addition, the County Council is required to prepare a Minerals and Waste Development Scheme that sets out how it will prepare any new local plans and other policy documents over a rolling

three-year period. The current Scheme has been updated to cover the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2028.

County Council Budget: For the coming year financial year, April 2025 to March 2026, the County Council has agreed to spend more than £2.2 billion on vital services, with the vast majority of this going to schools, social care, recycling, waste disposal and roads. This year an additional £47.4 million has been put in for service demand pressures and continued additional investment in our roads.

We are facing extremely challenging times in terms of local government finances, particularly around social care, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and home to school transport, but we have been able to close our predicted budget gap and deliver a balanced budget without cuts to front-line services. This has been achieved with spending reductions of £12.3 million, and an increase in council tax of approximately £1.65 per week for a Band D property. Whilst we have balanced the budget for this year, there will still be increasing financial challenges in the years to come, as the pressures facing the County Council outweigh the funding received from Government. Everything we do is focused on the priorities in our Council Plan, which are:

Keeping people safe in vulnerable situations

A sustainable and prosperous economy

Helping people and communities fulfil their potential

Making best use of resources

These priorities are underpinned by a cross-cutting theme of 'protecting the environment'

The future of local government in West Sussex and Sussex more widely, will be shaped by plans for devolution and the re-organisation of councils into unitary authorities. The details of these are yet to be determined, but in the meantime, we will continue to deliver the vital services that support our priorities and are relied on by thousands of residents every single day.

West Sussex County Council has again worked with schools to ensure that every child in the county who applied for a secondary school place this year has been offered one. This year there was a total of 9050 secondary school applications, a slight decrease from last year, with every child offered a secondary place. 7882 applicants (87.1%) will be offered their first preference school, which is slightly up on last year's percentage (86.8%) and 96.9% per cent of all applicants will be offered one of their three preferences.

Admissions officers are available to speak to parents, carers and pupils should they want to discuss their offer and the options available to them such as an independent admission appeal, by calling 03330 142903 or emailing admissions.south@westsussex.gov.uk or admissions.north@westsussex.gov.uk

The Carbon Literacy Project is offering access to fully funded training for a limited number of small and medium sized businesses operating in the food sector. The training will help businesses to set and achieve sustainability goals, comply with regulations, enhance their environmental reputation and better understand how to align with the

procurement policies of their customers. Further details: <https://carbonliteracy.com/food-hospitality/food-smes-offer>

Amanda Jupp