



**Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee
Wednesday 29 January 2025
7.30pm**

Present: Cllrs Craig Gale (Vice Chairman in the Chair), Paul Berry, Jeremy Harris and Steve Thomas.

In Attendance

G Burt, Clerk to the Council
Cllr Trevor Leonard

01/25 Chairman's Announcements.

The Chairman advised

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

02/25 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Edna Benger, Phillip Day and Craig Jones for approved reasons. On the proposal of Cllr Craig Gale, seconded by Cllr Steve Thomas, **RESOLVED** that the apologies and reasons given be accepted.

03/25 Declaration of Interests and notification of change to members' interests.

Cllr Paul Berry declared a pecuniary interest in Min 07/25 as his wife is an employee of the Council.

04/25 Public Session (Members of the Public may speak for up to 3 minutes at the discretion of the Chairman).

Cllr Trevor Leonard spoke in support of the suggestion being looked at later on the agenda, that the land referred to as East of Billingshurst in the Horsham District Draft Local Plan, be made into a Country Park. He said that as the Council had objected to the site's allocation for housing, such an alternative use should be supported.

The Chairman, with the meeting's agreement, took the following item next:

05/25 To consider suggestion of Country Park for East of Billingshurst by local resident.

Members were sympathetic to the suggestion. However, given that the site was privately owned, upon which a developer hoped to receive consent for a lucrative housing scheme, Members were pessimistic about the achievability of such a proposal. On the proposal of Cllr Paul Berry, seconded by Cllr Steve Thomas **DEFER** consideration pending a formal detailed proposal.

06/25 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2024, previously circulated, were taken as read. On the proposal of Cllr Craig Gale, seconded by Cllr Paul Berry that the minutes be approved and signed as a correct record accordingly.

07/25 Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported that the painting of the Parish Office was planned for 20-23 February, with staff working from home on the Thursday and Friday.

Cllr Berry left the meeting.

08/25 To Approve Payments and Note Receipts for November and December 2024.

Details of payments for November and December 2024 totalling £76,692.58 and £65,223.25 respectively had been previously circulated – Appendices **A** and **B**, along with any receipts. On the proposal of Cllr Craig Gale, seconded by Cllr Jeremy Harris **RESOLVED** that the payments be approved and published on the Council's website accordingly and any receipts noted.

Cllr Berry rejoined the meeting.

09/25 To Note Bank Reconciliations.

The following Bank Reconciliations were NOTED. (The corresponding statements were then initialled by Cllr Craig Gale).

Cashbook 1 to 30/11/2024 - Appendix **C**

Cashbook 1 to 31/12/2024 - Appendix **E**

Cashbook 3 to 31/11/2024 - Appendix **D**

Cashbook 3 to 31/12/2024 - Appendix **F**

10/25 To consider 2024-25 Interim Internal Audit report and agree draft responses –

The Internal Auditor had given the Council's accounting practices a clean bill of health. He raised several issues and on the proposal of Cllr Craig Gale, seconded by Cllr Steve Thomas, **RESOLVED** the responses to issues raised as set out in Appendix **G**.

11/25 To consider any recommendations from Committees.

From the F&GP Cttee of 15 January 2025

- a. On the proposal of Cllr Steve Thomas, seconded by Cllr Jeremy Harris, **RESOLVED** the release of £2,261 from the Council's CIL fund for the installation of electrical infrastructure on 8 lighting columns in High Street, to enable the Christmas Lights to be extended to West Street next festive season.
- b. On the proposal of Cllr Steve Thomas, seconded by Cllr Jeremy Harris, **RESOLVED** the release of £930 from the Council's CIL fund for the installation of a permanent Christmas Tree socket/pit, as quoted by Leith Hill Plant Hire, outside the Billingshurst Centre.

12/25 To review Grant Policy, as requested by the Committee.

Grant applications were currently considered as and when they were submitted. Members had been pondering whether a once or twice yearly consideration would allow a more strategic and fairer approach to distributing the available funds. On the proposal of Cllr Craig Gale, seconded by Cllr Paul Berry, **RESOLVED** for the 2025-26 financial year onwards, grant applications shall be considered twice per year, at the April and September meetings of this Committee. Applications, together with all supporting documentation as set out above, must be received by the 15th of those months and no later. It is the intention to award 50% of the available budget on each occasion. The Clerk was asked to publicise the change accordingly.

13/25 Highways:

- c. To consider responding to the Transport for the South East Draft Transport Strategy Public Consultation and/or encouraging Cllrs to make their own comments. Agreed to encourage Cllrs to make their own comments.
- d. To consider responding to the *West Sussex Road Safety Strategy Public Consultation* and/or encouraging Cllrs to make their own comments. Agreed to encourage Cllrs to make their own comments.

14/25 To note HDC's request for comments on the Better Billingshurst Draft Governance Arrangements.

HDC had asked for comments on the Better Billingshurst Draft Governance Arrangements. This had been circulated to all Councillors and the Clerk was collating responses accordingly. NOTED. The Clerk understood that the allocation panel was only to consider use of the new £1 million allocation (not s106 and CIL funds). If asked by HDC for nominations the following were proposed: Cllrs Berry, Duck and Gale. They felt that a BPC officer should also attend.

15/25 To review the draft Corporate Risk Assessment.

Following a detailed review, on the proposal of Cllr Craig Gale, seconded by Cllr Steve Thomas, **RECOMMEND** to Council that the Corporate Risk Assessment be approved.

16/25 To review the Council's Asset Register.

Following a detailed review, on the proposal of Cllr Steve Thomas, seconded by Cllr Jeremy Harris **RESOLVED** that the Asset Register be approved accordingly.

17/25 Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday 26 February 2025.

The meeting closed at 8.23pm.

Chairman

Date

APPENDIX A

Date: 13/01/2025

Billingshurst Parish Council Current Year

Page 1

Time: 12:03

Current Bank A/c

List of Payments made between 01/11/2024 and 30/11/2024

<u>Date Paid</u>	<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>	<u>Authorized Ref</u>	<u>Transaction Detail</u>
01/11/2024	Horsham DC	BACS	136.50		Bin emptying
12/11/2024	West Sussex County Council	13562	41,521.85		Salaries - October
12/11/2024	Billingshurst Comm. & Conf. Ce	13563	1,155.86		Various room hires
12/11/2024	Shredder Waste Paper	13566	59.40		Conf. waste paper disposal.
12/11/2024	Arun Counselling Service	13567	150.00		Grant
12/11/2024	Sussex Land Services Ltd	13568	1,506.48		Bark for play area SRCG
12/11/2024	Sutcliffe Play Ltd	13569	468.86		Playground spare parts
12/11/2024	Stuart Sexton	13570	27.00		S&SE In Bloom mileage
12/11/2024	Annual Play Inspections Ltd.	13571	954.00		Annual playground inspections
12/11/2024	Philip Day	13572	8.10		Car Parking for meeting
12/11/2024	Arthur J Gallagher Insurance B	13573	18,784.02		Insurance 2024-25
12/11/2024	Heaithmatic Ltd	13574	53.93		x2 locks for toilets
12/11/2024	Kent Surrey Sussex Air Ambulan	13575	500.00		Grant
12/11/2024	BSRA	13565	5,460.93		Reimb Klargestep repairs
12/11/2024	HMRC	BACS	2,440.34		VAT payment
13/11/2024	Heatsmart Ltd	013576	126.00		83a GF Gas boiler check
14/11/2024	Restream Inc.	CARD	15.34		Restreaming
15/11/2024	A272 Design	SO	568.86		TWEET advert
15/11/2024	Southern Water	DD	22.79		83a High St water etc
19/11/2024	Horsham DC	DD	68.80		Bin emptying
19/11/2024	Horsham DC	DD	120.40		Bin emptying
19/11/2024	Horsham DC	DD	143.20		Bin emptying
21/11/2024	Mailchimp	CARD	12.42		Mailchimp
21/11/2024	Engie Gas Ltd	DD	109.16		Gas 83a High St
25/11/2024	EE & T Mobile	DD	31.44		Mobile phones
25/11/2024	ALE Bus Machines	DD	38.60		Copier usage
27/11/2024	Netcom IT Solutions	DD	1,281.60	New laptop for Locum	Netcom IT Solutions
28/11/2024	Breakthrough Communications Lt	CARD	834.00		Job advert promotion
28/11/2024	SSE	DD	78.00		83a High St electric
29/11/2024	NatWest	BACS	14.70		Bank charges
Total Payments			76,692.58		

APPENDIX B

Date: 14/01/2025

Billingshurst Parish Council Current Year

Page 1

Time: 10:06

Current Bank A/c

List of Payments made between 01/12/2024 and 31/12/2024

<u>Date Paid</u>	<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>	<u>Authorized Ref</u>	<u>Transaction Detail</u>
02/12/2024	Sussex Land Services	SO	2,697.80		GM - November 2024
02/12/2024	Netcom IT Solutions	DD	224.32		Phones etc
02/12/2024	Netcom IT Solutions	DD	362.68		IT etc
02/12/2024	SSE	DD	171.92		Street furniture - Electric
02/12/2024	Horsham DC	DD	136.50		Bin emptying
05/12/2024	Annual Play Inspections	13571A	-954.00		CANCEL CHEQUE
11/12/2024	AMAZON	CARD	10.91		Sticker for EV
11/12/2024	AMAZON	CARD	8.15		Numbers for fishing pontoons
16/12/2024	Restream Inc.	CARD	15.41		Restreaming
16/12/2024	A272 Design	SO	618.00		Village TWEET advert
16/12/2024	Southern Water	DD	22.79		83a High St - water etc
17/12/2024	Horsham DC	DD	68.80		Bin emptying
17/12/2024	Horsham DC	DD	86.00		Bin emptying
17/12/2024	Horsham DC	DD	157.60		Bin emptying
18/12/2024	Billingshurst Comm. & Conf. Ce	013577	410.04		Garage rent
18/12/2024	Greg Burt	013578	65.54		Mileage + pkg Local Plan
18/12/2024	Surrey Hills Solicitors LLP	013579	2,940.60		Legal advice
18/12/2024	Annual Play Inspections Ltd.	013580	954.00		Play inspecs - replace cheque
18/12/2024	Colin Ellis	013581	34.98		Reimb. Blow torch
18/12/2024	G P Smith	013582	201.75		Fishing pontoons survey
18/12/2024	Sarah Linfield	013583	45.51		Ink cart reimb.
18/12/2024	West Sussex County Council	013584	19,295.91		Nov salaries
18/12/2024	Ballpoint Office Supplies Ltd	013585	145.87		Stationery
18/12/2024	<i>Emk Installations</i>	013586	1,080.00		Column testing ref Xmas lites
18/12/2024	SGW Safety & Security Ltd	013587	1,500.00		CCTV consultancy
18/12/2024	Leith Hill Plant Ltd	013588	2,304.00		Jubilee driveway repairs
18/12/2024	ICA Electrical Contractors Ltd	013589	360.00		Defib. fitting Advesane Hall
18/12/2024	GN Tree Surgery Specialists Lt	013590	1,163.87		Tree planting at BPC sites
18/12/2024	WorkNest Ltd	013591	1,543.80		HR advice
18/12/2024	Keith Atherfold	013592	45.00		Honours Board update
18/12/2024	West Sussex County Council	013593	19,295.91		Nov salaries
23/12/2024	EE & T Mobile	DD	31.44	Mobile phones	EE & T Mobile
23/12/2024	Mailchimp	CARD	12.57		Mailchimp
23/12/2024	CPRE	DD	36.00		Subscription
23/12/2024	ALE Bus Machines	DD	28.08		Copier charges
23/12/2024	Engie Gas Ltd	DD	183.84		83a High St - Gas
30/12/2024	Sussex Land Services	SO	2,697.80		GM - December 2024
30/12/2024	SSE	DD	87.00		83a High St - electric
30/12/2024	SSE	DD	147.20		Public loos - electric
30/12/2024	SSE	DD	166.40		Street furniture electric
31/12/2024	AMAZON	CARD	19.94		Bin bags
31/12/2024	Dunelm	CARD	1,407.95		The Depot - x2 sofas
31/12/2024	AMAZON	CARD	2,107.69		The Depot upgrade
31/12/2024	Progression Signage & Display	013523A	-102.00		Cancel cheque
31/12/2024	NatWest	BACS	13.30		Bank charges
31/12/2024	Netcom IT Solutions	DD	224.32		Phones etc
31/12/2024	Netcom IT Solutions	DD	381.18		IT support

Continued on Page 2

List of Payments made between 01/12/2024 and 31/12/2024

<u>Date Paid</u>	<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>	<u>Authorized Ref</u>	<u>Transaction Detail</u>
31/12/2024	Netcom IT Solutions	DD	2,966.88		IT support
31/12/2024	AMAZON	CARD	-200.00		Correct error
Total Payments			<u>65,223.25</u>		

**Bank Reconciliation Statement as at 30/11/2024
for Cashbook 1 - Current Bank A/c**

Bank Statement Account Name (s)	Statement Date	Page	Balances
Current Account	30/11/2024		520,305.98
Business Reserve Account	30/11/2024		0.00
Treasury Reserve Deposit	30/11/2024		140,062.33
Unity Bank	30/11/2024		494.21
			660,862.52
Unpresented Payments (Minus)			Amount
06/08/2024 013523	Progression Signage & Display		102.00
07/10/2024 013560	Loxwood & Kirdford YFC		100.00
11/10/2024 13564	Mulberry Local Authority Servi		1,092.60
12/11/2024 13566	Shredder Waste Paper		59.40
12/11/2024 13570	Stuart Sexton		27.00
12/11/2024 13571	Annual Play Inspeactions Ltd.		954.00
12/11/2024 13572	Philip Day		8.10
12/11/2024 13575	Kent Surrey Sussex Air Ambulan		500.00
			2,843.10
			658,019.42
Unpresented Receipts (Plus)			
			0.00
			0.00
			658,019.42
		Balance per Cash Book is :-	658,019.42
		Difference is :-	0.00


Signatory 1:

Name Signed Date

Signatory 2:

Name Signed Date

Bank Reconciliation Statement as at 30/11/2024
for Cashbook 3 - Bonus Saver Account

<u>Bank Statement Account Name (s)</u>	<u>Statement Date</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Balances</u>
Bonus Saver Account	30/11/2024		191,549.65 
			<u>191,549.65</u>
<u>Unpresented Payments (Minus)</u>		<u>Amount</u>	
		0.00	
			<u>0.00</u>
			191,549.65
<u>Unpresented Receipts (Plus)</u>			
		0.00	
			<u>0.00</u>
			191,549.65
		Balance per Cash Book is :-	191,549.65
		Difference is :-	0.00

Signatory 1:

Name Signed Date

Signatory 2:

Name Signed Date

APPENDIX E

Date: 14/01/2025

Billingshurst Parish Council Current Year

Page 1

Time: 10:01

**Bank Reconciliation Statement as at 31/12/2024
for Cashbook 1 - Current Bank A/c**

User: GREG

<u>Bank Statement Account Name (s)</u>	<u>Statement Date</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Balances</u>
Current Account	31/12/2024		510,158.05
Business Reserve Account	31/12/2024		0.00
Treasury Reserve Deposit	31/12/2024		140,062.33
Unity Bank	31/12/2024		494.21
			650,714.59

<u>Unpresented Payments (Minus)</u>	<u>Amount</u>	
07/10/2024 013560 Loxwood & Kirdford YFC	100.00	
11/10/2024 13564 Mulberry Local Authority Servi	1,092.60	
12/11/2024 13570 Stuart Sexton	27.00	
18/12/2024 013577 Billingshurst Comm. & Conf. Ce	410.04	
18/12/2024 013579 Surrey Hills Solicitors LLP	2,940.60	
18/12/2024 013580 Annual Play Inspections Ltd.	954.00	
18/12/2024 013581 Colin Ellis	34.98	
18/12/2024 013583 Sarah Linfield	45.51	
18/12/2024 013584 West Sussex County Council	19,295.91	
18/12/2024 013585 Ballpoint Office Supplies Ltd	145.87	
18/12/2024 013586 <i>Emk Installations Ltd.</i>	1,080.00	
18/12/2024 013587 SGW Safety & Security Ltd	1,500.00	
18/12/2024 013588 Leith Hill Plant Ltd	2,304.00	
18/12/2024 013589 ICA Electrical Contractors Ltd	360.00	
18/12/2024 013591 WorkNest Ltd	1,543.80	
18/12/2024 013592 Keith Atherfold	45.00	
18/12/2024 013593 West Sussex County Council	19,295.91	
31/12/2024 CARD AMAZON	19.94	
		51,195.16
		599,519.43

<u>Unpresented Receipts (Plus)</u>	<u>Amount</u>	
	0.00	
		0.00
		599,519.43
Balance per Cash Book :-		599,519.43
Difference is :-		0.00

Signatory 1:

Name Signed Date

Signatory 2:

Name Signed Date

<u>Bank Statement Account Name (s)</u>	<u>Statement Date</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Balances</u>
Bonus Saver Account	31/12/2024		191,776.36
			<u>191,776.36</u>
<u>Unpresented Payments (Minus)</u>		<u>Amount</u>	
		0.00	
			<u>0.00</u>
			191,776.36
<u>Unpresented Receipts (Plus)</u>			
		0.00	
			<u>0.00</u>
			191,776.36
		Balance per Cash Book is :-	191,776.36
		Difference is :-	0.00

Signatory 1:

Name Signed Date

Signatory 2:

Name Signed Date

APPENDIX G

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.	IN HAND
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.	PROGRESSING, BUT HINDERED BY CLLR CHANGES.
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.	IN HAND
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.	TO BE ACTIONED.
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	TO BE ACTIONED
Sales ledger	I also recommend that the sales ledger should be reviewed quarterly as part of routine finance reporting	TO BE ACTIONED
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 BE ACTIONED
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.	TWO AMOUNTS HAVE BEEN PUT ON HIGH INTEREST DEPOSIT, ONE FOR 3 MONTHS AND ANOTHER FOR 6.
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