



**Minutes of the Meeting of Billingshurst Parish Council
Wednesday 2 September 2026
6.30pm at the Billingshurst Centre.**

Present

Cllrs Craig Jones (Vice Chairman in the chair), Faye Algar, Edna Bengier, Alison Best (from Minute 90/26), Phillip Day, Sandy Duck, Jeremy Harris, David Hingamp, Trevor Leonard, James Marchant, Marie Montoya, Anna Rhodes, Kate Rowbottom and Doug Waller.

In attendance

G C Burt, Clerk to the Council
Dis Cllr J Trollope
5 Members of the Public

86/26 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. Mobile phones should either be switched off or silenced.

87/26 Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Paul Berry for an approved reason. On the proposal of Cllr Craig Jones seconded by Cllr Doug Waller **RESOLVED** that the apology and reason given be accepted.

88/26 To Receive Declarations of Interest and consider any requests for a dispensation.

None.

89/26 To consider applications for co-option to fill x1 (one) vacancy following resignation of Craig Gale.

The Chairman explained that the voting would be carried out in accordance with Standing Orders, in the event that no one Cllr received an absolute majority.

Three applications had been received for one vacancy on the Council. Alison Best, Steve Thomas and Suzy MacSorley were all invited to address the Council and answer questions.

On the proposal of Cllr Doug Waller seconded by Cllr Trevor Leonard, **RESOLVED** the vote be by signed ballot.

Ballot slips were then distributed by the Clerk. Cllrs were asked to write one name. These were then collected by the Clerk. The Clerk then totalled the votes cast, which was

overseen by the Chairman, and announced the number of votes cast for each candidate, with Alison Best receiving the most.

Alison Best then signed the Statutory Declaration of Office and joined other Councillors at the meeting table.

The Chairman thanked the unsuccessful candidates for their interest and hoped that they may consider putting themselves forward in the full elections next May.

Adjournment for

90/26 Public Session (Members of the Public may speak for up to 3 minutes at the discretion of the Chairman).

Mr Len Ellis-Brown (speaking as a MOP and not as District Cllr for Pulborough, Coldwaltham and Amberley) suggested that the three parishes most affected by the proposed new town south of Adversane, work together on their appearance before the planning inspector in October. A combined approach would have more clout and perhaps between the three could afford to engage a K.C.

91/26 Reports from:

a. County & Dis Councillors

Dis & Cty Cllr Mark Baynham in tending his apologies had submitted a report in advance, copied to all Cllrs, attached Appendix A.

Dis Cllr John Trollope had submitted a report in advance, copied to all Cllrs, attached Appendix B.

b. Representatives on outside organisations.

Cllr Craig Jones reported that HDC was about to commence a further consultation on projects being taken forward under the *Better Billingshurst* banner.

Resume Meeting

92/26 Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 August 2026.

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 19 August 2026, previously circulated, were taken as read. On the proposal of Cllr Craig Jones seconded by Cllr Sandy Duck **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted and signed as a correct record accordingly, subject to the addition of Cllr James Marchant as being in attendance.

93/26 Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported that the final Better Billingshurst projects would come back to members for approval. He also advised that further to Cllr Trollope's reference to WAKOO's, the Chairman of the Trustees would be presenting to the September meeting of the Property Committee.

94/26 To receive the External Audit Report 2025-26 and refer any matters requiring attention to the F&GP Committee.

On the proposal of Cllr Craig Jones seconded by Cllr Phillip Day **RESOLVED** that the External Audit Report for 2025-26 be received with detailed matters being tasked to the

F&GP Committee. The Clerk highlighted that the report mentioned the low level of general reserves.

95/26 To consider recommendation from Working Practices Committee of 13 May 2026: To add to Standing Orders that the Chairman of Council is not also a Chair of a Committee, formalising a current protocol.

On the proposal of Cllr Doug Waller seconded by Cllr Marie Montoya **RESOLVED** to add to Standing Orders that the Chairman of Council is not also a Chair of a Committee, formalising a current protocol.

96/26 To review appointments to Committees and outside bodies etc.

On the proposal of Cllr Phillip Day, seconded by Cllr Marie Montoya, **RESOLVED** as per appendix C.

97/26 CCTV update

The Clerk had circulated an update which explained how the scheme had been held up by the Council having to organise most of the electricity supplies.

NOTED.

98/26 To receive Minutes as approved by the following Committees:

- a) On the proposal of Cllr Doug Waller seconded by Cllr Marie Montoya, **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee of 2 June, 7 July and 4 August 2026 be received.
- b) On the proposal of Cllr Phillip Day, seconded by Cllr Marie Montoya, **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the F&GP Committee of 24 June 2026 be received.

99/26 Neighbourhood Wardens - to receive Wardens' Report for June and July - previously circulated. **NOTED.**

100/26 Date of Next Meeting – 2 September 2026.

Meeting finished at 7.43 pm

APPENDIX A

CLLR MARK BAYNHAM'S REPORT

County wide matters

Since taking office in May, the administration has made our Highways a top priority. Since then we have repaired over 13,000 potholes, cleared 34,000 drains and resurfaced 25 miles of road. A new dedicated Highways Ranger team has been set up to manage previous low priority issues such as obscured signs, overgrown vegetation and blocked water courses. Parish briefing sessions on Highways will also return from next month and Highways dept will be in touch with local schedules.

At the first regular meeting of the County Council, LibDems and Greens proposed a motion aimed at persuading the Government to review the funding formula for Education in West Sussex. Despite the introduction of the National Funding Formula in 2018, West Sussex remains among the lowest-funded local authorities in England for both primary and secondary school funding. The motion also highlighted concerns that current funding arrangements do not adequately reflect the county's labour market and housing costs, creating additional challenges for schools in recruiting and retaining staff.

The motion follows a letter sent by headteachers from across West Sussex to the county's Members of Parliament in May 2026, expressing what they described as their "profound and growing concern regarding the chronic underfunding of our schools". This was passed unanimously.

A further motion put forward by the Reform Group, which sought to restrict subjects that can be discussed at Council, beyond the rules that already exist, was voted down.

I have no further information on Local Government Reorganisation since the Government deferred their decision on the future West Sussex Unitary arrangements. We now expect that decision next month.

District matters

The second stage consultation on the Community Governance Review close in one week. I am not aware of any representations received seeking any significant changes to BPC.

The Local Plan modifications consultation has now closed. All representations will be collated and forwarded to the Planning Inspector, who anticipates resumption of the hearings in mid October. These sessions will be held at HDC, are open to the public and will be live streamed.

HDC Cabinet members and senior officers will be leading a series of four 'round the District' meetings with all Parish Council Chairs and Clerks invited. The North West meeting, which includes Billingshurst, will be held at Beeson House, Southwater on Tuesday 29th September.

Billingshurst matters

I have continued to escalate Highways issues when reported to me by local residents and the Parish Council. I will also be visiting Highways next week to see a demonstration of how potholes and patches are repaired and the latest technology in use.

The refurbishment of Parbrook play area by HDC has been completed. A reopening took place yesterday which drew a significant number of parents and children to see and make use of the new equipment.

If you have any specific issues, feel free to contact me directly.

Mark Baynham, County Councillor for Billingshurst Division and District Councillor for Billingshurst Ward

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APPENDIX B

CLLR JOHN TROLLOPE'S REPORT

WAKOOS: I recently was given a tour of Wakoos by Jade Cation. She detailed the financial pressures this charity is facing and that they need to be able to take on an additional 30 children to make it financially viable. The rooms to do this (to the left of the building as you enter it) are in a bad state of repair and she estimates a funding requirement of £100k. While it is true that this is a WSCC owned building, HDC has a responsibility for early learning provision. *[sic]* There are various discussions happening with WSCC, Denise Campbell of the Billingshurst Community Partnership and HDC to secure funding for this.

PARBROOK PLAY AREA: I briefly attending the opening of the revamped and improved play area yesterday. A big thanks to the Parks and Countryside Development Team at HDC for putting on this event which included lots of fun activities. The improvements included the installation of:

- snake swing with new safety surfacing within the play area
- zip wire (I must admit to wanting to give it a go myself....)
- sheltered seating near the path
- new gates and fencing repairs.

CLIMATE EMERGENCY FILM: The People's Emergency Briefing is a public information and community-engagement initiative focused on the climate and nature crisis. While it deals with a topic that is heavily debated in policy, the project itself frames its mission around scientific evidence, risk awareness, and community dialogue rather than alignment with a single political party. There will be two showings at the Women's Hall and the tickets are free:

- 12th October 10am – Women's Hall. Organised by Sussex Green Living and Surrey & Sussex Coppice Group. An optional follow up meeting Monday 2nd November 10am.
- 11th November 7pm – Women's Hall. An optional community follow up meeting Wed 25th November 7.30pm.

APPENDIX C

BILLINGSHURST PARISH COUNCIL	
COMMITTEES, WORKING PARTIES AND REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES	
2026-27	
(The Council has set the max. membership for Committees to 10 members.)	
COMMITTEES	
Planning & Environment	DW, FA, AR, KR, DH, JH, MM
Property	PD, PB, SD, EB, CJ, DW, DH, JM
Finance & General Purposes	PD, CJ, AB, PB, EB, JH, TL, MM
Working Practices	MM, JM, DW, KR, AR, CJ, SD, PB
Billingshurst Centre	CJ, PD, AB, PB, SD, EB, JH, TL, MM
Complaints (5 members Max)	PB, SD, TL, AB, MM
Complaints Chairman	SD
WORKING PARTIES	
Neighbourhood Plan	In abeyance
Internal Audit	PD, MM
Traffic Calming	PB, JM, TL
Sustainable Energy Efficiency	PD, CJ
Mission & Vision	PD, CJ, PB
<i>Bold indicates <u>Chairman/Vice Chairman</u></i>	
REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES	
B'hurst Sports & Recn. Assn. (BSRA) x2	SD, CJ + Assistant Clerk
CPRE	DH
Friends of Station Road Gardens x1	CJ
HALC (H'ham Assn Local Councils) x2	SD, MM
N'hood Warden Steering Group x2	SD, KR
Parish and Neighbourhood Climate Action Network	PD
Rural Market Towns Group (RMTG)	SD
Better Billingshurst Fund (BIF) x3 + officer.	DW, CJ, FA (PD = RESERVE) + Clerk
Trustee of Dauxwood Pre-School x1	PB
West Sussex Association Local Councils (WSALC) AGM x2	SD, MM
Community Partnership x1	KR
Youth liaison - all matters	AR

Updated 04/09/2026