Minutes of the Meeting of Billingshurst Parish Council
Wednesday 4 November 2026
6.30pm at the Billingshurst Centre

Present
Cllrs Paul Berry (Chairman), Edna Benger, Alison Best, Phillip Day, Sandy Duck, David Hingamp, Craig Jones, Trevor Leonard, James Marchant, Anna Rhodes, Kate Rowbottom and Doug Waller.

In attendance
G C Burt, Clerk to the Council
Dis Cllr M Baynham
Dis Cllr S Bateman
10 members of the public

101/26 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.
4. He would like to extend the Council's sympathy to the family and friends of Roy Margetts who passed away recently. Mr Margetts served as a Parish Councillor for over 20 years in total and was a well-known figure in Billingshurst. He was a big-hearted man and always had the best interests of Billingshurst at heart.
5. He would like to pass on our thanks and congratulations to everyone involved in organising and running last Friday's fireworks display, an event which Billingshurst Parish Council sponsors. Comments he had heard suggest it was another hugely successful event.
6. He would like to remind Councillors that he would be laying a wreath on behalf of the people of Billingshurst this coming Remembrance Sunday; it would be lovely to see some other Councillors there also.

"Finally, I have an update that I would like to read out regarding Item 8, the Willow Drive Trees.

Work started on the house a couple of weeks ago. This seems to have changed things quite significantly. Our insurers have been busy trying to get an update, which they now have, and they comment as follows....

"The third party has confirmed that underpinning works have commenced at (the property) .....this means there is no longer a need to fell the oak trees, as the claimant has proceeded with an engineering solution designed to stabilise the property while retaining the trees in situ.

We will now await a fully documented claim from the claimant's representatives. Once received, we can review the position and consider whether there are reasonable grounds to defend the claim on the basis that the Council has acted reasonably in what have clearly been challenging circumstances.

In the meantime, you can remove the proposed tree felling from the Council agenda.

So, we do not need to consider Item 8 this evening, and perhaps given this update, the less we say on the subject the better. This of course is very encouraging news. It certainly doesn't mean the matter is over, and the Council may well have to consider the item again at a later date as the claim is dealt with by its insurers and as other information emerges.

I would like to add that most of the time us Councillors really have the easiest jobs; we debate items, make decisions, ask questions, demand answers then move on. However, I think this update highlights the enormous work which has gone on behind the scenes regarding the trees involving at times a lot of people. These include various representatives from our insurers, legal and professional advisors and in no small part, the Council's Clerk, who is the person we all go to for answers and who I imagine has felt like piggy in the middle a number of times.

I am sure I speak on behalf of us all, when I offer our thanks to the Clerk and his team, and to Cllr Leonard for all the hard work they have committed to the subject. It is also good to hear from them how pro-active and supportive the Council's insurers have been."

102/26 Apologies
Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Faye Algar, Jeremy Harris and Marie Montoya for approved reasons. On the proposal of Cllr Paul Berry seconded by Cllr James Marchant **RESOLVED** that the apologies and reasons given be accepted.

103/26 To Receive Declarations of Interest and consider any requests for a dispensation.
None.

Adjournment for

104/26 Public Session (Members of the Public may speak for up to 3 minutes at the discretion of the Chairman).
Clive Cobie spoke about the *Climate Emergency* briefings being shown in the village the following week.

105/26 Reports from:

a. County & Dis Councillors
Dis & Cty Cllr Mark Baynham had submitted a report in advance, copied to all Cllrs, attached Appendix **A** and took questions. He highlighted: a rebate from the Government for help with SEN provision and good OFSTED reports covering four areas. 2027 would see elections for districts and parishes; 2028 the shadow unitary and new Mayoral elections. He would be laying a wreath on Sunday on behalf of

WSCC. It would be helpful if the Parish Council could attend the hearing the following week, into non-determination by HDC of up to 102no. homes and up to 5,605 sqm of business floorspace, to the rear of the trade and business park. The developer had failed to complete a s106 agreement relating to a PROW/pedestrian access from the site into the village. HDC were righty keen that this should be in place to allow residents to have green travel options.

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

Dis Cllr Sam Bateman commented on the proposed transfer of Cedars Pond & Orchard, which was being discussed at HDC that evening. Work was progressing to deliver the Better Billingshurst projects including the new or improved play spaces. She emphasised the need to get good things out of inevitable new housing developments, e.g. buses, children's nurseries etc.

b. Representatives on outside organisations.
Cllr Craig Jones reported on a recent meeting he and the Clerk attended with Wakoos (& WSCC) to discuss their lease and funding issues.

Cllr Paul Berry reported on a meeting that he had attended with Cllr Craig Jones and the Clerk, along with Dis Cllr Sam Bateman and MP John Milne to discuss car parking in the village. The MP would look to contact Napier Parking to ask if they would consider implementing the government's proposed Code of Conduct before it became mandatory.

Resume Meeting

106/26 Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 September 2026.
The draft minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2026, previously circulated, were taken as read. On the proposal of Cllr Craig Jones seconded by Cllr Trevor Leonard **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted and signed as a correct record accordingly.

107/26 Clerk's Report
None

108/26 To consider the future of trees at Willow Drive.
Not discussed following advice from Council's Insurer, see above.

109/26 To receive an update on HDC Draft Local Plan.
Members received an update from the Clerk about the Council's final representation on the Proposed Main Modifications to the Draft Local Plan, and subsequent appearances at the Public Inquiry. Councillors then briefly discussed some key points made at the Inquiry.

110/26 To consider draft calendar of meetings 2027.
On the proposal of Cllr Paul Berry, seconded by Cllr Doug Waller, **RESOLVED** the 2027 Meetings Calendar as per appendix **C.** Members commented that the change to allow for F&GP meetings to immediately follow Centre meetings could be reviewed after one year.

111/26 To review appointments to Committees and outside bodies etc.
On the proposal of Cllr Paul Berry, seconded by Cllr James Marchant, **RESOLVED** appointments to Committees and outside bodies as per appendix **D.**

112/26 To receive Minutes as approved by the following Committees:

a) On the proposal of Cllr Doug Waller seconded by Cllr David Hingamp, **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee of 1 September and 6 October 2026 be received.
b) On the proposal of Cllr Phillip Day, seconded by Cllr Trevor Leonard, **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the F&GP Committee of 29 July and 30 September 2026 be received.
c) On the proposal of Cllr Craig Jones seconded by Cllr Doug Waller, **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Property Committee of 10 June 2026 be received.
d) On the proposal of Cllr James Marchant seconded by Cllr Paul Berry, **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee of 13 May 2026 be received.

113/26 Neighbourhood Wardens - to receive Wardens' Report for August and September - previously circulated. **NOTED**.

114/26 Date of Next Meeting – 6 January 2027.

Meeting finished at 7.44 pm

APPENDIX A

CLLR MARK BAYNHAM'S REPORT

WSCC

- **Children & Education** – October funding secured: WSCC secured £182.7 million in Government funding following approval of its Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Reform Plan. This will cover 90% of the council's existing SEND funding deficit, although longer-term funding pressures remain.
- **Highways & Transport** – improvements reported in October: Almost £1.8 million invested in four completed walking, wheeling and cycling schemes the County. Improvements include safer school crossings, upgraded pavements and cycling routes. October launch: WSCC launched a trial using **AI-assisted road inspections** in eight highway vehicles to identify potholes, cracks and road defects more efficiently, with the aim of improving road maintenance and staff safety.

Winter readiness campaign about to launch – info will be sent to parishes and WSCC members as well as being published more generally.

- **Adult Social Care** – September launch: New guidance and support introduced to help residents plan for future care needs and costs, including an updated Care Guide, telephone advice and face-to-face library sessions.
- **Communities and WSFR - Trading Standards** – September enforcement: A Crawley retailer was banned from selling tobacco and vaping products for 12 months following repeated illegal sales to children.
- **Fire & Rescue** – September delivery: Six new on-call firefighters joined stations across West Sussex, including Horsham, Arundel, Shoreham and Bognor, strengthening local emergency response capacity.

January to August 2026 results: Firefighters attended 22 wildfires, 21 other large outdoor fires and 677 smaller outdoor fires. The service also reported plans to acquire eight specialist 4x4 vehicles to strengthen wildfire and water-rescue capabilities.

- **Environment and Climate Change - Environment & Waste** – September launch: WSCC launched its Stop the Spark campaign, encouraging residents to dispose of batteries, vapes and electrical items safely rather than placing them in household bins, reducing the risk of fires in waste vehicles and recycling facilities.

Longer-term achievements and results reported during the period.

- Environment & Climate Change – reported in October: WSCC's **energy-saving** investment programme is now reducing council energy bills by more than £63,000 annually, helping reduce operating costs and carbon emissions.

- **Support Services** - Customer Services – January to June 2026 results: WSCC handled 137,231 resident telephone calls, averaging 5,278 weekly, with 85% customer satisfaction. Reception teams also supported 17,191 residents face to face.

Local Government Reorganisation – The Minister confirmed that no decision on the future Unitary Authority/Authorities for West Sussex has yet been taken. Now expected in the New Year. However the timetable was confirmed with elections due for the new authority in May 2028, together with the Sussex mayoral election. In the meantime District Council elections will go ahead in May 2027.

HDC

Local Plan – Following the conclusion of the examination hearings the Planning Inspector has written a letter where he concludes that the Local Plan is sound subject to the main modifications. Consultation on the main modifications will therefore go ahead for a 6-week period starting on a date to be confirmed this month. For Billingshurst this principally means the expanded East of Billingshurst site and the Adversane site.

The Community Governance review has concluded. There are no changes for Billingshurst Parish.

Transfer of Land at the Cedars – This subject is due for consideration at Scrutiny Committee on 4th November. HDC Cabinet will then make the decision on transfer on 18th November.

As always if you have any subject you wish to discuss I am available at any reasonable time.

Mark Baynham, County Councillor for Billingshurst Division and District Councillor for Billingshurst Ward.
mark.baynham@westsussex.gov.uk mark.baynham@horsham.gov.uk tel.07885 805989

APPENDIX B

CLLR JOHN TROLLOPE'S REPORT

The Local Plan: The inspector has declared the plan sound subject to some minor modifications; already this has proven valuable in heading off speculative applications as was the case in Southwater last night at Planning Committee. The inspector's report will be shared with HDC in early 2027.

Wakoos: I am aware that their future is still not secure and that they require funding for internal building work to be able to take on more children. This is now largely being dealt with at WSCC level.

Open Space and Play Projects: The next steps are for HDC to share the consultation feedback with the BPC and to work together to design the new facilities. No exact date yet but before Christmas.

Cedars: As I mentioned above, I plan on giving this my full, robust support at scrutiny. What a wonderful outcome having a nature reserve would be for our community!

APPENDIX C

Billingshurst Parish Council				
Calendar of Meetings etc 2027				
January				
6th	Wednesday	Council and Trustee	7.00pm	
12th	Tuesday	Planning and Enviroment Committee	7.00pm	
13th	Wednesday	Property Committee	7.00pm	
27th	Wednesday	Billingshurst Centre Committee	7.00pm	
27th	Wednesday	Finance and General Purposes Committee	7.00pm	
February				
2nd	Tuesday	Planning and Environment Committee	7.00pm	
24th	Wednesday	Billingshurst Centre Committee	7.00pm	
24th	Wednesday	Finance and General Purposes Committee	7.00pm	
March				
2nd	Tuesday	Planning and Environment Committee	7.00pm	
3rd	Wednesday	Annual Parish Meeting of Electors	7.00pm	T.B.C
10th	Wednesday	Council and Trustee	7.00pm	
17th	Wednesday	Working Practices Committee	7.00pm	
24th	Wednesday	Property Committee	7.00pm	
31st	Wednesday	Billingshurst Centre Committee	7.00pm	
31st	Wednesday	Finance and General Purposes Committee	7.00pm	
April				
6th	Tuesday	Planning and Environment Committee	7.00pm	
28th	Wednesday	Billingshurst Centre Committee	7.00pm	
28th	Wednesday	Finance and General Purposes Committee	7.00pm	
May				
4th	Tuesday	Planning and Environment Committee	7.00pm	
6th	Thursday	Parish & District Council elections		
12th	Wednesday	Annual Council and Trustee	7.00pm	
19th	Wednesday	Property Committee	7.00pm	
26th	Wednesday	Billingshurst Centre Committee	7.00pm	
26th	Wednesday	Finance and General Purposes Committee	7.00pm	
June				
1st	Tuesday	Planning and Environment Committee	7.00pm	
2nd	Wednesday	Extraordinary Meeting of Parish Council (To approve n/cs)	6.30pm	PVN
2nd	Wednesday	Working Practices Committee	7.00pm	
16th	Wednesday	Beacon Lighting @ Adversane / Sussex 1,550 anniversary	9.00pm	All Councillors Welcome
30th	Wednesday	Billingshurst Centre Committee	7.00pm	
30th	Wednesday	Finance and General Purposes Committee	7.00pm	
July				
6th	Tuesday	Planning and Environment Committee	7.00pm	
7th	Wednesday	Council and Trustee	7.00pm	
14th	Wednesday	Property Committee	7.00pm	
28th	Wednesday	Billingshurst Centre Committee	7.00pm	
28th	Wednesday	Finance and General Purposes Committee	7.00pm	
August				
3rd	Tuesday	Planning and Environment Committee	7.00pm	
7th	Saturday	Family Activity Day @ Jubilee Fields	Noon-4pm	
September				
1st	Wednesday	Council and Trustee	7.00pm	
7th	Tuesday	Planning and Environment Committee	7.00pm	
8th	Wednesday	Property Committee	7.00pm	
29th	Wednesday	Billingshurst Centre Committee	7.00pm	
29th	Wednesday	Finance and General Purposes Committee	7.00pm	
October				
5th	Tuesday	Planning and Environment Committee	7.00pm	
6th	Wednesday	Budget Workshop	7.00pm	
13th	Wednesday	Working Practices Committee	7.00pm	
27th	Wednesday	Billingshurst Centre Committee	7.00pm	
27th	Wednesday	Finance and General Purposes Committee	7.00pm	
November				
2nd	Tuesday	Planning and Environment Committee	7.00pm	
3rd	Wednesday	Council and Trustee	7.00pm	
7th	Sunday	Remembrance Parade/Service		All Councillors Welcome
17th	Wednesday	Property Committee	7.00pm	
December				
4th	Saturday	Christmas Fayre @ Billingshurst Centre	10am-3pm	
7th	Tuesday	Planning and Environment Committee	7.00pm	
8th	Wednesday	Working Practices Committee	7.00pm	
15th	Wednesday	Billingshurst Centre Committee	7.00pm	
15th	Wednesday	Finance and General Purposes Committee	7.00pm	

Notes
All meetings held in the Billingshurst Centre.
All Committee meetings to be held in the Barnes Room, Stanley Room or Council Chamber 1 or 2
All Council Meetings to be held in Council Chambers 1 and 2

Updated 20/10/2026

APPENDIX D

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**, AB, PB, CJ, AR, DW
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

***Bold** indicates Chairman/Vice Chairman*

REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES	
B'hurst Sports & Recn. Assn. (BSRA) x2	SD, CJ (To ensure that two can always attend) + 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)
Trustee of Dauxwood Pre-School x1	PB
West Sussex Association Local Councils (WSALC) AGM x2	SD, MM
Community Partnership x1	KR
Youth liasion - all matters	AR