BILLINGSHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Working Practices Committee
Wednesday 14 October 2026
7.00pm

Present: Cllrs Marie Montoya (Chairman), Paul Berry (until Min 43/26), Sandy Duck, Craig Jones, James Marchant, Anna Rhodes and Kate Rowbottom.

In attendance:
Richard Plant, Assistant Clerk to the Council

32/26 Chairman's announcements

1. That 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. That item 8 on the agenda would be moved to after item 12 to allow for declarations of interest.

33/26 Apologies
An apology for absence had been received from Cllr Douglas Waller for an approved reason. On the proposal of Cllr Craig Jones, seconded by Cllr James Marchant **RESOLVED** to accept the apology and reason given.

34/26 To receive Declarations of Interest and Notification of Changes to Members' Interests
Cllr Paul Berry declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Min 44/26 and 46/26 as his wife is an employee of the Council.

35/26 Public Session
There were no members of the public present.

36/26 Approval of the minutes of the Working Practices Committee meeting held on 13 May 2026, previously circulated
On the proposal of Cllr Marie Montoya, seconded by Cllr Craig Jones, **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted and signed as a correct record accordingly.
The Chairman asked if there had been any progress on minute 23/26. The Asst. Clerk advised he would follow this up with the office.

37/26 Clerk's Report
The Assistant Clerk had nothing further to report.

38/26 To consider comment from External Auditor ref. Code of Conduct
The Committee discussed the comment raised by the external auditor and on the proposal of Cllr Craig Jones and seconded by Cllr James Marchant, **RESOLVED** that the Code of Conduct should be read and signed annually alongside the annual register of interests to ensure all Cllrs are regularly reminded of their commitment.

39/26 Consideration of new draft Vexatious Complaints Policy
Following consideration, on the proposed of Cllr Marie Montoya, seconded by Cllr James Marchant, **RESOLVED** that the policy to be adopted accordingly.

40/26 Consideration of new draft Safeguarding Policy for the Billingshurst Centre and the Council
The Committee considered the submitted draft policy but felt the policy lacked formatting. On the proposal of Cllr Marie Montoya, seconded by Cllr Craig Jones, it was **RESOLVED** that policy needed rewriting, with correct formatting, flowcharts which were missing, and addition of how staff would be trained to manage the policy and who would be responsible for the overall ownership of the policy – as it covers the Centre too whether it should be considered by the Billingshurst Centre Committee, or by the Council as Trustees.

41/26 Consideration of new draft A.I. Policy
Committee considered the policy as submitted and on the proposal of Cllr Marie Montoya, seconded by Cllr James Marchant **RESOLVED** that it be adopted.

42/26 To Consider the Future Workload of the Committee
The Committee considered the number of policies that needed to be updated. The Asst Clerk provided an update on how many could be updated by the Council's HR partner. The Committee were happy to hear this was underway and on the proposal of Cllr Marie Montoya and seconded by Cllr Craig Jones, **RESOLVED** that once updated, would be allocated a 1, 2 or 3 year review period and thereafter monitored accordingly.

43/26 Exclusion of Press & Public
On the proposal of Cllr Sandy Duck seconded by Cllr Craig Jones, **RESOLVED** that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted (staffing), the press and public be temporarily excluded, and they are instructed to withdraw.

Cllr Paul Berry left the meeting.

44/26 Consideration of new draft Compassionate Leave Policy
Councillors were not happy with the level of detail in the draft policy put forward based on the NALC template. After consideration, on the proposal of Cllr Marie Montoya and seconded by Cllr James Marchant, **RESOLVED** to adopt the suggested template from another council, previously circulated. This would be updated to match other the format of existing Council policies.

45/26 Staff Absences
The Clerk had reported on recent instances of prolonged compassionate leave and reduced hours on medical grounds. **NOTED**

46/26 2026-27 Pay Award.
Following on from the nationally agreed pay award for 2026-27, on the proposal of Cllr Marie Montoya seconded by Cllr Craig Jones, **RESOLVED** that the new salaries of affected staff be confirmed as set out in the tables accordingly.

47/26 Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 2 December 2026

Meeting closed at 8.28pm.

Chairman **Date**