



**Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Billingshurst Parish Council
Wednesday 2 December 2025
6pm at the Billingshurst Centre**

Present

Cllrs Craig Jones (in the Chair), Faye Algar, Phillip Day, Sandy Duck, David Hingamp, Trevor Leonard, James Marchant and Kate Rowbottom.

In attendance

G C Burt, Clerk to the Council

R Plant, Assistant Clerk

Martin Hawthorne & Andrew White of Highwood Group

2 Members of the Public

As both the Chairman and Vice Chairman had tendered their apologies, the meeting elected Cllr Craig Jones to chair the meeting.

101/25 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. Any members of the public wishing to speak, please sit at the designated chair so that the new technology could see and hear them.

102/25 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Edna Bengier, Paul Berry, Craig Gale, Jeremy Harris, Anna Rhodes and Doug Waller for approved reasons. On the proposal of Cllr Craig Jones seconded by Cllr Phillip Day **RESOLVED** that the apologies and reasons given be accepted.

103/25 To Receive Declarations of Interest and consider any requests for a dispensation.

None.

Adjournment for

104/25 Public Session (Members of the Public may speak for up to 3 minutes at the discretion of the Chairman).

Deepak Mahal spoke against the planned *West of Billingshurst* development. He said it breached the western BUAB and would set a precedent for adjoining sites to be developed. He believed that as the Council was an *interested party*, it should not vote in any shape or form on the development.

Garry Commings spoke against the plan submitted by Dunmoore for new housing to the rear/east of the Trade & Business Park.

Resume Meeting

105/25 To receive an update from Martin Hawthorn and Andrew White of the Highwood Group on the proposed *West of Billingshurst* development.

Martin Hawthorn and Andrew White gave an update on their plans for *West of Billingshurst*. They had continued to engage with local stakeholders on refining the design. They planned to leaflet the whole village in mid-December, to publicise an exhibition of the plans on the 8 January 2026 at the Billingshurst Centre. In answer to questions from Cllrs, they confirmed that the scheme would deliver 1,000 homes and the Country Park was approx. 36 hectares. NOTED

106/25 Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 November 2025.

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2025, previously circulated, were taken as read. On the proposal of Cllr Faye Algar, seconded by Cllr Phillip Day **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted and signed as a correct record accordingly.

107/25 Clerk's Report

The Clerk was pleased to report that although the Council had approved a budget of £1,000 to purchase new meeting audio/visual equipment, he had secured a second-hand device for £300.

108/25 To consider a response to major planning application: DC/25/1697

Billingshurst Business Park, Land at Stane Street, Billingshurst, West Sussex.

Hybrid application comprising: Mixed use development, including detailed permission for means of access and 1,338 sqm business floorspace with the remainder of the development in outline, comprising up to 102no. homes and up to 5,605 sqm of business floorspace (Classes E g (iii)/B2/B8).

Cllrs were unanimous in their opposition to this proposal. Cllr Phillip Day said the proposal went against what had originally been promised i.e. land to provide employment, particularly for existing local business looking to expand and develop. The use of this land for housing would be reinforcing the village as a *dormitory town*. Cllrs James Marchant, Faye Algar, Trevor Leonard, David Hingamp and Kate Rowbottom had similar concerns, adding that the proposal would add considerable traffic to an already very busy roundabout.

On the proposal of Cllr Faye Algar, seconded by Cllr Trevor Leonard **RESOLVED** that the Council **OBJECT** to the application, as per the reasons set out in the letter, attached Appendix A.

109/25 Date of Next Meeting – 7 January 2025.

Meeting finished at 6.55pm

APPENDIX A

Billingshurst Parish Council
Billingshurst Centre
Roman Way
Billingshurst
RH14 9QW

Nicola Pettifer, Case Officer

Planning Department
Horsham District Council
Albery House
Springfield Road
Horsham
RH12 2GB

Application: DC/25/1697

Hybrid application comprising: Mixed use development, including detailed permission for means of access and 1,338 sqm business floorspace with the remainder of the development in outline, comprising up to 102no. homes and up to 5,605 sqm of business floorspace (Classes E g (iii)/B2/B8)

**Billingshurst Business Park Land at Grid Reference 509292 126746 Stane Street
Billingshurst West Sussex**

Dear Nicola,

We have received notice of this application and find it deeply worrying that such a change to the agreed use of this site is being submitted.

The change of use of this part of the site, from workshops and trade units - intended for local businesses - to housing, is a clear divergence away from the reasons for which previous applications have been supported by the Parish Council.

Design and Overdevelopment

Whilst an outline application, the concept of inserting up to 102 dwellings, in an area of approximately 3.35 hectares, outside of the existing built-up area boundary (BUAB) is not in line with the Billingshurst Neighbourhood Plan Policy BILL 1: Billingshurst Built-up Area Boundary nor the Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) Strategic Policy 3: Settlement Expansion.

We have recently had approved an application at the south of the village on an area of 3.55hectares and that was only for 79 dwellings – a figure of 22.25 dwellings per hectare, which was already considered higher than the developments around it. This change to the trade park would see a density of 30.45 dwellings per hectare, which is not in keeping

with the rural design of Billingshurst, especially when tacked onto the side of the village outside the BUAB. This manner of expansion would further turn the village into a “dormitory town” with the decrease of the trade park giving fewer than promised job opportunities, and increasing the housing number.

This proposal is not in line with HDPF’s monitoring framework commitment to Policy 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy, where the target to be achieved was cited as “no development to be delivered outside BUAB unless through Neighbourhood Development Plans” which this would go against.

Whilst not yet completed, the removal of the smaller units from this development would also go against the ethos of the strategic policy for economic growth, where we would be losing potential employment land. Under the original application for the site, HDC’s Economic Development team commented, as a consultee, that within Billingshurst:

“There is currently a lack of supply of modern fit for use commercial sites in the District, both in terms of meeting the needs of smaller and larger businesses. This is evident in the poor performance of business rates growth and the lack of opportunities provided for existing companies to expand. Enquiries from businesses to Economic Development for commercial floorspace fit for purpose have recently increased. Much of the current stock is in need of updating in order to meet these needs. Priority 1 of the Economic Strategy states the importance of ensuring businesses have the confidence to invest in Horsham District as an economic location. The championing of strategic sites and new commercial developments will be critical in achieving inward investment from companies outside of the District.

This is furthered in Priority 2: Enterprise, in which a key point is to ensure our businesses become more productive and resilient to support long term growth. The provision of additional commercial floorspace will provide businesses the opportunity to expand and further their growth. These priorities are key to ensuring economic growth in the District. The current proposal would be another move to improve the commercial offer the District has and provide space for businesses in the District to expand as well as sites for inward investment. Economic Development strongly supports this application as it addresses key points within the economic strategy.

It was for this reason that the parish and the district supported the trade and business park being built and its change to housing would deviate from the support it was given.

The HDPF seeks to focus growth within defined built-up area boundaries (Policies 1,2,3), while the countryside is protected against inappropriate development thus only development essential to its countryside location is considered acceptable (Policy 26). This proposed development site is located outside of the BUAB of Billingshurst. It therefore does not accord with Policy 3 and conflicts with Policy 26 because it is not essential to its countryside location. Turning this into another housing development would go against the nature of the site, the reasons for which it was supported and the

need which Billingshurst requires as there are no other business or employment sites in the village.

Highway Access and Parking

There are already concerns regarding the traffic on the A29 at present, with morning queues building up from the New Road Roundabout back to the Hilland Roundabout each day, adding an additional potential of 204 morning journeys trying to exit onto this roundabout will cause further delays given that most dwellings will own two cars. This stretch of the A29 is already a dangerous road with Department for Transport accident statistics showing three slight [yellow], one serious [orange] and two fatal collisions [red] in the past three years of data (2021-2024) and these are just those reported to be included with the DfT figures.



The use of this land as housing will create a much greater level of increased traffic than the use of the land as trade and business units, as approved.

Loss of General Amenity, Privacy Light and Noise

If the application were permitted, we would be looking at 102 new dwellings, with vehicles entering and exiting the site, through the existing commercial area, and some of these dwellings living behind a petrol station operating 24 hours a day.

Those residents who opted to live there would be subject to large vehicle movements, noise from commercial units, and the smell of petrol fumes. As a commercial site, the site is vacant much of the night (excluding the 24-hour petrol station) and therefore create minimal light pollution however a residential area creates noise, light and car movements all round the clock. This would have an adverse effect on the local environment, light pollution onto New Road, which is not within the applicant's ownership.

For the reasons given above, we therefore do not agree with the change in the purpose of this site, and **OBJECT** to this planning application.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Plant
Assistant Clerk
Billingshurst Parish Council