PARISH BILLINGSHURST COUNCIL

Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of Billingshurst Parish Council
Tuesday 2 June 2026
6pm at the Billingshurst Centre

Present

Cllrs Paul Berry (Chairman), Faye Algar, Edna Benger, Phillip Day, Sandy Duck, Jeremy Harris (from 6.40pm), David Hingamp, Craig Jones, Trevor Leonard, James Marchant, Marie Montoya, Anna Rhodes, Kate Rowbottom and Doug Waller.

In attendance

G Burt, Clerk to the Council
R Plant, Assistant Clerk

55/26 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.

56/26 Apologies for Absence
An apology for absence was received from Cllr Craig Gale for an approved reason. On the proposal of Cllr Paul Berry seconded by Cllr Doug Waller, **RESOLVED** that the apology and reason given be accepted.

57/26 To Receive Declarations of Interest and consider any requests for a dispensation.
None

Adjournment for

58/26 Public Session (Members of the Public may speak for up to 3 minutes at the discretion of the Chairman).
None

Resume Meeting

59/26 Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 May 2026.
The draft minutes of the meeting held on 6 May 2026, previously circulated, were taken as read. On the proposal of Cllr Paul Berry seconded by Cllr Phillip Day **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted and signed as a correct record accordingly.

60/26 2025-26 Accounts.

a. To receive the Final Internal Audit Report.
On the proposal of Cllr Paul Berry, seconded by Cllr Phillip Day, **RESOLVED** to receive the Internal Audit Report 2025-26.

b. To consider suggested responses to *Action Plan* comments.
On the proposal of Cllr Paul Berry, seconded by Cllr Craig Jones, **RESOLVED** to approve the *Action Plan* – Appendix **A**.

c. To approve the Annual Return Governance Statement
On the proposal of Cllr Paul Berry, seconded by Cllr Phillip Day, **RESOLVED** to approve the Annual Return Governance Statement for 2025-26 Appendix **B.**

d. To approve the Annual Return Accounting Statements.
On the proposal of Cllr Paul Berry, seconded by Cllr Phillip Day, **RESOLVED** to approve the Accounting Statements for 2025-26 – Appendix **C.**

e. To reappoint Mike Platten T/A *April Skies Consulting* as Internal Auditor for the year 2026-27.
On the proposal of Cllr Craig Jones seconded by Cllr Kate Rowbottom, **RESOLVED** that Mike Platten T/A *April Skies Consulting* be reappointed as Internal Auditor for the year 2026-27.

f. To refer detailed consideration of the accounts to the F&GP Committee.
On the proposal of Cllr Paul Berry, seconded by Cllr Trevor Leonard, **RESOLVED** to refer detailed consideration of the accounts to the F&GP Committee.

61/26 To receive a presentation in relation to land at Hilland, Billingshurst (north of Hilland Road) from Katie Lamb (Strutt & Parker), Steve O'Halloran (Reside) and Adam King (ECE Architecture).

Following the presentation, the team answered questions from Councillors on: access onto Hilland Road; pedestrian links with adjoining sites; solar panels, blue infrastructure; on-site parking and affordable homes. The developer hoped the site could be allocated in the emerging Local Plan, but would nonetheless be submitting a planning application in due course. There would be a full public consultation before this.

62/26 Date of Next Ordinary Meeting – 1 July 2026.

Meeting finished at 7.51pm

APPENDIX A

FINAL AUDIT RECOMENDATIONS

Matter Arising	Recommendation	Council Response
Water bills for one transaction were based on estimates provided by the water company.	It is recommended that meters for all utilities should be read at least annually, there is a history of error by utility providers in this sector.	**STAFF AS APPROPRIATE HAVE NOW BEEN TASKED WITH DOING THIS.**
I again must recommend that the Council moves away from making payment by cheque.	Suppliers do not have systems to bank cheques promptly and many will not work with customers who make payment this way	**CLERK TASKED WITH COMPLETING THIS BY END AUGUST.**
General reserves at year end were £145K . This represents 27% of precept, which is at the lower end of levels recommended in the NALC Practitioners' Guide. General reserves must be closely monitored going forward, and the Council should ensure that these are not allowed to reduce further.	I understand that the Billingshurst Centre has very limited reserves, and the Council must consider its responsibilities in this area when managing its financial position. It is recommended that the Council sets a general reserve policy before the next budget setting round, this should stipulate the basic level of general reserve the Council will hold.	**CLERK REPEATEDLY REMINDS MEMBERS OF DIMINISHING RESERVES!** **CLERK HAS ASKED F&GP CTTEE TO ADDRESS CENTRE RESERVES ISSUE.** **DRAFT RESERVES POLICY TO GO TO FUTURE F&GP CTTEE**
The Sales ledger at 31.3.26 stood at £30.8K – all owed by Billingshurst Centre. I confirmed with the Clerk that the Centre has funding to meet these debts, and that payment should be made to the Council in the next 2-3 weeks.	The Council must monitor debts owed by the centre closely, as it is understood the Centre now has negligible cash reserves. This will have an impact on Council finances if recharge bills cannot be paid.	**SEE RESPONSE ABOVE**
Transparency data published on website	Contracts – needs to be updated, not done since March 2024 - this should be done before the agar is submitted to external audit.	**TO ACTION.**

APPENDIX B

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/26

We acknowledge as the members of:

BILLINGSHURST PARISH COUNCIL

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2026, that:

	Agreed			
	Yes	No*		'Yes' means that this authority:
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓			*prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.*
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓			*made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.*
3. We have assured ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓			*has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.*
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓			*during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.*
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓			*considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.*
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓			*arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.*
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓			*responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.*
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓			*disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.*
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A	*has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.*
	✓			
10. We have put in place arrangements for the effective IT and data management in accordance with proper practices during the year under review.	✓			*has made suitable arrangements for its IT and data management and has complied with proper practices in doing so.*

***Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

02/06/2026

and recorded as minute reference:

50/26c

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair [signature]

Clerk Gregory Burt

www.billingshurst.gov.uk

APPENDIX C

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2025/26 for

BILLINGSHURST PARISH COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2025 £	31 March 2026 £	*Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures **must** agree to underlying financial records.*
1. Balances brought forward	598,365	594,045	*Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value **must** agree to Box 7 of previous year.*
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	513,010	533,816	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	295,984	210,996	*Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.*
4. (-) Staff costs	263,938	311,780	*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	41,920	41,920	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	507,456	491,857	*Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).*
7. (=) Balances carried forward	594,045	493,300	*Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. **must** equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).*
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	585,854	536,235	*The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – **To agree with bank reconciliation.***
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	1,907,559	1,972,019	*The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings	314,551	257,706	*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	
11 Do the figures in the accounting statements above exclude any trust transactions?	✓		*For guidance refer to the Practitioners' Guide sections 2.31 to 2.33.*

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2026 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval.

Gregory Burt

Date 22/05/2026

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

02/06/2026

as recorded in minute reference:

60/26d

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved