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**Minutes from the Amberley Parish full Council meeting held at**

**St Michael’s Church Hall at 7:00 pm on Thursday 11th of September 2025**

**Present** – Parish Councillors ; Chair Jason Charman, ( JC ), Tim Simpson, ( TS ), Fraser Wheeler, ( FW ), Graham Smith, ( GS ), Hazel Allinson, ( HA ), Paul Mustow, ( PM ), Ian Corcoran, ( IC ), Leigh Cresswell, ( LC ).

**Also present** - Steve Trott, ( ST ), ( Clerk ), Paul Clarke & Len Ellis – Brown ( both HDC District councillors and 18 members of the public, but no dogs. ( Cllrs and members of the public from 7.30 pm )

1. **Apologies for absence** Elisabeth Tooms, ( ET ), Paul Marshall, ( Chair of WSCC ). The PC unanimously accepted reasons why ET was absent for this and the previous meeting.

Jon Campbell ( HDC councillor ), did not attend

1. **To receive Declarations of Interest from Members for items on the agenda**

No declarations were made.

1. **To meet and speak to candidates that applied for co option onto the parish council.**

Two candidates presented themselves and were interviewed, both were given 10 minutes equally. Mike Attard was unanimously voted for cooption by the parish council.

**Members of the public were invited to join the meeting at 7.30pm**

**Clerk re read apologies and declarations of interests**

1. **To approve and sign the minutes of the ordinary Parish council meeting held on the 14th March 2025**

The minutes were agreed by the councillors and signed by the chair and resolved as a true record.

1. **Updates from County and District Councillors**

Paul Clarke and Len Ellis Brown spoke regarding local government reorganization, the devolution of district councils along with the formation of a unitary authority and HDC’s local plan. Paul Clarke answered questions from the public and confirmed that there is a lack of information regarding LGR at present along with the fact that council tax is almost certainly going to rise in the Horsham area after LGR. Horsham Town is possibly forming a town council. Len Ellis Brown also spoke regarding the HDC local plan.

Signed ……………………………………………………… Dated 13th November 2025

1. **Current Matters** ;

Clerk reported ;

A series of suspect emails have been received by the PC, advised to delete them immediately if in doubt. Clerk has spoken to the email service provider.

A new sign has been supplied and fixed by the PC for St Mary’s Church at Houghton Bridge as previous minutes.

LC and Fraser Wheeler completed and submitted a SDNPA survey.

APC completed and submitted the WSCC survey regarding LGR and devolution

Operation watershed is in progress, completion on Friday 12th. 2 trash screens have been provided, ditches cleared in several locations, a large bund formed behind Newland gardens along with ditch widening and improving flow of water on the bend there. HDC will confirm who is responsible for clearing the ditch between top and bottom fields, Clerk to advise residents.

Assertion 10 relating to web sites and email usage comes into law in March 26, failure to comply will possibly lead to a failure of internal and external audits. Clerk advised all to use the APC email system only for council business, and strictly not personal email addresses. Clerk to work on and advise any changes that may be required by Assertion 10.

A speedwatch meeting has been organised by APC at 3 monthly intervals with neighbouring Parish and Town councils.

The PC resilience, or emergency, plan is being revised, GS is leading it, when complete it will be forwarded to the PC for discussion and comment before publication.

Congratulations were given to Nyetimber vineyard for winning the best sparkling wine award at the international wine challenge awards, this is the first time that the accolade has gone to a producer from outside the Champagne region. ( If anyone can afford it ), it was their 2016 Blanc de Blancs

1. **Committee Reports – Updates from**
2. **Planning**

LC updated the PC on current planning applications and their status :

**Kennards** – alteration and conversion of a barn. APC comment supported but some comment re the amount of glass. Status – In progress.

**Old Ale House** – Removal of a tree branch. APC supported. Status, determined.

**Willow cottage, Church Street** – Discharge of architectural watching brief, ( Condition 4 ). APC comment – supported. Status Determined.

**Lathams Barn**- Repairs and minor alterations. Approved by APC. Status determined.

**Leith House -**Replacement of French doors and enlarged glazing surround. In progress, APC approved.

Signed ……………………………………………………… Dated 13th November 2025

**Planning Cont / ….**

**Black Horse** – Retrospective application for use of garage. APC objected as no changes or mitigating action had been proposed from the previous planning application, along with neighbours objections. Status in progress.

 **(b) Roads & Paths**

JC spoke regarding flooding problems on the B2139 and he had inspected the same with a parishioner who lives adjacent. A blockage was found and awaiting clearance by WSCC Highways. A drain cover was found to be broken and has been repaired. Drains on the B2139 have not been jetted, WSCC have been advised and in turn informed JS that a contractor had failed and they were chasing outstanding works of which this is one.

**(c) Assets & Amenities**

An A & A committee meeting was held on the 9th of September, minutes will be made available on the APC website shortly.

The pond works largely are complete, a power cable has been exposed where it has been buried not to the modern required depth of 450 mm min, ( it was put there in 1969 ) Clerk has contacted UK Power network on 2 occasions now. Some monies remain for planting of native plants although this will take place later and on the advice of the pond contractor.

A grant for a bus shelter opposite the Sportsman for schoolchildren on the site of the old bus stop has been applied for and successfully awarded with an authority, ( SDNPA CIL fund ), different to that previously mentioned in the July minutes. Design to be agreed by the A & A committee, although restricted so as to match the footprint of the existing concrete plinth.

RoSPA carried out the annual inspections of the playgrounds at Hurst gardens and the recreation ground. Some small improvements needed JC to organise the same.

**(d) Neighbourhood Plan delivery/Car park**

TS spoke regarding a fence repair in progress but complicated by the non standard length of timber used by the contractor who installed the same originally.

**(e) Village Bus**

ET not present, so no report.

**(f) Speedwatch**

GS spoke regarding the status of the speedwatch group and the number of vehicles identified as speeding. A new speedgun provided by the PC is helping to identify speeding vehicles. A successful meeting was held with neighbouring council speedwatch groups to exchange ideas, possibly resources and to push for increased support from the police. The speedwatch group are looking for more volunteers.

Signed ……………………………………………………… Dated 13th November 2025

1. **Finance – To receive and agree bank reconciliations for August and July 2025**

Agreed and signed

1. **Proposal to adopt the decommissioned telephone box in Amberley village Square**

Clerk explained that an application has been made to adopt the phone box from BT Openreach, the subsequent maintenance and insurance would be the responsibility of APC. The majority of suggestions of use received by the clerk were for a book exchange. A parishioner highlighted that there were many other suggested uses. The PC advised that any decision would be a public one.

1. **The possible transfer of Assets from HDC to APC under LGR**

Clerk advised that as part of LGR assets could be transferred from a district council to a parish or town council. APC have been speaking to HDC regarding the transfer of the top, middle and bottom fields as part of this process and the issue was discussed at the July meeting with the public excluded. The reason for this was so as to not make SDNPA, ( planning ), aware or to raise public expectations. A mandate was given to the Clerk to proceed.

JC and the clerk met with HDC but were eventually denied permission to apply due to the HDC’s legal obligation to gain the best financial value for the transfer of an asset. APC were granted permission to apply, and have done so, for the car park and adjacent section of the bottom field. If the remainder of the three fields are not included in the upcoming revised SDNPA local plan then APC will be granted permission to apply for the remaining fields.

**Cllrs Paul Clarke and Len Ellis Brown left the meeting at this point**

1. **WSCC initiative to extend the 30 mph speed limit past Amberley Castle**

JC and clerk are to attend a zoom meeting with WSCC on the proposal, the views of the PC were sought on the matter, members of the public made suggestions including extending the 30 mph limit past the football field or extending the 40 mph limit by some distance, adding double white lines, and the Mill lane junction. APC to report back after the meeting with WSCC.

1. **Request from a parishioner to plant a second Oak sapling on Ham’s Piece within the Wildbrooks.**

The PC agreed to this but in light of concerns raised by others surrounding the SSSI status, along with others of the Wildbrooks suggested that permission be sought from Nature England.

1. **The condition of the Wildbrooks & the Climate Change and Nature Recovery Committee**

JC and Clerk explained that they, along with TS, had attended a scheduled meeting with Nyetimber where the Nyetimber rewilding manager was present. The meeting was successful with the rewilding manager the works that Nyetimber were carrying out and making the point that just because people don’t see vehicles or large numbers of workers this doesn’t mean that nothing is happening. The rewilding manager explained that they are liaising with other land owners. Several members of the public commented, some from Amberley Society, it was agreed that a further discussion be held after Amberley Society also met with Nyetimber at the end of the month. The nature committee was not discussed.

Signed ……………………………………………………… Dated 13th November 2025

1. **Clerk’s Information items along with a review of Parishioner’s correspondence list and agree on any necessary action.**

Clerk explained that he had received correspondence regarding :

LGR and the exclusion of the public when this was discussed at the July meeting. Item 10 should have answered the same.

The status of the Ditch identified as a chalk stream, the PC explained that it will take years to be officially defined.

Hog lane parking and the possibility of double yellow lines, Clerk referred the parishioner to previous meeting minutes and a decision not to adopt the same.

Pond restoration, mixed correspondence received.

Caravan and car both poorly parked at Hurst Cottages, Clerk explained that APC have no powers.

Sleeping policeman in Rackham Road at Crossgates. Little or no support from the council.

A parishioner queried items not on this meeting’s agenda, Clerk explained that once an agenda is published it cannot be altered or added to. If anyone wanted an item included on an upcoming meeting agenda, they must contact the Clerk at least 1½ weeks prior to the meeting with their suggestion although it is the Clerk that decides what is included on an agenda.

No defibrillator training at the Cricket Club, a member of the public present who is also a member of the Cricket Club said that they would organise the same as a defib had been provided there.

Involvement of the PC in the Church Foodbank initiative. The PC discussed but the feeling was leave it to the Church and don’t interfere.

A letter received from The Amberley Society regarding the condition of the Wildbrooks, this was discussed under item 13.

A letter received from one of the Gaggle administrators requesting a financial contribution to the Amberley Gaggle group. A value of £ 150.00 PA was suggested and the PC referred the matter to the finance committee who are meeting in early October.

A letter received from The Amberley Society regarding the works to a number of Ash trees and works carried out on the village pond, this was discussed under item 15.

Signed ……………………………………………………… Dated 13th November 2025

1. **Adjournment** – to take questions or comments from members of the public ( MoP’s )

A MoP queried that the lease on the car park expires in May 2027, they were referred to the asset transfer application as item 10.

A MoP asked for the result of the Cooption process, the PC advised that it would be announced the next day.

A MoP queried the clearance of brambles on the football field, JC confirmed that this was in progress

A MoP queried the PC’s involvement in the removal of a number of Ash trees. The PC informed that they had no prior knowledge of this, it was outside of a PC’s remit and that the works were undertaken by Springhead Estate in Parham the neighbouring Parish. Clerk confirmed that he had contact the Clerk there who was confident that all of the appropriate permissions and licenses would have been obtained but is going to liaise with Springhead.

A MoP queried the pond works that have been carried out as it is actually within the Wildbrooks, ( SSSI ). The PC were not aware of this, the clerk spoke to 2 different SDNPA, ( the grant donor for the works ), rangers and their office in Midhurst, all of whom were surprised at this but all indicated that the works undertaken were beneficial to the interest of the SSSI status and they would be extremely surprised if Nature England disagreed. Clerk has invited Nature England to inspect the works carried out but has yet to receive a reply. This may take months to be attended to by Nature England.

1. To receive any updates on meetings attended by members of the PC

None

1. To note the date of the next meeting on the 13th of November at 7.30pm

The Chair closed the meeting at 21.35

Stephen Trott - Clerk to Amberley parish council

Signed ……………………………………………………… Dated 13th November 2025

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