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**Telephone: 01903 208943 Email: clerk@amberley-pc.org.uk**

**Minutes from the annual Amberley Parish Council held at**

**St Michael’s Church Hall at 7:30pm on Thursday 8th May 2025**

**Present** – Parish Councillors ; Jason Charman, ( JC ), Tim Simpson, ( TS ), Fraser Wheeler, ( FW ), Paul Mustow, ( PM ), Elisabeth Tooms, ( ET ), Graham Smith, ( GS ), Leigh Cresswell, ( LC ), Ian Corcoran, ( IC ), and Steve Trott, ( ST ), ( Clerk ).

1. **Election of Parish Council Chair** – Jason Charman elected as Chair, Declaration of office signed.
2. **Election of Parish Council vice chair** – Graham Smith elected as Vice Chair, Declaration of office signed.
3. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies noted and accepted from Hazel Allinson. Apologies also noted from Paul Marshall, ( WSCC councillor ), and Paul Clarke, ( HDC councillor ). Jon Campbell and Len Ellis Brown ( both HDC councillors ), did not attend with no apologies received.

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

None declared

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. **To confirm any appointment/changes to committees**

Graham Smith was appointed to the Assets and Amenities committee

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

No Councillors present

1. **To review the councils standing orders and financial regulations**

Discussed and no changes proposed

Signed ……………………………………………………… Dated 10th July 2025

1. **Current Matters** –

( a ) Community speedwatch group & Parham PC’s initiative regarding speed reduction on the B2139

GS briefed the council on the work of the speedwatch group, this was previously published on Amberley Gaggle. Graham is contacting Sussex Police for a better speed gun. With Parham’s 40 mph TRO initiative in mind, Clerk proposed contacting road safety at Sussex police for their advice on possible traffic measures on the B2139, this was discussed and approved by the council.

 ( b ) Campervan parking on School Lane

The possibility of allowing a resident to park their campervan in the car park rather than School Lane was discussed by the council but rejected.

 ( c ) Martyn’s Law.

Clerk made the council aware of Martyn’s law, which is a new law requiring events of circa 200 + attendees to have enhanced emergency planning in case of accident or terrorist incidents such as risk assessments, controlled access for emergency services and appropriate first aid facilities along with evacuation planning. The requirements become even greater when 800 + people are involved. Amberley open gardens and the Amberley revival have already been made aware, no other events were thought to involve 200 people.

1. **Committee Reports – Updates from**

(a) **Planning**

**Cricketers** - No objection from APC

**Drewitts Farm** - No objection from APC but some concern at the time being taken for works to be completed was mentioned.

**24 Newlands Gardens** - Permission granted, but as APC’s partial objection.

**Black Horse** - Planning committee to look at steps taken by the Black Horse within their re application that might mitigate or reduce the effects upon neighbours before taking a position. Response has to be submitted to SDNPA planning before the 28th of May.

 **(b) Roads & Paths**

Drain still blocked outside Cricketers on the B2139 in Houghton. Clerk is to contact WSCC.

Corner cottage on junction of School Lane and B2139, hedge partially obstructing sight line to the west from School Lane has still not been cut back by the Castle despite three requests. Clerk to ask for an urgent meeting with the operations manager at the castle and if necessary involve WSCC Highways. 2 trees to the rear of Corner cottage are of concern as they are leaning and seem to have lost their roots.

Ruffs path, works to improve path are to be discussed at upcoming preliminary finance committee meeting.

Signed ……………………………………………………… Dated 10th July 2025

 **(c) Assets & Amenities**

A grant to improve and maintain the pond adjacent to the castle has been applied for under the ‘Pounds for Ponds’ funding arrangement with the SDNPA. An encouraging acknowledgement has been received.

A grant for a bus shelter opposite the Sportsman for schoolchildren on the site of the old bus stop has been applied for under SDNPA CIL funding, no acknowledgement has been received yet.

PM confirmed that the mowing of the football field was being carried out by the Cricket Club, there was a query as to why the perimeter of the field is being left uncut, Clerk to contact the Cricket Club.

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

Car park is being well used, otherwise nothing to report.

**(e) Village Bus**

Ramp not yet fitted to bus, a strong steering wheel security clamp has been fitted.

**(f) Climate Action & Nature Recovery Working Group**

FW spoke regarding a parishioner called David Curry who is ex chief of Hampshire Fire Brigade and was willing to offer advice on flooding in Amberley, particularly the bottom field / Car Park / School Lane. The council agreed to a meeting with David

1. Finance - to receive and agree Bank Reconciliations for March and April 2025; to review and authorise payments on the Financial Statement from 1st March to 30th April 2025: to receive details of CIL funds as at 30.04.25 **Agreed and Signed**
2. To review and approve the Annual Internal Audit Report for 2023/24
3. To review and approve the Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 on the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for 2023/24 **Agreed and signed**
4. To review and approve the Accounting Statements 2023/24 on the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for 2023/24**Agreed and signed**
5. Adjournment – to take questions or comments from members of the public (max 15 minutes)

A parishioner asked if hedges were allowed to be cut before the bird nesting season ends, answer yes if causing an actual or potential danger.

A parishioner queried the progress of the cutting back of brambles, undergrowth etc on the football pitch field, answer works has begun and is in progress.

A parishioner asked whether the stream defined as a chalk stream by the Amberley Showstopper group could be named, it was suggested that old maps be looked at and to see if it had a historic name, although it was pointed out that the status of the stream has yet to be agreed by Nature England and the SDNPA.

Signed ……………………………………………………… Dated 10th July 2025

1. **Clerk’s update and Information items**

Sussex rural police have offered to hold local rural parish meetings, Amberley PC have applied, however the police have been overwhelmed and are arranging a diary. It was suggested that the PC arrange a joint briefing with neighbouring parishes, Bury and Parham, Clerk to contact police. The police had explained that the rural force cover over 200 parishes with 10 PC’s and 6 Special officers.

The Clerk apologized for not advising the community regarding the roadworks and traffic control currently being carried out and causing delays on Bury Hill, the roadwork warnning information received by the clerk was inaccurate for the 3rd time in recent weeks. Clerk to look at alternative sources of information.

The situation regarding the high fence erected beside the South Downs Way by Nyetimber was discussed. Despite 2 requests, the Nyetimber estate manager has not confirmed that Nyetimber would cut down the fence to half of its present height when the Juniper plants were matured, as previously agreed, only that the height of the fence would no longer be necessary. Clerk and LC to look to arrange a meeting with Nyetimber senior management.

Clerk confirmed that the situation with Natwest authorizing access to the bank account has been resolved from 2nd May.

1. **To review the Parishioner’s correspondence list and agree on any necessary action**

A parishioner had asked if it was possible to add swings to Hurst Playground. No funds available nor monies budgeted for, Clerk to look at possible sources of funding from grants.

A parishioner asked whether the council were holding an annual parish meeting this year. The council decided no as there has already been a large amount of engagement and communication with the community over the SDNPA local plan, there are also 2 further walk in surgery mornings planned in the coming months.

A parishioner previously asked for support in action to ban HGV’s from Houghton Bridge, they had previously sought the support of the MP Andrew Griffiths and WSCC both of whom declined do not support the proposal. The council discussed the matter and also decided not to support the proposal. Clerk to write the parishioner with the results of the traffic survey carried out last year by WSCC supporting the PC’s decision. The same parishioner had previously submitted a great deal of correspondence which has become increasingly vexatious with refusals to accept council decisions taken. The council agreed for the clerk to suspend correspondence with them until their manner improved under the PC’s vexatious behavior policy.

1. **To receive any updates on external meetings attended by councillors**

None declared

1. **Prize draw for Local plan survey** – Drawn by James Tolson, organised by Leigh Cresswell

1st prize - £ 100.00 **Mollie Briggs**

2nd prize – Bottle of champagne **Tony Hughes**

3rd prize - Cream tea at the tea rooms **Jerry Tanner**

1. **To note the date of the next meeting** 10th July 2025 at 7.30pm – **Confirmed**

Signed ……………………………………………………… Dated 10th July 2025

The Chair closed the meeting at 21.47

Stephen Trott - Clerk to Amberley parish council

Signed ……………………………………………………… Dated 10th July 2025

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