

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
Held at St Micheal's Church Hall
On Thursday 15th January 2026

Councillors Present: Jason Charman (Chairman), Graham Smith (Vice-Chairman), Hazel Allinson, Mike Attard, Ian Corcoran, Paul Mustow, Tim Simpson and Elisabeth Tooms.

Also Present: Cllr Paul Marshall (WSCC, Leader), Cllr Paul Clarke and Cllr John Campbell, Len-Ellis Brown (HDC)

Officers present: Celia Price FSLCC, FDA (Comm Gov) Locum Clerk

Members of the Public: 6

The Chairman welcomed all those present.

001. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Leigh Creswell

002. Declarations of Interest

The Chairman reminded members that declarations of interests already declared under the Localism Act 2011 stand. There were no declarations of interest on any items on this meeting's agenda.

003. Public Adjournment

Members of the public were reminded that only questions or queries on the agenda were allowed and the public adjournment is limited to 15 minutes.

Questions regarding the publication of the agenda of the last meeting were raised. The Locum Clerk assured all present that the publication of the agenda met the statutory requirements and was displayed on both the noticeboards and website. Noting the change in administration it was recognised that on this occasion 'Gaggle' was not used to distribute the agenda and residents were thanked for their understanding during this period of transition recognising the difficulties faced by the council.

004. Minutes of the Council meeting held on 8th January 2026

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meetings held on 8th January 2026 as true and accurate records of the meeting.

005. Action Updates

The Locum Clerk advised that an application for bank accounts with Unity Trust Bank have been submitted.

006. District and County Councillor Reports

The Chair welcomed District Councillors Paul Clarke and John Campbell and County Councillor and Leader Paul Marshall.

HDC Report

District Councillor Paul Clarke provided an update on current district council matters:

Signed:

Central Government Funding

HDC is facing significant financial pressure due to central government funding cuts. A reduction of approximately 4.4% (around £1 million) has been confirmed in addition to a further withdrawal of £0.5 million, increasing the budgetary challenge.

Gatwick Retail Initiative

A new retail concept is being introduced at Gatwick Airport. This initiative aims to provide greater visibility and promotion of local products, supporting local businesses and producers.

Capitol Theatre, Horsham

The Capitol remains closed until November 2026 whilst major refurbishment works are underway, including replacement of toilets, upgrades to the bar and box office and improvements to heating and associated infrastructure.

Food Waste Recycling

A new food recycling service will begin in the spring. The scheme includes the purchase of new collection vehicles to facilitate the introduction of weekly food waste collections. The former ambulance station has been converted to support the new service, and households will be provided with special bins and a countertop caddy. Cllr Clarke highlighted that the scheme will improve the already strong recycling rates achieved by HDC and food recycling is a national wide government directive,

Questions were raised that included the impact on the roads and infrastructure, particularly as Amberley currently experiences a daily refuse collection with particular concerns regarding the efficiency of current routing, the environmental impact of multiple vehicles movements, damage to the roads and disturbance to residents.

In response County Councillor Paul Marshall explained how the bio-digestion process will be used for energy production and Cllr Clark agreed to take these concerns back to the relevant department for review.

WSCC Report

County Councillor Paul Marshall provided an update on current county council matters:

Highways and CityFibre Works

A Highways briefing with CityFibre will take place on 13 April. As part of the planned works, Long Furlong will be closed for approximately 10 days, and residents should expect an increase in traffic during this period.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

A decision on the future structure of local government in Sussex is expected in March. Options under consideration include the creation of one unitary authority, two unitaries (with a west/east split), or a model proposed by Brighton & Hove, which would require around £200 million to implement. It is anticipated that the Brighton and Hove model would be too costly, therefore one of the other two models is likely to be favoured by the government. A transition to a single unitary authority is expected to take two years, with projected annual savings of £40 million whilst transition to two unitaries would take six years, with estimated savings of £20 million per year.

Signed:

Cllr Marshall advised that May elections are likely to be cancelled due to the reorganisation timetable and noted that maintaining service levels during the transition will be a significant challenge.

In addition a new strategic authority would cover all of Sussex, with a Mayor expected to be elected in 2028 with elections for a shadow council anticipated in 2027.

Pulborough Landslip Update

WSCC has now secured permission to proceed with remedial works on the landslip, following the conclusion of a court case.

Future Role of Parish Councils

Cllr Marshall highlighted that the reorganisation presents a significant opportunity for Parish Councils to take on a more influential role. Further discussions between parish councils and the future unitary authority are expected to take place in 2028.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the reports.

District and county councillors left the meeting

007. Committee Reports

a Planning

In the absence of Cllr Cresswell, Cllr Smith gave an overview of the report. Applications at Kennards and Lathams Barn were approved, while the Black Horse retrospective application was also approved despite objections from neighbours and the Parish Council, with concerns now raised with SDNP. The SDNP has released a revised Land Availability Assessment, retaining the three central fields in Amberley as a potential development site but reducing proposed housing numbers from 45 to 20 and extending the development timeframe to 6–10 years. APC will consult the community again during the Regulation 19 consultation expected in May–July 2026.

b Roads and Paths

The Chair reported that the B2139 still requires the drains to be cleared. Clearance of hedges has started on Cross Path and the potholes in Hogg Lane are getting worse. These have been reported to WSCC.

It was noted that litter picking activities need to be reinstated once the weather allows and a relaunch of the litter picking group needs to be organised.

A 28-day notice is now on the bus stop on Rackham Road. After the 28-day notice period has expired, a section 15 licence will be issued by WSCC. This licence will authorise the installation of the bus shelter and formally transfer ownership and responsibility for the asset, including all ongoing maintenance, to Amberley Parish Council.

c Assets and Amenities

Nothing to report

d NP delivery / Car park

Cllr Simpson reported that the lights in the carpark need checking. The Chair agreed to assist with inspection.

Signed:

e Village Bus

It was noted that the installation of a wheelchair ramp is not viable as a retrospective fit would result in the loss of too many seats and is very difficult to achieve.

f Speedwatch

Cllr Smith noted the need for more volunteers.

008. 2026/27 Budget

Following approval of the 2026/27 budget in October and significant events requiring unbudgeted expenditure the budget was revisited.

It was **RESOLVED** to increase the budget by £2000 it was further **RESOLVED** to invest in a new finance package to allow greater transparency and scrutiny.

Concerns were raised regarding the anticipated increased burden on the cricket club resulting from the grass cutting proposal. It was agreed that there should be no additional burden placed on the cricket club and logistics regarding use of the tractor need to agreed.

009. 2026/27 Precept Demand

It was **RESOLVED** to increase the precept demand to £25,319.50

010. Correspondence

None

011. Confidential Session

It was **RESOLVED** that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items off business.

Members of the public left the meeting

012. Confidential Matters

i) Locum Clerk SLA

The SLA for the Locum Clerk was reviewed.

It was **RESOLVED** to agree terms of the SLA and engage the locum clerk for 10 hours per week. The Chair signed the agreement.

ii) HR & Legal Matters – Graham

Cllr Smith confirmed that the HR and Legal issues have been resolved and the matter is now closed.

It was **RESOLVED** to record a vote of thanks to Cllr Smith and the Chairman in recognition of the considerable time, effort, and the challenging work they have undertaken to resolve the situation.

013. Items for the next agenda and date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting is **Thursday 12th March @ 7:30pm**

There being no further business the meeting closed @ 9pm

Signed: