

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
Held at St Michael's Church Hall
On Thursday 14th September 2026

Councillors Present: Jason Charman, Graham Smith, Elisabeth Tooms, Tim Simpson, Ian Corcoran and Paul Mustow

Officer Present – Locum Clerk: Trevor Parsons CiLCA

Members of the Public: 6

The Chair welcomed all those present.

Prior to opening the meeting members of the public expressed their concern regarding the increased numbers of cars parking in the village making it difficult for residents to park near or outside their homes even at times when the car park is full. Yellow lines are not an option as they would not be enforced and residents are looking to the Council to investigate ways improvements can be made. A resident also enquired about the trees in the football ground and Cllr Charman confirmed the matter was in hand.

036. Apologies for Absence

Cllr Charman informed the meeting that Cllr Cresswell had handed in his resignation from the Council. Cllr Charman expressed his sincere thanks for the many years of service to the community and his comments were echoed by the other Councillors present.

Apologies were received from Cllrs Allinson and Attard (APC), Cllr Marshall (WSCC) and Cllrs Campbell and Ellis-Brown (HDC).

037. Declarations of Interest

No declarations made.

038. Minutes of the meeting held on 18th June 2026

Councillors approved the minutes of the meeting held on 18th June 2026 as a true and accurate record.

039. District and County Councillor reports

Cllr Marshall (WSCC) reported:

A number of significant matters are currently being considered across West Sussex, and I wanted to provide some clarity on the principal issues affecting all our communities. There will, of course, also be local matters specific to each parish. I will continue to pursue these through my attendance at parish council meetings and through discussions with councillors and residents outside the formal meetings. I hope this briefing provides a helpful summary of my position and the work I am undertaking on these wider issues. Where a parish council meeting is taking place, I would be grateful if the briefing could be noted in the minutes.

Local government reorganisation

The Government has announced a review and pause of local government reorganisation decisions, including West Sussex, following updated legal advice about the process. This means there is currently no decision to abolish West Sussex County Council or the district and borough councils. Local elections in May 2027 are expected to proceed using the existing council boundaries. I welcome this development. I have consistently opposed the proposed break-up of West Sussex and supported retaining a single countywide authority if reorganisation were to proceed. In my view, reorganising West Sussex into two unitary councils would have caused years of disruption to vital services such as adult social care, children's services and highways, while costing local taxpayers more than £60 million to implement, for relatively limited benefit. Although the

Government describes this as a pause and review, it creates an opportunity to reconsider whether such a costly and disruptive reorganisation is necessary at all.

The separate Sussex devolution arrangements should not be confused with local government reorganisation.

Horsham District Local Plan

The consultation on the proposed Main Modifications closed on 24 August. The Planning Inspector will now consider the representations received, with further examination hearings scheduled to begin in October.

I submitted objections because of the scale and cumulative effect of development proposed across the Storrington division, including at least 580 additional homes affecting our local communities.

My principal concerns include:

- the ability of local roads and junctions to accommodate further traffic;
- the effect on rural communities and infrastructure;
- additional pressure on schools, health services and other local facilities;
- the increase in the allocation east of Billingshurst from 650 to 1,000 homes;
- the proposed new settlement of 3,200 homes at Adversane;
- the concentration of development around Ashington, including the Rectory Lane area; and
- the extent to which Horsham district is being expected to accommodate unmet housing need arising from elsewhere.

West Sussex County Council has maintained a holding objection to the Local Plan. Its position is that the plan is not presently supported by sufficient transport and highway-safety evidence. The County Council considers that the plan cannot currently be regarded as sound in relation to highway-safety impacts. Its objection therefore remains in place pending the completion and proper assessment of the necessary further evidence. The County Council has also objected to modifications that would remove affordable-housing requirements from certain older persons' and specialist housing developments.

Community Governance Review

Horsham District Council has been reviewing parish boundaries and governance arrangements throughout the district. Its current draft recommendations preserve the existing parish council arrangements across the Storrington division. This means recommendations of no change for Washington; Parham; Amberley; Storrington and Sullington; Ashington; and Wiston.

Importantly, the earlier possibility of merging Amberley and Parham has not been taken forward. I made representations arguing that population size or administrative convenience should not override established community identity, historic character and local democratic accountability. Where smaller parish councils face capacity or administrative challenges, I believe collaboration and shared support should be considered before structural changes or mergers are proposed. I am pleased that Horsham District Council specifically acknowledged my representation and accepted that the existing parish structure broadly reflects the identity and interests of our communities. These are currently draft recommendations and will remain subject to the formal conclusion of the Community Governance Review.

Conclusion

Overall, these developments provide some welcome reassurance for our parish councils. Local government reorganisation has been paused, the existing parish arrangements across the Storrington division are recommended to remain, and West Sussex County Council continues to challenge the Horsham Local Plan where the necessary highways and transport evidence has not yet been provided. I will continue to represent our communities and press for their local identity, infrastructure and essential council services to be properly protected.

040. Finance Committee Report

Cllr Smith informed the meeting that the budget was on track for this financial year and that the next meeting is set for Thursday 15th October 2026.

041. Planning Committee Report

Comments have been made to SDNP applications for trees being cut back. A planning meeting will be convened shortly to consider the other applications.

042. Assets & Amenities Committee Report

- **Pond Update**

An estimate has been agreed regarding the management of the pond in 2026 by PTP Pond Consultants where the team will attend to the pond over the year with a guaranteed total of four visits being in summer and a tidy up late Autumn/winter. They will also make unscheduled visits to check on its wellbeing during the year. The full day rate is in the region of £1,400.

Action : Cllrs Charman and Smith to approach the volunteers to help with tidying the landscape, as per directions provided by PTP Pond Consultants.

Action : Cllr Smith to generate an article for November's edition of Wildbrooks.

Action: APC to contact the Airys regarding the timing of the finishing of their building works to ensure that the access area used is returned to pre-works condition in a timely manner

Action : The Clerk to contact HDC to request that the new bin is emptied on a regular basis once installed.

- **Fishing Update**

Nyetimber have now secured that gate thus preventing unauthorized vehicle access and fishing on Ham Piece.

Any further action regarding fishing will be reviewed at the next A&A meeting.

043. Road & Footpaths Update

Amberley Castle have cut their hedge on the entrance of school road making it safer to pull out onto the B2139.

The frontage of Vicarage House is very overgrown.

Action : Clerk to email PCC to request that it is tidied up.

Frontage of Field End is very overgrown.

Action: Clerk to make contact with estate agent to resolve.

A large crater has appeared near the pond caused by Amberley Castle repair contractors. Cllr Charman has spoken to them and requested it is filled with ballast as a temporary repair.

Hog Lane hedges are really overgrown Cllr Charman reported at he was advised by WSCC that hedges were within their parameters.

044. TRO on Turnpike Road B2139

Cllr Smith presented two applications to submit to WSCC for Traffic Regulation Orders to reduce the speed limits on B2139. Firstly, to reduce the 40mph to 30 mph for the reason of the number of driveways accessing the road and School Road Access. Secondly, to reduce maximum speed limits apply to 50 mph as vehicles are entering and leaving the restricted speed limits too quickly.

Councillors considered both applications and **RESOLVED** to submit the 40mph to 30 mph TRO initially and then look to submit the 50mph TRO once we have support from Parham and Storrington PCs.

045. Village Parking

Several emails have been received by the Clerk concerning this topic as well as a discussion within the public participation.

It was agreed that this is a very difficult situation with few practical options available to make real improvements.

Action : The Clerk to create a working party of Councillors to explore what can actually be done to make parking better for everyone.

046. Clerk Recruitment

Councillors wanted to express their thanks to Celia Price who was the Locum Clerk until 24th July 2026.

Cllr Smith informed the meeting that Trevor Parsons has replaced Celia as Locum Clerk. In addition, Trevor has been appointed as the new permanent Clerk working 16 hours per week, commencing from 1st October 2026.

047. Local Government Pension Scheme

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council agrees to join the Local Government Pension Scheme, as administered by West Sussex County Council, and all employed members of staff are given opportunity to join."

048. Payments

Councillors noted that the following payments have been made from 18th June to 2nd September 2026

Date	Payee	Amount	Detail
29/06/2026	WSALC	£232.57	WSALC / NALC Subscriptions
29/06/2026	HDC	£88.40	Litter bin emptying (3 months)
29/06/2026	Parish Online	£45.00	Mapping Service
29/06/2026	Locum Clerk	£2,000.00	Clerking Services
30/06/2026	Unity	£7.00	Bank Charges
07/07/2026	Octopus	£22.95	Electric – Car Park
13/07/2026	The Tech Doctors	£30.00	CCTV
10/07/2026	J Charman	£539.00	Roads & Paths
10/07/2026	Amberley CC	£500.00	Grant
20/07/2026	Church Hall	£24.00	Hall Hire
20/07/2026	Tilbury Consulting	£750.00	Reg 19 response document
20/07/2026	Scribe	£84.00	Accounting Software
20/07/2026	Mulberry	£331.50	Internal Audit
20/07/2026	Locum Clerk	£2,500.00	Clerking Services
31/07/2026	Unity Bank	£7.00	Bank Charges
08/08/2026	Octopus	£23.55	Electric – Car Park
13/08/2026	The Tech Doctors	£30.00	CCTV

07/08/2026	Vision ICT	£626.69	IT Services
14/08/2026	Scribe	£42.00	Accounting Software
20/08/2026	Rollings	£210.00	Open Spaces repairs
24/08/2026	WSALC	£40.00	HALC Subscription
31/08/2026	Unity Bank	£7.00	Bank Charges
01/09/2026	PWLB	£1,818.78	6 monthly loan repayment

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

Finance Committee 15/10/2026 and Full Committee on Thursday 12th November 2026