**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF AMBERLEY PARISH COUNCIL**
**Held at St Michael's Church Hall On Thursday 12th November 2026**

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

**Officer Present – Locum Clerk:** Trevor Parsons CiLCA

Members of the Public: 12

---

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Public Participation – Representatives from Amberley Conservation Group reported to the meeting about the latest stage of the SDNP Local Plan. The SDNPA Planning Committee met earlier in the day at Midhurst to consider and decide on submission of the new draft Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination. In the public participation of that meeting, a representative from the group appealed to the Committee that important environmental considerations for the SDA35 Amberley Land Availability Assessment be reconsidered for:

· The newly, nationally recognised Amberley winterbourne chalk stream by CaBA. (Catchment Based Approach).

· A hydrological review, in conjunction with Natural England, of the Habitats Regulations Assessment for the designated Arun Valley Sites.

· The suitability and capacity of SDA35 including appropriate protection of the stream and its corridor.

The SDNPA Planning Committee voted for the plan to proceed. It may be modified before the next stage where it goes before the Full Members of the Authority on 8 December 2026, to decide whether to formally submit it for independent examination.

The Group has requested that Amberley Parish Council endorse the views of the Group with SDNPA.

The Clerk agreed that councillors could provide their response to the proposed endorsement letter by email.

**058. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies received from Cllr Marshall (WSCC) and Cllrs Clark & Campbell (HDC)

**059. Declarations of Interest**
To receive declarations of interest from members in respect of any agenda item as defined under the Localism Act 2011.

None declared

**060. Minutes of the meeting held on 5th October 2026**
To approve the minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting and Planning Meeting held on 5th October 2026 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Councillors approved the minutes of the meetings held on 5th October 2026 as a true and accurate record.

**061. Matters Arising from previous Meetings**

Village Parking – The Clerk and Councillors met with WSCC Highways to discuss the issue, but sadly no realistic solutions were found. There will be no yellow lines in the village and permit parking would not work due to the cost of enforcement.

**062. District and County Councillor reports**

Cllr Marshall (WSCC) reported:

1. Appointment as Chair of Scrutiny – Sussex and Brighton Strategic Authority

I am pleased to advise that I have recently been appointed Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the Sussex and Brighton Strategic Authority. The principal role of the Committee is to provide independent scrutiny and oversight of the decisions and activities of the Strategic Authority, ensuring transparency, accountability and value for money.

As the Authority develops its responsibilities, particularly around economic development, transport, infrastructure and strategic investment, I believe it is important that the interests of our rural communities, including Amberley, are properly represented and considered alongside those of our larger towns and urban areas.

2. Horsham District Local Plan – Examination in Public

I recently participated in the Examination in Public of the Horsham District Local Plan, particularly those sessions considering the proposed housing allocations, the implications for existing communities and the supporting infrastructure required. My principal concern remains the cumulative impact of additional housing development across the district, particularly on our already stretched highways network, local services and wider infrastructure.

Relevance to Amberley - Although many of the larger proposed housing allocations are outside Amberley itself, their impact will not necessarily be confined to the communities in which development takes place.

Additional housing across the district will generate further traffic movements, including journeys along the A29 and A283 corridors and through the surrounding rural road network. For communities such as Amberley, where the rural road network has limited capacity and opportunities for significant highway improvements are constrained, it is particularly important that the cumulative consequences of development are properly understood. During the examination, I highlighted the continuing concerns raised by West Sussex County Council in its capacity as Highway Authority, particularly the outstanding transport and infrastructure evidence. The County Council had previously submitted a holding objection pending further supporting information. I raised this matter on two occasions during the examination, including the fact that the County Council's concerns had not been adequately addressed in the responses presented. Unfortunately, this matter was not pursued further by the Inspector.

Air Quality Management Area

I also challenged comments made during the examination suggesting that the Storrington Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) could be removed. I made it clear that the AQMA remains in place and that any consideration of its removal must be supported by appropriate evidence and a formal review process.

Importantly, the assessment requires three years of air quality monitoring data from 2024 onwards before a properly informed decision can be considered. While the AQMA specifically relates to Storrington, the wider issue is directly relevant to Amberley. Increased traffic associated with development elsewhere in the district can affect rural communities through additional vehicle movements, congestion and emissions, even where there are no major housing allocations within the parish itself. My concern is that, unless these wider impacts are properly assessed, smaller rural communities such as Amberley could experience the consequences of additional development without the necessary investment in highways and supporting infrastructure. I therefore emphasised during the examination that planning decisions must take account of the cumulative impact of development across the wider road network, rather than simply assessing individual sites in isolation. I will continue to monitor the Inspector's conclusions and any subsequent recommendations, particularly where they could affect Amberley and the surrounding rural communities.

3. Local Government Reorganisation – West Sussex

There remains considerable uncertainty surrounding the Government's proposals for local government reorganisation in West Sussex. The Government has paused its decision on the future structure of local government in the county, and we are awaiting further clarification on the preferred arrangements and timetable. My position remains that a single unitary authority covering West Sussex would offer the strongest opportunity

to protect frontline services, reduce duplication and deliver sustainable financial savings. The financial assessments undertaken suggest that a single unitary model could deliver approximately £50 million in recurring annual savings, compared with approximately £20 million under a two-unitary arrangement. These are estimates rather than guaranteed savings. A single authority would also provide greater consistency in the delivery of services, particularly adult social care, children's services, highways and other important countywide responsibilities. For rural parishes such as Amberley, I believe it is particularly important that any new arrangements maintain strong local representation and ensure that smaller communities are not overlooked in favour of larger urban areas. The current expectation is that elections to district and borough councils will proceed in May 2027, with shadow elections potentially taking place in 2028 and any new unitary arrangements taking effect in 2029, subject to Government decisions. Until there is a formal announcement, however, the future structure and implementation timetable remain uncertain.

Cllr Ellis-Brown (HDC) reported:

1) Horsham Wellbeing is a free service for adults offering advice and support to access local services and improve health and wellbeing. One to one appointments with a Wellbeing Adviser for things like losing weight, getting fitter, dealing with stress, kicking a habit, or simply improving general wellbeing. HDC also offer a range of free courses to help you make changes and live life to the full.

2) The revised Local Plan has gone out for consultant with aspirations to adopt by end of January 2027.

3) The is a new Schedule of Delegation relating to planning applications in place at HDC. See their website for more details.

4) Capitol Theatre will be re-opening very soon following its refurbishment.

**063. Sussex Wildlife Trust – SEWLR Trust**

Tony Whitbread of the Southeast region of the Waterlife Recovery Trust addressed Councillors explain the threat to local wildlife from North American Mink which are veracious predators first introduced into mink farms in the 1920's. Many have escaped and the Trust is undergoing a programme using traps every 12 km to eradicate the mink from the UK. The Trust has approached Amberley Parish Council to request the installation of temporary traps on Parish Council land.

The Chair thanked Mr Whitbread for his presentation and Councillors unanimously agreed to the request to install temporary traps on Council land.

**064. Policies & Procedures**

To approve the latest Terms of Reference for Finance & HR, Planning, A&A, Roads & Paths. To approve the latest Standing Orders, Financial Regulations & IT Policy. To approve new Data Audit, Data Protection and Data Retention & Disposal Policies

The Chairman thanked Cllr Smith for all his hard work in simplifying the Terms of Reference and Policies for the Council.

Councillors were sent the above policies via email to read and understand some days prior to the meeting. Councillors unanimously approved the adoption of all the new policies, updated policies and updated Terms of Reference.

**065. Finance Committee Report**

Further to the EGM of 5th October 2026 where it was resolved to apply for a £60,000 PWLB loan to assist with the purchase of Amberley football ground, Cllr Smith provided clarification to the meeting of the borrowing term, annual loan repayments and comment on the precept. In full it reads as...

At the Amberley Parish Council meeting of 12th November 2026, it was resolved to seek the approval of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to apply for borrowing approval for a loan of £60,000 over the borrowing term of 30 years for the purpose of purchasing Land at Amberley Football Ground.

The annual loan repayments will come to around £4,556. It is not intended to increase the council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments.

Councillors voted unanimously in favour of the PWLB loan application to fund the purchase.

Cllr Smith reported that a spending review for 2026/27 had been undertaken and that the Council was on-track with its budget for this financial year.

Cllr Smith reported that a draft budget of expenditure for 2027/28 had been produced resulting in a requirement for a precept of £52,000 being an increase of just under 3%. Cllr Smith stressed this increase was to cover other expenditure including staff costs, fixed costs, repairs & maintenance and not to fund the new PWLB loan.

**066. Planning Committee Report**

SDNP/26/04064/HOUS Installation of 1no new window to front and 8no solar panels to roof
Locations: 2 Sportsmans Cottages Rackham Road Amberley West Sussex BN18 9NR

Councillors considered the above application and raised no objection to the application.

**067. Assets & Amenities Committee Report**

The Chairman summarized the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd November which can be found on the website.

The Chairman confirmed that a new noticeboard has been ordered to go in the bus shelter opposite The Sportsman.

The Chairman agreed to contact Pete The Pond regarding progress on pond maintenance.

The Clerk confirmed that he had written to Amberley Cricket Club to request information on insurance, annual accounts and fixture list for 2027. In addition, a grant application form has also been sent to the Club.

**068. Road & Footpaths Update**

The Chair advised the meeting that:-

i) the potholes reported to WSCC had been filled in.

ii) The winter programme has started on the ditches

iii) An electrician has resolved the issue with the lights in the car park so they should now come on between 4pm – 11pm. A five-year service has been booked in for May 2027.

**069. Payments**
To note the payments made in September and October 2026.

Payments for the period 18th June to 2nd September 2026 were shared with Councillors.

Bank Balances as at 1st November 2026 were:

| | |
|---|---|
| Unity Current Account | £ 1,853.37 |
| Unity Instant Access Account | £ 42,718.23 |
| NatWest Current Account | £ 8,666.55 |

**070. Items for the next agenda and date of the next meeting**.

The next Full Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 13th January 2027.