

Minutes of Bramber Parish Council (BPC) Ordinary Meeting

Held on 12 November 2025

Present:

- Cllrs A Blakelock (Chair), M Croker, Bayford, S Blakelock, D Croker, Green, Kitson, Tilley

Members of the public:

- None

164. Apologies for absence

Cllrs Goodall, Horsham District Councillor R Noel

165. Declarations of interest

Cllr Green declared that she was a neighbour of Sunny Croft referred to in item 173 b.

166. Minutes of previous meetings

The draft minutes of the BPC Ordinary Council Meeting on 08 October 2025, were agreed subject to noted amendments and signed by the Chair.

167. Public session

No questions from the floor.

168. Matters arising

168 a Toilet/store insurance liability – the Clerk displayed a copy of the toilet lease which confirmed that the security of the contents and use of the toilets and stores were the responsibility of BPC as lessee (ref October 2025 minutes, 154 c).

168 b The Bramber/Upper Beeding bridge fence – the Clerk reported that she was liaising with the Upper Beeding Clerk regarding the fence as a ‘shared asset’ (ref October 2025 minutes, 154 c).

169. Joint Parishes Climate Action Group (JPCAG)

The Bramber Climate Action Plan – the end of year plan was displayed and the Chair summarised:

1. Measuring air quality – MC pointed out that it is very difficult to measure air quality in a meaningful way and equipment is extremely expensive – it was agreed to remove this item in future from the BPC Climate Action Plan.
2. Local Walking Cycling Plan – requirement that entrance to forthcoming Glebe Farm development in Steyning to be close to the Kings Barn Lane entrance – this is unlikely to happen.

3. Reducing carbon emissions – Gateway installed – completed May 2025
4. Eco films/talks – Emergency Plan (EP) with the Bramber Society (item 170) – equipment audit completed Nov 2025, new EP ongoing
5. Safe movement between villages – White Bridge link completed Sept 2025; As yet, no permitted cycling across farm field.
6. Bramber Castle Orchard – fruit trees remain healthy – ongoing
7. Carpark flower beds – ongoing in collaboration with youth support worker
8. Communication updates in *Your Mag* (previously *Your Steyning*) - March and September 2025 – completed
9. Climate Action Plan – uploaded to HDC One Planet platform – JPCAG questions the value of continuing to use the platform.
10. Solar panels on toilets – continues to be dependent on funding opportunities – ongoing

170. Emergency Plan and Equipment (EP)

Cllr Bayford confirmed that she and Rachael Rainbow were progressing with a new Emergency Plan. The Chair presented the emergency equipment November audit. The following items require immediate service: Extension lead, 2 orange salt spreaders, 2 water pumps, 1 brush cutter, Hyundai power generator, 2 gas heaters. The 4-stroke and 2-stroke oil canisters also need replacing. It was agreed that the Clerk should obtain quotes for the equipment servicing and replace the oil canisters and buy a blade for the bow saw.

171. Reports

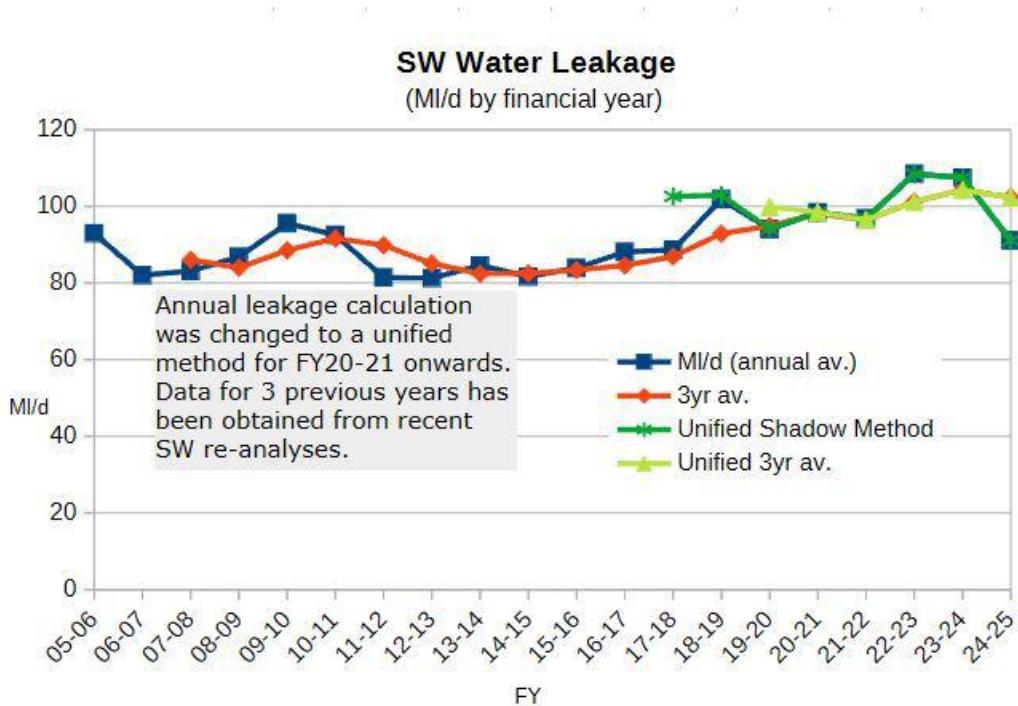
171.a HDC Councillor's report – Cllr M Croker reported:

- West Sussex Nature Recovery Strategy consultation closes 26 November; there's a thorough video explanation of the strategy and how to comment at <https://yourvoice.westsussex.gov.uk/lnrs-west>
- HDC has just published a South Horsham Economic Profile as part of the recently announced Rural and Market Towns Economic Alliance business development project. (The five towns identified being Billingshurst, Pulborough, Storrington, Steyning and Henfield.
- Following several press releases in October Natural England (NE) issued a statement to withdraw its 2021 Position Statement that it could not be sure that abstraction of water at Hardham was not harming the Arun valley protected sites. The basis for this withdrawal seems to be a very recent report 'Hardham Basin Environment Study' commissioned by Southern Water (which has not been released to HDC) and an agreement between NE, SW, DEFRA, & EA (together with RSPB re changes at Pulborough Brooks) comprising:
 1. No additional abstraction pressure – Southern Water will volunteer a licence reduction, which in its abstraction licence from 16 → 13 Ml/d (average) and 30 → 27 Ml/d (peak).
 2. On-site water level management – RSPB will manage sluices to maintain suitable water depths and prevent further deterioration of site features.
 3. Monitoring of site features – Southern Water will continue building a scientific baseline of site conditions, providing assurance that the agreed measures are effective.

4. Ecological resilience measures– A package of actions (e.g. reprofiling/desilting ditches, removing invasive species) to improve site resilience and ensure the licence complies with the Habitats Regulations.

As the competent authority under the Habitats Regulations, HDC will apply the precautionary principle and will be using the 2024/25 water efficiency savings made by Southern Water to allow all development to move forward as water neutral from 1 November 2025. These savings were previously to be used by the Sussex North Water Certification Scheme (SNWCS) which now won't be going ahead.

SW's leakage performance over the last 20 years, compiled by Cllr M Croker from published data.



171 b The White Bridge Link – The Chair reported that the White Bridge Link was open and there would be an official opening on 21 November. There are issues with uneven steps and puddles, but these would soon be resolved. The gate handle has been altered to prevent cattle from opening the gate. Upper Beeding Parish Council will finance the management of the new path edges in Upper Beeding.

171 c LWCP (Local Walking and Cycling Plan) – Cllr S Blakelock reported that now that the LWCP had been completed it can be removed from the BPC agenda.

171 d Neighbourhood Wardens – The Chair updated the Council: There had been a suspicious leased car in the Bramber carpark; an Upper Beeding Councillor had reported she has had to remove condoms around the Castle while litter picking, so the Wardens would be increasing their patrols in the area; and there had been dog fouling besides the river. The Wardens thanked the couple who had removed the recent toilet graffiti.

Neighbourhood Warden Steering Committee – the Clerk updated the Council following a meeting on 21 October:

- A new Team leader, Ross Spanton, had been appointed

- Developing a 'dementia friendly town' – John Sampson reported that the Wardens were currently supporting families and friends living with dementia by attending several community groups e.g. *Love to Move* at the Steyning Centre, *Melody for the Mind* at the library and the *Friendship Lunch* at the Hub. It was agreed that the Wardens would aim to reach out to as many elderly residents as possible over the coming months e.g. *Vintage Years* at the Steyning Centre
- Upcoming events – Armistice Day, Halloween Pitstop, Steyning Christmas Shopping Day, and discussions are taking place with Julia Sherlock to plan a day of activities during the Steyning Festival 2026
- HDC Community Services Manager, Mandy Cunningham, advised that St Georges flags erected or painted on roads/roundabouts should be reported to WSCC Highways Department
- Upper Beeding Clerk, Steve Keough, advised that the Council's Maintenance Manager could be contacted in the case of property damage or vandalism.

The next meeting would be held in January 2026.

171 e Joint Parishes Cemetery Committee (JPCC) – Cllr Green reported she was still trying to get in contact with the JPCC Clerk, Colette Harber. She had sent emails to all those concerned and would forward her letter to the BPC clerk too. Cllr Green would like a JPCC meeting in order to rotate committee roles.

171 f Joint Parishes Youth Committee (JPYC) – Cllr Bayford reported that there had been two meetings and updated the Council:

- There would be more meetings in future
- All committee members now required DBS checks
- Half term activities in October did not go ahead due to lack of take-up
- Key performance indicators would be used in future, with regular updates similar to those issued by Neighbourhood Wardens; youth worker, Vicky, will have an extension of her apprenticeship.
- Staff contract of employment remains to be agreed.
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – this has been renewed for 2026-27; BPC's 9% contribution remains as previous years, but the total funding contribution will increase by 4% to £4,959 for 2026-27. The Chair proposed, seconded by Cllr Bayford, that the Council accepts the MOU for 2026-27 and this was unanimously agreed.

171 g HALC – The Chair reported that there had been a WSALC Conference at the Amex Stadium on 24 October covering a range of current topics. Full minutes and summary of sessions are awaited.

171 h English Heritage/Bramber Castle – Neill Stannard has agreed to discuss his Bramber vision e.g. improving the drive to St Nicholas Church, water supply for church toilets etc at the BPC meeting in January. National Trust own the land, but English Heritage own the monument. Cllr Green noted that the steps going up to the Church had now been repaired by English Heritage and she would update the Council after the forthcoming meeting.

171 i Village Hall – Cllr Tilley updated the Council:

- Repairs/works - The roof has been repaired. The fuse box needs replacing at £3,000, and replacement windows at £15,000; Focus Foundation has agreed to a grant of £7,000 to

fund the windows matched by £7,000 from hall funds, and it will be crowd funding for the balance

- The hall has appointed a new window cleaner at a cost saving for cleaning both inside and outside
- All Trustees now need to be DBS checked
- The small kitchen needs to be updated as there is a Legionella threat
- The owner of the Upper Beeding (UB) Newsagent is leaving having provided a valuable service to local community for many years; she is having a leaving party in December, and the UBB Village Hall management committee and UB Parish Council are contributing to this. The Chair proposed that the BPC also contribute £30 to the party/leaving gift, and this was unanimously agreed. The Clerk was requested to follow this up.

171 j Website – Cllr Tilley reported that there had been 176 visits during October.

171 k Patient Participation Group (PPG) - Cllr Bayford reported that there had been no meeting but the AGM would take place on 17 November.

171 l South Downs National Park – Cllr D Croker reported that there had been a Zoom meeting on 8 October, and the recording is online covering:

- Knowledge Hub – for feedback and comments
- Water as a priority
- Car congestion – there had been a Seven Sisters hike, and it had been hard to cope with the number of cars arriving
- A new Partnership Management Plan – this is to be adopted by the end of December
- SDNP Local Plan – there is a full update online
- The next meeting would be in March 2026

172. Finance and general purposes

172 a The following payments for November 2025 were unanimously agreed:

November payments/invoices to be agreed by BPC	
Donation to the Bramber Society for the flower baskets	£600.00
EDF Energy Oct 25	£73.00*
UBB – Hall hire: meet £16 Bramber Room.	£16.00
Nest Pension payment	£11.61*
Chichester Payroll – Oct 25	£15.00
HMRC (PAYE) – Oct 25 = £123.40	£123.40
Toilet Cleaning – Julie Bakter 30 @12.60 – Oct 25	£390.60
Clerk expenses	£3.69
Clerk salary	£493.32
Clerk door lock upgrade – 2 insurance compliant locks	£185.00
Bank service charge	£6.00*
Mick Tilley – website subscription	£201.60

*Paid in advance for approval

172 b Reconciled Accounts – The reconciled accounts for October 2025 were unanimously agreed and signed – see appendix A.

173 c Requested costs – The Clerk reported that she had received two quotes for installing toilet and emergency store BS 3621 insurance compliant locks; a third quote is outstanding and once received the Council agreed to decide on a contractor via email.

173 d BPC Budget update/planning – The Clerk displayed the BPC 2026/27 Draft Budget (version 1). After discussion it was agreed that the following amendments/possible projects be considered at the next BPC meeting.

- BBMC donations deleted
- NPC Grant deleted
- Resolve puddles along the Bramber Brooks path
- VAS for the Downslink crossing between the Bramber and Upper Beeding roundabouts
- Branch cutting along the cycle way between the Castle Lane to the Bramber roundabout
- Solar power for the toilets – dependent on grants

The Clerk agreed to draw up 2026/27 BPC Draft Budget (version 2) and circulate this prior to the December meeting. The final budget/precept request to be agreed no later than the January meeting.

Note: Cllr Kitson left at 8.30pm.

174. Planning applications

174 a CA/25/1021 - Land to the South of St Nicholas Church, The Street, Bramber – surgery to an Alder (Works to Trees in a Conservation Area). It was unanimously agreed to submit ‘no objection’.

174 b DC/25/1680 - Sunny Croft The Street Bramber - removal of Conditions 3 and 5 of previously approved application DC/25/1046 (Proposed change of use from hotel (c1) to a single dwellinghouse (c3)) relating to the electric vehicle charging point and the removal of permitted development rights. Cllr M Croker proposed, seconded by the Chair, that the Council would like to uphold the Planning Officer's previous decision (ref DC/25/1046) relating to the installation of vehicle electric charging points, and permitted development rights, and sees no reason why these should be removed. This was agreed with six in favour and one abstention.

175. Other Planning matters

175 a SDNP/25/03891/FUL - Shoats Hill Farm, Annington Road, Bramber - erection of a silo (retrospective). It was unanimously agreed to submit ‘no objection’.

176. Highways and Public Rights of Way (PROW)

176 a Speedwatch – Cllr S Blakelock updated the Council: There had been 12 half-hour sessions undertaken in The Street and six hour-long sessions in Clays Hill. The average no of speeding cars in The Street was 6.8 per hour and along Clays Hill 9 per hour – a reduction from 13 per hour in July. The gateway appears to have had a positive effect.

176 b Community Highways Scheme – Cllr M Croker reported that a response to the funding application was still awaited and likely to be made early in the New Year.

176 d Walks for All/PROW – The Chair confirmed that she had received a quote for £700 to cut back the vegetation along the cycle/path beside the bypass, if Highways did not do the cutback.

177. Communications

The Chair reported three items:

- Be prepared for winter – the Clerk confirmed that she had received a positive response from the WSCC Communities Team for an urgent ‘top-up’ of the PBC grit bins and that it had agreed to fill the bins currently less than 50% full; to date this has not been done; the Clerk would follow this up
- Food Waste collections will be beginning in the New Year
- HDC is promoting aerosol recycling, and a poster has been posted on the BPC noticeboard reminding residents to do this

178. Other Parish Matters

Cllr Bayford reported that there had been a Bramber Society meeting when Rev Neill Stannard had described his plans to upgrade St Nicholas’ facilities including installing toilets, a kitchen area and removing pews to facilitate a community room for Christian and secular events.

English Heritage is supportive of this. Rev Neill Stannard has agreed to address the Council to explain more at its January 2026 meeting.

Bramber Christmas Carols will take place on 6 December.

Cllr Tilley reported that the first Bramber Brooks volunteer day on 4 November was very well attended and the group cleared a lot of scrub. The next volunteer day will take place in December.

179. Consultations – West Sussex Nature Recovery Strategy consultation – see item 171 a.

180. Correspondence

The Chair reported that a resident was concerned about builders’ rubble along the path to The White Bridge. She had contacted Steyning and District Community Partnership (SDCP) and the resident had contacted Land Build. It was confirmed that the rubble would be covered with primary type 1.

181. Items for next agenda

- Revised 2026-27 BPC Budget Draft (version 2) with potential projects
- Asset acquisition review/update

182. Date of next meeting

17 December 2025 at 7pm at Upper Beeding Village Hall. BPC Planning Meeting subject to the receipt of planning applications.

The meeting closed at 9.35.

Appendix A

Bramber Parish CouncilPrepared by: _____
Name and Role (Clerk/RFO etc)

Date: _____

Approved by: _____
Name and Role (RFO/Chair of Finance etc)

Date: _____

Bank Reconciliation at 31/10/2025			
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2025		22,500.95
	ADD Receipts 01/04/2025 - 31/10/2025		41,407.87
	SUBTRACT Payments 01/04/2025 - 31/10/2025		63,908.82
A	Cash in Hand 31/10/2025 (per Cash Book)		30,195.74
			33,713.08
	Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
	Petty Cash 31/10/2025	0.00	
	Cashbook / Lloyds Bank 31/10/2025	0.00	
	Unity Bank - current 31/10/2025	25,311.71	
	Unity Bank - savings 31/10/2025	8,401.37	
			33,713.08
	Less unpresented payments		
	Plus unpresented receipts		
B	Adjusted Bank Balance		33,713.08
	A = B Checks out OK		