

Minutes of Bramber Parish Council (BPC) Ordinary Meeting

Held on 03 September 2025

Present:

- Cllrs A Blakelock (Chair), H Bayford, S Blakelock, M Croker (Vice-Chair), D Croker, M Tilley.

Members of the public:

- District Councillor Noel

125. Apologies for absence

Cllr Green, Cllr Goodall, Cllr Kitson.

126. Declarations of interest

Cllr Tilley declared an interest as a neighbour to the Bramber Brooks planning application DC/25/1324.

127. Minutes of previous meetings

The draft minutes of the BPC Ordinary Council Meeting on 23 July 2025, were agreed subject to noted amendments and signed by the Chair.

128. Public session

No questions from the floor.

129. Matters arising

The Chair noted that the latest BPC half page update had appeared in the September edition of *Your Mag*. She thanked Cllr Tilley for responding to the NALC Flooding Survey on behalf of the Council. And requested that the Clerk send a letter of thanks to Russell Barnes and the Visitor and Tourism Group for organising the *Bramber Comes Alive* event in August.

130. Joint Parishes Climate Action Group (JPCAG)

The Chair confirmed that there had been no meeting.

131. Emergency Plan (EP)

The Chair reminded the Council that the EP workshop would take place on 12 September, 10am-noon at the Village Hall. The Clerk had circulated three relevant website links and the EP PowerPoint presentation, for Councillors to read before the workshop. She requested that the Clerk sends an email reminder to the Neighbourhood Wardens and also an invitation to the Bramber Society.

The Chair, the Clerk and Cllrs Tilley, M Croker, D Croker and H Bayford all confirmed their attendance at the workshop.

132. Reports

132.a HDC Councillor's report – Cllr Noel and Cllr Croker updated the Council:

- Local Plan – HDC is working on the Local Plan and its current situation. The Inspector felt that HDC should have proposed more than 13000 new homes and criticised it for not working collaboratively with neighbouring Councils. HDC has now submitted a letter stating that it had been in discussion with Crawley and Mid-Sussex and welcomed a further meeting with the Inspector before cancelling the Plan. The outcome is awaited.

In the meantime, more planning developments have been approved by the Planning Committee in the absence of a Local Plan. Also, if the Committee refuses to approve applications, which are subsequently lost at the appeal stage, HDC could be put into 'Special Measures' enabling MHCLG to make decisions on behalf of HDC in favour of development. To date HDC has lost 7% of proposed sites at appeal; if this rises to 10% by the end of the year then Special Measures will be imposed.

The number of Councillors sitting on the Planning Committee is set to reduce further as part of the new Planning and Infrastructure Bill, and Southeast England has been earmarked as an area for development.

- Local Government Review (LGR) & Devolution – Proposals for unitary areas are to be submitted by the end of September 2025 and a decision by the Secretary of State will be made by March 2026; the rest of 2026 will be spent deciding what remains with the new authority and what will be transferred to the Parishes. The new (shadow) authority elections will be held in May 2027 and asset transfer will be completed. In April 2028 there will be a vesting day when the new authority will take full control. There will be two Councillors from each unitary authority sitting on the Mayoral Council.
- HDC forthcoming expenditure – Bramber Brooks: The Environment Agency has been invited to survey the footpath and bridge arrangements on 25 September.

There will be little expenditure in the South of the District, but £10.2million is earmarked for the refurbishment of the Capitol Theatre; £60,000 for a memorial in Horsham Park; and a complete remodelling of the town centre.

Cllr Tilley asked whether the Parish Council elections due in May 2027 would go ahead and Cllr Noel confirmed that they would. Cllr S Blakelock asked whether thought had been given to Parish Council arrangements within the new authority; Cllr Noel confirmed that this was up to the individual Parishes to decide.

Cllr Croker explained that West Sussex' draft LGR Business Case was based on 2 different models: a single unitary for all of West Sussex with 96 councillors (approx. 7100 residents per councillor) or two unitaries with an east-west split, each with 70 councillors (approx.. 4750 residents per councillor).

132 b The White Bridge Link – the Chair reported that the old bridge had been removed and that the access road is looking strong and well-made. The next meeting is on 17 September, followed by a full update at the next meeting.

132 c LWCP (Local Walking and Cycling Plan) – Cllr S Blakelock confirmed the completion of the LWCP Final Draft, and this had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. The Chair proposed that the BPC adopted the LWCP Final Draft as its policy and this was unanimously agreed. Cllr M Croker agreed to report back to Geoff Barnard and the LWCP team; and the Clerk agreed to send a letter of thanks.

132 d Neighbourhood Wardens – the Clerk confirmed that John Sampson had been appointed as the new Warden and had started on 1 September. The Chair commented that the August report had not highlighted any specific issues in Bramber; an e-scooter rider riding through the village had been reprimanded by the Wardens at the Upper Beeding Sports Centre.

132 e Joint Parishes Cemetery Committee – no update to report.

132 f Joint Parishes Youth Committee – the Chair reported that the young people had now weeded the car park planters and removed dead wood. Cllr Bayford reported that the SPC Clerk had confirmed that a meeting would be held soon.

132 g HALC – no update to report.

132 h English Heritage/Bramber Castle – no update to report.

132 i Village Hall – no update to report.

132 j Website – Cllr Tilley reported that website hosting cost is set to increase by 20% to £200 per two years; this equates to £8.40 per month which is still a good rate. Visits had increased by 5% over the past month with a particular (unexplained) ‘spike’ on 15 August.

The Clerk had forwarded him a resident query about being referred to 2023 minutes when trying to view 2025 minutes. Cllr Tilley confirmed that this is a discrepancy occurring on some devices/browsers e.g. Android phones, Google and Microsoft Edge. He said that he would look into solving this issue.

132 k Patient Participation Group - no update to report. Cllr Bayford confirmed that the next meeting would be on 30 September.

133. Finance and general purposes

133 a The following payments for September 2025 were unanimously agreed:

September invoices to be agreed by BPC on 03 Sept 2025	
Barawood Publishing – Your Mag – half page 10789	£99.00
EDF Energy KI-A0E97367-0014 – Aug 25	£73.00
UBB – Hall hire: Inv. BB210343 – April meet £16 Bramber Room Inv. BBVH899 – May meet £25 (outstanding) Main Hall; Inv. BBVH938 – June meet £20 Beeding Room; Inv. BBVH959 – July meet £16 Bramber Room.	£77.00
Danny Flynn – mowing riverbank + behind caravan park	£225.00
HMRC (PAYE) – Aug 25 = £123.40	£123.40

Toilet Cleaning – Julie Bakter 31 @12.60 – Aug 25	£390.60
Clerk expenses – 1x File, 2x colour & b/w printer cartridge packs	£56.18
Clerk salary	£493.32
Chichester Payroll Services - BPC2191	£15.00

The Chair noted the relatively high cost of taking out a half-page advertisement in *Your Mag*; it was agreed that the Clerk should obtain the cost of a full-page advertisement as alternative for future updates.

133 b Reconciled Accounts – The reconciled accounts for July and August 2025 were unanimously agreed – see appendix A.

133 c AGAR 2024-25 – External Auditor feedback

The Clerk explained that the External Auditor, Moores, had requested an explanation for the variance (greater than 15%) between the BPC Cash in Hand at the beginning of April 2024 and end of March 2025. She had completed and submitted the required Explanation of Variance proforma document (circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting), citing the lack of youth provision and corresponding costs, unused Neighbour Plan and emergency reserves, and over estimations of General Maintenance and dog-bin collection costs as key reasons for the variance. The External Auditor is due to ‘sign off’ AGAR 2024-25 at the end of September 2025.

133 d S106 monies for the Gateway cost - the Clerk confirmed that she had submitted all the invoices and paperwork necessary for the release of S106 money for the Village Gateway under the category of ‘sustainable transport’. This now rests with the Mark Golubics, HDC Asst Highways Manager, who requires WSCC Cllr Linehan’s agreement and support. The Clerk agreed to contact Cllr Linehan to seek his assistance as a matter of urgency.

134. Planning applications

134 a DC/25/1173 - 18 The Ridings Bramber - Erection of a replacement front porch. BPC had agreed ‘no objection’ via email to meet the August deadline for comments.

134 b DC/25/1220 – St Mary’s, The Street - Repair, conservation, and structural work. Replacement of the roof structure and tiles, removal of the chimney stack, alterations to fenestration, reconfiguring the internal layout, replacement of the cement floor with a traditional limecrete floor. (Listed Building Consent). The Chair proposed ‘no objection’ to the application and this was unanimously agreed.

134 c CA/25/0099 - 4 Castle View, The Street - Surgery to 1x Leylandii Hedge and 1x Tilia Cordata (Works to Trees in a Conservation Area). The Chair proposed ‘no objection’ to the application and this was unanimously agreed.

135. Other Planning matters

DC/25/1324 – Bramber Brooks (Off) The Street Bramber BN44 3WE - Variation of Condition 1 of previously approved application DC/23/1776 (Excavation and creation of wetland ponds, bunds, a raised public access footpath, removal of existing timber bridges and replacement with bridged footpath sections (to allow gaps for conveyance of surface waters on the site) and railings. Installation of coir matting on the banks of the footpath to prevent erosion and

destabilisation of the banks along with re-seeding) Relating to the access track. Cllr M Croker pointed out that this application aimed to retain the current hard surface access to Bramber Brooks to maintain easy access to the site. The Chair proposed 'no objection' with the additional comment that BPC would like to note that the surface of the current access track and camber needs improving, particularly to the Southern point of the track; this was agreed with eight in favour and one abstention.

136. Neighbourhood Plan (NP)

Cllr Noel informed the Council that he had recently corresponded with the HDC Neighbourhood Planning Officer, Norman Kwan, who had advised Parishes not to go ahead with any renewal plans at present. It was agreed to keep on the NP on future agendas until further updates were received.

137. Governance – HDC transfer of assets

In the light of devolution, HDC had produced a Community Asset Transfer Policy (circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting) and the HDC Director of communities, Paul Anderson, had informed BPC of three possible HDC assets that could be transferred to the Council: Bramber Brooks (part of), the village carpark and the bus shelter.

Bramber Brooks – the Clerk displayed the Title Plan which showed the proportion of Bramber Brooks within Bramber Parish – approximately one sixth – and pointed out that as it shared the site with Steyning then Councillors could consider a shared agreement whereby Bramber takes on a proportionate share of the maintenance and management costs, as an environmental asset and visitor attraction.

After full discussion the Chair proposed that BPC investigate working with Steyning and Upper Beeding Parish Councils to collaborate over both Bramber Brooks and The Saltings, through the JPAG or another three-parish working group or committee. This was unanimously agreed.

The Clerk confirmed that she would inform both the SPC and Upper Beeding Clerks of this decision.

Village Car Park – It was agreed that before making any decisions regarding the currently free-of-charge car park, Cllr M Croker would request a breakdown of maintenance costs from Paul Anderson.

Bus Shelter – It was agreed that the bus shelter should be transferred to BPC as it already leases the toilets and the store cupboard attached to the shelter.

The Clerk confirmed that she would inform Paul Anderson of all three decisions made at the meeting.

138. Highways and Public Rights of Way (PROW)

138 a Speedwatch – Cllr S Blakelock reported that during July and August the community speedwatch had conducted seven sessions and recorded 32 cars speeding; he and Cllr Kitson conducted three sessions in Clays Hill during July and recorded 29 cars speeding. During the six months prior to installing the village gateway they had recorded an average of 14 cars speeding; this had now reduced to 10 per session with the gateway. From 2015 to 2019 there was a decline

in speedwatch 'second offenders' from 21% to 6% which suggests that speedwatch is worth doing.

138 b Overgrown vegetation – The Chair confirmed that she had contacted the Council's grass cutting contractor, Danny Flynn, to request that he cuts back the overgrown vegetation due to the safety concerns of the Council for pedestrians crossing the roads around the roundabout. She had not however received a reply. The Clerk confirmed that she would contact the WSCC Highways Steward a second time to request that the vegetation is cut back around the roundabout and along the cycle path between the Castle Road crossing and The Street.

The Chair also informed the Council that a resident had offered a serviced shrub cutter to use and keep as part of the Council's emergency equipment. It was agreed that the Chair circulates the resident's letter to Councillors, and that BPC could accept the cutter for residents to use at their own risk.

138 c Community Highways Scheme (CHS) – Cllr M Croker reported that he had received a response to the CHS funding application to install a safe crossing at the Castle Lane/A283 crossing point. Mark Golubics had confirmed that installing a Toucan crossing would be too expensive; and it is unlikely that the crossing point would achieve the pedestrian/vehicles per hour ratio required for a light-controlled crossing. Instead, Mark had suggested that the Council considers a central 'refuge', similar to the South Downs Way crossing in Upper Beeding. Cllr Croker had suggested a staggered crossing with railings. Whatever is decided, it would be two to three years before installation.

It was agreed that Cllr M Croker pursues the refuge option through the Highways department. And that the Clerk sends a letter of thanks to Greening Steyning for assisting in submitting the funding application.

138 d Walks for All – the Chair reported that she had inspected the Walks for All footpaths, and they didn't need an extra grass cut; the main problem was the lateral incursion of vegetation.

139/140. Communications and other Council matters

The Chair reported that she had received a resident email concerning a van and tent camped behind St Mary's. Cllr M Croker confirmed that he had contacted SDNP's Emma Goodwin regarding this and the campers had now left.

The Chair had also received a complaint about a blocked toilet. Cllr M Croker confirmed that he had contacted Southern Water to unblock the drain, and it was now flushing satisfactorily.

141. Future meeting schedule

The Clerk had circulated a proposed 2026 meeting schedule based on meeting on the first Wednesday of each month. This was unanimously agreed. The Clerk confirmed that she would book the Village Hall rooms accordingly and send the list to Cllr Tilley to post on the website.

142. Consultations – none to report.

143. Correspondence

Cllr Tilley reported that he had received an email commenting that with nine Councillors the Council included couples.

The Chair reported that the Upper Beeding Clerk had requested a Tree Warden recommendation. BPC does not have one, but she requested that the Clerk contact SPC Clerk for contact details of its Tree Warden

144. Items for next agenda

The Chair requested that the Clerk submits exact costs for the Certification in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) course and training sessions.

Cllr H Bayford reported that a group of residents were thinking of appealing to the Council to act over the condition of The Bramber Dragon which is falling into disrepair; it is also planning to contact the estate agents letting/selling the property.

145. Date of next meeting

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

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm.

Appendix A



Reconciled all
accounts - July 25.pdf



Reconcile all
accounts - Aug 25.pdf