Minutes of Bramber Parish Council (BPC) Annual Meeting

Held on 7 October 2026

Present:

Cllrs A Blakelock (Chair), S Blakelock, D Croker, D Goodall, S Green, D Kitson, M Tilley and the Clerk.

Members of the public:

None present.

139. Apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from Cllrs H Bayford, M Croker, District Cllr R Noel and County Cllr V Finnegan.

140. Declarations of interest

None received.

141. Minutes of previous meeting

Draft minutes for the BPC Ordinary Meeting on 2 September 2026 were unanimously agreed subject to amendment.

142. Public session

No members of the public present

143. Matters arising

143 a River Run – closure of Bramber carpark & additional resident parking – the Chair reported that that the half marathon was well organised and the toilet and drinks stop in the car park took place without event. However, despite HDC previously confirming that it would shut the car park for the event, this did not happen because it was a free car park; a fact that HDC failed to communicate to BPC until after the event. As a result, many residents still parked in the car park with just one or two parking in the arranged additional parking space at the Tollgate Inn. The Chair also noted that at the time of River Run, The Street was used by cyclists, several motorbikes and classic cars driving through the village. It was agreed that if River Run returns in 2027 then the organisers should be asked to check for other events/rallies occurring on the same date that might contribute to congestion in The Street.

143 b Councillor absence and next steps – following period of permitted absence, Cllr Goodall and Cllr Kitson, resigned their positions as BPC Councillors. The Chair thanked them both for their valuable and active contribution to the Council. It was agreed that

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the Clerk should inform HDC Democratic Services of the vacancies and initiate the process for co-opting/electing two new BPC Councillors.

143 c BPC internal audit in November 2026 – the Clerk confirmed that an interim audit had been booked with Mulberry Local Authority Services for 23 November 2026.

143 d BPC response to HDC Community Governance Review draft consultation – the Clerk confirmed that the agreed BPC response to the review had been submitted to HDC.

143 e Replacement Queen's Canopy Tree at the King's Meadow – the Council had not received an update from Cllr Noel regarding available trees through the HDC Parks and Countryside team. In the light of this it was agreed that Cllr Tilley should purchase a Rowan tree in time for Autumn planting.

143 f Newsletter item for WSCC and WSALC – the Clerk confirmed that items for both news outlets were on-going. It was agreed that the Clerk should prepare copy the December issue of *Your Mag,* and for a selection of suitable items be submitted to WSCC (Highways) and WSALC newsletters.

143 f Letter regarding the Hurstpierpoint housing development – the Clerk confirmed that she had submitted the agreed BPC comments regarding the development (part of the Mid-Sussex Local Plan) and its possible detrimental effects on the River Adur and flooding.

144. Reports

144 a Horsham District Council (HDC) – the Chair reported the following update on behalf of Cllr M Croker:

- Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) – a Government decision on the new West Sussex Unitary Authorities is expected by 31 October.
- HDC Local Plan – the Inspector's examination will restart on 13 October
- HDC Community Review – it is expected that HDC will support Bramber's request to transfer the whole of Bramber Books into the Parish. Other changes include all of Small Dole becoming a part of Upper Beeding parish.

144 b WSCC Council – the Chair reported the following update regarding the diversion proposal for PRoW 3802 on behalf of Cllr V Finnegan:

Senior and Principal Rights of Way Officers recently met with the landowner on site to review the diversion proposal in accordance with the standard application process. During the meeting, officers requested a detailed scaled plan of the proposal, which has since been provided. It is understood that the landowner intends to share the plans with the relevant Parish Councils to help them better understand the proposal and the changes being proposed.

The next stage is for officers to assess the diversion proposal against the statutory tests applicable to a diversion order, as outlined in my previous report.

Given the level of public interest in the application, any recommendation on the diversion proposal will be reported to the Planning and Rights of Way Committee for consideration.

In summary, WSCC is currently assessing the diversion proposal, and no decision has been made at this stage. Any recommendation arising from that assessment will be presented to the Planning and Rights of Way Committee for debate and determination.

In relation to the Section 130 notice and associated court proceedings, WSCC was notified on 2 October that the matter has been listed for a pre-trial hearing at Brighton Magistrates' Court on 27 October.

Cllr Finnegan's full report is detailed in Appendix A. Topics covered include:

- Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)
- AI Vision Inspection Trial
- Oak Processionary Moths
- Signage left/not taken down
- Climate Mitigation and Climate Action Plan
- Fires
- Open Reach (etc) digging verges
- SEND Reform Plan
- Get help to get online in West Sussex
- EV Consultation
- Parish Briefings
- Glebe Farm Development (WSCC issues)
- Newmans Gardens/Health Centre Carpark
- National Scheme of Delegation (for Planning)

144 c Joint Parishes Neighbourhood Wardens (JPNW) – the September JPNW report had been circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting. The Chair noted that there had been issues with electric bikes driving around the Bramber roundabout; fly-tipping at the rear of the carpark and an abandoned vehicle reported by the Fit Walk Club. It was noted that Cllr S Blakelock is now a BPC representative for JPNW and should be included in all relevant communications.

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144 d Joint Parishes Climate Action Group (JPCAG) – the Chair reported that the next meeting would take place on 14 October.

144 e Joint Parishes Cemetery Committee – Cllr Green reported that there had been no update since the last meeting.

144 f Joint Parishes Youth Committee (JPYC) - in Cllr Bayford's absence the Chair reported that the JPYW is running a Dungeons and Dragons Club, a new Primary and Junior Club, and a First-Aid Responders event. The next meeting will be on 12 October.

144 g HALC – the Chair reported that there would be a special meeting regarding concerns over the constitution, compliance, governance and financial administration, transparency, record-keeping and accountable leadership.

144 h Bramber Castle / English Heritage/National Trust – Cllr Green reported that English Heritage have not yet decided on the type of re-surfacing required for the drive, and Cllr Green suggested that BPC contacts the contractors working on the nearby Glebe Farm development to see if they would be able to re-surface the drive and car park at an affordable rate.

144 i Village Hall Committee – Cllr Tilley reported that the next maintenance meeting would be at the end of October.

144 j Website – Cllr Tilley reported that visits had increased over the past month to 197 with a particular spike on 30 September.

144 k Patient Participation Group (PPG) – in Cllr Bayford's absence the Chair updated the Council:

- There is £5000 in the bank, though the PPG only received £2000 from the Wilson Memorial Trust; a member of the committee is looking into this as the PPG was expecting £2500;
- The PPG is looking for adverts to include in its magazine to help cover costs;
- Cllr Bayford will be writing an article entitled *The Day in the Life of a Pharmacy*;
- A member has been co-opted to help with the medical centre screens;
- Options online regarding conditions are to be changed to 'new', 'existing', 'follow-up', 'urgent' or 'non-urgent';
- A tablet has been bought so that a receptionist can take people aside, to help complete forms and encourage more patients to use the online system;
- Flu vaccinations are delayed to 17 October due to supply issues; vaccinations started on 1 October;
- The Newmans carpark is being re-surfaced, and the access road will be closed during this time. Access will be given to doctors, the pharmacy van and disabled people only;

- Two new receptionists are being recruited;
- Wound care is still 'a big pressure';
- The surgery has confirmed that it has not been contacted regarding any new developments, including Glebe Farm and the redevelopment of the previous Steyning Grammar (Lower) School building. It has requested that the local parish councils inform them of any future new developments.
- The PPG AGM is on 18 November, and the next meeting is on 16 December.

144 l South Downs National Park (SDNP) – Cllr D Croker reported that the SDNP had reminded parish councils to use their CIL money as this is time-limited. It was also noted that Maudlin Farm had been sold.

144 m Bramber Emergency Plan (EP) - the Chair reported that Cllr Bayford had found some fire beaters for £25.16 + £5.96 delivery each. It was agreed that in Cllr Bayford's absence, the Council should wait until she is able to confirm the quantity of beaters required.

145 Finance and governance

145 a To accept and sign off payments and invoices – it was noted that the Chair had received and countersigned the payments and invoices for August and September 2026.

145 b Payments for October 2026 – the following payments were unanimously approved:

October payments/invoices to be agreed by BPC	
Parish online – annual email package - inv 45UF005-0015	£312.00
Business Stream (water supply) - outstanding from last quarter	£ 9.00
EDF Energy August 26	£25.07*
Toilet Cleaning - Julie Bakter £13.47x 30	£404.10
Nest Pension payment	£13.93*
Clerk salary – Sept 26	£508.93
HMRC (PAYE) – Sept 26 961PM10319612	£160.07
Clerk expenses – mileage £5.20, working from home allowance, £26, I-Mend Ltd – laptop fix & security firewall renewal (£63.00 total)	£94.20
Chichester Payroll – Sept 26 - BPC2347	£15.00
Bank service charge	7.00*

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*Paid in month for approval

145 c BPC Reconciled accounts – the reconciled accounts for September 2026 were presented by the Clerk and unanimously agreed – see Appendix B.

145 d To agree and accept income & expenditure report for 2026-27 Quarter 2 – the income and expenditure report for 2026-27 had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting as a basis for discussion. It was noted that the village hall payment had exceeded the current budget due to a forward payment to the end of 2027. The Chair suggested that she should use part of the Chair's allowance to buy a gift for retiring Cllrs Goodall and Kitson, and this was unanimously agreed.

145 e To discuss items for inclusion in the BPC 2027-28 budget – the Council suggested the following items:

- An increased environmental maintenance allowance to accommodate a more extensive firebreak operation at the beginning of Summer 2027;
- Replacement VAS on Clays Hill;
- Replacement footpath fencing along Maudlin Lane;
- Footpath sign by the Bramber Orchard to encourage users to go down to Bramber Brooks and out to The Street via a safer junction.

145 f External audit for end of year Accounts 25-26 – the Clerk reported that further to feedback from the external auditor, an amended end-of-year accounts statement, stating all current assets as 'fixed assets', had been submitted and accepted. A Conclusion of Audit 25-26 had subsequently been issued and would be displayed on the noticeboards and website.

145 g Digital AGAR transition & Mulberry Annual Conference – the Clerk reported that the Mulberry Annual Conference day had focussed on the requirement for parish councils to transfer to the digital AGAR process, 'paper to portal'. This is optional for 26-27 and mandatory for 27-28 onwards. The Clerk confirmed that she had already selected Mulberry Smaller Authorities Service Ltd as its nominated online auditor. The Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP) had issued the following requirements for/changes to future AGAR processes:

- The internal audit process is continuous throughout the financial year, carrying out an interim audit, and aiming to complete the audit as near to the end of the financial year as possible;
- Assertion 10 requirements are mandatory from March 2027;
- he internal audit 'trail' must be supported by council minutes including engagement of the internal auditor, budget and precept setting procedures, and ordering agreements;

- Greater clarification of reserves i.e. as 'earmarked' or 'ring-fenced';
- AGAR Accounting Statement – this will increase from the current nine accountability 'boxes' to twenty.

145 g S106 grant application for the replacement toilet door – the Clerk explained that she had referred the application to Cllr M Croker - although the application to HDC Planning Department had fulfilled all the S106 requirements for 'security enhancement', the funding had still been denied. Cllr M Croker is perusing an appeal to the decision.

145 h To discuss and agree BPC IT Policy 2026 – the revised BPC IT Policy had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting as a basis for discussion. Cllr Tilley proposed, seconded by the Chair, that the revised BPC IT Policy be agreed and adopted by Council and this was unanimously approved.

145 i To agree the NALC recommendations for the Clerk's salary pay scale for 2026-27 and appropriate backdated payments – the NALC 2026-27 Clerk pay scale recommendations, with the appropriate back payments, were unanimously approved.

145 j Asset transfer – the Clerk reported that the HDC CEO, Jane Eaton, had confirmed that parishes should continue to submit asset transfer business plans despite the uncertainty around LGR. In the light of this the Clerk confirmed that she would continue to draw up asset transfer plans.

146. Planning

Planning applications – none received.

147. Other planning matters

147 a BPC planning comments agreed by email – it was noted that comments in support of CA/26/0110 and DC/26/1415 had been agreed and submitted to HDC by the Clerk.

148. Highways and Public Rights of Way (PROW)

148 a Speedwatch – Cllr S Blakelock reported that no sessions had been carried out on Clays Hill, but three sessions had taken place in The Street reporting 69%, 84% and 50% speeding vehicles on each occasion.

149. Correspondence/briefing sessions

149 a HALC Special Meeting – the Chair confirmed BPC support for the Special Meeting and a date is tba.
149 b Local Highway Operations – Winter Preparedness briefing session – the Clerk confirmed that the BPC EP Coordinator was planning to attend the session.

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149 c WSALC – Making Documents Accessible – Cllr Tilley confirmed that he would attend the session on 27 October.

149 d WSALC – Improving Community Engagement on websites – Cllr Tilley confirmed that he would attend the session on 10 November.

149 e WSALC – Appraisal Training – the Chair confirmed that she had completed this training on 7 October.

Correspondence – the Chair reported the following items:

- Campaign for Rural England (CPRE) had invited BPC to join the campaign group. It was agreed not to do so on the basis that it was a campaign group.
- A resident had requested that something was done about speeding along the A283 bypass; Cllr M Croker had replied in detail, outlining the difficulties in trying to reduce the speed limit, and on-going measure to ensure safe passage.
- Request to re-consider the Council's decision regarding PRoW 3802 – it was agreed that BPC would not comment further as the footpath diversion is now listed for a pre-trial hearing and 'sub judice'.

150. Other Parish Matters

The Chair noted that there was a consultation on the revised Smaller Authorities Proper Practices. The Clerk agreed to circulate the link to this.

151 Items for the next agenda

To discuss BPC's use of forthcoming SDNP CIL money.

152 Date of next meeting

4 November 2026 at 7pm at Upper Beeding Village Hall. BPC Planning Meeting subject to the receipt of planning applications.

The meeting closed at 8.37 pm.

Appendix A

WSCC Cllr Finnegan report

PRoW 3802 proposed diversion - see main minute text.

LGR (Local Government Reorganisation) - On 7 Sept Housing and Communities Secretary, confirmed a nationwide pause of LGR affecting 14 areas due to updated legal advice to re-examine decisions already made and align them with broader devolution plans. No fixed end date or timeline has been provided by ministers for the completion

of this review. There has been 18 months of preparatory work (workstreams e.g. IT, secondments, consultancy fees etc).

HDC (among others) are likely to have elections in May 27.

Mayoral authority continues with elections in May 28.

WSCC continues with the work towards unitary(s) – Its Chief Executive is convinced that central Government are committed to devolution – it is just weighing up the timings with legal challenges.

AI vision inspection trial

Highway inspections are a critical element of asset management and public safety. Current processes, which rely predominantly on time-consuming manual surveys, can present challenges to inspector safety when operating in live traffic environments.

Through a successful application to the Lane Rental Surplus Fund (LRSF), West Sussex Highways has secured grant funding to invest in smarter infrastructure and digital tools. This project represents one of the first approved uses of the LRSF and will help demonstrate how the fund can deliver measurable benefits across the organisation.

The project will trial an AI camera-based inspection system that automatically detects and records highway defects during driven inspections. Using intelligent dashboard cameras, the technology captures footage of the highway network and uses artificial intelligence to identify issues such as potholes, cracking and surface deterioration. Defect information is then fed directly into Confirm for review, verification and reporting.

Expected benefits include:

- Improved safety by reducing the need for inspectors to enter the live carriageway.
- Greater efficiency, enabling more miles of the network to be inspected each day.
- Increased accuracy and consistency through automated defect detection and geo-tagged location data.
- More proactive maintenance, helping identify issues earlier before they become more costly repairs.
- Reduced carbon emissions through more efficient inspection routes and greater use of office-based verification.
- Real-time insight through seamless integration with Confirm, supporting faster decision-making and streamlined operations.

The trial will provide valuable information for a range of teams across West Sussex Highways and may increase the number of defects identified for repair. Equipment installation and staff training are now underway as the project moves into the next phase.

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Oak Processionary Moths

The Arboriculture Team recently visited a London borough to learn more about Oak Processionary Moth (OPM), a tree pest that is spreading across the Southeast and is now approaching the borders of West Sussex.

OPM caterpillars feed on oak trees, damaging foliage and posing a risk to human health. Their tiny toxic hairs can become airborne and may cause skin irritation, eye problems and respiratory issues. The pest is notifiable, meaning any suspected sightings must be reported to the Forestry Commission.

The knowledge gained will help ensure the team is ready to identify, manage and respond effectively to this emerging threat to both the county's oak trees and public health.

If you find or suspect OPM, you should report it to the Forestry Commission; or report it to West Sussex Highways who will confirm the presence of OPM and pass the information to the Forestry Commission.



Signage left/not taken down

Please continue to report to me if old signs are found on the side of the Highway or not taken down after use; I want Highways/contractors to get the overall message – rather than individual reporting, but meanwhile I will continue to report.

Climate Mitigation and Climate Action Plan

There have been 800 responses to the West Sussex Climate Mitigation and Climate Action Plan.

Fires

Residents urged to ‘Stop the Spark’ by keeping batteries and vapes out of household bins.

So far in 2026, there have been 40 fires linked to batteries and electrical items at the county's Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) in Ford, in waste collection vehicles and at Recycling Centres. A further 199 fires caused by batteries, vapes and small electrical

items were recorded at the Anaerobic Digestion and Resource Recovery Facility (ADRFF) in Horsham between June 2024 and May 2025.

Open Reach (etc) digging verges

I am still reporting compliance issues – Highways are then inspecting and getting contractors to re seed/ tidy areas.

Cross-party alliance

Greens have led on changes on petitions, reducing the number required from 9000 to 3000 (involving a lot of lobbying and cross party working). It was passed at Governance Committee and will go to Full Council on 16 October.

A Green cabinet member for Environment and Climate change is now sitting on Southern Water stakeholder team meetings.

A '20 is Plenty' question is to be asked at Council on 16 October.

SEND Reform Plan

Department for Education has formally approved West Sussex's SEND Reform Plan, securing access to **£182.7 million** of High Needs Stability Grant funding.

(The Government's assessment recognised a number of strengths, including the ambition of our reform vision, our implementation roadmap, governance arrangements and commitment to coproduction. As would be expected for a programme of this scale and complexity, it also identified areas that will require continued focus as we move from planning and mobilisation into delivery. This is nevertheless an important moment and a considerable collective achievement for West Sussex.)

Get help to get online in West Sussex

The Library Service is holding special free drop-in sessions across the county to help people download and use the app during Get Online Week (19 to 25 October).

Get Online Week has been organised nationwide since 2007 by Good Things Foundation and highlights how being online can help people stay connected, access services, learn new skills and save money.

If you know someone who would benefit from any of these sessions, please let them know.

Visit www.westsussex.gov.uk/getonline for more information.

In West Sussex, it's estimated that:

- 98,221 people are without a smartphone

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- 131,422 are without a laptop
- 14% are without the essential digital skills for work
- 5% of adults are not online

Local events are highlighted below:

Thursday 22 October

Findon Lime Tree Avenue, Findon Valley, BN14 0DH 10am – 12 noon

Littlehampton Maltravers Road, BN17 5NA 10am – 12 noon

Henfield Off High Street, BN5 9HN 10am – 12 noon

Steyning Church Street, BN44 3YB 2pm – 4pm

Worthing Richmond Road, BN11 1HD 2pm – 4pm

Hurstpierpoint Trinity Road, BN6 9UY 2pm – 4pm

EV Consultation

Residents are being asked for their views on proposed new on-street electric vehicle charging points in West Sussex.

The West Sussex Public Chargepoint Network aims to make charging easier for residents who do not have access to a driveway or garage.

There would be no changes to parking arrangements at this stage. Existing restrictions, such as permit parking, disabled bays and pay and display requirements, would still apply. Any future changes to parking restrictions around electric vehicle bays would be subject to a separate public Traffic Order consultation.

The charging points are delivered in partnership with Connected Kerb through the Government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Pilot Programme with support from district and borough councils.

Residents can take part in the consultation by visiting: https://yourvoice.westsussex.gov.uk/ev-chargepoints

The consultation is open from 21 September to 19 October 2026.

People can also view proposed locations, by visiting: http://www.connectedkerb.com/westsussexresidents

To suggest a new location for a charging point, or if you are unable to complete the survey, call 0330 222 7770 or email: evchargingpoints@westsussex.gov.uk

Parish Briefings

Member and parish briefing sessions programme 2026/27

2026/2027 programme of Member & Parish/Town Council Briefing Sessions.

Over the coming year, these sessions will provide an opportunity to hear directly from service experts from across Highways, Transport and Planning on a range of topics that are frequently raised by local communities.

Topics will include:

- Highways Development Management and Planning Applications
- Winter Preparedness
- Riparian Responsibilities, Flood Risk Management and Planned Drainage
- Road Safety: Safe System Approach
- Speeding and Speed Limits
- Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Tree Plan
- Summer Readiness
- S106 Contributions: Bus Shelters and New Developments
- Parish Clerk Induction / Refresher Training
- Local Operations - Highway Maintenance
- Planned vs Reactive Maintenance: Pothole Repair, Resurfacing Programmes, Budgets + Data
- Public Rights of Way (PRoW)
- Highways Network Management

Each session will focus on a specific topic and will typically consist of a presentation followed by a dedicated question and answer session.

First 2 sessions:

Thursday, 12 November: Member and Parish Briefing: Highways Development Management, 10.00 am to 12 noon

The key contact for this event is Kerry Arthur, Customer Liaison Officer, Place Services.

This session is the being held on Teams.

Wednesday, 25 November: Member and Parish Briefing: Local Highway Operations – Winter Preparedness, 10.30 am to 12 noon

To help the service prepare for the session and ensure they can provide the most comprehensive responses possible, attendees are to submit any questions in advance via this survey (please note this is a single survey used for more than one session).

This session is the being held on Teams.

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Glebe Farm (WSCC issues)

New roundabout (Steyning bypass) is complete – I am getting temporary fencing/screening erected around the proposed switch back path as residents on Abbey Road have reduced privacy.

Awaiting design and material (concrete/steel) of the switch back path.

Newmans Gardens/Health Centre Carpark work

The overall contract duration is anticipated to be four weeks from 14 September. The most disruptive element of the programme will be the car park resurfacing and line marking works, which are currently scheduled for w/c 5 October.

The road leading to the Heath Centre off Tanyard Lane will be closed overnight on 7 October and reopened on 8 October). This road is owned by HDC and has very poor surface/potholes.

I have been in contact with Acting Chair of the Patient Participation Group so they can engage directly with the engineer/contractors regarding the proposed access arrangements.

National Scheme of Delegation

On 30 June 2026 a Parliamentary committee approved the second legislation that requires local authorities to delegate planning applications to officers rather than democratic planning committees.

The new regulations divide planning applications in Schedule 1 and schedule 2 projects.

Schedule 1 are always delegated (e.g. residential development up to 9 homes, discharge of reserved matters on certain outline applications and permitted development). Councillors can have no impact on critical design (RM) of up to 500 homes or variation of S106 agreements on schedule 1 projects. I understand that this also includes landfill sites, incinerators and data centres.

Schedule 2 include wide range of major residential developments.

Issues

- Transparency of decision needed (gateway)
- Councillor involvement in pre apps desired.
- Number of planning committee members reduced to 13
- No “call-ins” by Councillors or PC

Comes into effect on 31 October so for applications to be on the agenda the Constitutional changes will need to take effect on 14 October.

County Cllr V Finnegan

Appendix B

1 October 2026 (2026-2027)

Bramber Parish Council

Prepared by: _____ Date: _____

Name and Role (Clerk/RFO etc)

Approved by: _____ Date: _____

Name and Role (RFO/Chair of Finance etc)

	Bank Reconciliation at 30/09/2026			
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2026			22,992.16
	ADD			
	Receipts 01/04/2026 - 30/09/2026			42,671.08
				65,663.24
	SUBTRACT			
	Payments 01/04/2026 - 30/09/2026			25,811.28
A	**Cash in Hand 30/09/2026** (per Cash Book)			**39,851.96**
	Cash in hand per Bank Statements			
	Petty Cash	30/09/2026	0.00	
	Unity Bank - current	30/09/2026	21,581.93	
	Unity Bank - savings	30/09/2026	18,270.03	
				39,851.96
	Less unpresented payments			
				39,851.96
	Plus unpresented receipts			
B	**Adjusted Bank Balance**			**39,851.96**
	A = B Checks out OK			