

# Minutes of Bramber Parish Council (BPC) Annual Meeting

Held on 3 June 2026

## Present:

- Cllrs A Blakelock (Chair), the Clerk, S Blakelock, M Croker (Vice-Chair), D Croker, M Tilley

## Members of the public:

Mike Corless, Bramber Emergency Plan Co-ordinator.

## 96. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed Mike Corless to the meeting. Apologies were accepted from Cllrs Bayford, Goodall, Green, Kitson and District Cllr R Noel. The Chair proposed a motion to extend Cllrs Goodall and Kitson's leave of absence for a further three months, and this was unanimously agreed.

## 97. Declarations of interest

None.

## 98. Minutes of previous meeting

Draft minutes for the BPC Annual General Meeting on 6 May were agreed subject to amendment and signed by the Chair.

## 99. Public session

The Chair proposed that item 101 I be taken as 'public session' and invited Mike Corless to update the Council with the Bramber Emergency Plan (EP):

- Mike took over as Co-ordinator in January 2026, and he acknowledged that much of the EP had already been completed by his Deputy Co-ordinator, Cllr Bayford and Rachael Rainbow.
- Current updates include: Setting up an EP WhatsApp group – all planning team members had added their numbers to this except one who had provided their email address; keys to the Emergency Store had now been distributed to Mike and appropriate members; and an inventory of all Emergency Store equipment had been undertaken.
- Vulnerable people list – a post on the Facebook site *Spotted* requesting suggestions of residents to be added to list did not produce any response. However, Mike confirmed that the EP team had a good idea of who might be suitable for the list.

Following his introduction, Mike invited questions from those present:

Q. Is there sufficient equipment, including sandbags?

A. Mike confirmed that a sandbag supplier had been contacted and would be able to produce bags quickly in the case of an emergency. He also confirmed that the store contained a road-side kit and megaphone; and that he was in touch with residents possessing chainsaws and tractors.

He emphasised that the most significant challenge would be fire, and this would be the remit of the emergency services, and the key role of the EP team would be communications in that instance.

Q. Are there plans for moving the Emergency Store to higher ground to avoid flooding?

A. Mike confirmed that the church had been located as a place of refuge as a high position but there are no immediate plans to relocate the Emergency Store.

Q. Would a pdf copy of the EP be available?

A. Yes, a pdf copy would be available to Councillors which should then be deleted once read. A master copy would be kept with the Clerk.

The Chair thanked Mike for his presentation and he left the meeting.

## 100. Matters arising

100 a Replacement signs – Walks for All and toilets – the Clerk confirmed that the one faded ‘no cycling’ sign near St Mary’s House had been replaced. A new ‘No Cycling sign had been positioned close to the flyover and another new ‘no cycling’ sign had been attached to a wooden post where the Botolphs path meets the Walks For All path.

She also confirmed that a new sign had been erected beside the toilets indicating the up-to-date opening times.

100 b Toilet cleaner’s service contract – the Clerk confirmed that the agreed service contract, dated from 1 May 2026, had now been signed by both the Clerk and the toilet cleaner.

## 101. Reports

101 a Horsham District Council (HDC) – Cllr M Croker updated the Council

- HDC Local Plan – the current plan is expected to be adopted in January 2027. Following the examiner’s session in April, the plan requires some modification principally because the housing numbers are considered inadequate; over the plan period (to 2040), 20,100 houses are now required compared to 14,500 previously. HDC is also being asked to consider the housing need of coastal communities as well as Crawley’s unmet need. The examiner has requested that some ‘major’ sites (typically 10 to 500 houses) should be reconsidered, particularly those ‘unsuitable’ due to landscape harm; four strategic sites are being considered – East and West Billingshurst, Buck Barn and Adversane. There is a link on the Horsham website which shows all the sites being reconsidered and Cllr M Croker agreed to forward this to Councillors.

Alongside the current Local Plan, a new plan will be started by 30 June 2026 using a different housing need assessment and completing after the transition to the unitary authority.

- Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) – consultation on the modified proposals ends on 15 June. Two options had been proposed by West Sussex: one unitary authority; or splitting West Sussex into two unitary authorities – Crawley, Mid-Sussex and Horsham as one, and Chichester and Arun, Worthing and Adur as the other. The Government proposed modification is that just the coastal districts form one unitary and that Chichester joins Horsham, Crawley and Mid-Sussex as an urban unitary. The government’s decision is expected in Summer 2026.
- Task and Finish Group – this is looking into the potential fire risks from Lithium ion battery storage, possibly in the roof, associated with PV solar energy schemes. The aim is to draw up a list of considerations before installation, especially via the group purchase schemes promoted by HDC.

101 b Joint Parishes Neighbourhood Wardens – the Chair reported that the JPNW May report had been received and circulated. She noted that the vulnerable woman who had previously been found in Clays Hill and by the A283 roundabout, had now been issued with a Pegasus Card, is being encouraged to take up hobbies and has been signposted to our local PSCO. Tyre fly tipping is taking place at the top of Bostal Road. The Street speedwatch team had reported that 10% of vehicles are currently exceeding the speed limit. And there have been complaints about dog-fouling along the river path with concerns about runners letting dogs off-lead and not removing their mess.

101 c Joint Parishes Climate Action Group (JPCAG) – the Chair reported that there would be a meeting on 8 July.

101 d Joint Parishes Cemetery Committee (JPCC) – Cllr Green had reported that there was no update.

101 e Joint Parishes Youth Committee (JPYC)– Cllr Bayford had reported that there was no update.

101 f HALC – the Chair confirmed that there would be a meeting on 22 June in Southwater.

101 g Bramber Castle/English Heritage/National Trust – Cllr Green had reported that there was no update.

101 h Village Hall Committee – Cllr Tilley reported that the Village Hall Committee AGM had taken place on 28 May. The hall remains very busy. It had a £45,000 bank balance which is well above the contingencies required to fulfil forthcoming projects - £9,000 for the Bramber and Upper Beeding rooms’ floor replacements; £10-15,000 for additional toilets to facilitate separate child toilets; and a fence along the front of the hall to prevent children falling on to the path. The committee also needs to update safeguarding, GDPR and CCTV policies. Legionella’s checks have been successfully carried out.

101 i Website – Cllr Tilley reported that 139 sessions were recorded for May representing a 30% increase. There had been a complaint about the May ‘100 years ago’ article so he had replaced this for June. Following the AGAR 2025-26 report recommendation, Cllr Tilley agreed to update website accessibility to meet the Website Accessibility Statement (WAG) 2.2 AA.

101 j Patient Participation Group – Cllr Bayford had reported that there was no update.

101 k South Downs National Park (SDNP) – Cllr D Croker reported that there were two consultations currently underway – SDNP Open Spaces and the Draft Local Plan. A Partnership Management Plan meeting is also due, and Cllr D Croker agreed to inform Council of this.

101 l Bramber Emergency Plan – see item 99.

## 102 Finance and general purposes

102 a To accept and sign off payments and invoices for May 2026 – the Clerk noted that the payments and invoices had been counter-signed by the Chair and this was accepted by the Council.

102 b Payments for June 2026 – the following payments were unanimously approved:

<b>June payments/invoices to be agreed by BPC</b>	
UBB – Hall hire: meet Bramber Room	£ 20.00
EDF Energy May 26	£25.07*
Parish Online – May 26-27 <b>45UF005-0014</b>	£45.00
Nest Pension payment	£13.93*
Security Signs – Inv 4818447	£112.70
Ferring Nurseries – summer flowers and watering - EST:1531	£2,880.68
Mulberry Local Services Lt – internal audit – inv 2210	£331.50
Toilet Cleaning – Julie Bakter £13.47x 31days	£417.57
Chichester Payroll – Mahy 26 - BPC2314	£15.00
HMRC (PAYE) – May 26 961PM10319612	£160.07
Clerk salary – May 26	£508.93
Clerk expenses – mileage & proportional phone & WiFi	£5.70
Bank service charge	£7.00*
Steve Duffett – Fitting Walks for All signs & erecting new wood post	£108

\*Paid in month for approval

102 c BPC Reconciled accounts for May 2026 – the reconciled accounts were displayed and agreed unanimously – see appendix A.

102 d To receive and agree the recommendations from the end of year 2025-26 internal audit – the internal auditor completed the end of year audit on 18 May 2026. A full report of the audit was sent to the Clerk and received by the Council as a supporting paper for this meeting. The following recommendations were made to the Council, and the Clerk advised how the Council could fulfil these requirements:

- FINANCE REGULATIONS, GOVERNANCE AND PAYMENTS

Auditor - I confirmed by sample testing that councillors sign "Acceptance of Office" forms. I recommend the form is amended to include formal acceptance to receive information by electronic means in the form "As per Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972, I consent to the receipt of all council meeting papers by electronic methods. I understand I may withdraw this consent at any time".

Resolution- Councillors had received revised Acceptance of Office forms as a supporting paper to the meeting and those present signed these and returned hard copies to the Clerk. This would be taken over as an agenda item for the next meeting so that Councillors not present could do the same.

Auditor - I remind council it is required to also post any supporting documentation with the agendas as outlined by the Information Commissioner's Office (page 3 of this link [www.ico.org.uk/minutesandagendas](http://www.ico.org.uk/minutesandagendas))

Resolution – The Clerk confirmed that she would supply pdfs of all supporting meeting documents to Cllr Tilley who agreed to investigate posting these as a zip file on the BPC website.

Auditor - I recommend that the minutes are clearly marked as draft or that a statement is added to the relevant page of the website that they are in 'draft form until ratified at the next meeting.'

Resolution – The Clerk had ensured that the May meeting draft minutes had carried a 'draft' watermark and confirmed that this would be BPC practise for all further meetings.

Auditor – I note the council has deleted model Financial Regulation 2.2 from their adopted version, which relates to independent verification of bank statements. As this is an essential internal control, I recommend this is reintroduced when the new Financial Regulations are adopted (FR 2.6 in the current NALC model).

Resolution – Councillors had received revised and updated BPC Financial Regulations 2025 (in the current NALC model) as a supporting paper to the meeting, and the practise of 'signing-off' payments and invoices been introduced for this meeting (see item 102 a) and the BPC monthly bank statements had been checked and signed against the Reconciled Accounts by a BPC Councillor other than a signatory.

- EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS – INSPECTION OF ACCOUNTS

Auditor - The Parish Council did not comply with the statutory requirements for the Notice of Exercise of Public Rights. In contravention of Regulation 15(2)(b) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the AGAR was approved and signed on the same day that the public rights period was announced, rather than the announcement being made at least one clear day after approval.

I am not satisfied the requirements of this control objective were met for 2024/25, and assertion 4 on the Annual Governance Statement should therefore be signed NO by the council.

Resolution – The Clerk pointed out to the Council that the incorrect dates had been added to the Public Rights Notice in 2024/25 so the statutory requirement for due public notice was not met. She also confirmed that the correct dates had been added to the Public Rights Notice for 2025/26.

- PUBLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Auditor - *Whilst I was able to confirm that the Notice of the Period of Public Rights and Section 1 (Annual Governance Statement) and Section 2 (Accounting Statement) were published on the council's website before 1 July 2025, these are not the signed and approved versions as required and I must therefore answer no to this assertion.*

Resolution - The Clerk confirmed that she had now submitted the signed versions of Notice of Public Rights, Section 1 (Annual Governance Statement) and Section 2 (Accounting Statement) for the 2024/25 audit to Cllr Tilley who had posted these on the BPC website.

- DIGITAL AND DATA COMPLIANCE

Auditor - I was able to confirm that the council website contains a Privacy Notice and a Website Accessibility Statement. However, The Website Accessibility Statement does not reference partial compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 AA and I recommend that this is addressed as soon as possible.

Resolution – Cllr Tilley confirmed that he would investigate the requirement of WAG 2.2 and apply these to the BPC website.

Auditor - *I recommend that the council adopts an IT Policy and completes a regular data audit to comply with GDPR Regulations.*

Resolution – The Clerk confirmed that she would draw up a BPC IT Policy and bring this back to the next meeting for discussion and adoption. She also confirmed that she would complete regular data audits to comply with GDPR Regulations.

102 e To discuss, agree and sign Annual Governance and Accountability Report (AGAR) section 1 for submission to the external auditor – Councillors had received the AGAR section 1 as a supporting paper for this meeting. The Chair and Clerk signed section 1 and the Council agreed that it be submitted with any associated notes to the external auditor.

102 f To discuss, agree and sign the AGAR Accounting Statement section 2 for submission to the external auditor - Councillors had received the AGAR section 2 as a supporting paper for this meeting. The Chair and Clerk signed section 2 and the Council agreed that it be submitted with any associated notes to the external auditor.

102 g To agree that the Notice of Public Rights for the BPC AGAR Return 2025-26 be published - Councillors had received the Notice of Public Rights as a supporting paper for this meeting. It was agreed that this be published on the website and posted on the BPC noticeboards.

102 h To review and adopt the updated Donations Policy and Subject Access Request Policy – the Clerk reported that the Donations Policy had been amended to include reference to the Donations Application Form as part of the required application process; and the Subject Access Request Policy had been updated to include the current Clerk's email address and BPC website address. Both policies were agreed and adopted accordingly.

102 i Asset transfer – the Clerk reported that she had been in contact with HDC Asset Manager regarding the deadline and process for applying for asset transfers prior to devolution. She had confirmed that there is no deadline for applications and the Clerk has now received an application pack for her and the Council to complete.

102 j S106 grant application for the replacement toilet door – the Clerk reported that this was ongoing.

### 103. Planning

103 a Planning application - DC/26/0677 – 39 Coombe Drove, Bramber – surgery to 2x copper beach. It was unanimously agreed to submit ‘no objection’.

### 104. Other planning matters

The Chair noted that the Council had submitted ‘no objection’ to DC/26/0709 - 39A Roman Road Steyning - To install fixed line broadband electronic communications apparatus under Regulation 5, detailed as 1X NEW 9M LIGHT WOODEN POLE, which was received between Council meetings.

### 105. Highways and Public Rights of Way (PROW)

105 a Speedwatch – Cllr S Blakelock reported that there had been no Clays Hill sessions but two half-hour sessions in The Street recording a total of 23 ‘offending’ vehicles, consistent with previous months.

105 b Acquisition of a new Vehicle Activated System (VAS) - Cllr M Croker reported that the WSCC Assistant Area Highways Manager had made it clear that a Community Highways Scheme (CHS) grant is unlikely to be successful for installing a VAS and that these were usually paid for out of parish funds. Also, a VAS does not qualify under any of the outstanding BPC S106 grant categories. Following discussion, it was decided that as there is an alternative route to crossing at the northern approach to the Downs Link crossing of the A283, the project should be put on hold at the current time.

105 c Speed humps along The Street – Cllr M Croker reported that WSCC Highways had informed him the speed bumps would not be removed as they pose no danger to life. It was agreed that Cllr M Croker would write to the resident who had originally requested their removal explaining the situation, copying in the WSCC Highways department.

105 d Downslink summer cut – see item 105 f

105 e Entry/exit to western river path leading north from Beeding Bridge – the Clerk reported that she had requested WSCC Highways to cut back the hedge by the bridge, but as it is part of private land it had confirmed that it would not be doing so. Following discussion, it was agreed that the Clerk should write a letter to the landowner requesting that the hedge is cut back (to permit a clearer pedestrian view) and copy in the WSCC Highways department.

105 f Vegetation overgrowth along the A283 path – the Clerk confirmed that she had requested an early and late season cut for the path. The chair noted that the vegetation had just been cut back in the last couple of days.

### 106. Consultations

106 The HDC Community Governance Review Paper – Following a joint parish meeting on 1 June 2026 including Bramber, Steyning, Upper Beeding, Ashurst and Wiston councillors and clerks, the Steyning Clerk had circulated written meeting notes and had been received by Councillors as a supporting paper for this meeting. The proposed joint response was noted as follows:

- the 5 councils support retaining the current parish/town council structure and identities;
- No change of Parish names (Steyning had already changed its name to a Town Council); No merging of Councils; no boundary changes are requested (except where Upper Beeding PC are to agree with Henfield Parish Council who takes control of the whole of Small Dole, having already agreed that the village should not be split between the two Parishes); No change in numbers of Councillors for each Council; No sub division into smaller Parish Wards, nor Ward boundary changes being required.
- the councils value existing collaborative working and wish to continue with this;
- the area covered by the 5 Parishes should be recognised as ***'Rural, and as a gateway to the South Downs'***;
- the council representatives wished to ensure that parish and town councils have clear routes to influence any future unitary authority arrangements.
- Members agreed that individual councils should also submit their own separate responses, which reflected the agreement of this joint working party.

The Clerk informed Councillors that Steyning TC councillors (present at the meeting) were in favour of changing the town's current boundary to allow Bramber to fully embrace Bramber Brooks as part of its parish. In the light of this, it had been agreed to meet with Steyning Town Council to amend the joint response to reflect this boundary change in both the final joint and individual Council responses. The Clerk agreed to complete the BPC response embracing the above points but with the inclusion of the BPC boundary change (to fully include Bramber Books) and circulate this to councillors prior to submission.

## 107 Correspondence

The Chair reported that Andrew Griffiths MP would not be attending the Emergency Briefing film showing at the Steyning Centre on 24 June, but that Katy Bourne, Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, would be attending.

A River Run involving 700 runners would be taking place through Bramber on 6 September. The organisers would like to use the Bramber carpark as a toilet and drinks station. The Chair confirmed that this had been referred to HDC as owners of the carpark, and Head of Parking and Enterprise had suggested that BPC canvases resident views on the use of the carpark for runners on the day. It was agreed that the Clerk should write to the Bramber Society requesting that it emails its members for their opinions. And that Cllr M Croker contacts HDC requesting an extension to the response deadline to allow this to take place.

The Chair noted that HDC would now be officially redacting all Councillor addresses.

## 108. Other Parish matters

Cllr Tilley reported that he had let a resident borrow the BPC strimmer from the BPC Emergency Store. The Clerk pointed out that she had originally responded to the request, requiring the resident to make a formal written request which would need to be discussed by full council as there is potentially a health and safety issue. The Clerk agreed that she would contact the resident to request written confirmation of the user's insurance and the exact dates of the 'loan'.

## 109. Items for the next agenda

JPNW attendance and update.

## 110 Date of next meeting

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

The meeting closed at 9.15pm

## **Appendix A**

**See below**

DRAFT



DRAFT