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The Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting of the Bramber Parish Council that took place at the Beeding and Bramber Village Hall on Wednesday 12th February 2025 at 7:00pm.

Present: Cllr A. Blakelock (Chair), Cllr S. Blakelock, Cllr H. Bayford, Cllr D. Croker, Cllr Goodall, Cllr Kitson and Cllr Tilley.

In attendance: Paul Richards (Parish Clerk).

Members of the public – Three.

17. Apologies for absence – Cllr M. Croker, Cllr Green and HDC Cllr Noel.

18. Declarations of interest – None.

19. Minutes of the previous meeting.

The draft minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 12th February 2025, circulated previously, were **AGREED** by the Members, and were duly signed by the Chair.

20. Matters arising - The Chair advised that:

21. Walks for All – the Chair reported that she had received a quote from a local contractor to provide for an additional grass cut along the Walks for All path. After debate and discussion, Members **AGREED** that (a) the quotation of £90 be accepted and that (b) the contractor would be asked to provide a further quote to extend the length of mowing from the flyover to the triangle of land just before the Cement Works bridge

22. Public Session – None.

23. Youth Worker Presentation – the Youth Worker team leader presented details of the new youth service and introduced her colleagues. After their very informative presentation (slides attached at Appendix A), the Chair thanked them for their valuable service to the community.

24. Climate Action Plan – The Chair advised that the next meeting is scheduled for 17th February 2025 however the integration of the Plan with HDC's OnePlanet system may be impacted by devolution plans in the future.

25. Reports.

- a) **HDC** – As Cllr M. Croker and HD Cllr Noel had given their apologies for absence, their report, circulated previously and attached at Appendix B, was noted.
- b) **SDCP The White Bridge Link** – the Chair advised that the next meeting will be held on 28th February 2025. Cllr Tilley remarked that the new path had been well received however, concern had been raised by residents about the severe slope by the bank north of the bridge. The Chair agreed to raise this matter at the next meeting.
- c) **SDCP Local Walking Cycling Project** – Cllr S Blakelock referred to the draft report, circulated previously, and raised the concern that although Clays Hill was deemed to be the third most dangerous route in the area it did not feature in the suggested actions within the draft report. He was asked to highlight this matter at the next LWCP meeting.
- d) **Neighbourhood Wardens** – Cllr S Blakelock referred to the graffiti reported by the Wardens. He advised that similar graffiti had been seen on the electricity substation in Castle Lane. He agreed to report this to the Utility Company.
- e) **Joint Parishes Cemetery Committee** – no meeting.
- f) **Joint Parishes Youth Committee** – as per the earlier agenda item.
- g) **WSALC/HALC** – as per the HDC report attached at Appendix B.

- h) **English Heritage/Bramber Castle** – Cllr Green provided a report *“Update on the Community Orchard - we have a meeting on Friday, 14th February which is the final one before the first planting session at the orchard. Below is the text prepared by all involved, including input from English Heritage and National Trust. If this could go on the website that would be great - and if there is anything further after our meeting on Friday I will, of course, update you”*.

Bramber Castle Orchard

The National Trust, English Heritage and Steyning Community Orchard are working in partnership to create a new orchard in the small field to the west of Bramber Castle. We plan on planting 22 fruit trees this winter and another eight in 2026. The trees will be a mix of Sussex apple varieties, pear, cherry, medlar, quince and bullace and once planted there will be a plan, accessible to visitors, showing where each of the trees are planted.

Over the next ten years, English Heritage will be establishing King’s Meadows -flower-rich grasslands across England. Here at Bramber we’ll be restoring the meadow alongside the creation of the Orchard. Beneath the fruit trees the grassland will be managed to create a wildflower rich meadow supporting a range of insects and other wildlife. This will take time to develop through careful management and sowing wildflower seed.

We hope this project will create a lasting natural legacy, rich in wildlife, that will be enjoyed for many years to come.

On February 19th between 11am – 1pm the Steyning Community Orchard volunteers will be leading the planting of the first 22 trees and there will be staff and volunteers from the National Trust and English Heritage. We would welcome visitors and the local community to join us in this planting day, talk to us about the work we are doing here and perhaps help us in the creation of this new orchard.

The Clerk was asked to recirculate Cllr Green’s update and Cllr Tilley agreed to post the update on BPC’s website.

- i) **Village Hall** – Cllr Tilley reported on the last Hall Management meeting that showed the finances to be in a healthy position. Maintenance issues persist (roof tiles) and a window replacement programme had been scheduled. Members agreed that the smaller Bramber Room was more suited to parish council business. The Clerk was asked to move future bookings to the smaller room
- j) **Website** – Cllr Tilley reported a 40% increase in site activity (all recorded in one day). The Chair agreed to send Cllr Tilley the latest Climate Action Plan following their next meeting and asked that this be posted up onto the BPC website
- k) **Patient Participation Group (PPG)** – no meeting.

26. Finance and General Purposes.

- a) The payments schedule (attached at Appendix C) was **AGREED**.
- b) The donation request from the Salvation Army was deferred until the next meeting as the Clerk had been asked to provide details of previous donations made.
- c) Following the correction of a typographical error, the Q3 Variance Report (attached at Appendix D) was noted.

Cllr Kitson referred to the decision made in December 2025 to not provide a dedicated mobile phone for parish business. He asked why then the Clerk had received a payment in November 2024 for mobile phone expenses. The Chair asked the Clerk for an explanation. The Clerk advised that his home expense claim was a contractual obligation on BPC that included the use of his personal phone for council business whereas the December debate referred to the provision of a dedicated parish mobile phone.

27. Planning.

- a) **Applications** – none.

- b) **Other Planning matters** – The Chair referred to Cllr M. Croker’s report on the SDNPA’s call for projects request. In his report, he suggested the Walks for All path be restored. Members agreed and the Chair was asked to check with Cllr. M. Croker the likely cost of such a project. The Clerk was also asked to circulate the latest balance of CIL and S106 monies held by HDC.

28. Highways and Public Rights of Way.

- a) **Village Gateways** – Cllr Goodall referred to the proposed village gateway design. The chair queried whether the word Bramber should be on the sign since devolution might mean boundary changes. After review, Members **AGREED** the sign’s style and content and asked that a quote for the sign be obtained and then evaluated.
- b) **A283 TRO** – the Chair reminded Members to complete the consultation survey since the deadline was 13th February 2025.
- c) **Other issues** – Cllr S. Blakelock asked the Clerk to report a broken road surface on the second speed bump in The Street by the Castle. The Chair asked that all Members report the issue as well to WSCC Highways.

29. Councillor Training.

- The Chair advised that she would attend the devolution briefing on 17th February 2025. She has also booked a planning training course in March; and
- Cllr Bayford reported that she had booked two forthcoming planning training courses with WSALC.

30. Environment and Parish Actions - The Chair advised that:

- **Flood Team contact details** – Cllr Tilley was asked to attend a meeting with the Team representative;
- **Bramber Society** – the next meeting is on 20th February 2025; and
- **Your Steyning** – the Chair reported on the latest BPC article for the newsletter that included information on the TRO, village gateways and other speed reduction initiatives.

31. Consultations – The Regulation 18 SDNPA Local Plan public consultation and meeting schedule was noted.

32. Correspondence – the report, circulated previously, was noted.

33. Items for inclusion on the next Agenda – donation request (Salvation Army).

34. Date of the next meetings.

- The next **Ordinary Parish Council Meeting** will be on Wednesday 5th March 2025 at the Beeding and Bramber Village Hall commencing 7:00pm; and
- **Planning Meeting** – TBA subject to receipt of planning applications.

The meeting closed at 20:36

Signed..... Chairman

Date.....

APPENDIX A – Youth Service Presentation

To Follow

Appendix B – HDC Report

District Councillor Update – 11 February 2025

Office move to Albery House

- Refurbishment works completed; staff transferring by department
- Upgraded facilities compared with Parkside for both officers and councillors
 - improved council chamber with enhanced IT
 - additional meeting rooms
 - no more conflicts with WSCC meetings, Planning Inquiries or Coroner's Courts
 - first council meetings in the new building should be in March

Local Government Devolution

- Sussex is in the Devolution Priority Programme for Mayoral Combined Authority
 - MHCLG consultation expected soon on whether Sussex residents want a mayor
 - this year's county council elections will be postponed for 1 year
 - mayoral elections in May 2026
 - district councils are expected to unitarise with county – how many unitaries?
 - outline proposals by 21 March 2025(1), full proposals by 26 September
 - elections for new 'shadow' unitaries in May 2027
 - power vested to unitaries in 2028
 - some HDC assets are likely to be offered to parishes
 - e.g. car parks, Bramber Brooks, Saltings Field, Henfield Common...

River Recovery Declaration approved by Cabinet

- resulting from a Green motion in December 2023
- not the Rights for Rivers that group originally wanted, but
- commits HDC to work with many other groups to improve the condition of the Adur, Arun and Western Rother

'It does not give rights to people, nor guarantee economic investment but provides a framework to enable and support a sustainable water environment for future generations.'

Local Plan

- has not been 'stopped' (yet)
- 'delayed' while HDC awaits information on what happens next

HDC Council Meetings in south of the district

- June HDC meeting will be held in Henfield
 - easier for residents living in the south of the district to attend
- Green group had requested that half (3 pa) be held in the south, maybe get 2
 - possible future venues are Storrington, Steyning, Pulborough...

Capitol Theatre refurbishment

- work further delayed (contractors, technical issues)
- 2025:
 - fix roof leaks
 - install new seats
 - panto (Robin Hood) goes ahead
- 2026:
 - major works on internal layouts, heating and ventilation (Jan to Sept)

Appendix C – Payments Schedule

Payments 12th February 2025				
Income since last meeting	Amount			
None	£ -			
TOTAL INCOME	£ -			
BALANCES ON ACCOUNT				
Current Account (Treasurers)	£ 1,074.06	31/01/2025	Unity Bank	
Savings Account (Instant Access)	£ 24,070.66	31/01/2025	Unity Bank	
CASH AT BANK	£ 25,144.72			
EARMARKED RESERVES				
NHP reserve	£ 1,380.00			
Emergency reserve	£ 1,000.00			
Elections	£ 1,500.00			
AVAILABLE RESERVES	£ 21,264.72			
PAID IN MONTH FOR APPROVAL	Invoiced Services	Voucher	Payment	Value
Julie Bakter	Toilet Cleaning - January	105	BACS	£ 163.80
Paul Richards	Clerk's salary - January	106	BACS	£ 460.79
NEST	Clerk's pension - January	107	DD	£ 98.81
Chichester Payroll Services	Payroll costs	108	BACS	£ 15.00
HMRC	PAYE - January	109	BACS	£ 338.06
TO APPROVE	Invoiced Services	Voucher	Payment	Value
365Direct Online	Toilet Supplies	110	BACS	£ 149.41
Beeding and Bramber Hall	Meeting 15/1/2025	111	BACS	£ 20.00
EDF	Toilet Electricity	112	DD	£ 73.00
Unity Trust Bank	Service charge - Jan 2025	113	BACS	£ 6.00
ICO	Data Protection fee	114	DD	£ 47.00
TOTAL NEW PAYMENTS TO APPROVE			TOTAL	£ 295.41
Position at bank on 31/01/2025	£ 25,144.72			
New payments to approve	-£ 295.41			
CASHFLOW POSITION AS AT 31/01/2025	£ 24,849.31			
Earmarked reserves	-£ 3,880.00			
RESERVE/BUDGET POSITION AS AT 31/01/2025	£ 20,969.31			

APPENDIX D Q3 Variance Report

Agenda Item: **25/25**

Report to:	Bramber Parish Council
Report on:	Quarter 3 – 2024/25 Budget Report and Material Variances
Report by:	Clerk

Summary

The Bramber Parish Council Financial Regulations require that the Clerk prepare a financial report to be presented to the Parish Council.

1. **Statement of receipts and payments** – the statement at Appendix A describes the third quarter position. Reserves are in line with previous reports and in accordance with good practice i.e., that General Reserves should be sufficient to cover 3-6 months running costs.

Material variances are highlighted. The Q3 expenditure is 14.26% underspent compared to budget. The Q3 outturn is a positive balance of £5,283.60.

2. Recommendations

That BPC note the variances as listed in Appendix A.

Paul Richards

Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer to Bramber Parish Council

12th February 2025

Expenditure	Budget	To Q3	Variance	%age	Comment
Insurance	£ 750.00	£ 415.11	£ 334.89	44.65%	Lower than expected premium
Village Hall hire	£ 165.01	£ 140.00	£ 25.01	15.16%	Extra meeting
Phone / admin	£ 525.01	£ 634.08	-£ 109.07	-20.77%	Slight overspend in Q3
Clerk employment costs	£ 8,402.94	£ 8,029.28	£ 373.66	4.45%	Not material
Chairmans allowance	£ 112.50	£ -	£ 112.50	100.00%	Payment due at half year
Travel expenses	£ 225.00	£ 151.20	£ 73.80	32.80%	Underspend
Postage	£ 37.53	£ 102.20	-£ 64.67	-172.32%	Newsletter = £99
Street lighting	£ 787.50	£ 1,081.92	-£ 294.42	-37.39%	No Q4 costs expected
Toilet - cleaner salary	£ 2,357.94	£ 3,049.20	-£ 691.26	-29.32%	Extended opening hours
Toilet - water supply and loo rolls	£ 262.50	£ 495.97	-£ 233.47	-88.94%	Lock repair and annual supplies
Toilet - electricity supply	£ 540.00	£ 584.00	-£ 44.00	-8.15%	Not material
Subs inc website	£ 787.50	£ 1,019.57	-£ 232.07	-29.47%	New email accounts
Audit fees	£ 441.00	£ 356.25	£ 84.75	19.22%	Underspend
Neighbourhood Wardens	£ 6,681.05	£ 8,249.00	-£ 1,567.95	-23.47%	No Q4 costs expected
Youth Provision	£ 3,375.16	£ -	£ 3,375.16	100.00%	No Spend
Training	£ 187.51	£ -	£ 187.51	100.00%	No Spend
Floodlight contribution	£ 50.00	£ -	£ 50.00	100.00%	No Spend
Christmas tree	£ 175.00	£ -	£ 175.00	100.00%	No Spend
General maintenance	£ 834.18	£ 226.82	£ 607.36	72.81%	Underspend
Environmental maintenance	£ 450.00	£ 425.00	£ 25.00	5.56%	
Donations and grants	£ 824.99	£ 650.00	£ 174.99	21.21%	More spent in Q2
Flowers & watering	£ 2,782.50	£ 2,471.84	£ 310.66	11.16%	Not material
Dog bin emptying	£ 310.17	£ -	£ 310.17	100.00%	No Spend
Neighbourhood Plan	£ 750.00	£ -	£ 750.00	100.00%	No Spend
Emergency Reserve	£ 374.99	£ -	£ 374.99	100.00%	No Spend
BBMC	£ -	£ -	£ -	0.00%	No Spend
Election Costs	£ 562.50	£ -	£ 562.50	100.00%	No Spend
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£ 32,752.48	£ 28,081.44	£ 4,671.04	14.26%	
Receipts	Budget	To Q3	Variance	%age	Comment
HDC Precept	£ 37,564.64	£ 37,564.64	£ -	0.00%	
HDC Cleansing grant	£ 860.00	£ 898.08	£ 38.08	4.24%	Not material
Maudlyn Residents Assoc	£ 120.01	£ 215.28	£ 95.27	44.25%	Higher initial cost from WSCC
Refunds / VAT Reclaim	£ 1,000.00	£ -	-£ 1,000.00		Not billed as yet
Misc income	£ -	£ 595.66	£ 595.66	100.00%	Bollard repair
NDP Grant	£ -	£ -	£ -	0.00%	
Bramber Society	£ 2,782.00	£ 2,440.43	-£ 341.57	-14.00%	Not material
TOTAL RECEIPTS	£ 42,326.65	£ 41,714.09	-£ 612.56	-1.45%	