

# Minutes of Bramber Parish Council (BPC) Ordinary Meeting

Held on 23 July 2025

## Present:

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

## Members of the public:

- District Councillor Noel

## 107. Apologies for absence

None

## 108. Declarations of interest

Cllrs M Croker and D Croker declared an interest as neighbours to DC/25/0978: Tall Pines, Maudlin Park; Cllr Green declared an interest as a neighbour to DC/25/1046: Sunny Croft, The Street

## 109. Minutes of previous meetings

The draft minutes of the BPC Ordinary Council Meeting on 18 June 2025, were agreed subject to noted amendments and signed by the Chair.

The draft minutes of the BPC Extraordinary Council Meeting on 27 June 2025, were agreed and signed by the Vice Chair.

## 110. Public session

No questions from the floor

## 111. Matters arising

The Chair requested an update regarding the scheduled Downs Link cuts on 24 June and 5 July. Cllrs confirmed that to their knowledge this had not been done.

## 112. Joint Parishes Climate Action Group (JPCAG)

The Chair reported that there had been a meeting on 16 July with all three parishes represented. Geoff Barnard (Steyping Greening) introduced five future projects for discussion.

- a) A Parity Project with home builders. But looking at the EPC (Energy Performance Certification) building data was not up to date so there was a credibility issue, and it was also not suitable for park homes, so this project was discarded.
- b) Energy Landscape Workshop involving looking at your area and selecting appropriate renewable energy sources. Vicci Johnson pointed out that there were no 'next steps', so this was rejected.

- c) Small Wind Farms. These would be community funded and require a windy location. Cllr M Croker pointed out that he had done a local district tour of potential sites several years ago and, on the basis of published wind energy maps, concluded that there were no 'good' wind turbine sites near the Bramber area.
- d) Walking and Cycling Plan. This is already well developed but it needs to be 'locked into' the planning process and the new Local Plan. Bramber will be looking at the Castle Lane crossing, Upper Beeding some chicanes and Steyning at the Kings Barn Lane crossing to the White Bridge. Other areas include the Chanctonbury Ring Car Park to Washington bridleway, and twittens, though not all twitten paths are PROW (Public Rights of Way). It is hoped that the Walking and Cycling Plan will be signed off in September 2025.
- e) Energy Champions Training. Upper Beeding (UB) has successfully engaged its residents and acquired thermal imaging equipment to identify areas of property heat loss. It's an expensive piece of equipment but, but as UB has demonstrated, it is an effective way of engaging residents, and it might be possible to borrow one.
- f) Parish Carbon Footprint Analysis. Bramber is high on the energy consumption list due to its high number of older buildings.

There will be another JPCAP meeting in the Spring when it will assess which projects will be worth making bids for.

## 113. Reports

113.a HDC Councillor's report – due to Cllr Noel's delayed arrival this was presented after 113.k

- Local Plan – on 6 July cabinet was recommended to formally withdraw the Local Plan. Alternative options included initiating a judicial review of the process, but this would be expensive and too late viz a viz the devolution schedule. Following review by the Communities and Place Policy and Scrutiny Committee, HDC will write to the Inspector to ask, given the forthcoming withdrawal of the duty to cooperate, whether the current stalled plan could be salvaged.
- The Council still has its 2015 Planning Framework to 'defend' against unwanted development proposals. And there is also the local flooding scheme (drawn up in February 2025) and now the 'Shaping Development and Planning Advice Note' which are both in place to protect the District while there is no established Local Plan.
- HDC is expecting a flood of new development applications with the availability of Grampion Conditions to access the renamed SNOWS, 'Sussex North Water Certification Scheme'. With the imminent withdrawal of the Local Plan and its quota of 777 new homes/annum, the new government target is 1338 homes/annum plus a 20% buffer which could mean around 1600 homes per year.
- Neighbourhood Plans – parishes are being encouraged to renew out of date plans. The HDC Neighbourhood Planning Officer, Norman Kwan, has confirmed that an update will be given in the Autumn. Cllr Noel confirmed that BPC is not due for renewal until 2026.
- HDC will be purchasing seven new refuse trucks at a cost of £7.2 million.

Cllr Tilley asked on what basis was the Local Plan was rejected. Cllr Noel confirmed that this was based mainly on the lack of sourcing alternative water resources to SNOWS (Sussex North Offsetting Water Scheme). Cllr M Croker also pointed out that the housing figures were based on predictions by the Office of National Statistics. The proposal is to use a simple 0.8% per year factored up by your area's house price to earnings ratio which is not good in Horsham District.

113.b The White Bridge Link – the Chair reported that Southern Gas had now re-routed their pipework under the river, Land Build is on site and the access road is being built from Kings Barn Lane to the White Bridge. It is all progressing, though the work is a little behind schedule. Plans are afoot for an official opening in the Spring. Cllr M Croker confirmed that the bridge will be painted green, not white.

113 c LWCP (Local Walking and Cycling Plan) – Cllr S Blakelock updated the Council: Geoff Barnard had reported that HDC was very positive about adding the LWCP to local planning guidance. Geoff and Mike had submitted a funding bid to WSCC for the Castle Lane crossing: the outcome is awaited.

113 d Neighbourhood Wardens – the Wardens’ June report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr Goodall updated the Council: Mike Pearce had now left, and Carole Boniface would also be leaving. E-scooters continue to be a problem; the Wardens do their best to stop them, but they have no legislative powers, despite them being illegal for use on public highways. The Wardens are proposing posters illustrating that e-scooters are prohibited from public places.

113 e Joint Parishes Cemetery Committee – no update to report. Cllr Green explained that despite her efforts to contact the committee’s clerk to arrange a meeting and discuss future representatives, she had not managed to do so to date. She would continue to follow this up.

113 f Joint Parishes Youth Committee – Cllr Bayford reported that there had been no meeting, but she had emailed Vicky regarding the carpark planters and their upkeep. She would follow this up at the next meeting as she had not heard back.

113 g HALC – the Chair updated the Council: A meeting had taken place on 19 June, attended by herself and Cllr M Croker. The focus was on devolution and the Local Plan, noting that a HDC Councillors had not yet decided how to progress since the Local Plan had been considered unsound and that the designated housing figures would need to be increased.

HDC CEO, Jane Eaton, informed members that 16 options for devolution had been refined to four possible areas: Single County; East and West Sussex; North and South Sussex; and a coastal strip embracing Adur, Worthing to Brighton and Hove. A list of assets is proving difficult to draw up as some across the county are known under different names.

In future HDC Planning Committee members will be fully trained, either at a national level or more locally with specific issues in mind; there might be a two-tier system established with some issues being decided by Planning Officers and some going to Committee.

Cllr M Croker reported that there would be a survey of local residents’ opinions regarding local government reorganisation. There will also be a proposed policy of how HDC manages the process of asset transfers to be sent to Cabinet for approval on 6 August.

[Note: Cllr Noel arrived at 7.33pm]

113. h English Heritage/Bramber Castle – Cllr Green reported that English Heritage had a promotional bus at the *Bramber Comes Alive* event on 20 July. The Chair expressed her appreciation of the event and noted that the Visitor and Tourism Chair, Russell Barnes, had expressed his thanks to BPC for its donation. Cllr Green also reported that the fencing had come down around the Bramber Castle and that a new fence has been approved: she will try to find out when this will happen.

113. i Village Hall – Cllr Tilley updated the Council: There had been a meeting on 21 July. New room and toilet signs had now been erected. New roof tiles are due to be installed on the village hall roof and boiler room to be fixed w/c 21 July.

The committee is currently seeking quotes for the fuse board fixture and replacement main hall windows; it hopes to get a grant for the latter. The maintenance schedule had suggested a new boiler. However, as the current one is working well the committee was advised against replacing it so saving £16,000. This will be reviewed next year.

The smart meter is set to be replaced with an export meter to establish how much solar power is being sent back to the grid and potentially get some money back for this.

The current playground fence is not sufficiently high, so quotes are being sought for a replacement. Yellow lines are required at the front of the hall. Upper Beeding PC are contacting WSCC for a PTRO (permanent traffic regulation order) to establish this.

Room rates are set to increase by 20% next year. Current bookings are going well. The website is set to be re-hosted with a cheaper provider. Financially, the hall currently had £9,000 in its current account and £36,000 in its savers account, which is sufficient to meet on-going maintenance needs.

113. j Website – there was no update to report.

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

## 114 Finance and general purposes

114. a The following payments for July, and pending payments for August 2025, were unanimously agreed:

| July invoices to be agreed by BPC on 23 July 2025                                                                                                                                                |          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Chichester Payroll Services                                                                                                                                                                      | £15.00   |
| EDF Energy                                                                                                                                                                                       | £57.48   |
| Gallagher Insurance – April 25-26                                                                                                                                                                | £416.96  |
| Clerk Salary (net PAYE) – April, May, June 25 =<br>£493.52+£493.32+£493.32 = £1480.16                                                                                                            | £1480.16 |
| HMRC (PAYE) – April, May, June 25 = £123.20 + £123.40 +£123.40 =<br>£370.00                                                                                                                      | £370.00  |
| Toilet Cleaning – Julie Bakter 30 @12.60 – June 25                                                                                                                                               | £378.00  |
| Clerk expenses – Mileage @ 36.9p/mile (1 x meeting, 2x noticeboards) =<br>£1.85; Microsoft Personal annual renewal £84.99 (incs VAT) – to charge<br>to E Trundle Mastercard **9578 on 27 July 25 | £86.84   |
| Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd – internal audit fee                                                                                                                                       | £312.00  |
| Business Stream – Scottish Water Co                                                                                                                                                              | £89.40   |
| Wilbur Associates – Clays Hill gateway sign                                                                                                                                                      | £1590.00 |
| Pending August invoices/payments to agree on 23 July 2025                                                                                                                                        |          |
| Toilet Cleaning – Julie Bakter 31 @12.60 – July 25                                                                                                                                               | £390.60  |
| Clerk Salary (net PAYE)                                                                                                                                                                          | £493.32  |
| HMRC (PAYE)                                                                                                                                                                                      | £123.40  |

|                             |        |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| Chichester Payroll Services | £15.00 |
|-----------------------------|--------|

114. b Reconciled Accounts – The reconciled accounts for April, May and June 2025 were unanimously agreed – see appendix A.

114. c AGAR 2024-25 internal audit and BPC Intermediate Review – the completion of AGAR 24-25 and submission of the Intermediate Review were noted.

114. d S106 monies for the Gateway cost - it was unanimously agreed that the Clerk should proceed with applying for S106 money for the gateway under the category of ‘sustainable transport’.

## 115 Planning applications

115. a DC/25/0978 – Tall Pines, Maudlin Park – erection of a first-floor front extension, side conservatory conversion and erection of a single storey rear extension. The Council agreed no objection to the application, with six in favour and three abstentions.

115. b DC/25/1013 - Little 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 lime-crete floor. The Council unanimously agreed no objection to the planning application.

## 116 Other planning matters

DC/25/1046 – Sunny Croft, The Street - proposed change of use from hotel (c1) to a single dwellinghouse (c3). The Council agreed no objection, with eight in favour and one abstention.

SDNP/23/03425/FUL - Annington Mere Farmhouse, Annington Road - Discharge of Conditions 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10 – Cllr M Croker reported that this planning application had been permitted despite BPC submitted objections.

## 117 Highways and Public Rights of Way

117. a Speedwatch – Cllr S Blakelock updated the Council: During the previous week 21 vehicles were inputted, 13 by the Clays Hill Speedwatch team and 8 by The Street Speedwatch team. The 13 he and Cllr Kitson had noted represented a decline in numbers speeding so it could be that the gateway signage is having the desired effect. Chris Broadley from Community Speedwatch has informed him that they have acquired an extra gun from Henfield so both of our teams have guns. Speeding coming down Clays Hill is also a matter of concern and will hopefully be addressed in the future. The Speed Indicator Device at the top of the hill does not always seem to light up and indicate speed even when the speedwatch gun had ‘clocked’ a vehicle. Cllr Kitson suggested that this could be due to drivers reducing their speed on seeing speed watchers so by the time they reached the top of the hill they are within the speed limit.

Cllr S Blakelock confirmed that he and Cllr Kitson would continue to monitor vehicles over the coming months to assess the effect of the gateway signage. The Chair thanked them both for their hard work as Council speed watchers.

117. b Overgrown vegetation and bent Downs Link sign – The Clerk informed the Council that she had heard back from the WSCC Highways Steward allocated to deal with the overgrown

vegetation along the A283 cycle path and around The Street roundabout, and the bent Downs Link sign at the Castle Lane crossing. He had arranged for the sign to be replaced but had concluded that the overgrown vegetation was not severe enough for current work. In the light of this feedback, it was agreed that the Chair would contact 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.

117. c Community Highways Scheme – the Chair offered her thanks to Cllr M Croker and Geoff Barnard for submitting the funding application to WSCC to install a safe crossing at the Castle Lane/A283 crossing point. Cllr M Croker noted that a light-controlled crossing was part of the Glebe Farm development roundabout which should set a positive precedent for future developments.

117. d Walks for All – footpath maintenance. Further to a meeting with the Steyning and Community Partnership (SDCP) Cllr M Croker reported that the footpaths need cutting back in the absence of the scheduled WSCC cut on 5 July. It was agreed that the Chair would ask Danny Flynn to cut the footpaths. Cllr S Blakelock also suggested that two cuts be accounted for in the budget for 2026/27.

## 118 Communications

BPC September newsletter in *Your Mag* - the Chair suggested a 'celebration' of the Clays Hill gateway signage and reasons for its installation; and a piece on the BPC Emergency Plan workshop on 12 September encouraging residents to attend. This was unanimously agreed.

## 119 Certification in Local Council Administration (CiLCA)

The Clerk briefed the Council on the current situation regarding CiLCA: Although it had been anticipated that she would begin her training for the CiLCA qualification in September, the September intake will be the last of the current 'iteration' (curriculum) and that this would then be updated to embrace current legislation requirements. In consultation with the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) she had been strongly advised to register for the new CiLCA course in February 2026 and not the September intake.

The Clerk requested that the Council agree to a delay to her CiLCA registration until February 2026; this was unanimously agreed. The Clerk was requested to submit exact costs for both the course and training sessions to the Council.

## 120 Other Parish matters

The Chair requested that the Queen's Green Canopy tree, which is struggling to survive with recent heatwaves and poor soil, be monitored.

With the success of *Bramber Comes Alive* the Chair proposed the Council write a letter of thanks to the SDGP and this was unanimously agreed.

## 121 Consultations

The Chair drew Councillors attention to the NALC consultation (previously circulated by the Clerk) regarding flood risk and preparedness. It was agreed that Cllr Tilley would prepare a

response on behalf of the Council and that this would be circulated for Councillors to make comment/agree.

## 122 Correspondence

The Chair informed the Council that there was an online SLCC meeting on Local Government Reorganisation on 30 July should anyone wish to attend.

## 123 Items for the next agenda

The following items were request for inclusion on the agenda for 3 September 2025: Neighbourhood Plan – next steps; signing off the Walking and Cycling Plan; and preparation for the Emergency Plan workshop on 12 September.

## 124. Date of next meeting

03 September 2025 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**

|          |                                                     |           |                  |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------------|
|          | <b>Bank Reconciliation at 30/04/2025</b>            |           |                  |
|          | Cash in Hand 01/04/2025                             |           | 22,500.95        |
|          | <b>ADD</b><br>Receipts 01/04/2025 - 30/04/2025      |           | 19,625.00        |
|          |                                                     |           | 42,125.95        |
|          | <b>SUBTRACT</b><br>Payments 01/04/2025 - 30/04/2025 |           | 14,135.06        |
| <b>A</b> | <b>Cash in Hand 30/04/2025</b><br>(per Cash Book)   |           | <b>27,990.89</b> |
|          | Cash in hand per Bank Statements                    |           |                  |
|          | Petty Cash 28/02/2025                               | 0.00      |                  |
|          | Cashbook / Lloyds Bank 16/07/2025                   | 0.00      |                  |
|          | Unity Bank - current 30/04/2025                     | 19,693.71 |                  |
|          | Unity Bank - savings 16/07/2025                     | 8,297.18  |                  |
|          | Unity Bank - current 16/07/2025                     | 0.00      |                  |
|          |                                                     |           | <b>27,990.89</b> |
|          | Less unrepresented payments                         |           |                  |
|          |                                                     |           | 27,990.89        |
|          | Plus unrepresented receipts                         |           |                  |
| <b>B</b> | <b>Adjusted Bank Balance</b>                        |           | <b>27,990.89</b> |
|          | <b>A = B Checks out OK</b>                          |           |                  |

|          |                                                     |           |                  |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------------|
|          | <b>Bank Reconciliation at 31/05/2025</b>            |           |                  |
|          | Cash in Hand 01/04/2025                             |           | 22,500.95        |
|          | <b>ADD</b><br>Receipts 01/04/2025 - 31/05/2025      |           | 20,091.56        |
|          |                                                     |           | 42,592.51        |
|          | <b>SUBTRACT</b><br>Payments 01/04/2025 - 31/05/2025 |           | 14,448.24        |
| <b>A</b> | <b>Cash in Hand 31/05/2025</b><br>(per Cash Book)   |           | <b>28,144.27</b> |
|          | Cash in hand per Bank Statements                    |           |                  |
|          | Petty Cash 28/02/2025                               | 0.00      |                  |
|          | Cashbook / Lloyds Bank 31/05/2025                   | 0.00      |                  |
|          | Unity Bank - current 31/05/2025                     | 19,847.09 |                  |
|          | Unity Bank - savings 31/05/2025                     | 8,297.18  |                  |
|          | Unity Bank - current 16/07/2025                     | 0.00      |                  |
|          |                                                     |           | <b>28,144.27</b> |
|          | Less unrepresented payments                         |           |                  |
|          |                                                     |           | 28,144.27        |
|          | Plus unrepresented receipts                         |           |                  |
| <b>B</b> | <b>Adjusted Bank Balance</b>                        |           | <b>28,144.27</b> |
|          | <b>A = B Checks out OK</b>                          |           |                  |

|   |                                                   |            |                  |
|---|---------------------------------------------------|------------|------------------|
| A | <b>Bank Reconciliation at 30/06/2025</b>          |            |                  |
|   | Cash in Hand 01/04/2025                           |            | 22,500.95        |
|   | <b>ADD</b>                                        |            |                  |
|   | Receipts 01/04/2025 - 30/06/2025                  |            | 20,148.37        |
|   |                                                   |            | 42,649.32        |
|   | <b>SUBTRACT</b>                                   |            |                  |
|   | Payments 01/04/2025 - 30/06/2025                  |            | 17,991.31        |
|   |                                                   |            |                  |
|   | <b>Cash in Hand 30/06/2025</b><br>(per Cash Book) |            | <b>24,658.01</b> |
| B | Cash in hand per Bank Statements                  |            |                  |
|   | Petty Cash                                        | 28/02/2025 | 0.00             |
|   | Cashbook / Lloyds Bank                            | 31/05/2025 | 0.00             |
|   | Unity Bank - current                              | 30/06/2025 | 16,304.02        |
|   | Unity Bank - savings                              | 30/06/2025 | 8,353.99         |
|   |                                                   |            |                  |
|   |                                                   |            | <b>24,658.01</b> |
|   | Less unrepresented payments                       |            |                  |
|   |                                                   |            |                  |
|   | Plus unrepresented receipts                       |            | 24,658.01        |
|   |                                                   |            |                  |
|   | <b>Adjusted Bank Balance</b>                      |            | <b>24,658.01</b> |
|   | <b>A = B Checks out OK</b>                        |            |                  |