

Minutes of Bramber Parish Council (BPC) Annual Meeting

Held on 6 May 2026

Present:

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

Members of the public:

- District Cllr R Noel

76. Election of Chair of BPC

Cllr A Blakelock was nominated by Cllr S Blakelock and seconded by Cllr M Croker for the position of BPC Chair and this was unanimously agreed.

77. Election of Vice Chair of BPC

Cllr M Croker was nominated by Cllr A Blakelock and seconded by Cllr Bayford for the position of BPC Vice Chair and this was unanimously agreed.

78. Apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from Cllrs Goodall, Green and Kitson.

79. Declarations of interest

None

80. Minutes of previous meeting

Draft minutes for the BPC Ordinary Meeting on 1 April were agreed without amendment and signed by the Chair.

81. Matters Arising

81 a Toilet door replacement and lock – the Clerk reported that the replacement door and new electric lock had been installed. The new lock allows for automatic opening in the morning and closing in the evening. There is an emergency press release button inside the toilet if anyone should get locked in, and an emergency key stored in the key safe if the toilet requires opening from the outside during locked times. The Clerk confirmed that the timer had been reset to summer opening times but that the sign attached to the door did not reflect the true opening hours. She would purchase a new sign.

81 b Toilet cleaner's service contract – the draft BPC Toilet Cleaner Service Contract circulated to Counservices; and to the meeting, was accepted unanimously subject to the following amendments: 3.1.1 and 'Fees payable' of the Service Agreement Specification to read: 'A fee

equivalent to the National Living Wage + 6% would be paid per hour / day for the provision of the agreed services; and that the service contract be dated from 1 May 2026.

82. Public Session

No questions from the floor.

83. To discuss and agree Committee memberships for 2026-7

83 a HALC – Cllrs A Blakelock agreed to sit as the BPC representative.

83 b Joint Parishes Cemetery Committee (JPCC) – Cllr Green and Cllr S Blakelock agreed to sit as the BPC representatives.

83 c Joint Parishes Youth Committee (JPYC)– Cllr Bayford agreed to sit as the BPC representative.

83 d Joint Parishes Climate Action Group (JPCAG) – Cllrs A Blakelock and M Tilley agreed to sit as the BPC representatives.

83 e Neighbourhood Wardens – Cllr S Blakelock and the Clerk agreed to sit as the BPC representatives.

83 f Patient Participation Group – Cllr Bayford agreed to sit as the BPC representative.

83 g Village Hall Committee – Cllr Tilley agreed to sit as the BPC representative.

83 h South Downs National Park (SDNP) – Cllr D Croker agreed to sit as the BPC representative.

83 i Bramber Castle/English Heritage/National Trust – Cllr Green agreed to sit as the BPC representative.

83 Bramber Emergency Plan - Cllr Bayford agreed to sit as the BPC representative.

84 To discuss and agree BPC policies and standards

The Clerk reported that all the BPC policies and standards documents had been updated with the current Clerk's contact details, and the Freedom of Information Policy had been updated to include all the BPC current policies and standards. The current policies and standards documents were unanimously approved and re-adopted 'en bloc'.

The Clerk also presented a draft BPC Donation's Policy and BPC Donation Application form. The Chair proposed, seconded by Cllr Tilley, that Council adopts both Donation's documents and this was unanimously approved.

85 Reports

85 a Horsham District Council – Cllr R Noel updated the Council:

- Council has been very quiet over the last month due to the upcoming District Council elections and the end of the Municipal Year.
- HDC held it's AGM Council Meeting on 29 April. There was reference to Bramber Brooks and the planting of some memorial trees in memory of the late HDC Head of

Sustainability and Green Spaces, Helen Peacock. The new Chair for 2026/27 municipal year is Cllr. Joanne Knowles, Councillor for Cowfold, Shermanbury and West Grinstead.

- Local Plan: Exploratory meetings took place from 21 to 23 April allowing the new inspector, Jonathan Bore, to ask some preliminary questions before the examination starts in September. This was a good-natured set of meetings, but the housing numbers mooted are expectedly high.

This needs to be taken in the context that, as the present plan has taken so long to reeach Regulation 19 inspection (it should have been agreed in 2021), the Inspector is expecting HDC to start another Plan in July to include even higher housing numbers. HDC is looking at an overall increase of up to 40% of the present delivered numbers, with an expectation that it should take quotas from Crawley and the southern coastal areas, meaning Adur and Worthing Districts. However, these numbers will take HDC up to 2040, and the general feeling is that Jonathan Bore appears sound and realistic.

According to HDC planning officers, he did not announce any 'showstoppers', but HDC is probably looking at least one new strategic site of several thousand dwellings to reach its new targets. In the meantime, in the absence of an up to date Local Plan, the balance will be tilted to approving applications. Going forward, under the new National Scheme of Delegation of Planning Functions major applications will continue to be potentially subject to committee scrutiny, but any applications under nine dwellings will not come before HDC Planning Committee.

- Local Government Reorganisation: The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is proceeding with a new four-week public consultation to assess if two modifications to the Brighton model proposal - merging Chichester, Horsham, Mid Sussex, and Crawley into one Unitary body, with Arun, Worthing and Adur as the second unitary council in West Sussex - are acceptable. Although at least two political parties are likely to object, the new County Council's composition will be clear by 8 May after election results are counted.

85 b Joint Parishes Neighbourhood Wardens – The Wardens' April report had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Chair noted that there had been another incident involving a woman with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder which had been reported to the Wardens by the BPC Clerk. The Clerk confirmed that the Police had been called and the woman was re-united with her father following hazardous behaviour at the A283 Bramber/Steyping roundabout.

85 c JPCAG – The Chair reported that she, Cllr M Croker and Cllr Tilley had attended the meeting on 8th April. Greening Steyping, in collaboration with the Joint Parishes Climate Action Group, is showing the film *National Emergency Briefing* on 24 June at 7pm at the Steyping Centre. Geoff Barnard is encouraging all Councillors and residents to attend, and issuing group invitations to local churches, community groups and partnerships. The film is intended as a 'conversation starter' and it includes discussion points. It is not a government project. The chair asked councillors if they were happy that she invited our MP and Katy Bourne on behalf of BPC. The council agreed.

JPCAG also flagged up a site climatehero.me where individuals can assess their own carbon footprint.

85 d JPCC – No meeting.

85 e JPYC – Cllr Bayford reported that there had not been a meeting since the last, but the Youth Leader had decided to stay in post and has been re-instated in her position.

85 f HALC – No meeting.

85 g English Heritage/Bramber Castle – Cllr A Blakelock updated Councillors with Cllr Green’s report:

- The fallen tree on the path out of the Bramber Orchard had been removed so the path is now clear.
- There had been a site meeting on 25 March regarding the drive up to the Castle. An outcome is awaited. It is still unclear where the boundary between the church and National Trust land lies; Church Warden, Phil Hoare, has agreed to look into this. It was also noted that the fence on the path up to the Castle from The Street (which collapsed in April 2024) had still not been repaired.
- Cllr Green and Ali Naylor (of English Heritage) walked around the grounds after the meeting and noted the large amount of surface glass appearing in the area by the curtain wall behind where the large tree had been felled.

85 h Village Hall – Cllr Tilley reported that there had been no meeting, but the AGM would take place on 1 June.

85 i Website – Cllr Tilley confirmed there was nothing to report.

85 j Patient Participation Group – No meeting. There is a “Falls Prevention” talk at The Steyning Centre on 19th May at 2.00pm

85 k SDNP – Cllr D Croker reported that the new SDNP Partnerships Management Plan is now being implemented. She also noted that Maudlyn Farm was for sale and Councillors might be interested in following the sale’s progress.

85 l Bramber Emergency Plan (EP) – Cllr Bayford confirmed that EP Co-ordinator, Mike Corless, had agreed to give a presentation at the next BPC meeting on 3 June. Mike is also due to meet with Bramber Society’s Rachel Burstow to be briefed on using the Society’s email list. At the May’s Bramber Social Rachel will be inviting people to suggest names to add to the residents’ vulnerable persons’ list.

The Clerk confirmed that Mike now had a key to the Emergency Store.

86 Finance and general purposes

86 a Payments for May 2025 – the following payments were unanimously approved:

May payments/invoices to be agreed by BPC	
UBB – Hall hire: meet Upper Beeding Room	£ 36.00
EDF Energy April 26	£25.07*
Nest Pension payment	£13.93*
Toilet Cleaning – Julie Bakter 12 days @13.47– April 26	£161.64

Chichester Payroll – April 26 - BPC2298	£15.00
HMRC (PAYE) – April 26 961/KA55973	£160.07
Clerk salary – April 26	£508.93
Clerk expenses – mileage & proportional phone & WiFi expense & key cutting	£12.69
Bank service charge	£7.00*
WSALC annual sub June26-27	£311.03
Toilet Door – electric lock and emergency release	£852.66

*Paid in month for approval

86 b Reconciled accounts for April 2026 – the reconciled accounts were displayed and agreed unanimously – see appendix a.

86 c BPC S106 grant update for April 2026 – the Clerk displayed the current S106 grant availability figures for BPC. Following discussion, it was agreed that the Clerk should apply for a grant to cover the cost of the new toilet door under section ‘Community Facilities – HDC:91005’ and that she should re-circulate the updated BPC S106 table to Councillors.

86 d Community Assets – the Chair informed Councillors that she had received an email from the HDC Communities Manager, Emma Grundy, confirming that HDC would consider BPC Business Plans for the acquisition of Bramber carpark, bus shelter and toilets. The Council voted in favour of proceeding with these plans.

87. Planning

87 a Planning applications - 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. As the planning application had come in so late it was agreed to agree a response via email.

87 b Other Planning Matters – none

88. Highways and Public Rights of Way (PROW)

88 a Speedwatch – Cllr S Blakelock reported that there had been two half-hour sessions in The Street during April recording a total of 22 ‘offending’ vehicles. This is consistent with previous months. Cllr Tilley suggested an additional speedwatch location by the Beeding Bridge; Cllr S Blakelock pointed out that this would entail a re-application to confirm a new location.

88 b Acquisition of a new Speed Indicating Device (SID) – Following discussion it was agreed that Cllr M Croker and the Clerk would submit a new Community Highways Scheme grant to install a new SID on the northern approach to the Downs Link crossing of the A283.

88 c Renewal of ‘No Cycling’ signs along the Walks For All footpaths – The Clerk displayed images of the current No Cycling signs which were faded and failing to deter cyclists riding along the Walks for All footpath. It was agreed that three new signs needed to be purchased – one for

the path by St Mary's, one for the path by the flyover and a new one with a wooden post by the Walks for All wildlife board approached from Botolphs. The Clerk agreed to source these and liaise with the Chair for installation.

88 d Speed humps along The Street – it was agreed that all the speed humps along The Street are in poor condition and probably no longer required. In particular, with the VAS in place between Beeding Bridge and St Marys, the western most hump serves little purpose. Cllr M Croker agreed to contact WSCC Highways to request that removal is considered.

88 e Downslink summer cut – the Chair confirmed that the Downslink summer cut would take place between 27 June and 10 July 2026.

88 f Entry/exit to western river path leading north from Beeding Bridge – the steps from the riverside path, exiting directly on to the Beeding Bridge, remain a pedestrian hazard. Following a detailed report by Cllr M Croker it was agreed that a new sign should be erected on the NW river bank directing pedestrians away from the bridge exit towards the community orchard ; and that the Clerk requests WSCC Highways to cut back the hedge by the bridge which is currently blocking pedestrians' view.

88g PRoW 3802 (Bostal Road to Coombe Drove) The chair and Cllr M Croker met with 3 Coombe Drove residents. Negotiations are still ongoing.

(Cllrs D & M Croker left the meeting at this point.)

89. Governance

The Clerk drew Councillors attention to the HDC Local Governance Review consultation which would run from 9 May to 27 June. Parish Councils are being encouraged to respond to this consultation so that their desired outcomes can be acknowledged. In the meantime, the Clerk remains engaged with neighbouring parish councils and the potential for future collaboration.

90. Communications

The Chair reported that she had received a telephone request from Roger Potter of the Bramber Society for a donation of £600. This was unanimously approved. The clerk would ask Roger Potter to either provide an email donation request or to fill in a new donation request form.

91. Consultations

See item 89.

92. Correspondence

See item 90.

93. Other Parish matters

Cllr Tilley reported that the Queen's tree was dead. The Chair proposed replacing the tree in the King's Field in the Community Orchard. The Clerk agreed to contact National Trust to request permission to

plant a new tree in the Bramber Community Orchard. This was unanimously agreed, and Cllr Noel agreed to request a free replacement tree from the HDC Queen's Canopy fund.

94. Items for the next agenda

Presentation by the Bramber Emergency Plan Co-ordinator, Mike Corless.

95 Date of next meeting

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

The meeting closed at 9.10pm

Appendix A

Approved by: _____		Date: _____	
<i>Name and Role (RFO/Chair of Finance etc)</i>			
Bank Reconciliation at 30/04/2026			
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2026		22,992.16
	ADD		
	Receipts 01/04/2026 - 30/04/2026		21,186.03
			44,178.19
	SUBTRACT		
	Payments 01/04/2026 - 30/04/2026		11,616.65
A	Cash in Hand 30/04/2026 (per Cash Book)		32,561.54
	Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
	Petty Cash 30/04/2026	0.00	
	Unity Bank - current 30/04/2026	13,194.49	
	Unity Bank - savings 30/04/2026	19,367.05	
			32,561.54
	Less unrepresented payments		32,561.54
	Plus unrepresented receipts		
B	Adjusted Bank Balance		32,561.54
	A = B Checks out OK		

