

Minutes of Bramber Parish Council (BPC) Ordinary Meeting

Held on 17 December 2025

Present:

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

Members of the public:

- District Cllrs R Noel and M Boffey

The Chair pointed out that due to the length of the November meeting, the December agenda includes the additional statement, 'a meeting shall not exceed a period of 2 hours, unless by agreement of the majority of Councillors present' in compliance with current BPC Standing Orders.

The chair also welcomed the Leader of HDC, Cllr M Boffey.

182. Apologies for absence

Cllrs Goodall and Kitson

183. Declarations of interest

None declared.

184. Minutes of previous meetings

The draft minutes of the BPC Ordinary Council Meeting on 12 November 2025, were agreed and signed by the Chair.

185. Public session

No questions from the floor.

186. Matters arising

186 a Toilet/store lock quotes – the Clerk presented three quotes for replacing the toilet door and emergency store locks with BS 3621 insurance compliant locks. It was unanimously agreed to appoint the cheapest quote to carry out the work.

186 b Emergency equipment service - the Clerk presented two quotes for servicing the emergency store equipment. She explained that a third quote had been sought but the contractor had advised not going ahead with a full chargeable quote as parts for three of the items were unlikely to be currently available. It was unanimously agreed to appoint a company which is used by Steyning Parish Council (SPC) and recommended by a local business, to carry out the work, deducting the amount for the strimmer (donated to BPC in summer 2025) which was due to be returned to the donor.

186 c The Bramber/Upper Beeding bridge fence – the Clerk reported that she had spoken with the Upper Beeding Clerk regarding the fence as a 'shared asset'. He had no knowledge/record of

the fence ownership or it being shared between the two parishes. The Clerk said that she would liaise with the previous BPC Chair for further information.

186 d Grit Bins – the Clerk reported that all the parish grit bins that were less than 50% full had now been refilled in time for winter weather.

187. Joint Parishes Climate Action Group (JPCAG)

The Chair reported that the next meeting would take place on 14 January when each parish would share its Climate Action Plan (CAP). She agreed to draw up a draft BPC CAP for agreement at the BPC's January meeting.

188. Emergency Plan (EP)

Cllr Bayford updated the Council:

- The wording of the EP needs updating
- More volunteers are required – Cllr Bayford plans an email via The Bramber Society and posts on *Spotted* local Facebook site
- EP Committee – some members need to be contacted to check they are still available
- Tractor cover would continue to be provided in the event of adverse weather; insurance details are held with SPC

189. Reports

189.a HDC (Horsham District Council) report – Cllr R Noel updated the Council:

- Local Government Reorganisation (LGR): Next May's mayoral elections have been postponed. By 2028 the new Unitary Authority is set to be established prior to Mayoral elections. No information has been forthcoming regarding West Sussex County Council (WSCC) elections. WSCC favours the West Sussex unitary model; HDC favours the Horsham/Mid-Sussex/Crawley model; and Brighton favours the Horsham/Chichester/Crawley model. The final unitary model selection will be made in February or March 2026.
- HDC Full Council has agreed the making of a new Horsham Town Council in 2026 comprising the currently unparished areas of Horsham. It also agreed a draft Annual Plan 2026-27, which hopes to support greener futures within the District; and a new workshop to support forthcoming food waste collection vehicles so the service can be operated smoothly.
- HDC Local Plan – the Inspector has agreed to further discussions around restarting the HDC hearing soon; this is good news for HDC, but it remains to be seen how central Government intends to impose new housing allocations.

Cllr Tilley asked Cllr Boffey to explain the meaning of unparished councils; Cllr Boffey defined these as areas that pay a 'special charge' rather than a council tax and this is voted on by HDC as a whole; unparished councils are mostly controlled by HDC.

Cllr Croker asked for clarification on the current position with neighbourhood plans. Cllr Boffey reported that he had spoken to the HDC Neighbourhood Planning Officer, Norman Kwan, who had confirmed that renewed plans would require a full needs assessment and housing number allocation. However, there will be a new National Planning Framework issued on 16 December

2025 so there is no definitive answer at present. Cllr Noel reminded Councillors that Locality Grant Funding was no longer available to help cover the costs of renewed plans.

189 b SDCP, The White Bridge Link – The Chair reported that the detritus along the path had been cleared and that Land Build would resolve the puddling issue this week.

189 c Neighbourhood Wardens – The Chair confirmed that the November report had been circulated and that there had been one incident in Bramber concerning an elderly man who had been taken ill at the Hub café and who was later visited. The Clerk noted that a new Warden poster had been printed and would be posted on the noticeboards and website.

189 d Joint Parishes Cemetery Committee (JPCC) – Cllr Green reported she had been in contact with the JPCC Clerk, Colette Harber, and a meeting had been arranged for 26 January to re-allocate Committee roles.

189 e Joint Parishes Youth Committee (JPYC) – Cllr Bayford reported that there had been no meeting.

189 f HALC/WSALC – The Chair reported that the newsletter following the WSALC Conference at the Amex Stadium on 24 October had been circulated.

189 g English Heritage/Bramber Castle – Cllr Green reported that an on-site meeting had been arranged for 19 January 2026 at 11am. Cllr Tilley mentioned that the fence on the roadside Castle approach needed repairing. Cllr Green confirmed that this was partly a funding and partly an ownership issue; at the on-site meeting she would take the opportunity to discuss all current issues as well as repairing the approach drive. She also confirmed that she would cover all concerns in her quarterly report due on 20 December.

189 h Village Hall – Cllr Tilley reported that there had been no meeting.

189 i Website – Cllr Tilley reported that there had been no significant changes in website engagement.

189 j Patient Participation Group (PPG) - Cllr Bayford updated the Council following the AGM took place on 17 November:

- The PPG finances are in a good position following a grant by the Wilson Memorial Trust.
- Volunteers are needed for magazine distribution and for the PPG Committee
- There was a meeting on 17 December, and minutes would be circulated once received.

189 k South Downs National Park (SDNP) – Cllr D Croker reported that there would be a Partnership Management Plan issued at the end of December 2025. There are seven draft aims: Nature Recovery; net zero; water stewardship; inclusive access; cultural heritage; and rural prosperity. Cllr D Croker agreed to circulate the draft Plan once issued. She also mentioned that the SDNP is focussing on 'active travel' connecting towns/villages and improving accessibility.

190. Finance and general purposes

190 a The following payments for December 2025 were unanimously agreed:

December payments/invoices to be agreed by BPC	
Ferring Nurseries – winter flower baskets/planter inv 24572	£363.32
EDF Energy Nov 25	£73.00*
UBB – Hall hire: meet £16 Bramber Room – inv BBVH1083	£16.00

Christmas tree	£160.00
Nest Pension payment – back dated April, May, June & Oct, Nov due	£50.05
Chichester Payroll – Nov 25	£15.00
HMRC (PAYE) – Nov 25 = £123.40	£123.40
Toilet Cleaning – Julie Bakter 10 @12.60 – Nov 25	£126.00
Clerk expenses – mileage & proportional phone & WiFi expense	£5.70
Clerk salary – Nov 25	£493.32
Business Stream toilet water supply Aug-Nov 25 inv 9329447	£70.89
Bank service charge	£6.00*
Sterling Power Tools – pick up/delivery emergency equip assessment	£20.00*

*Paid in advance for approval

190 b Reconciled Accounts – The reconciled accounts for November 2025 were unanimously agreed and signed – see appendix A.

190 c BPC Budget update and 2026-27 Precept request - The Clerk distributed hard copy versions of the BPC Draft Budget 2026/27 (version 3) with precept comparisons for 0%, 2.5% and 5% increases. After discussion it was unanimously agreed that the current precept should be increased by 2.5% to £40,231.25, and that the Clerk would submit this request to HDC in time for the January deadline – see Appendix B.

It was also agreed that part of the current Chair's Allowance would be used to buy a 'thank you' gift for the residents who cleaned the toilet walls following the graffiti incident in October 2025.

190 d Donations:

- Village Hall window replacement costs – it was unanimously agreed that as a shared facility BPC would donate a proportional sum of £450 towards the £15,000 window replacement costs.
- Salvation Army - it was unanimously agreed that BPC would donate a sum of £50 following the December carol concert. It was noted that some residents had expressed a preference for the carols to take place outside around the village Christmas tree rather than inside The Castle Inn.

190 e Toilet door replacement cost – As the toilet door has been damaged the Clerk confirmed that she was looking into door replacement costs and this was ongoing. She noted that having agreed the toilet door and store replacement lock contractor, the quote might need to be negotiated down if the new door comes with BS 3621 compliant lock fittings.

191. Planning applications

191 a DC/25/1985 - Sunny Croft, The Street, Bramber - Demolition of a front boundary wall and replacement with a dwarf brick wall, iron railings, and a pedestrian gate (Part Retrospective). It was unanimously agreed 'no objection'.

192. Other Planning matters

192 a It was noted that BPC had agreed 'no objection' to the following planning application since the November meeting: DC/25/1688 - 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 limecrete floor. Cleaning of timbers to remove modern paint (listed building consent). Permeable internal wall insulation to the rear single skin brick wall. Adjustment to the external hard landscaping adjacent to the road to create a more effective water shedding (Listed Building Consent).

193. Highways and Public Rights of Way (PROW)

193 a Speedwatch – Cllr S Blakelock updated the Council: There had been two half-hour sessions undertaken in The Street recording 12 speeding vehicles and one hour-long session in Clays Hill recording 13 speeding vehicles.

193 b Community Highways Scheme (CHS) – Cllr M Croker reported that there were no new updates. The Chair confirmed that CHS would in future be added to the BPC CAP for 2026 as its aims of facilitating walking and cycling, and cutting noise and air pollution, are compatible with those of the CAP.

194. Governance

194 a Asset transfer – The Clerk displayed the recently issued HDC asset transfer application document, explaining that the process had now been ‘formalised’, and that a separate complete application was required for each asset request. The Chair confirmed that the HDC had indicated that it would be looking to retain Bramber Brooks as part of its Parks and Countryside portfolio; but other transferable assets such as the bus shelter/toilet block and the carpark needed more investigation. It was agreed that Cllr Croker should further investigate running costs for the carpark; and to keep asset transfer on the agenda until further information was available.

Cllr Boffey pointed out that no definitive decision had been made regarding Bramber Brooks. He also confirmed that HDC would be running Community Government Review during 2026, looking at parish boundaries and councillor numbers, which could have a bearing on assets and where they are located within parishes.

195. Communications

The Chair reported that a resident had emailed concerning a damaged bench along the river close to Annington pumping station. The Clerk confirmed that this was not on BPC’ asset register and might be privately owned. The Chair agreed that she would contact Cllr Goodall about this as she might know more about the bench.

196. Other Parish matters

The Chair confirmed that the overhanging branches along the Castle Lane to Bramber roundabout cycle/pedestrian pathway had now been cut back following a full complaint by Cllr S Blakelock as well as many previous reports to the WSCC Highways Department.

197. Confidential session

Note: By agreement this was discussed as the final item of the meeting.

198. Consultations

The Clerk informed the Council of two forthcoming consultations and confirmed that she would forward the relevant links for responding to each:

- SDNP Consultation re Advice Note on Retrofitting Historic Buildings – deadline 18 December 2025
- Statutory Consultation on Local Government Reorganisation – deadline 11 January 2026

199. Correspondence

The Chair reported that there would be a meeting regarding the HDC Annual Plan at the Steyning Centre on 11 February 2026 at 6pm. Those wishing to attend should contact the Clerk.

200. Items for the next agenda

Rev Neil Stannard would be addressing the Council at the next meeting. Presentation of the draft BPC Climate Action Plan.

201. Date of next meeting

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

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.

Appendix A



Reconcile all - Nov
25.pdf

Appendix B



Budget 26-27 (draft
3) agreed ^M 2.5^1 †