

Minutes of Bramber Parish Council (BPC) Ordinary Meeting

Held on 4 March 2026

Present:

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

Members of the public:

- None

40. Apologies for absence

Cllrs R Noel, H Bayford, S Green, D Goodall and D Kitson

41. Declarations of interest

None declared.

42. Minutes of previous meetings

The draft minutes of the BPC Ordinary Council Meeting on 4 February 2026, were agreed subject to amendments and signed by the Chair.

43. Public session

No questions from the floor.

44. Matters arising

44 a Toilet door replacement – the Clerk reported that the contractor’s surveyor had visited the site and had raised questions about the viability of installing an automatic electric locking device to the replacement steel door. She checked with the BPC’s regular locksmith who confirmed that he would be able to install an electric lock to the new door, without invalidating the warranty. She has since received the final invoice from the door contractor and, subject to BPC’s agreement, the new door would be installed within four to six weeks.

44 b Asset Register - the Clerk reported that the BPC Asset Register had been amended to show that only two Vehicle Automated Signs (VAS) are owned, instead of three. She also verified that the five *Walks for All* benches were included on the Register and noted that a PDF copy had been forwarded to Cllr Tilley for uploading to the BPC website.

The Chair questioned why current asset replacement values were ‘over-insured.’ The Clerk confirmed that she would check this and update the Council as soon as possible.

44 c Replacement high street bollard – Cllr M Croker reported he was awaiting delivery of the replacement bollard. He also mentioned that another bollard had been damaged which he had managed to mend.

44 d Employment status of BPC toilet cleaner – the Clerk reported that the cleaner had agreed to provide monthly payment invoices to BPC as a ‘freelance contractor’. She had sought advice from the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), the BPC Internal auditor and Cllr Green regarding the cleaner’s status. As a result, in order to protect the Council from any responsibilities to HMRC, it was recommended that BPC creates a Service Agreement, to be signed by both BPC and the cleaner. The Clerk confirmed that Cllr Green’s HR adviser would be able to provide an agreement template which the Clerk would adapt and circulate to Councillors for approval.

45. Emergency Plan (EP)

The Chair reported on behalf of Cllr Bayford:

- Mike Coreless has agreed to take over as the EP coordinator and will complete the EP.
- A post has been published on the Facebook page Spotted, asking for information about local vulnerable individuals. Access to this list would be restricted to Mike, Cllr Bayford, and the Clerk.
- Mike will be arranging a volunteer meeting and training on how to use the emergency water pumps etc, probably through the fire brigade.
- Riparian Rights – a briefing on residents’ Riparian Rights would be arranged at a forthcoming Bramber Social meeting.
- Mike should have access to the emergency store. An emergency store key will be cut and issued to him.

46. Reports

46 a Horsham District Council (HDC) report – Cllr M Croker updated the Council:

- HDC Local Plan: Live streamed hearings for the Local Plan will take place on 21 to 23 and (possibly) 24 April 2026, primarily to discuss housing allocations. These figures are anticipated to reflect the calculation methods set out in the draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), leading to a housing allocation for the district approximately twice as high as in the current plan submission.
- Elections: the WSCC elections will take place on 7 May 2026 with advanced voting being trialled in some divisions. Councillors will be in post for two years with the Unitary Authority taking over in 2028. Current authorities are now coordinating on structures for a smooth transition to the new Unitaries.
- Budget: A 2.94% HDC budget increase has been agreed, and the Capitol renovation project is still going ahead within budget.
- Footpath blocking: The Green group brought up the issue of parking on footways (raised by the Macular Society in Storrington). The Government is encouraging local authorities to take measures to prevent parking on footways and HDC is actively encouraging WSCC to enforce this.

46 b Neighbourhood Wardens – the Chair updated the Council:

- The Wardens had attended a Joint Parishes Primary Youth Club and had been very impressed.
- Age UK will be focussing on the local area supporting isolated and vulnerable residents.
- The Clerk had reported a distressed young woman she had encountered in Castle Lane. The Police were informed and the woman, who was suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, was successfully reunited with her boyfriend.
- The Wardens have alerted residents to be wary of ‘scam traders’ who have been cold calling across the parishes.

46 c Joint Parishes Climate Action Plan (JPCAP) – the Chair confirmed that the 14 January meeting minutes had been circulated. The next meeting would be on 8 April. Cllr M Croker reported that the Community Highways application for a ‘refuge’ at the Castle Lane A283 crossing has been successful and would now proceed to the feasibility stage. He cautioned that this was a ‘first hurdle’ and the construction might prove too costly if alterations to the road were required.

46 d Joint Parishes Cemetery Committee (JPCC) – Cllr S Blakelock reported that the JPCC Secretary, Collette Harber, would be submitting a summary of the Cemetery Committee’s work for each parish to post on their websites.

46 e Joint Parishes Youth Committee (JPYC) – the Chair reported on behalf of Cllr Bayford:

- Sessions are proving very popular, especially with juniors, and it is hoped that these children will eventually ‘filter’ into the older age group; there are now three Thursday sessions running for six-to-eight-year-olds.
- The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are now finalised.
- Monthly reports will be sent out from now on, and a leader report every 12 weeks.

46 f HALC / WSALC – The Chair updated the Council following a February meeting:

- Andrew Metcalfe from Squires Planning, stressed that in future written planning application comments will need to be robust and thorough as there will no longer be the opportunity to present cases in person.
- HDC asset transfer – it is likely that HDC will wish to retain ownership of profitable assets and transfer those that are not.
- Parish councils are being urged to draw up business plans, outlining what they have achieved over the past three years and what they hope to achieve in the three years.

46 g English Heritage/Bramber Castle – no meeting/update.

46 h Village Hall – Cllr Tilley - no meeting/update.

46 i Website – Cllr Tilley reported that there had been 90 visits during February, a decrease from January. He has set up a new page focussing on Bramber ‘100 years ago this month’.

46 j Patient Participation Group (PPG) – no meeting/update.

46 k SDNP - Cllr D Croker reported that the SDNP Parishes Meeting was taking place on 4 March and that a recording and minutes would be circulated once available.

47. Finance and general purposes

47 a The following payments for March 2026 were unanimously agreed:

March payments/invoices to be agreed by BPC	
UBB – Hall hire: meet £20 Bramber Room + £4 for January (price rise)	£24.00
EDF Energy Feb 26	£25.07*
Nest Pension payment	£11.61*
Toilet Cleaning – Julie Bakter 12 days @12.60 – Feb 26	£151.20
Chichester Payroll – Feb 26 - BPC2258	£15.00
HMRC (PAYE) – Feb 26 961/KA55973	£435.10**
Clerk salary – February 26	£508.93
Clerk expenses – mileage & proportional phone & WiFi expense	£5.70
Bank service charge	£6.00*
JPYW – BPC contribution 205-26	£5021.00
Replacement toilet door – deposit	£1006.82
HDC Dog-bin emptying	£176.80
CiLCA registration fee	£495.00
Glasdon bollard replacement SI932859	£305.55

*Paid in month for

approval

**Includes backdated NI payments £275.03

47 b Reconciled Accounts – The reconciled accounts for February 2026 were unanimously agreed and signed – see appendix A.

48. Planning applications

The Chair noted that BPC had supported DC/26/0115 - The Corner House, 8 The Ridings, Bramber - Surgery to 1x Beech (TPO) via email between meetings.

49. Other Planning matters

49 a HDC Parish and Neighbourhood Councils meeting - the Chair updated the Council following the meeting held on 11 February at the Steyning Centre, attended by six local parishes.

- Barbara Childs, Head of Place and Cllr Martin Boffey, Leader of HDC presented to the meeting.
- Cllr Boffey talked about the HDC Local Plan, supporting people and leisure with leisure centre contracts, reducing violence against women and girls providing more safe spaces, nature recovery, food waste recycling and devolution.
- Local Plan – HDC has a new planning inspector, who has previously inspected Mid-Sussex. It is hoped the new inspector will be more understanding of local concerns.
- Draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – the NPPF is currently open for consultation until 10 March.
- Neighbourhood Plans – Barbara Childs advised all parishes to wait until the HDC Local Plan is adopted before revising their Neighbourhood Plans.
- It was suggested that parishes consider amalgamating on certain projects to create a 'critical mass,' which would make it easier to secure project grants.

49 b BPC response to the Government NPPF consultation – the Chair noted the pertinent comments made by the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE). Cllr M Croker had also received some comments raised by Vicci Johnson on behalf of the JPCAG. It was agreed that the Chair would circulate the CPRE response, and that Cllr M Croker would respond on behalf of BPC.

50. Highways and Public Rights of Way (PROW)

a Speedwatch – Cllr S Blakelock reported that there had been an increase in speeding along The Street. No sessions had been undertaken in Clays Hill.

b PRoW 3802 (Bostal Road to Coombe Drove) – Cllr M Croker reported that there had been communication between the Coombe Drove residents' group and WSCC, and that the WSCC PRoW Officer will be engaging with the owners of the property at the end of the twitten at the foot of Bostal Road. In the meantime, Cllr M Croker agreed to contact WSCC to arrange for the vegetation along the Clays Hill path to be cut back as it is currently difficult to pass, particularly with a push chair or mobility scooter.

c Acquisition and positioning of a new Vehicle Activated Signal (VAS) – Cllr M Croker updated the Council: there are two positions under consideration – between the Downslink crossing and the

A283 Bramber roundabout, and between the A283 Bramber roundabout and the A283 Castle Lane crossing.

For the Downslink crossing, the VAS would need to be positioned 250 m from the Bramber roundabout before the ingress of trees and shrubs, with the equivalent on the North-bound side. Cllr M Croker has arranged to meet with the Assistant Area Highways Manager on 18 March to assess both sites.

d Relocation of Mobile VAS (MVAS) – Cllr M Croker reported that Upper Beeding Parish Council had gifted its share of the joint MVAS to BPC. He proposed that in future the MVAS is left in one position. Following discussion, it was agreed that the MVAS be moved permanently to outside St Mary's House in The Street.

e White lines in the carpark – the Clerk confirmed that the HDC Parking team has agreed to re-paint the white lines in the carpark and replace the coach bay lines with car bay lines. The current lead time is six to eight weeks.

F Cllr Kitson has noted that a “No cycling” sign had been taken down at the Botolphs end of the Walks for All. The chair said she would investigate.

51. Governance

51 a Asset transfer – the Clerk confirmed that there had been no update since HDC issued its Parish Community Asset Transfer Process document.

52. Communications

The Chair displayed the draft BPC news article for the April edition of *Your Mag*, and this was agreed unanimously.

53. Consultations

As per item 49 a.

54. Correspondence.

The Chair reported that she had circulated an update letter from Andrew Griffiths MP, representing Arundel and South Downs.

55. Other Parish matters

- Guest speaker/s for the BPC Annual Parish Meeting in May – the Chair suggested a presentation on the future of Bramber Brooks and Saltings Field. Cllr M Croker requested that the Clerk contact Pete Crawford, HDC Head of Parks and Countryside, to arrange this.
- WSCC Candidate Event – the Chair informed the Council that there would be a candidate ‘hustings’ event on 16 March, 6 to 7.30pm via Teams.

56. Items for the next agenda

The Clerk agreed to present an update on the progress of her CiLCA course training.

57. Date of next meeting

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

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm.

Appendix A - below

Name and Role (RFO/Chair of Finance etc)

	Bank Reconciliation at 28/02/2026		
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2025		22,500.95
	ADD Receipts 01/04/2025 - 28/02/2026		46,874.37
			69,375.32
	SUBTRACT Payments 01/04/2025 - 28/02/2026		38,266.78
A	Cash in Hand 28/02/2026 (per Cash Book)		31,108.54
	Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
	Petty Cash 28/02/2026	0.00	
	Cashbook / Lloyds Bank 28/02/2026	0.00	
	Unity Bank - current 28/02/2026	8,344.07	
	Unity Bank - savings 28/02/2026	22,764.47	
			31,108.54
	Less unrepresented payments		
			31,108.54
	Plus unrepresented receipts		
B	Adjusted Bank Balance		31,108.54
	A = B Checks out OK		