

PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held at Pulborough Village Hall on Monday,

26th January 2026 at 6:00 pm.

Councillors present: Cllrs Lauren Bailey, Jonathan Campbell (Vice Chair), Paul Clarke, Sharon Curd (Chair), Jeannie Esdaile, Ian Hare, Elizabeth Hunt, Andrada Labuschagne, Jilly Marcuson, Frank Riddle and Lissette Trembling.

Officers: Oliver Last (Clerk)

Also Present: Neighbourhood Warden Lottie

Members of the Public: 4

The Chair welcomed everyone and gave a safety announcement.

FC091. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Andrew Perry, Ruth Court, Sandra Martin, Len Ellis Brown (HDC) and Charlotte Kenyon (WSCC).

FC092. Declarations of interest

The Chair reminded all present that declarations of interest still stand (as defined by the Localism Act 2011). There were no declarations of interest.

There were no declarations of interest.

FC093. Public forum and questions

There were no questions from the public.

FC094. Minutes of the Council meeting held on 24th November 2026

It was resolved to approve the minutes of the Council meeting held on 24th November 2025 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

FC095. Reports

To receive a report from:

i. Chair's update

The Christmas Fair held on 5th December was well attended, with approximately 250 people from the community taking part. Sincere thanks go to everyone involved in organising, setting up, running, and clearing away this now well-established annual event, with a special mention to Jon for his role as Santa.

Unfortunately, the planned Pulborough Traders event on 4th December 2025 did not take place. However, the newly formed Lower Street Association, led by Oly Barnsley and including both traders and residents, will be meeting in early February to plan future events and initiatives to support local businesses and improve the Lower Street area.

As we look ahead to spring, both the Community Garden Group and the Allotment Team are arranging meetings to discuss plans for the upcoming growing season. These volunteer-led groups do fantastic work to enhance our village's green spaces, and new volunteers are always welcome—no experience necessary and all equipment provided. Please speak to me or Elizabeth if you are interested in joining.

In Nutbourne, Cllrs and residents organised a bramble pull on 18th January at Nutbourne Common, helping to clear space for heather and bluebells and creating new habitats for wildlife. Many thanks to Jilly for leading this successful and sociable event.

Finally, a large branch fell from a tree in the recreation ground last week. The tree is currently being assessed for safety, and we await a condition report to determine next steps. Updates on other ongoing projects will be provided later in the meeting.

Cllr Hare updated the council informing them that last week GACC joined forces with CAGNE, and a judicial review took place. Ian will update the council when he hears more.

ii. Horsham District Council

Cllr Clarke reported that the council's core spending power has been reduced by 4.3% which equates to £1 million cutback, with a three-year settlement in place, while overall costs have increased by £5 million, including additional expenses such as food waste management. Council Tax increases were noted, with Horsham District Council (HDC) rising by 2.8%, and the capital budget spend is set at £35 million over the next two years. London Gatwick initiative providing a significant platform for local producers is being promoted by HDC. The Capitol Theatre is currently closed for maintenance and refurbishment until November 2026.

A planning application has been submitted to convert a former ambulance station into a food waste facility.

An update is expected in March regarding the LGR and the unitary set up, and there is a possible judicial review of Brighton's proposal for five unitary authorities. Electors have agreed to postpone elections scheduled for April/May for county council, with a possible District Council election in 2027, a shadow authority operating 2027–2028, and a full unitary authority takeover with mayoral elections in 2028. HDC councillors have received questions regarding current planning applications and the pressure to process them, and our Planning Committee is advised to submit representations on applications requiring particular attention.

iii. West Sussex County Council

Apologies were received from Cllr Charlotte Kenyon.

iv. Pulborough and District Community Care Association (PDCCA)

Isla Moran gave a brief report outlining recent activities, including the successful Christmas market and the ongoing befriending scheme, which supports the local community by visiting individuals and helping them to join various groups. The scheme is providing support to a total of 75 individuals.

Lunches at the village hall continue every other week, with an art table proving popular. The "Cooking with Confidence" initiative has been adapted to focus on supporting small groups of six children, with sessions now held on Wednesdays from 3:30 to 4:30pm. The village transport service has assisted 167 passengers, making 718 journeys with the help

of 25 dedicated volunteer drivers. The weekly “Pop In” session at the library remains well attended. The community pantry delivered 30 Christmas hampers over the festive period, and a toy appeal resulted in over 100 toys being distributed to local children. The Rising Sun public house concert raised £400 for local good causes. On 19th February, HDC will be providing safeguarding training for PDCCA volunteers. The group has also been nominated for the King’s Volunteers Award and the High Sheriff Awards.

v. Pulborough Community Partnership (PCP)

No report received.

vi. Nutbourne Residents Association

Brian White provided an update, highlighting ongoing highways concerns. He reported on a recent meeting with the West Sussex County Council (WSSC) Highways team, during which they walked the area to identify issues and discuss the placement of Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs). Three issues have now been resolved, but they are still waiting for a report regarding the SIDs and their proposed locations, with one company being mentioned in relation to this project. Nutbourne’s defibrillator will be upgraded, and the telephone box has been fully restored as requested by residents thanks to the local community and the Neighbourhood Wardens. Brian also noted that the Annual General Meeting (AGM) took place yesterday and expressed thanks to cllrs who joined the meeting. Regarding the Girder Bridge DC/26/0010 planning application, residents have been advised to submit their comments via HDC’s online planning portal.

vii. Neighbourhood Warden and Community Engagement Update

Lottie Torp updated the council on several ongoing matters, including the reporting of potholes, and confirmed that these issues have been raised with the relevant authorities. An infographic summarising recent activities has been prepared, shared with cllrs, and will be posted on social media for wider community awareness. The report highlighted support for 41 vulnerable individuals and the identification of 74 hazards. Three projects are currently underway: refurbishment of the Nutbourne phone box (now completed), creation of a plinth/platform for letter box toppers, and launching Dungeons and Dragons sessions as part of the parish Youth Programme.

There have been 11 engagements with the police and 48 incidents of antisocial behaviour recorded. Lottie also noted that a follow-up with WSSC Highways is required regarding the status of the remaining flags hung on lampposts around the village.

FC096. Committee Reports

The following reports from Committees were received.

i. Planning Committee

No update from planning was given.

ii. Finance and Policy Committee

At the latest Finance and Policy Committee meeting, members noted that the council's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders needed to be updated to adopt the latest model versions provided by NALC, in response to recommendations from the interim internal audit. These revised documents are intended to strengthen the council's governance and financial controls. It was agreed that the updated Financial Regulations and Standing Orders would be considered in detail and formally adopted later in the meeting.

The committee also discussed the recommending of the draft budget and precept proposal to Full Council for approval, reaffirming the importance of robust financial management and adherence to the council's adopted procedures.

iii. Recreation and Open Spaces Committee

The Recreation and Open Spaces Committee reported that the bund is being checked regularly to ensure its ongoing effectiveness. Approval has been given for the St Mary's School marathon event to take place on the recreation ground.

The committee also noted that the Tree Committee continues to meet every other month to address tree-related matters. Youth activities were discussed, with it noted that accommodating pickleball on the MUGA remains challenging. Allotment holders will be contacted about the removal of the Leylandii trees and sheds are being offered to allotment holders before removal. The committee is also considering options for replacing play equipment in the Masons Way play area. Questions were raised regarding the prevalence of honey fungus and the selection of suitable replacement tree species which will be discussed in future meetings.

FC097. Working Group

i. Local Plan Referendum

The Deputy Clerk has informed the working group of some training which is being held on 2nd March 2026 regarding the Neighbourhood plan. A meeting will be held later to update the council on the changes.

ii. Pavilion Redevelopment Working Group Update

The Clerk provided an update, noting that the current community survey regarding the redevelopment is now live and will close at the end of this week. A further survey may be scheduled once the working group has reviewed the results of the current consultation. The Clerk also reported that he is meeting with another roofing contractor in an effort to arrange necessary repairs to the Sports Pavilion roof.

iii. Youth programme initiative.

Cllr Curd updated the council informing them that the Music Programme, delivered in partnership with Macklin's, is progressing well. A launch day for prospective students will be held at Macklin's on Tuesday 17th February, offering a "pop in and play" session where tutors will be available to give young people a taster on various instruments, with the aim of enrolling them for lessons. Two students are already on the waiting list, and lessons will commence once all safeguarding, DBS checks, and necessary paperwork have been completed. An electric guitar and amplifier have been purchased, with further instrument acquisitions to be made according to the specific needs of enrolled students. There is also interest from students in learning sound production and lighting, recognised as important skills in the modern music industry. Additionally, a partnership has been established with the West Chilton Brass Band to develop a youth brass band, which is currently in the early planning stages. Plans are also underway to launch a youth singing group after the February half-term. Other initiatives under consideration for the youth programme include encouraging young people to become more involved with the memorial garden and allotment plots, potentially in connection with the Duke of Edinburgh scheme. Further updates on these and other emerging ideas will be provided as the programme develops.

iv. Transport and Infrastructure Update

There was no update given.

v. Pulborough Community Land Trust (CLT)

The Clerk provided an update on the current position of the Pulborough Community Land Trust (PCLT), noting that the group has met recently and progress is being made. Information was shared regarding the acquisition of new land, and the Clerk advised that further details are awaited from the Solicitor, who is being actively chased for a response.

It was **resolved** to note the updates.

FC098. Budget

The budget for the forthcoming financial year was presented to the council by Cllr Clarke and the Clerk, who explained the budget process and the decisions that had been made. Cllr Clarke reported that the Finance and Policy Committee had reviewed the budget in detail, considering each line item, and had agreed with the final version now presented. Cllr Clarke formally proposed the adoption of the budget, which was seconded by Cllr Bailey.

The Council unanimously **resolved** to approve the budget for the financial year 2026/27 as recommended by the Finance & Policy Committee, having considered the estimates and supporting reports provided by the Clerk/RFO

FC099. Precept

The Clerk presented the proposed precept to the council, confirming that it reflects the requirements of the agreed budget and ensures alignment with the council's financial planning and statutory obligations. Cllr Clarke proposed the precept increase of 5.5%, which was seconded by Cllr Campbell.

The council **resolved** to raise the precept by 5.5% which equates to a Band D rise of 4.34% required to meet the agreed budget. The Clerk/RFO was instructed to forward the precept requirement to HDC.

FC0100. Resilience Plan

The updated document has been sent to HDC for their input. It was noted that further contributions and minor adjustments are to be incorporated, following feedback from HDC and other stakeholders.

FC0101. RMTEA

The Clerk provided an update on a new business-led partnership that brings together the rural and market towns of South Horsham. The Clerk informed the council that the business in the area will be asked for their input as well as the towns and parishes. The deputy Clerk is starting to get involved in the project.

FC0102. Office Move Update

The Clerk presented a recently received quote for building work required to make the proposed new area suitable for relocating the council office. It was noted that further detail is needed, as the quote must be separated from the village hall costs for clarity. The council also discussed the proposed rent increase for the new office, with the Clerk providing an explanation of the current office rent and room hire costs.

The council **resolved** to agree to the new rent and to proceed with the relocation process, expressing a strong intention to move to the new premises once all costs have been clearly established.

FC0103. Neighbourhood Warden Agreement

The Clerk issued the council with the new Neighbourhood Warden agreement and highlighted that it includes a TUPE process for the wardens when the new Unitary authority comes into place. The Finance Committee discussed this and resolved to enter into the Partnership Agreement 2026-29 for the Neighbourhood Wardens, subject to receiving written confirmation from HDC that signing the agreement does not commit the Council to the TUPE process.

The Clerk informed the council that he had received confirmation from HDC that this agreement did not commit the council to the TUPE process.

It was **resolved** to sign the agreement.

FC0104. Interim Internal Audit

The council discussed the advice received from the Internal Auditor to adopt the new model Standard Orders and Financial Regulations, bringing the council up to model standards. This was presented and discussed at the Finance and Policy meeting and they resolved to adopt the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations as presented, to govern the business and financial administration of the Council once the recommendation had been taken to Full Council.

It was **resolved** to adopt the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations as recommended by the Finance and Policy Committee.

FC0105. Finance

i. Detailed Income & Expenditure

Cllrs reviewed the latest bank statements and resolved to acknowledge the Council's current financial position.

ii. Update from the Finance Committee

Previously received.

iii. Payments

The payments were circulated and signed off.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 19:55