

# **PARISH OF PULBOROUGH**

## **You are invited to the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF ELECTORS**

The Annual Parish Meeting will take place on **Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 6.00pm**, at the Village Hall. The Chair of the Meeting will be the Parish Council Chair, Cllr Sharon Curd

Electors and residents of the Parish of Pulborough are invited to attend to discuss matters of interest to the parish.

After the meeting, please join the Parish Council for tea/coffee and biscuits.

*Sharon Curd*

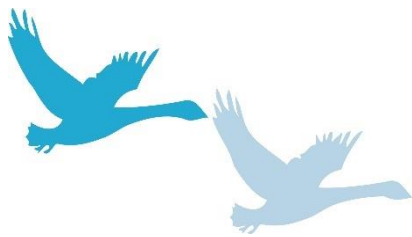
*Cllr Sharon Curd  
Chair of Pulborough Parish Council  
16th May 2025*

### **AGENDA**

- 1.** Welcome and introductions by Chairman.
- 2.** To approve the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024\*.
- 3.** To receive the Annual Report of the Council, including Chair's Report, Committee Reports and Financial Report with statement of unaudited accounts for year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025\*\*.
- 4.** Question and answer session with Electors of the Parish.

\*Available at [www.pulboroughparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.pulboroughparishcouncil.gov.uk) and at the meeting

\*\*To be presented at the meeting



PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL  
*Working together for a better future*

## PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

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### **MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL** **HELD ON THURSDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2024 AT THE VILLAGE HALL**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs: Ellis-Brown (Chair), Clarke, Court, Curd, Esdaile, Hare, Hunt, Martin, Marcusson, Mote, Riddle & Trembling

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr H Quenault (Clerk)  
Mrs B Nobbs (Deputy Clerk)

#### ***The meeting opened at 7:30***

**1. Introduction by the Chair of the Parish Council**

The Chair welcomed attendees and introduced the meeting.

**2. Special Reports**

Due to Maria Lee being absent, the report was read out by the Clerk.

The report summarised the overwhelming community support of the Pantry which has now helped an extraordinary amount of people who were and are in need while also battling food waste.

**3. Minutes**

Members **RESOLVED** to agree and approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2023 as a true and accurate record of the proceedings and the Chair signed them.

**4. To receive the Parish Council Annual report**

Members and attendees received the Parish Annual Report presented by the Chair of the Council.

#### **Annual Report by the Chair of the Parish:**

The Parish Council has accomplished a great deal this year, thanks to the immense contributions of everyone involved. The Chair expressed thanks to all the volunteers, Council Members and staff for their dedication. Although the coming year may be slower whilst we take stock, it is crucial to continue working together. We have finalised the plans for replacing our MUGA work is due to commence in August 2024. The New Sports Pavilion is progressing well, and work is due to commence in April 2027. Following the remarkable success of last year's Christmas Fair, we plan to hold a similar event again this year. Our Community Allotment is also making substantial progress; volunteers have collected wooden pallets, and new raised beds are ready for composting. Cllr Esdaile kindly organised an afternoon for children to learn about our trees, which was an enormous success.

#### **Recreation & Open Spaces Report by the Chair of Recreation & Open Spaces:**

This year has been challenging, especially with Sussex Clubs for Young People folding and leaving us without youth support. Despite this, we successfully organised a skate

event during the February half-term. Cllr Hunt has been conducting after-school cookery classes and has secured a new oven as a donation for the classes. Progress on the community allotment is going well, with volunteers working diligently and two companies now sponsoring a raised bed. The Memorial Garden won the RHS award for the best community garden. The BT Garden is now well-established and Horsham District Council has granted permission to re-wild the verges of Lower Street car park, leading to much upcoming work. We are planning an open day for all our gardens within the next month.

Planning Report provided by the Clerk:

This year has been exceptionally challenging. Horsham has noted significant improvement in our Parish's strength and the quality of our comments, thanks to training that helped us better understand the decision-making processes of the Horsham District Council. Earlier this year, we expanded the Planning Committee, resulting in a broader range of perspectives. The Clerk expressed thanks to the Planning Committee for their hard work. The Clerk also mentioned the lack of progress of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Finance Report provided by the Clerk:

With the Clerk's experience, we have carefully managed our finances, and the Clerk is pleased with the current state of our accounts. We are now up to date with everything, and the detailed accounts have successfully passed the internal audit, along with the risk register, asset register and within the time allotted. Last year, we saw an increase in expenditure and income, so we ended this year with a balanced budget. Notably, we had to increase the precept on Band D by 5.74%, which amounts to a rise of ten pence.

The Chair thanked the Clerk and Deputy Clerk for their commitment and work.

The Clerk reported that the work will commence around April 2027 for the new Sports Pavilion and that a new Muga would be built around August 2024.

## **5. Question & Answer Session**

The Chair opened the question & answer session.

A request was made for an announcement to be made for the late Chair Lawrie Ellis to be remembered at the next appropriate meeting – *This would be facilitated at the beginning of the next Full Council Meeting*

Why has no mention been made lately regarding the Pulborough Pier. - *This is a PCP initiative and when they have any further developments they have confirmed it will be brought before Full Council.*

Payments over £500 have not been updated on the website. - *The Clerk will update the website with all the payments over £500 by next week.*

A Council Member made a statement regarding the vague mention of the previous Clerk and wanted her to be acknowledged for the work which she did.

A Council Member made a statement acknowledging that one of the key aims of the new group was to produce a new Emergency and Resilience plan. It was asked why this had not happened. - *The Chair advised there is not a new Resilience Plan in place, and this will come back to Full Council to work on.*

A statement was made surrounding potholes in Church Place being repaired; the situation has worsened. There are now 2 deep holes, with additional crack appearing. Alarming, at the bottom rats have taken up residence, the signage is regularly vandalised and the risk of falling posing a significant safety hazard. - *The Clerk has confirmed that the issue has been documented with photographs and reported to WSCC, and that Cllr Clarke has just emailed the Chief of Highways to hopefully get this matter resolved.*

What is the status of the neighbourhood plan and the village design statement? Planning South committee members have said it's outdated. In 2018 the plan was reviewed so that buildings cannot be built in conservation areas, this seems to have been ignored by HDC Planning Department. Concerns are growing that the neighbourhood plan will fail. The status of the neighbourhood plan and village design statement has come under scrutiny. Planning South committee members have deemed it outdated, despite a review in 2018 intended to prevent construction in conservation areas—a directive seemingly ignored by the HDC planning department. Concerns are growing that the neighbourhood plan may fail. While some neighbourhood plans are advancing smoothly, our plan is encountering unique challenges, particularly regarding water neutrality. We might reach Regulation 16, which requires submission to HDC and an examiner's review. - *We are prepared for a public vote, and the Chair has announced that a meeting on the neighbourhood plan will be scheduled with HDC soon.*

St Crispin's is the subject of a planning application to be decided by Planning South Committee at HDC on Tuesday, May 21, 2024. There is deep concern regarding this. - *Dr Andy Tilbrook and Cllr. Esdaile will attend the meeting to make comment on the development and bring attention to the concerns.*

Parishioners are concerned about the prominent buildings in the village which are covered in graffiti, it was asked if the PPC can put any pressure on the District Council to tidy them up. – *The Clerk has contacted the developers. The Clerk is happy to contact compliance to put pressure on the District Council regarding the state of the buildings.*

A statement was made that it was disappointing that Cllr. Kenyon was not present. A question was asked about any progress regarding the work on Church Hill – *this is currently stalled due to legal issues with the landowners. However, it was noted that the presence of fewer HGVs due to the traffic lights has been beneficial.*

***The meeting closed at 8:21.***

.....Chairman

.....Date

## **Chair's Report to the Parish including Planning & Services and Recreation & Open Spaces Reports 2024/25**

Pulborough Parish Council, together with our staff and community volunteers, has achieved another solid year addressing community needs. Thanks to our combined efforts we are making a real difference for residents and living our vision of working with our community to create a thriving Parish for all. A huge thank you goes out to Councillors, staff, volunteers, community members and everyone who continues to help make this happen.

During the last year we have seen a few personnel changes among our staff and Councillors but we have continued to ensure a 'business as usual' service, including passing our annual financial and policy audits, overseeing local governance and ensuring community needs were met. The Council continued to engage with residents through regular public committee meetings, ensuring transparency and providing an opportunity for them to directly address Councillors.

We have recently recruited a new Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer, Oliver Last. The Parish Clerk is a pivotal member of Parish Council team, wearing many hats and fulfilling a wide range of responsibilities. Oliver is joining at an exciting time as we move forward on key projects. Grateful thanks go to our locum clerk, Paul Richards and staff for their support during the recruitment period.

A new Grounds and Biodiversity Officer has recently started and is already getting good feedback.

We have continued to increase the number of community volunteers but we always need more! It's vital that we remain committed to offering opportunities that encourage people of all ages and backgrounds to join us where they can as staff, Councillors and volunteers so we can do more, be fully representative of our community and continue delivering on our strategic priorities. We currently have two Councillor vacancies.

Beyond personnel shifts, we've tackled various local concerns. Extreme weather events have prompted flood alerts in the Horsham District, reinforcing our focus on community resilience. Plans have continued to be put in place preparing the community for emergencies, ensuring local infrastructure can withstand challenges, and to support residents during crises.

In addition, the Council has been actively working on many tactical initiatives to enhance community facilities, sustainability, and local engagement. These are:

### **Community Hub**

- **Pulborough Sports & Social Pavilion** – The council has been collaborating with stakeholders to plan a new community hub that meets the needs of the community ensuring modern and improved facilities for residents and sports teams.

## Sports

- **The MUGA** has been refurbished with a substantial grant from the Football Association and now provides a safe state-of-the-art facility for a range of sports including football and netball. Teams can now easily book and pay for sessions online. And with an active marketing campaign planned, we'll also extend its sports appeal to a wider audience by offering tennis.

## Community Projects

- **The Pulborough Pantry** celebrated its first birthday and has firmly cemented its place at the heart of the community saving 12,000 kg of food from landfill while helping local families to stretch their budgets during the ongoing cost of living crisis. It has built close partnerships with local supermarkets, Horsham Matters and a loyal volunteer team. Community volunteer Maria Lee, a founder of the Pantry, was shortlisted for a HDC Volunteers Award last year for her tireless efforts in supporting both the Pantry and numerous events for our community.
- **Little Monkeys Pre-School Playgroup** – we've supported this group under our umbrella by funding the cost of the weekly hall hire and seen regular attendance levels of 25 – 30 children. 85% of these live in Pulborough with a few from Storrington and Fittleworth. This is a valued service which will continue through 2025/26.

## Greener Pulborough

Our initiatives are showing impressive results thanks to formidable efforts of our groundsman, Councillors and community volunteers. Maintenance and improvement of public spaces, including parks and recreational areas, have been prioritised.

- **Community Allotment** - In its first year, the allotment produced a wide range of fruit, vegetables and herbs in sufficient quantities to reward their green fingered team of Councillors and community volunteers and give the surplus to the Pantry to distribute to our community. The community allotment also received the welcome donation of a new wheelbarrow from the Rotary Club of Storrington and Pulborough District.
- **Community Gardens** – These are lovingly tended by a talented volunteer team. They have created some beautiful garden areas from scratch turning our village into a riot of colour during Spring and Summer. They are enriching our village by providing valuable new havens for nature and welcome spaces for reflection in the Lower Street area. Some of this work has been supported by the Sussex Wildlife Trust, Wild Pulborough and HDC and will continue to open up new opportunities. Last year our community gardens were awarded a Thriving (Level 4) award in the RHS South and South East in Bloom – It's Your Neighbourhood category.
- **Nutbourne Common** – Councillors and volunteers have diligently fought against rampant brambles with regular 'bramble pulls'. These efforts have been praised by South Downs National Park and contribute to making Nutbourne Common a walkers' paradise and safe haven for nature.

- **Rivermead Nature Reserve, Pocket Park and our recreation grounds** - These are all benefitting from the laser focus of our new groundsman and bio diversity officer. In a very short time, he has transformed these areas and it's not gone unnoticed. So many residents have complimented his efforts.
- **Repair Cafes** – Residents were invited to come and learn how to mend and upcycle clothing and textiles. These sessions have led to a close working relationship with the Pulborough-based Mary How Trust, supporting them to raise vital funds for their lifesaving work.
- **Pulborough Shedders** - Now in their second year of operation, are working closely with us to achieve their dream of their own 'shed' within a new community education facility surrounded by community gardens. Recent data shows that with our aging population comes the need to tackle social isolation and safe community spaces where people of all abilities can help each other with projects or just chat are crucial. They regularly attract 15 – 20 community members to attend their twice weekly sessions and many more would come if they had more space. We continue to support their search for new temporary accommodation and ultimately to provide them with their own 'shed' as part of a new community hub project.

## Recreation

- **Recreation Ground Playground Repaint** – Deputy Clerk Bev corralled a small team of Councillors and community volunteers to help prepare and repaint the children's playground equipment in three days. With only the cost of the paint falling on the precept, valuable funds were saved and new skills learned. Local parents praised the job done.
- **Carpenters Meadow Playground Refurbishment** – New equipment installed has provided a safer and more stimulating playing environment for younger residents thanks to funding from HDC.

## Events

- **Devolution** – we hosted a town hall meeting discussing local government devolution and the future of governance in Sussex with leaders from Horsham District Council in March 2025.
- **Pultopia** - our exciting new community music festival took place in July 2024. Organised by team of Councillors and community volunteers, the festival delivered live music, food, drink, and family-friendly entertainment, all while raising funds for local causes. It also returned a small profit which was donated to the Pantry.
- **Christmas Fair** - now in its second year, brought festive cheer and attracted over 300 shoppers to a record number of local vendors, holiday themed stalls and entertainment creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere for residents and visitors alike. Local traders snapped up Christmas trees to festoon their premises giving our village a traditional Christmas feel. This event raised money for local good causes and the Pantry.
- **Remembrance Parade** – Around 300 local residents joined local groups gathered at the Memorial Garden to walk together to St. Marys Church to commemorate our armed forces and fallen heroes at a special outdoor service.
- **Sussex Wildlife Trust – Weald to Waves** – Our event at the Village Hall in November to a packed house of nature lovers helping Sussex Wildlife Trust spread

the word on the importance of controlling non-native invasive species, eliminating water pollution and creating green corridors.

- **Fairtrade** – We continue to be part of the movement to champion Pulborough as a Fairtrade village and hosted their AGM.

## Finance and Policy

Throughout the year, as well as ensuring our statutory accounts continue to be well managed, the Finance and Policy Committee has reviewed all policy documents and relevant risk assessments. The committee also continued to support volunteer schemes and initiatives making a big difference to our community.

## Infrastructure

- **Neighbourhood Plan** – The referendum version of the Pulborough Neighbourhood Plan was finalised in November 2024, but subsequently stopped when the inspector found that HDC had failed in its legal Duty to Cooperate on housing needs and water neutrality. Subject to legal guidance, it's expected that our plan will still go to referendum with further details on the voting process expected to be announced soon
- **Infrastructure and Transport Improvements** – The council has been actively working on an updated plan addressing current and future needs for roads, footpaths and bridleways
- **Neighbourhood Wardens** continue to foster community cohesion and resilience, making Pulborough a safer and more connected place.

## Planning

We have reviewed around 80 planning applications in the last 12 months. This includes new build, alterations to residential and commercial premises and tree work for HDC and SDNP. This is detailed work, and decisions are carefully made. The team work between Councillors and local experts on the application for 160 dwellings and landscaping at New Place Farm is to be particularly commended for the pace, depth and quality of response to a number of concerns.

The Committee is acutely aware of Government plans to increase housing allocation numbers across Horsham District. Any additional allocation for Pulborough has yet to be agreed however the focus for the Committee will be to ensure any new development proposals are supported by the appropriate transport and infrastructure upgrades.

## Next Steps

As well as continuing to deliver on existing projects the following activities and initiatives are planned:

- A new vibrant, inclusive, and engaging **Youth Programme** for young people. This strategy aims to promote youth participation in sports, leisure, cooking,

and play, ensuring they have access to enriching activities that support their physical, mental, and social well-being.

- **Pultopia, Fairtrade** and **Christmas Fair** events
- Move forward with next steps towards redeveloping the **Pulborough Sports & Social Pavilion/Community Hub**
- Hold a referendum on our **Neighbourhood Plan** subject to legal guidance
- Continuing to lobby for an **Infrastructure and Transport Improvements** commensurate with current and future needs
- Launch a **Volunteer Programme**

All of this activity reflects the Council's commitment to community well-being, environmental sustainability, compliance, sound financial governance and local development.

2025/26 will be a busy year as we continue to deliver for you, our community.

## Finance & Policy Year End Report: Chair of Finance

Unfortunately, after appointing our new Clerk in 2023, he resigned in early 2025. Mr Quenault resolved the anomalies encountered in last year's account and as you can see the auditors are very pleased at the way our statutory accounts have been managed and presented. We can thank our locum clerk and staff for their support in the short term as we seek to recruit a new Clerk and RFO.

Through the year, the Finance and Policy committee have reviewed all Policy documents and relevant Risk Assessments mitigating areas of risk for the improved safety of the residents of Pulborough. The finance committee was very pleased to be able to continue supporting some of the volunteer schemes and initiatives that are making a huge difference to the residents of Pulborough.

The income for the year to date 31 March 2025 was £393,469 compared to £290,528 for 2023-2024: Part of this income is from various grants received such as the cleaning grant and then the balance, £292,460 being the precept. The income from interest accrued on our funds was helpful to our finances with an increase from last year £14,343 to £15,656

Most of the Council's expenses remain staff costs including the cost of our wardens. Staffing remains an issue as our long serving groundsman retired and we had problems recruiting new members of staff. However, once we have appointed our new Clerk then those issues will fade.

The Ear Marked Reserve funds (EMR) were little changed from last year moving from £247,375.6 to £251,723.85. These financial reserves are earmarked to be used for several planned projects such as a new Sports and Social club, a new tractor and other items. Some EMR funds were used with S106 funds to revamp and refurbish the MUGA (Multi Use Games Area). Now we are working on marketing the facility and publicising this brand-new facility. It is expected that the MUGA will generate a good income stream.

Your Council saw more delays to its key project, the Sports Pavilion. Working together with Thakeham the designs for the facility have been improved and their expertise helped both in terms of the future versatility of the building but also in making it more efficient and less costly in capex terms.