



Minutes of the **Hybrid Annual Parish Council Meeting**
Monday 12th May 2025 at 7.00pm
at Boxgrove Village Hall and Community Centre

Present:

Cllr H Potter, Cllr Moore, Cllr Howton, Cllr Matters, Cllr Tynan, Cllr Lovejoy, Cllr Barnes, Cllr Bish

In attendance: The Clerk (zoom)
8 Members of the Public

CDC – Cllr Henry Potter

WSCC: Cllr Jeremy Hunt

1. To elect the Chair of the Council until the date of the next Annual Meeting of the Council in 2026, and to sign the Chair's Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Cllr Moore proposed, and Cllr Howton seconded Cllr Potter.

Cllr Barnes proposed and Cllr Matters seconded Cllr Lovejoy.

At the vote four councillors voted for Cllr Potter and two councillors voted for Cllr Lovejoy. Cllr Potter was duly **ELECTED** as Chair of the council and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

2. To elect the Vice-Chair of the Council until the date of the next Annual Meeting of the Council in 2026, and to sign the Vice-Chair's Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Cllr Howton proposed and Cllr Potter seconded Cllr Moore. At the vote four councillors voted for Cllr Moore, who was duly **ELECTED** as Vice-Chair of the council and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

3. Apologies

Cllr Raikes who is unwell.

4. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

5. Minutes – to agree and sign the minutes of the meeting on 7th April 2025 .

The Minutes were unanimously agreed to be a true and accurate record and were duly signed by the Chair.

6. County Councillor, District Councillor and Chair's Annual reports.

WSCC Jeremy Hunt – Annual Report (Cllr Hunt had previously circulated his report as he would arrive a little later).

“So much has happened over the last year it would take a lengthy report to cover everything. My bi-monthly reports over the year cover many key County Council activities, so I will not report them all here. I hope that you are able to access my reports through the Parish Council website. You might be interested to know that the County Council has a gross spend of £2.2bn and provides over 300 services, such as social care, libraries, West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, highways, libraries, registration services, waste disposal, public health and education and schools, to name but a few key services. Please find below an update on three key areas.

The key political change in the last year was the election of a **new Labour government** last July. As far as the County Council is concerned this has brought about some challenges, not least the increase in National Insurance contributions (NI) - and the lowering of the threshold where NI payment begins. This, together with the above inflation increase in the minimum wage, will push up the already challenging costs of social care - in both Adults and Children's services - as many of our providers struggle with these unexpected increases. Our social care budget is by far our largest spend, and accounts for nearly 70% of our spend on services. The huge pressures on the social care

budget is not just a West Sussex issue, but is a national one, and unless government acts soon, many councils - even well-run ones - could well be in trouble.

Unfortunately, although the government talks a lot about promoting growth, they seem to put in place policies that stifle growth. Also, very relevant to West Sussex, are the new taxes they have introduced on farmers and small businesses. Both these industries are vitally important to the economy of W. Sussex, providing employment which is so vital for our residents, the sustainability of our communities and the sustainability of our countryside. In fact at recent County Council Meetings a number of motions have been put forward by the Conservative Group, including one supporting our farmers and calling on the government to look again at their new tax policies on farmers and SMB's, and another one calling on government to introduce an exemption from national insurance employer contribution increases for all care providers, charities and hospices. These motions coincided with similar calls from numerous organisations and other bodies, but unfortunately the government has so far failed to respond.

Then of course we have the **Government's Devolution Proposals**. They published the white paper on devolution in December, with an implementation period which is extremely challenging. I am sure many of you already understand these proposals, but it is worth repeating them again here. Basically, the proposal is that areas will become Mayoral Strategic Authorities (with a minimum population of c.1.5 million). Those wishing to be on the priority programme were asked to register their expressions of interest to be a Priority Scheme Mayoral area by Friday 10th January. Following approval at their respective cabinet meetings, West Sussex, together with East Sussex and Brighton and Hove, subsequently submitted a combined expression of interest. I know that some people wonder why we did this in such haste. However, it was made very clear in the white paper that if authorities did not choose to do this, then the government would enact legislation to force them to go down the devolution route by May 2028. In other words, you would then be at the back of the queue when it came to influencing how your strategic area would be governed. The government also made it clear that those on the priority programme would receive devolved powers, such as economic development and regeneration, environment and climate change, health, wellbeing and public service reform, strategic planning (roads and infrastructure), transport & Local Infrastructure, economic development, skills & Employment Support and Fire and Rescue and the Police, ahead of those not on the programme. Following extensive discussions between the three authorities, it was felt that in the best interests of supporting our residents, we should apply to be on the priority programme. Subsequently, we were notified that we had been accepted.

Running parallel with - but separate from - devolution there will be Local Government Reform (LGR). The proposal is that current two tier areas (County Councils plus District's & Borough's) of E & W Sussex will become individual Unitary authorities with one tier of government. So in March the West Sussex Councils - that's the County Council plus the seven District and Borough councils - submitted their [draft interim plan for Local Government Reorganisation \(LGR\)](#), outlining their progress and seeking guidance on several critical issues to ensure a successful final submission in September 2025. These plans included a number of possible unitary options.

The interim plan, submitted by West Sussex Leaders and Chief Executives, emphasises the councils' commitment to devolution and a route map for creating unitary authorities that will deliver the best outcomes for citizens. The interim plan outlines potential options for new council structures. It also highlights the opportunity for public service reform and improved outcomes, particularly in areas such as homelessness prevention and social care. The councils have also proposed how to address democratic representation, governance arrangements, and how new structures will support devolution ambitions. While acknowledging limited local engagement due to the tight timeline, all councils have committed to extensive consultation with local residents, businesses and wider stakeholders as proposals develop.

The plan is that there will be Mayoral elections in May 2026. We then understand that the current proposal is that in May 2027 there will be elections for the shadow Unitary Authority - or Authorities - which will run in tandem with the County Council (CC) and the District's and Borough's (D's and B's) until May 2028. At that point, the CC and the D's and B's will cease to exist and the shadow unitary - or unitaries - will take over full control. In the Devolution White Paper it is made very clear that

localism is very much to the fore of these plans and engagement with parish and town councils is planned to increase, devolving more powers to local areas.

The Devolution White Paper can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-white-paper-power-and-partnership-foundations-for-growth/english-devolution-white-paper>

Finally, probably the most discussed service provided by the CC is **Highways**. We have put an additional £50m into our highways over the last two years and despite what is often said, they are improving. Yes, there is a long way to go, but we do receive many reports from residents saying that they feel we are generally improving the state of the roads. Our figures for the 2024-2025 financial year have highlighted the significant progress made by its highways team in improving the condition of the county's 2,500 miles of road. Between April 2024 and March 2025, the council's highways team delivered a wide programme of essential reactive maintenance and proactive improvements including:

- 44,767 potholes repaired, using durable methods such as 'sawn and sealed' patching and 'spray injection patching'
- A decrease in the average time between receiving a report and repairing a pothole to just 14 days
- 134.5 miles of surfacing works, including surface dressing, micro-asphalt and major carriageway patching
- 36,031 sqm of small and medium scale patching

Over the winter months, the highways team have also been working hard to keep drainage systems clear and ensure water can run off the roads as effectively as possible, cleansing 123,000 drainage gullies and completing 63 small scale drainage schemes. These works help to protect road surfaces from water damage and reduce the risk of flooding in the event of heavy rainfall.

As part of our efforts to improve winter resilience on the road network, extra resources were provided to clear more gullies, ditches and areas where leaves build up. Extra CCTV resource was also brought in to monitor and identify issues, and an additional jetting unit was provided to clear flooded areas and get them moving as soon as possible.

The team's hard work has been reflected in the number of reports of defects, such as potholes or blocked drains being submitted by the public. In recent years, there has been an upward trend in the number of defects being reported, however, in a clear sign of the improvement in the condition of the county's road network, there has been a drop in reports from 69,669 last year to 53,574.

At the start of this financial year, the council implemented a new highways contract with VolkerHighways Limited, for the delivery of core carriageway maintenance across the county. VolkerHighways' remit covers everything from rapid-response pothole and jet patching repairs to our winter maintenance programme and vegetation management. A key focus of the contract will be the cutting of average repair times by up to 25% while still ensuring that high quality services are consistently delivered. At the same time, FM Conway took on the contract for cyclical and small-scale drainage works. Their responsibilities include routine gully cleansing and the installation of new pipes and chambers, applying root-cause solutions to reduce repeat defects and extend the lifespan of drainage assets. As part of this new partnership, we have also increased the frequency of our gully cleansing programme. This means that all 140,000 gullies will now be emptied every 2 years instead of every 4 years.

Residents are encouraged to continue reporting any issues using the council's [online reporting tool](#), helping the Highways Team respond quickly and effectively. More information about ongoing improvements to the road network can be found on the council's [Better Roads campaign page](#).

Local Issues:

New Road/A285 Junction. Discussions are ongoing regarding additional signage on New Road, just before junction with A285

Boxgrove Quarry - despite our best efforts, including getting the earlier application deferred for further enquiries, the application was subsequently approved. Although this still leaves the south-east corner clear for the proposed battery storage project, our objection to the proposed reduction of the number of trees by over 30% from the original application, was addressed. With the proposed

expansion of some of the woodland areas, the number of proposed trees now matches the original application.

Halnaker Windmill - In simple terms, and following a frustrating time addressing the bat issue, a design now seems to have been agreed with all parties, including ecologists and conservationists with a proposal that, with a fair wind, we could complete next summer.

Finally, please do not forget to keep an eye on our website, especially our news and campaigns page where you can keep up to date with all our latest news. <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/news-and-campaigns/>

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District Councillor Henry Potter

- a) The main focus this past month has been modifying the Local Plan to accommodate the comments and advice of the Planning Inspector after his initial study of the submitted Plan and having taken into account the representations made to the two hearing sessions held in the latter part of last year. These Main Modifications have been produced in a new document, The Chichester Local Plan 2021-2039, the Modification Consultation Version. Cllr Potter has a paper copy of this document if anyone wishes to read it. It is also available by visiting the CDC website. It is equally as comprehensive as the original submitted document with much redaction and substitution and there are some poignant changes.
- b) The Council has also published an Annual Progress report on its Climate Emergency Plan. This Plan has a target of a reduction of 10% of greenhouse gases year on year. Between 01/10/2023 and 30/09/2024 emissions of 2,903 tonnes of carbon dioxide were recorded, only a 5% reduction on the previous year. The current action plan has resulted in 75 actions having been implemented, solar panelling installed on several public conveniences and Leisure Centres. Under the Warmer Homes Scheme 68 homes have had 131 measures completed, 3 more electricity vehicles have been added to the CCS fleet in addition to the 2 electric refuse collection vehicles. Much lighting in all CDC buildings has been replaced with LED units, and the list goes on. Costs?? The modifications to Westgate Leisure Centre alone cost £1.3 million!! Funded mainly by Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and £210,000 from the Council's Reserves. Incidentally, the Council's application for funding from the National Lottery "Climate Action Fund - Our Shared Future" was rejected. This would have helped support a network of climate action groups in the District. Work on this will continue but at a much-reduced pace.
- c) Finally, at the full Council Meeting, held on the 8th April, it was announced that the Chief Executive, Diane Shepherd, will be reducing her work with the Council to concentrate on the extensive programme towards the Devolution process. This is transpiring to be a very complex process requiring many meetings between the Executives of the Authorities involved, CDC and the other District or Borough Councils, East and West Sussex CC's and Brighton and Hove Council. To compensate for Diane's absence, John Ward has assumed a new role of Chief Operating Officer to oversee the day-to-day affairs of the Council. Eventually when the Unitary Authority reaches the 'Shadow' stage with an elected Mayor, Diane hopes to take full retirement after 40 years working at CDC during which time she rose to become the CEO for the past 13 years. This will possibly be in 2027. An extensive Public Bulletin has been issued by her Office. At another meeting, the Joint Employee Consultation Panel, last Thursday 08/05, it was announced that our Senior Enforcement Officer, Shona Archer is to retire in a couple of weeks after 20 years in the department. I have contacted Shona on numerous occasions during this time and considering the constraints and seemingly ridiculous regulations Enforcement work under, it is not an easy occupation. Far from it! I have forwarded the latest update on the Local Govt. Reorganisation for information and it is becoming apparent that the timetable will be slipping so many important questions with no answers as yet.
- d) And finally, after an examination by the Planning Advisory Services into the CDC Planning process, various changes were recommended most of which the Planning Committee at the most recent meeting 07/05, agreed were unnecessary. Reducing the number of Members to 10, from 13, reducing the time allowed for each speaker to 2 minutes, from 3 and scrutinising Parish

Council objections which usually bring an application before a Committee for decision making. This would allow more decisions to be made under delegation by Planning Officers, a less Democratic way of doing things.

The principle behind these recommendations was to “speed up” the Planning process but Members generally felt these proposals wouldn’t make an appreciable difference. The final decision will be from the Cabinet Meeting on the 13th and referred to the next Council Meeting.

It is always a pleasure to attend your Parish Council meetings and I shall continue to do so for the final two years as your elected Councillor. Thank you.

Chair Boxgrove Parish Council Henry Potter

- a) Firstly, my thanks to Cllr. Mike Howton for his contribution to The May issue of the Bugle magazine highlighting the work of our Rangers, and good work it is that they do! The closing date for contributions for the June issue is the 15th so I propose to write a page this month as there is little time available to meet the deadline.
- b) 80th Commemoration of VE Day. The street sized Poppies arrived in good time and are displayed throughout Halnaker and Boxgrove including side streets; the flag of St. George is flying at the Almshouses since 23/04, not the 28th as dictated by the Church. And as planned, the beacon basket was placed adjacent to the Windmill and lit at dusk, 8.45 pm to be precise. It burnt well aided by the strong wind blowing from the east, but away from the fire it was cold! My thanks to Robert Langmead for opening both gates to allow access Thursday and Friday morning. Approximately 20 folk made the trip up to the beacon, they all enjoyed the experience. Thanks also to Jim MacDonald for saving the scrap timber and my neighbour, Paul Procter who helped me erect the basket and Cllr. Julian Moore for assistance on the night. We did have a report from a resident in Bognor who saw the beacon. It was disappointing that no other activity had been planned to mark the 80th year since the war ended in 1945 due, essentially, to a distinct lack of enthusiasm for a Fish and Chip supper accompanied by old time music during the early evening. This had been proposed by the Village Hall management, well-advertised but with the lack of interest and bookings it was cancelled. However, a few residents did meet up in the garden of the St. Blaise Centre and enjoyed an afternoon themed tea and cakes hastily assembled by two or three residents.
- c) The faulty mower has been attended to and looking across the playing field this morning 09/05 looks in splendid condition for the 2025 cricket season. And! We’ve been furnished with the seasons fixture list, thank you the Cricket Club.
- d) Yet another serious, though injury free, accident at the black spot, New Road and its intersection with the A285. A BMW failed to stop and tore the front n/ s corner off a passing 55 Stagecoach bus. When will WSCC acknowledge that the sign warning of the junction is only 4 metres from the advisory stop line and introduce a warning further back up New Road. I’m actually waiting to hear back from Cllr Hunt as it was to him I immediately reported the incident, expecting some positive response. Surely this doesn’t require a time-consuming TRO to implement action before a fatal accident occurs.
End of report.

7. Crockerhill Update

The vehicle that had had an enforcement notice stuck on it has still not been removed. Mr Olley will chase up with the enforcement team at CDC.

Mr Addison asked if there were any further progress on the enforcement action on Crockerhill Cottage as the building works are progressing.

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| Action | Cllr Potter/Clerk |
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8. Motion to accept the proposed amendments to the Boxgrove Neighbourhood Plan.

The amendments were proposed by Cllr Potter, seconded by Cllr Lovejoy and unanimously approved.

9. Election of Councillors to the following outside bodies:

- i. **SDNP Board – Councillor representative**
- ii. **Chichester District Association of Local Councils – Cllrs Potter and Moore**
- iii. **West Sussex Association of Local Councils – Cllr Moore**
- iv. **Goodwood Aerodrome/Goodwood Motor racing committee – Mr Paul Addison**
- v. **Boxgrove Village Hall Trustee – Cllr Henry Potter**

10. Election of Councillors to the following working groups:

- i. **Planning** – Cllrs Moore, Howton, Lovejoy and Tynan.
- ii. **Boxgrove Rangers** – Cllrs Howton and Tynan, Mr G Dipple, Mr P Addison and Mr and Mrs Heneker
- iii. **Boxgrove Conservation Area group** – Cllr Tynan and Cllr Barnes
- iv. **Boxgrove Neighbourhood Plan review** – Cllr Cate Matters and Mr D Leah
- v. **Resilience/Emergency planning** – Cllrs Moore and Potter, Ms V Mills, Mr Dipple and Cllr Bish
- vi. **Staffing Committee** – Cllrs Lovejoy and Barnes

Cllr Hunt joined the meeting at 7.45pm

Cllr Hunt apologised for his late attendance having attended Westhampnett PC previously. He responded to Cllr Potter's report on the signage for New Road. He said that as this had been raised with Cllr Potter at the Goodwood Motor circuit meeting, he had not thought it necessary to confirm with email. Lloyd McNeill also took part in the discussion and agreed to cut back vegetation along approach to 285 from New Road. Cllr Hunt has sent a request concerning the signage and asked for a site meeting if possible with officers. Cllr Potter thanked him for trying to move this forward.

Mr Dipple asked Cllr Hunt if he had been able to establish why all the vegetation had been cut down at the Crockerhill substation. Cllr Hunt to chase up.

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| Action | Cllr Hunt |
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Item 12 was brought forward – EV charging point in The Close

Cllr Hunt had been in contact with the resident who had organised a petition against the EV charging point in The Close. With the weight of objections, the officer is reviewing the situation. It was agreed that the Parish Council would submit a comment that The Close is an inappropriate location.

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| Action | Clerk |
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11. Clerk's report

- i. **To approve the use of the Recreation Ground for Dog show 27th September 2025** – approved **and To approve the use of the Recreation Ground for Floral Fringe Fair** - approved
- ii. **Request from Village Hall for meetings to be paid for** – the Parish Council meetings would not be paid for but this was a request for other meetings such as Neighbourhood Plan meetings to be paid for. Cllr Potter proposed that the price should be negotiated beforehand and then the Council could pay. Seconded by Cllr Barnes and unanimously **APPROVED**.
- iii. **To approve the Internal Auditor's report** - deferred
- iv. **To approve the Annual Governance Statement** - deferred
- v. **To approve the Annual Return for 2024 – 25** - deferred
- vi. **To confirm the appointment of the Internal Auditor for 2025 – 26** It was unanimously **AGREED** to appoint Smithe and Co as internal auditor for financial year 2025 - 26
- vii. **To approve Council Standing Orders, Council Financial Regulations, Council Asset Register, Scheme of Delegation, Council Risk Assessment, TOR for Boxgrove Rangers/Conservation working group**
All documents were proposed by Cllr Howton, seconded by Cllr Potter and unanimously **APPROVED**.
- viii. **To approve the payments for consideration** – with the addition of the internal auditor bill of £336 the payments were proposed by Cllr Potter, seconded by Cllr Lovejoy and unanimously **RESOLVED**.
- ix. **Bank reconciliation** - circulated

12. ADDITIONAL ITEM – PLANNING APPLICATIONS

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| 24/02040/Ful | Boxgrove Common BESS application | OBJECTION |
| 25/00876/TCA | Old Forge Cottage Halnaker Tree works | NO OBJECTION |

13. EV Charging point proposal from WSCC: The Close – already dealt with above

14. Agenda items for next meeting – Southern Water will be present/Cricket Club

15. Date of next meeting: June 2nd 2025

There being no further business to be discussed the meeting was declared closed at 8.18 pm.

Signed:_____ Dated:_____
Cllr Henry Potter – Chair

DRAFT