

Crowhurst

PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes of the Ordinary of the Parish Council held on
Monday 17th November 2025 at 7.05pm
 in Crowhurst Village Hall, Forewood Lane, Crowhurst.

Parish Councillors present: Cllrs Geoff Thomas (Chair), John Goddard, Sue Laimbeer, Sonia Plato and Lynda Roller

District Councillor Nicola McLaren and County Councillor Kathryn Field

In attendance: Maureen Collins, Parish Clerk

1.	PUBLIC QUESTIONS: There was one written question from a resident who asked why the grass on Sandrock Hill outside the properties from Erlei to 2 Sandrock Cottage had not been mowed this year. This is done by John O’Conner, and the Clerk will contact them to find out when it will be carried out.
2	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: There were no apologies for absence.
3.	DECLARATION OF INTERESTS: Received from: Cllr Thomas – Village Hall Committee Cllr Laimbeer – Annual Fayre Committee, Crowhurst Environment Group and Strolling Group Cllr Plato - Crowhurst Environment Group and Youth Club Cllr Roller - Crowhurst Environment Group
4.	MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: The Chairman was authorised to approve and sign the minutes of the Ordinary meeting of Crowhurst Parish Council held on 20 th October 2025 as a true and correct record.
5.	MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED IN THIS AGENDA: 5.1 Councillor Vacancy – This is still being advertised on the notice board. The Chairman encouraged those present to spread the word that the Parish Council have a vacancy. Anyone who is interested is very welcome to come along to a meeting to see what is involved and to have an informal chat.
6.	REPRESENTATIONS FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS: District Cllr McLaren reported attending the recent Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting. The main topic discussed was the new Local Plan which will be published in January. Further details of the consultation process will be shared when available. Cllr McLaren reported on the tragic pellet pollution incident at Camber Sands. In early November millions of plastic bio-beads washed ashore. The cleanup will involve both specialized equipment and manual collection by council staff and volunteers. The source is believed to be a failed filter at Southern Water's Eastbourne plant, and the company has apologized for the spill. Cllr McLaren expressed her appreciation for the volunteers who are assisting with the clean-up efforts. Cllr McLaren attended Crowhurst C of E Primary School on 10 November 2025 to lead an assembly on food waste and to explain the role of a councillor. Pupils are taking part in Rother District Councils competition to name one of the new food waste trucks. Cllr McLaren reported that the children were very enthusiastic and knowledgeable about food waste issues.

	<p>Cllr McLaren was involved in a joint initiative led by the National Trust and the University of Exeter, which took place on 24–25 November. She attended to contribute to discussions on the rights of nature. In addition, she met with the Woodland Trust on 18 November.</p> <p>County Councillor Kathryn Field reported that Ofsted’s unexpected, targeted inspection of Children’s Services was rated ‘Good’. She was particularly pleased to highlight Ofsted’s comments recognising that staff were kind. In addition, Adult Social Services has also received a rating of ‘Good’. It was reported that East Sussex County Council faces a significant financial challenge, with no viable route to achieving a balanced budget. Current projections estimate a deficit of £88.6 million over the next three years. To maintain existing service levels, the Council would require a Council Tax increase of 18%. However, it is anticipated that an increase of 7.5% will be applied.</p>
7.	<p>TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING</p> <p>1)To consider the following planning applications and provide comments to Rother District Council:</p> <p>RR/2025/1823/PNA</p> <p>Hye House Farm, Royal Oak Lane, Crowhurst</p> <p><i>Proposal/Application to determine if prior approval is required for the change of use of an agricultural building to form 2 x 3-bed dwelling houses (use C3) and (associated operational development).</i></p> <p>Cllr Roller and Cllr Thomas were unable to visit the property prior to the meeting. They agreed to carry out the visit before the comment deadline of 25th November. Following the visit, they will circulate their findings and agree on the comments, which will then be passed to the Clerk for submission before the deadline.</p>
8.	<p>FINANCIAL MATTERS:</p> <p>8.1 The financial report to 31st October 2025 had been circulated and was approved by members.</p> <p>8.2 The payments report for November 2025 was considered and approved.</p> <p>8.3 The bank reconciliation to 31st October 2025 had been circulated. This was approved by members and signed by the Chair (GT).</p> <p>8.4 Councillors agreed to the renewal of the insurance policy and approved the payment of £1385.91 (incl VAT) to Zurich.</p> <p>8.5 Councillors approved the payment of £7.00 to the clerk for a title plan of the Plough Inn from the Land Registry.</p> <p>8.6 Councillors approved the payment of £86.85 to Joey Davea, and they thanked her for standing in at short notice during the Clerk’s recent illness.</p>
9.	<p>RECREATION GROUND:</p> <p>9.1 Cllr Laimbeer carried out this month’s playground inspection. She noted that it was much the same as had been reported last month, but commented that the level of the wood chippings needs to be kept under review.</p> <p>9.2 In response to the enquiries from Nicola Stell, the Clerk will contact Stephen Greenfield, Manager of the Football Club, to request the removal of the builder’s bag of sand/soil from the car park. The pile of road planings will remain in situ and will be utilised once the ditch has been cleared.</p> <p>9.3 Following a short discussion of the Annual Playground report, the clerk was requested to email councillors details of any areas of the playground that received a ‘moderate’ risk rating. The annual inspection cost of £222 including VAT was noted and approved.</p> <p>9.4 Councillors agreed to purchase a new base and a pair of chains for the swing in the playground. Councillors approved the costs of £108 incl VAT for the base, and £96.00 incl VAT for the set of chains. There is also a delivery charge of £45.00.</p> <p>9.5 Councillors approved the purchase of a new barrier gate for the Recreation Ground. The total price for the gate and the fittings and a new post will be £444.55 incl VAT. Cllr Goddard offered to collect the gate from Crestla Fencing, as they cannot deliver. Colin Ford has been asked to provide a quote to install the gate.</p>
10.	<p>PARISH COUNCIL REVIEWS TO SET PRIORITIES</p> <p>The date for the review has been set for Monday, 12th January 2026. Trevor Lego, CEO of ESALC will</p>

	act as facilitator.
11.	URBAN GRASS CUTTING OPTIONS Crowhurst Parish Council have confirmed their Urban Grass Cutting Option for 2026/27 as Self delivery. This is the same as last year. ESCC will pay the Parish Council the sum of £594.98 to cover the two cuts they would have been providing in the other options.
12.	CROWHURST FLOOD ATTENUATION POND Cllr Plato reported that the Stakeholder Group of the Combe Valley CIC will be meeting next week. At this meeting, she intends to follow up the Sussex Ornithological Society's offer of a grant towards the removal of the carp illegally introduced in order to support the return of wildlife to the pond.
13.	LOWER WILTING UNLICENSED WASTE The Parish Council would like to thank the ESCC Highways Department and Marcus Berrisford, Monitoring and Enforcement Officer (Planning Policy & Development Management, Communities, Economy and Transport, ESCC), for their prompt response when mud on the road, caused by soil removal works at Lower Wilting, created highway safety issues. All remedial work has been halted for the time being. The situation will be kept under review, and works will resume once it is safe to do so.
14.	PAVILION AND PLAYGROUND REFURBISHMENT PROJECTS Cllr Plato had circulated the minutes of the Pavilion Working Group meeting held on 8 October 2025. The date of the next meeting will be confirmed once the pavilion survey has been received. The survey was conducted on 10 October by James Parker. Councillors Roller and Thomas will be holding a meeting in December with interested local residents with a view to forming a Playground Renovation Working Group.
15.	ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE RDC have asked for the application to be resubmitted as The Plough is now closed for business. The clerk agreed to do this as soon as possible.
16.	ROTHER LOCAL PLAN Please see Item 6
17.	COUNCILLOR UPDATES ON EXTERNAL BODIES (IF ANY): Cllr Thomas reported that the chair store at the side of the Village Hall will be insulated during the Christmas holiday to make it warmer. The removal of the middle wall, providing better storage and the renovation of the areas at the rear of the hall are being investigated. Cllr Thomas was delighted to announce Gemma Watson has been appointed as the new secretary. Combe Valley CIC Update - There is currently a discussion regarding the process for appointing directors. Going forward, directors will serve a term of three years, although individuals with specialist knowledge may be invited to remain for longer. The Stakeholders' Forum will have the ability to nominate directors. The Crowhurst Environment Group are now members of the CIC, but not members of the CIC Board. Cllrs Thomas and Roller recently attended the AGM of the Rother Association of Local Councils. Keith Robertson remains as Chair. There is no change to fees charged. Cllr Thomas reported that there had been a lot of discussion regarding the transfer of assets in advance of Devolution. Cllr Thomas highlighted the importance of ensuring that smaller parishes retain a clear and representative voice so that local priorities are not overlooked. Cllr Plato advised that 9kg of crocus bulbs have been donated by George Mighall from the Rotary Club to be planted at the school MUGA wildlife verge, Station car park, the Millenium Garden and the picnic area at the Recreation Ground. These will be planted by the Crowhurst Environment Group. Cllr Plato expressed her thanks to Kanna Ingleson of the Southeast Communities Rail Partnership and Stephen Crowley of South Eastern Railways for their collaboration with the Crowhurst Environment Group in installing planters at the railway station. She also noted the valuable involvement of local residents Michael Gayle and Ian Spencer. The group has submitted a request to the Southeast Communities Rail Partnership for a grant of £250 to support the purchase of a water butt, the installation of an outdoor tap, and the tidy-up of the tool shed.
18.	CLERK'S REPORT AND INFORMATION FOR COUNCILLORS

	<p>18.1 The clerk reported that she had been approached by a local non-profit youth football club looking for a Sunday home football pitch for the 2026/27 season. After a brief discussion it was decided that although they would be open to the occasional one-off use, councillors felt that the ground should be available for residents of the village to use on a Sunday afternoon. The clerk will write to F4 Sports and Development to advise them of the decision.</p> <p>18.2 Our footpath warden, Pam Woolley, had asked the Parish Council to remove two trees that had fallen across the cutting from the Quarry. The ownership of the land and the responsibility for the footpath here is unclear, however it was agreed that it is in the village's interest to ensure this remains open. It was therefore considered advisable for the Parish Council to discuss the matter further with Sarah Blackford. In the meantime, Cllr Goddard will clear the trees from the path. The Parish Council thanked Cllr Goddard for agreeing to do this.</p> <p>18.3 The clerk has written to a resident regarding the water running down the tittern by The Plough.</p> <p>18.4 We have received a list of Community Street Meeting dates from the local police. The next will take place on Saturday, 24th January 2026 from 2:30 to 3:30pm. It will be held in the car park of the Village Hall.</p> <p>18.5 A resident has requested the clearing of the drains in Station Road. The clerk will contact Chris Page of Network Rail to arrange for this to be done.</p>
19.	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>Cllr Roller reported that the Parish Council has received a generous donation from Broadstock to be used for Sunday Socials.</p> <p>Cllr Plato advised that there will be a Dark Skies Festival in the village on the evening of the 30th November and the 3rd of December. Everyone is welcome to attend.</p>
20.	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The next ordinary meeting will be held on Monday 15th December 2025 at 7.05pm in the Village Hall.</p>

Signed

Dated