



Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on  
**Monday 19th January 2026 at 7.05pm** in the Village Hall

Parish Councillors present: Cllrs Geoff Thomas (GT), Lynda Roller (LR), Sue Laimbeer (SL) and John Goddard (JG).

County/district councillors present: Cllr Kathryn Field, ESCC

In attendance: Maureen Collins, Parish Clerk & RFO

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**1. Public Questions**

There were no questions from members of the public.

**2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were accepted from Cllr Sonia Plato and District Cllr Nicola McLaren.

**3. Declaration of Interests**

Received from:

Cllr Thomas – Village Hall Committee

Cllr Roller – Member of the Crowhurst Environment Group

Cllr Laimbeer - Annual Fayre Committee, Strolling Group & Crowhurst Environment Group

**4. Adoption of Minutes**

The Chairman was authorised to sign the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the parish council held on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2025 as a true and correct record.

**5. Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting**

There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

**6. Representations from District & County Councillors**

Members noted that confirmation is still awaited regarding the date of the next County Council elections, with the position remaining uncertain due to ongoing discussions about potential local government reorganisation. The potential formation and structure of a new unitary authority remains under consideration, adding to the current uncertainty.

An update was received on the financial situation at East Sussex County Council (ESCC). It was reported that the County Council is currently unable to balance its budget and has commissioned a £40,000 consultancy review to confirm that all financial procedures and governance arrangements are in order. ESCC faces a £56 million budget shortfall, and although an 18% increase in council tax would be required to achieve a balanced budget, such an increase is not permitted under current legislation. The Council is seeking Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) from central government, with any borrowing under this scheme subject to variable interest rates.

It was also reported that, following a motion proposed by Cllr Field, road layouts in new developments within Rother will be designed so that vehicles cannot exceed 20mph, supporting safer, low-speed neighbourhood environments.

## **7. Town and Country Planning**

There were no new Planning Applications this month.

## **8. Financial Matters**

8.1 The financial report to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025 had been circulated and was approved by members.

8.2 The payments report for January 2026 was considered and approved.

8.3 The bank reconciliation to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025 had been circulated. It was approved by members and signed by the Chair (GT).

8.4 The final draft of the budget for '26/'27 was approved, and members approved the corresponding precept request. The RFO was asked to complete & submit the request to Rother before the end of January as per the deadline.

8.5 Councillors approved the payment of £362.18 + VAT to Dale Saunders following the water leaks in the Pavilion on 5/01/26 and 6/01/26.

8.6 Councillors approved the payments of £97.50 and £70.47 to Rother Town Council and Waitrose, associated with the Business Plan meeting held on the 12<sup>th</sup> January 2026.

8.7 Councillors agreed to pay the Clerk as usual during her forthcoming jury service.

## **9. Recreation Ground**

- Cllr Goddard undertook the inspection this month and Nicola Stell completed her weekly inspections as usual. The dumped TV has still not been collected by Rother District Council and the clerk will chase this up.
- Water leaks had been discovered in the Pavilion on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> January. Following repairs the water to the building was turned off and Nicola Stell had reported that the lights were also not working, although there was still power to the sewage plant and showers. After a brief discussion members agreed that the water to the Pavilion should be turned back on and Cllr Goddard undertook to do this and to look at the lights. The clerk raised the matter of applying to Castle Water for a leak allowance towards the water that was lost. As this can only be done once in two years, she will calculate the cost and report back to councillors at the next meeting when a decision can be made.
- The council has received a quote of £400 from Colin Ford to break out the existing barrier posts and replace these with a new barrier and posts. Councillors approved the cost and instructed the clerk to order the gate from Crestla Fencing at a cost of £370.46 + VAT. Once the gate had been delivered the clerk will liaise with Mr. Ford regarding the installation.
- A quote has been received from Colin Ford to excavate six new bollard footing pads on the Recreation Ground. After a brief discussion it was agreed to defer this matter until later in the year.

## **10. Councillor Vacancy**

A casual vacancy was reported following the resignation of Cllr Koorosh Ashrafi. The Electoral Services Manager at Rother District Council, Richard Adams, was duly informed, and the statutory notice of vacancy was displayed on the parish notice board and on the Crowhurst Parish Council website. The notice expired on 15 January 2026, and no requests for an election were received.

## **11. Parish Council Business Plan Meeting**

A very productive meeting was held on 12<sup>th</sup> January which was attended by councillors and the clerk, and facilitated by Trevor Lego, CEO of ESALC. Notes were made, and it was confirmed that a further meeting will be held to advance the next steps.

## **12. Dark Skies – ESCC Cross Party Motion**

Crowhurst Parish Council reconfirmed its willingness to be cited in the East Sussex County Council cross-party motion on dark skies, expressing continued support for the initiative and its associated aims.

### 13. Parish Council Meeting Dates 2026/27

Members approved the following meeting dates for 2026/7.

Annual Assembly 27<sup>th</sup> April 2026

Annual Meeting – 18<sup>th</sup> May 2026

Ordinary meetings – 16<sup>th</sup> February 2026, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026, 13<sup>th</sup> April 2026\*, 15<sup>th</sup> June 2026, 20<sup>th</sup> July 2026, 21<sup>st</sup> September 2026, 19<sup>th</sup> October 2026, 16<sup>th</sup> November 2026 and 14<sup>th</sup> December 2026\*.

\* 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month.

### 14. Pavilion Refurbishment Project

Members received an update on what was seen as a successful meeting. Five members of the working group were present with Gareth Bright taking notes. It was confirmed that three design options have been agreed for presentation at the Parish Assembly. The building survey currently held was discussed, and it was acknowledged that it is not sufficient for producing tenders. Costings may therefore require the engagement of an external estimator, and the survey work may need to be repeated to ensure accuracy. Members agreed that a public consultation within the village will be necessary as the project progresses.

### 15. Councillor Updates on External Bodies (if any)

Members were informed that RALC will hold its next meeting at Rother District Council to make use of their facilities to host a hybrid meeting. It is hoped that holding the meeting in this venue, will support increased attendance from member councils.

### 16. Clerk's report/Information for Councillors

**1. Hedge Cutting on the Crowhurst Road** – A resident raised a question regarding the cutting of hedges on the Crowhurst Road, between Swainham Lane and Upper Wilting Farm. The clerk has approached ESCC for clarification.

**2. Update on the potholes in Swainham Lane** – ESCC Highways department has advised us that no further action will be taken on the potholes on Swainham Lane. This matter will be raised at the next SLR meeting. Cllr Thomas encouraged those present to continue to report any new potholes as they arise.

**3. Practical Guide to create age friendly communities** – NALC has partnered with the Centre for Aging Better on a new practical guide explicitly designed to help parish and town councils to create age-friendly communities. Cllr Roller will look through the guide and assess its relevance to Crowhurst Parish Council.

**4. Update on Parish Online invoices** – Members reviewed the two outstanding invoices relating to Parish Online and resolved to approve payment of £240 + VAT for the email service and £63.00 + VAT for the Parish Online mapping subscription.

**5. Training request** – Councillors agreed to Cllr Roller attending The Open Spaces Society Public Rights of Way training on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026, at a cost of £70 plus VAT. Cllr Roller will invite our Footpath Warden to join her to view the Zoom session.

**6. Replacement Paediatric Defib Pads** – The clerk will seek advice from The Circuit regarding the necessity to have both adult and paediatric defib pads in the Telephone Box. Councillors agreed to the purchase of the paediatric pads at a cost of £132.00 +VAT if they are required.

### 17. Any Other Business

No other business was discussed.

### 18. Date of next meeting:

The next meeting of the Parish Council will take place on **Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> February 2026** at 7.05pm in the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.10pm

Signed .....

Dated .....