Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Crowhurst Parish Council held on Monday, 16th November 2026 at 7.05pm in Crowhurst Village Hall

Present: Councillors Geoff Thomas [Chair], John Goddard, Sue Laimbeer, Lynda Roller, and Paula Rivett.

District Councillor Nicola McLaren,

In attendance: Maureen Collins, Clerk and RFO.

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

---

1. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No questions were raised.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from County Councillor Kathryn Field and Cllr Sonia Plato.

Resolved: To accept the apologies for absence.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations were received as follows:

- Cllr Thomas – Village Hall Committee
- Cllr Roller – Crowhurst Environment Group
- Cllr Laimbeer – Crowhurst Environment Group

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 19th October 2026 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

5. MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

Members noted the action updates contained within Appendix 1.

Resolved: To note the report.

6. REPRESENTATIONS FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

District Councillor's Report

Councillor Nicola McLaren reported that the Government had confirmed it would continue with Local Government Reorganisation in East Sussex. This will include transferring part of the south-west of the county to Brighton & Hove. Elections for the new Unitary Authority are scheduled to take place in 2028. Elections for Rother District Council will be held in May 2027.

Members noted that Rother District Council continues to face increasing service costs and growing demand, with a projected funding gap of approximately £1.2 million in the 2027/28 financial year. The District Council is currently consulting on proposed changes to grants, services, fees and charges. The public consultation opened on 6 November 2026 and closes at 5.00 pm on 16 December 2026.

Councillor McLaren advised that community, education, environmental and infrastructure projects across Rother will benefit from £1.3 million of funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The funding will support seven projects aimed at improving local facilities, accessibility and sustainability. Further details are available on the Rother District Council website.

The Council was also informed that Rother District Council will be holding an online pre-election information event for prospective district council candidates on Tuesday 24 November 2026 at 6.00 pm via Microsoft Teams.

County Councillor's Report

In the absence of County Councillor Kathryn Field, the Clerk read her report. Councillor Field advised that, owing to attendance at the County Council Network Conference, she was unable to be present at the meeting.

The principal matter she wished to highlight was that East Sussex County Council is preparing for another extremely challenging budget-setting process. The scale of the challenge is not yet known, as the Council is awaiting details of the Government's funding settlement, which are expected during the second half of December. Once the funding figures are known, the Council will be better placed to assess the extent of the budget pressures facing the authority and the measures that may be required to achieve a balanced budget,

Resolved: To note the reports.

7. TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING

7.1 RR/2026/1200/FULL – Upper Wilting Farm, Crowhurst Road, Crowhurst, TN38 8EG

The Council raised no objection to the application. Members noted that the proposed shepherd huts would be overlooked by a neighbouring property; however, following discussions with the neighbouring owners, this was not considered to be an issue.

Whilst supportive of the proposal, the Council assumes that all necessary ecological and archaeological assessments and mitigation measures have been undertaken and will be implemented as required to protect the site and its setting.

The Council also requested that any external lighting be kept to a minimum and designed in accordance with the dark skies policies contained within the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan. Any hardstanding associated with the development should be constructed using permeable materials wherever practicable to minimise surface water run-off.

The clerk was authorised to submit these comments to Rother District Council by the deadline of 18th November.

8. GOVERNANCE AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

8.1 The Financial Report to 31st October 2026 had been circulated and was approved by members.

8.2 The Payments Report for November 2026 was considered and approved.

8.3 The Bank Reconciliation to 31st October 2026 had been circulated. It was approved by members and signed by the Chair.

8.4 Members received an update on the initial discussions regarding preparation of the 2027/28 budget. The Clerk advised that a draft budget proposal would be prepared and presented to the December meeting for Members' consideration.

8.5 Councillors approved the payment of £50.00 to Mr N Stell for hedge cutting.

8.6 Councillors approved the payment of £185.00 plus VAT to RSR in respect of the sewage system service undertaken on 6 November 2026.

8.7 Councillors approved the payment of £35.95 plus VAT to Battle Building Company.

8.8 Councillors approved the payment of £75.00 plus VAT to Rise Electrical for the replacement and installation of a light fitting in the Pavilion.

8.9 Members considered the Parish Council's grass-cutting arrangements for 2027/28 and agreed that the current arrangements should continue (Option 3).

8.10 Consideration of the Clerk's accrued additional hours was deferred as the matter was not discussed. The item will be included on the agenda for the December meeting.

8.11 Councillors reconsidered the deferred quotation for a Network Attached Storage (NAS) device to provide secure backup of the Clerk's computer and the Council's electronic records and approved the purchase. It was further agreed that the NAS device and laptops for Councillors would be purchased following the Clerk's consultation with an independent IT specialist to ensure the equipment is compatible and meets the Council's requirements.

8.12 Members considered the updated Risk Register, which had been revised to incorporate a colour-coded risk assessment matrix to assist in identifying and monitoring risk levels. Councillors reviewed and approved the amendments. The updated Risk Register was adopted and will be used for the ongoing management and monitoring of the Council's risks.

9. RECREATION GROUND

Members received the monthly inspection report from Councillor Roller and noted that the playground and recreation ground remained generally in good condition.

Councillors noted that the woodchip beneath the play equipment would benefit from raking and that attention was required to the handlebar on the rocker bike. The recreation ground and associated facilities were otherwise reported to be in good order.

The car park was noted to have a small number of potholes requiring attention.

Members also noted that the exterior of the Pavilion would benefit from maintenance. The defibrillators were reported to be in good working order and the interior of the Pavilion was found to be neat and tidy.

The telephone kiosk housing the village defibrillator was reported to be in urgent need of repainting. The Clerk advised that Mr Matt Bumpass had requested details of the required works and the anticipated cost of materials. The Clerk will provide this information to Mr Bumpass to enable him to prepare a quotation for consideration by the Council.

The report relating to the recent servicing of the sewage treatment system was considered. Members noted that the contractor had advised that the tank was functioning satisfactorily but that the high-level alarm on the treatment plant was not operational. The Clerk was asked to contact RSR to obtain a quotation for the repair of the alarm for consideration at a future meeting.

10. GRANT REQUEST

Members considered the grant application from the Crowhurst Society for £976.85 towards public liability insurance costs incurred during 2024, 2025 and 2026.

The Council recognised the benefit provided by the Society's activities to the parish and agreed that further information was required before a decision could be made on the application.

It was agreed to defer consideration of the grant pending receipt of additional information. The Clerk was asked to follow up her earlier request for the Crowhurst Society's bank details and copies of bank statements covering the previous three years. The Clerk was also asked to request sight of the public liability insurance policies relating to the three-year period for which grant funding is being sought.

The application will be reconsidered once the requested information has been received.

11. COMMUNITY FIRST RESPONDERS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Members discussed opportunities to increase community awareness of CPR, defibrillator use and emergency preparedness.

The Chair, Councillor Thomas, advised that he would circulate the final draft of the Parish Emergency and Resilience Plan to Members for consideration. Once Members' comments had been received, Councillor Thomas would arrange a meeting of the Emergency Wardens and coordinate appropriate training.

Members noted that Councillor Thomas would also investigate and apply for available funding opportunities from organisations with relevant expertise and experience in supporting community resilience initiatives.

12. COUNCILLOR UPDATES ON EXTERNAL BODIES

Members provided updates on meetings and activities undertaken on behalf of external organisations.

Resolved: To note the updates and agree any consequential actions.

13. CLERK'S REPORT AND INFORMATION FOR COUNCILLORS

The Clerk's report, previously circulated to Members, was received and noted.

Members noted updates relating to the trees on Chapel Hill, the Recreation Ground Users' Meeting, tree works on Station Road, Local Government Reorganisation, arrangements for the forthcoming Business Plan Meeting, and representation at the Rother District Council Housing Event.

The Council noted the proposed submission to the Regulation 19 consultation on the Rother Local Plan and supported its submission.

Members were advised that salt bins within the parish had been checked and replenished where required, that details relating to the refurbishment of the telephone kiosk would be provided to Mr Matt Bumpass, and that a response had been provided

within the statutory timescale to a Freedom of Information request relating to the Council's grounds maintenance and arboricultural arrangements**.**

Resolved: To note the report.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor Thomas reported that a replacement post box for the former installation at the bottom of Station Road has been ordered by Royal Mail. The new post box will be installed as soon as it arrives at the local delivery office.

Councillor Goddard reported that the "No Dogs" notices at the Recreation Ground required replacement, as several people had been regularly observed walking dogs on the site. The Clerk agreed to arrange for replacement signs to be obtained and installed as soon as possible.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members noted that the next meeting of Crowhurst Parish Council would be held on Monday, 14th December 2026 at 7.05pm in Crowhurst Village Hall.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.15pm.

Signed: .....

Chairman

Date: .....