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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting on Tuesday 24th February 2026 at 7.00pm. This meeting was held at Rusper Village Hall.

Present: Cllrs M Cooke (Chair), F Maitland-Smith, M Fenton, S White, G Fleming, D Matthew, G Hussey, G Sallows.

County Councillor Sam Raby

WSCC Highways George Fort

There were 2 members of public.

Apologies: Cllrs M Fillmore, G Hussey, D Halsay.

Meeting commenced 1900hrs

163-25/26 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs M Fillmore, G Hussey, D Halsey.

Resolved: Apologies were accepted.

164-25/26 Declarations of Interest Apologies for Absence and Resignation

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr D Halsey, Cllr G Hussey, Cllr M Fillmore. The Council formally noted and recorded the resignation of **Cllr Ritchie Gatt**. The Chair thanked Cllr Gatt for his long service to the Parish.

Resolved: Apologies accepted and resignation noted.

165-25/26 Declarations of Interest

Councillors were invited to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or other interests in respect of items on the agenda. Cllr Fenella Maitland-Smith declared an interest in this item in her capacity as Chair of Save West of Ifield.

166-25/26 Climate Crisis Statement

The Council reaffirmed its acknowledgement of the climate crisis and confirmed its commitment to ensuring environmental considerations are taken into account in decision-making where appropriate.

167-25/26 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on **30 January 2026** were considered.

Resolved: That the minutes be approved as a true and accurate record. The Chair signed the minutes.

168-25/26 Open Forum

Members of the public addressed the Council in accordance with Standing Orders on matters including highways safety and development impacts. One question on the new bench in the playground was raised, this will be considered in the Roads, Footpaths and Open Spaces Committee.

169-25/26 WSCC Highways – Rusper Parish Issues

The Council received a presentation and verbal update from **George Fort**, Highways Officer (WSCC), covering:

- Flooding at Faygate noted as a one-off, not systemic.
- Traffic-calming measures as part of developments were discussed.

- Ongoing concerns regarding mud on the highway and verge damage from construction traffic; residents encouraged to report issues.
- Millfields CEMP and Devine Homes site access noted; no CEMP yet for Devine Homes.
- Potential use of Section 106 funds for pedestrian improvements opposite the Village Hall and at the rear of Cooks Mead was discussed.
- Clerk to continue liaising with Highways and HDC pending implementation of agreed measures.
- Residents encouraged to report potholes/highway damage via Parish website link.
- Sinkhole, Newdigate Road (ref. 70213428) noted and an updated was provided.

170-25/26 Proposed Permanent Traffic Order – A264 Horsham Bypass & Crawley Road (TRO/HOR9009/RC)

The Council considered the proposed traffic speed reduction and resolved to object to it on the basis that a speed reduction may impact Rusper Village further.

Resolved: To object to the TRO on A264.

171-25/26 Reports from Other Authorities

a) County Councillor Sam Raby –

Local Government Reorganisation / Mayoral Election – Authorities are continuing preparations for the creation of a Mayoral role. Discussions continue around the potential formation of unitary authorities. HDC has joined with other councils, while it was noted that West Sussex County Council would benefit from being a single unitary authority. It was reported that approximately 80% of services are delivered by WSCC, and that a single unitary structure would be around £30 million more cost-effective than having two. County Council Budget 2026/27 – The provisional budget proposal indicates an increase in County Council tax of 4.99%, comprising 2.99% for general costs and 2% for social care. This equates to an additional £1.73 per week for a Band D household. Revenue is expected to increase from £660 million to £900 million, including Government grants. **District Council update -** Thanks to prudent financial management and healthy reserves, **Horsham District Council** remains well-positioned to protect services, support residents, and invest in community improvements. A £35m capital investment programme over two years was noted, including home repairs, disabled facilities grants, housing enabling grants, refurbishment of The Capitol Theatre, upgrades to the Rec Rooms, a new community centre at Highwood, improved facilities in Billingshurst, and new waste collection vehicles. Fees and charges will increase to meet rising costs, resulting in a £5.15 (2.94%) annual increase for a Band D property. HDC will continue to have the lowest Council Tax in Sussex. The Capitol Theatre closed on 4 January 2026 for a 10-month major refurbishment (last refurbished in 2002). Works will improve customer facilities, accessibility (including a Changing Places facility), and back-of-house services. Re-opening is planned for the November 2026 panto season.

The Council raised concerns regarding the proposed 3000 homes in West of Ifield, noting that the development may conflict with paragraph 50 of the NPPF. The Council believes the application should be paused while the Inspector is asked to consider whether it would impact the Local Plan. The County Councillor will take this matter back to HDC for clarification.

172-25/26 Financial Matters

a) Financial Reports – January

The Council considered the Reconciliation, Budget Report, and Unity Trust Bank statements.

Resolved: That the financial reports be approved.

b) Schedule of Payments The Schedule of Payments was considered.

Resolved: That the Schedule of Payments be approved.

c) May Day Road Closure – noted that the Clerk has been notified that the road closure should take place on 4th May 2026 and will apply for the closure at an agreed cost of £100 as per previous years.

173-25/26 Consultation: Revised National Planning Policy Framework

The Council noted the announcement by the Housing Minister regarding the next phase of Government planning reforms and considered the consultation on the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Councillors reviewed the proposed measures and discussed the potential implications for housing delivery, planning policy, and parish-level decision-making. Deadline 10th March 2026.

Resolved: Chair to look at the NPPF and to make notes and distribute it to Council.

174-25/26 Planning Applications Since Publication of the Agenda

The Council considered planning applications received since publication of the agenda. None were considered.

175-25/26 Millfields Development

The Council considered the proposal for the installation of a swing at the new playground and the available mat options.

Resolved: That the installation of a swing be approved with a note for a swing for under 5s. That the agreed mat option is approved.

176-25/26 Rusper Sports Club

a) **Relationship Agreement** The final version of the agreement was considered. **Resolved:** That the Relationship Agreement be approved.

b) **Lease Signing** The signed lease was delivered to the Clerk, this was signed off by Cllr Daniel Matthews, Cllr Michelle Cooke in the presence of the Clerk. A scanned copy will be sent to Surrey Hills Solicitors for further instruction. Carry item.

c) **Lease Compliance and Monitoring:** This item was referred to the Open Spaces Committee for detailed review, with a recommendation to develop and implement appropriate monitoring arrangements.

177-25/26 Request for a Memorial Tree

Memorial Tree Application: The Council considered an application to plant a memorial tree (details provided separately in accordance with GDPR). Two potential locations were identified: the Sports Field and the Playground. It was agreed to delegate authority to Marion Fenton to progress the matter. Carry to next meeting.

178-25/26 Annual Parish Meeting

Annual Parish Meeting – 26 May 2026: Arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting were confirmed. It was agreed that the meeting would be combined with the APM and AGM, and that an update on the defibrillators would be included.

Resolved: That the arrangements be approved and that the meeting scheduled for 28 May be cancelled and removed from the calendar.

179-25/26 Gatwick Report

The Gatwick report was received and noted.
(Report available via the Gatwick Airport website.)

180-25/26 Reports from Representatives

a) M Fenton – Enquired about Ghyll Manor. G Sallows reported there is no further update and will follow up with Brakespear.

b) G Sallows – Advised that the West of Ifield AGM is now scheduled for 26 February 2026.

c) M Cooke – Noted that the current payroll provider is retiring; the Chair will investigate a replacement provider.

d) M Cooke – Raised the matter of new parish councillors.

e) S White – Reported that the issue with bins along the path at East Street has been resolved.

181-25/26 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

182-25/26 Date of Next Meeting

Resolved: That the next Parish Council meeting will be held on 24th March 2026.

Meeting closed: 2108 hrs

Signed Dated