Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common Parish Council
Email: office@hurstpierpoint-pc.gov.uk
Website: www.hurstpierpoint-pc.gov.uk
Telephone: 01273 833264

Village Centre
Trinity Road
Hurstpierpoint
West Sussex BN6 9UY

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Thursday 24 July 2025 at 7.30 pm at Hurstpierpoint Village Centre.

Members Present:

Cllr Claire Majsai (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Michael Avery
Cllr Helen Bedford
Cllr Rodney Jackson
Cllr Duncan Ranger
Cllr Bob Sampson
Cllr Julia Shorrocks
Cllr Annette Street
Cllr Lindsay Thompson

Members Absent: Cllr Sarah Baldey

Also Present: Sarah Groom, Clerk to the Council plus Cllr Joy Dennis (WSCC). Apologies were received from Cllr Zeidler (MSDC).

In the absence of the Chairman, the meeting was chaired by the Vice-Chairman (Cllr Majsai).

C25/26.050: Apologies for Absence: Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Helena Browne, Cllr Susan Dyke, Cllr David Evans and Cllr Malcolm Llewellyn, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Council ACCEPTS the apologies for absence for Cllrs Browne, Dyke, Evans and Llewellyn.

C25/26.051: Declarations of interest: There were no declarations of interest.

C25/26.052: Previous Minutes: Members received the minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 26 June 2025, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Council ADOPTS the minutes of 26 June 2025.

C25/26.053: Adjournment for Questions from the Public: There were no members of the public present.

C25/26.054: Reports from Other Authorities: Members received reports from representatives of other authorities:

C25/26.054.1: West Sussex County Council: Cllr Dennis outlined the latest information on the local government reorganisation options. It was noted that nationally smaller unitary authorities had not been doing as well as larger ones which were able to be more resilient, especially in the areas of adult and childrens' services. The impact of reorganisation on council tax was another key factor being considered. Cllr Avery reiterated his displeasure with the surfacing on College Lane, where the tarmac did not meet the edges of the road. Cllr Dennis will investigate further and whether overhanging vegetation affected the re-surfacing machine's ability to get closer to the wall. Cllr Avery felt councillor allowances shouldn't be taxed, all others believed they were taxed.

C25/26.54.2: Mid Sussex District Council: Cllr Jackson had attended the MSDC Council meeting the day before. The District Council was increasing its basic members allowances by 3.4%. It has been confirmed that a Sussex Mayoral election will take place in May 2026, on a first past the post basis. The Fair Funding Review will dictate how much of the business rates collected can be kept by the District Council. The food waste collection service will be rolled out to all of Mid Sussex in the Autumn. There has been a 20% increase in homelessness figures and a significant increase of numbers of people on the social housing register. It was noted that the timetable for the consultation on the parking charges for the Hurstpierpoint car parks is going slower than first envisaged but the Cabinet is still expecting to make a decision at its September 2025 meeting.

The Vice-Chairman thanked Cllr Dennis and Cllr Jackson for their reports. Cllr Dennis left the meeting at 8.03pm.

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C25/26.055: Committee Minutes: Members received and where appropriate, considered the recommendations of the:

i. **Sustainability Strategy Working Group (30 June 2025)** There were no recommendations for Council.

ii. **Planning Committee (30 June 2025):** There were no recommendations for Council.

iii. **Finance, Governance & Estates Committee (17 July 2025)** There was one recommendation for Council as follows:

F25/26.023: Van Comparison Costs: The Committee re-considered a briefing note comparing the costs between leasing and purchasing a new works van, as well as the cost to purchase the existing leased van off the leasing company at a cost of £8,900 plus VAT, and it was: RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED to recommend to Council that the Parish Council purchases the existing works van from the leasing company at a cost of £8,900 plus VAT, and to fund the purchase from both the Van Earmarked Reserve (311) which has a balance of £2,972, and the remainder of £5,928 from the General Reserve, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Council AGREED to purchase the existing works van from the leasing company at a cost of £8,900 plus VAT, and to fund the purchase from both the Van Earmarked Reserve (311) which has a balance of £2,972, and the remainder of £5,928 from the General Reserve.

and it was:

RESOLVED: The Council RECEIVES the minutes of the following Working Group and Committees and AGREES the recommendations where appropriate:

i. **Sustainability Strategy Working Group (30 June 2025)**
ii. **Planning Committee (30 June 2025)**
iii. **Finance, Governance & Estates Committee (17 July 2025)**

C25/26.056: Draft Pension Fund Funding Statement: Members considered the draft Funding Strategy Statement due to be published on 1 April 2026, for the West Sussex Local Government Pension Scheme. Members noted the Funding Strategy Statement informs the 31 March 2025 valuation and the formal valuation process concludes with the publication of new employer contribution rates to be paid by the Parish Council, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Council NOTES the draft Funding Strategy Statement due to be published on 1 April 2026, for the West Sussex Local Government Pension Scheme.

C25/26.057: West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Consultation: Members considered the public consultation launched by the West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service on its proposals for its new Community Risk Management Plan. The Vice-Chairman noted the proactive community work undertaken by the Hurstpierpoint crew, and encouraged everyone to respond to the consultation individually, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Council NOTES the public consultation launched by the West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service on its proposals for its new Community Risk Management Plan.

C25/26.058: Reports from Representative on Outside Bodies:

C25/26.058.1: South Downs National Park Authority: Cllr Jackson reported that he had attended the SDNPA seminar on 1 July 2025 regarding their Partnership Management Plan. The focus is on training for volunteers and improving access to the South Downs by public transport.

C25/26.058.2: Hurstpierpoint Society: Cllr Dyke had provided notes in her absence, including the proposal for signage to be considered to recognise Latchetts Lane (the footpath at the end of St Geoge's Lane to College Lane).

C25/26.058.3: Sayers Common Village Society: On behalf of the Society, Cllr Thompson requested an update on when the pond will be dredged, when the damaged swings will be repaired, whether the shallow ditches left from the drainage project will be filled, and asked, if the oak tree is felled, can the Society have the wood.

C25/26.058.4: Hurst Festival: Cllr Sampson announced that the Festival will run from 13-28 September 2025. The website is available for tickets sales, and the box office will open at weekends for those wishing to purchase tickets in person.

C25/26.058.5: St Lawrence Fair: Cllr Bedford reported that the Fair during the week of 30 June 2025 had gone very well but that the co-chairs were stepping down, so the Committee was looking for volunteers.

C25/26.058.6: Santa Sunday: Cllr Bedford confirmed plans for Santa Sunday on 7 December 2025 were steaming ahead. Cllr Thompson explained there was a dark spot near the Nationwide and the Committee were looking to have additional lighting. It was noted there is a WSCC streetlight in that location but it is hidden by the Chantry House tree.

C25/26.059: To note any information items, correspondence received or requests:

C25/26.059.1: Members noted the consultation issued by West Sussex County and the District and Borough Councils called "Have your say on the future of local government in West Sussex". The Vice-Chairman encouraged everyone to respond to the consultation individually by the deadline of 13 August 2025.

C25/26.059.2: Members noted the meeting with Alison Bennett MP and District Ward Councillor planned for 31 July 2025 has been postponed to 7 October 2025.

C25/26.059.3: Members congratulated the Assistant Clerk on successfully passing her Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) qualification on 3 July 2025.

Members RESOLVED that in view of the confidential nature of the following items, the press and public be excluded under section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

Confidential Matters:

C25/26.060: Purchase of the Reeds Lane Play Equipment: Members considered a briefing note on the purchase of the Reeds Lane Play Equipment, subject to securing S106 funding, and it was:

> **RESOLVED: That the Council AGREES to award the contract for the play equipment at Reeds Lane Recreation Ground to Sovereign Design Play Systems Limited, at a cost of £50,499.17 plus VAT, subject to securing the funds to cover the costs from Mid Sussex District Council's Section 106 Fund Reference PL3-000016 (Play Space).**

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.42pm.

Chairman