



Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common Parish Council
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Village Centre
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Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Thursday 25 September 2025 at 7.30 pm at Sayers Common Village Hall.

Members Present:

Cllr Malcolm Llewellyn (Chairman)	Cllr Rodney Jackson	Cllr Annette Street
Cllr Michael Avery	Cllr Claire Majsai	Cllr Lindsay Thompson
Cllr Helen Bedford	Cllr Duncan Ranger	
Cllr Susan Dyke	Cllr Bob Sampson	

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

C25/26.061: Apologies for Absence: Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Sarah Baldey and Cllr Julia Shorrocks, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Council ACCEPTS the apologies for absence for Cllrs Baldey and Shorrocks.

C25/26.062: Declarations of interest: There were no declarations of interest.

C25/26.063: Previous Minutes: Members received the minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 24 July 2025, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Council ADOPTS the minutes of 24 July 2025.

C25/26.064: Adjournment for Questions from the Public: The Chairman announced the sad passing of Cllr David Evans on 3 September 2025. The Chairman paid tribute to David's long service as a district as well as parish councillor and his passion for a great number of subjects. His particular interests related to preserving the heritage, history and countryside of the parish and he shared these interests with enthusiasm. David also cared deeply about wildlife and the natural world. The Chairman recalled their lively discussions over Latchetts Lane, the Green Circle and street-naming in Hurstpierpoint. David would be sadly missed.

There were 11 members of the public present. (Cllr Bedford joined the meeting at 7.34pm.) Responses to questions included the timetable for the new play unit and associated equipment for Reeds Lane Recreation Ground and for the Oak Tree which has to be felled on the site. (Cllr Avery joined the meeting at 7.38pm.) The Berrylands Pond upkeep by the Woodland Flora and Fauna Group volunteers was discussed and Cllr Zeidler felt MSDC who own the pond, would support requests from the community but would not be able to fund extra work than that provided by their contractors. Cllr Majsai stressed that not all local residents may agree on the best solutions for the pond, such as cutting back more trees or dredging the pond. The Chairman stressed that residents must not do anything without permission or that risks their safety. The closure of Twineham School was raised and the Chairman suggested responses were directed to WSCC. The Chairman agreed to bring forward the agenda item concerning the Sayers Common Village Sign.

C25/26.065: Reports from Other Authorities: Members received reports from representatives of other authorities:

C25/26.065.1: West Sussex County Council: Cllr Dennis was not in attendance and there were no questions arising.

C25/26.065.2: Mid Sussex District Council: Cllr Jackson reported that MSDC had agreed the next steps for parking charges in the Hurstpierpoint car parks on 15 September 2025. Further consultation will commence in February 2026 with implementation taking place in May 2026. MSDC had agreed to request two new unitary councils be created in West Sussex (one being Horsham, Mid Sussex and Crawley), going against the preference of WSCC for one unitary based on the existing boundaries. Members voiced concerns about splitting up the adult social care and childrens' services. The sports pitches at the Arc (Centre for Outdoor Sports) are now in use. Cllr Avery asked about drain clearing in Malthouse Lane/College Lane which Cllr Jackson is following up. The Chairman thanked Cllr Zeidler and Cllr Jackson for their reports.

C25/26.066: Committee Minutes: Members received and as appropriate, considered the recommendations of the:

- i. **Planning Committee (28 July 2025):** There were no recommendations for Council.
- ii. **Finance, Governance & Estates Committee (14 August 2025)** There was one recommendation for Council:

F25/26.031: Review of 2024/25 External Audit Report: The Committee noted the External Auditor's (Moore West Sussex) Certificate for the 31 March 2025 accounts and congratulated the Team on the result. A comment had been made in the covering letter to the Clerk, that the External Auditor felt the general reserves appeared to be held at a low level. The Committee noted that the Parish Council's Reserves Policy states that a minimum of three months of net revenue expenditure would be held in the general reserve, and that this figure was in fact exceeded. The Practitioners' Guide states that in practice any authority with income and expenditure in excess of £200,000 should plan towards the three months equivalent general reserve. The Internal Auditor had also commented in their report of 29 April 2025, that the Parish Council's reserves are in the recommended range. The Committee agreed to recommend the External Audit report to Council for adoption, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee NOTED External Auditor's (Moore West Sussex) Certificate for the 31 March 2025 accounts and AGREED to recommend it to Council for adoption, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Council AGREES and ADOPTS the External Auditor's (Moore West Sussex) Certificate for the 31 March 2025 accounts, and congratulated the Team on the result.

- iii. **Planning Committee (1 September 2025):** There were no recommendations for Council.
- iv. **Community Engagement Committee (11 September 2025)** There was one recommendation for Council:

CE25/26.018: Review of the Media and Communications Policy: The Committee discussed the proposed Media and Communications Policy in detail, agreeing minor amendments to Appendix A. It was: **RESOLVED:** for the Assistant Clerk to incorporate the agreed amendments to Appendix A, and that Committee then recommends the revised policy for adoption by Council at a future meeting, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Council AGREES and ADOPTS the revised Media and Communications Policy.

- v. **Finance, Governance & Estates Committee (18 September 2025)** There were no recommendations for Council, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Council RECEIVES the minutes of the following Committees and AGREES the above recommendations:

- i. **Planning Committee (28 July 2025)**
- ii. **Finance, Governance & Estates Committee (14 August 2025)**
- iii. **Planning Committee (1 September 2025)**
- iv. **Community Engagement Committee (11 September 2025)**
- v. **Finance, Governance & Estates Committee (18 September 2025)**

C25/26.067: Casual Vacancy: Members noted that following the sad passing of Cllr Evans, a Notice of Vacancy dated 11 September was required to be displayed to allow ten or more residents to call for a by-election. If no election is called within 14 working days, then the Parish Council can fill the vacancy by co-option. The closing date for the by-election notice is 30 September 2025. Members also noted that following the resignation of Helena Browne on 9 September, there is also a second vacancy which will follow the same process with a closing date of 9 October 2025. Members noted there was already a prior vacancy being advertised to be filled by co-option at the 23 October 2025 Council meeting. Subject to by-elections not being called, Members agreed to attempt to fill the three posts by co-option at the Council meeting on 23 October 2025, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Council NOTES the three casual vacancies and unless electors call for a by-election, AGREES the posts will be filled, if possible, at the 23 October 2025 Council meeting.

C25/26.068: Draft IT Policy: Members considered an IT Policy for adoption, as required from April 2026 to comply with Assertion 10 (Digital and Data Compliance) of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Council AGREES and ADOPTS the IT Policy.

C25/26.069: Internal Controls: Members reviewed the September 2025 internal controls exercise, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Council NOTES and AGREES the findings from the September 2025 internal controls.

C25/26.070: New Street Trading Policy: Members considered the draft Mid Sussex District Council Street Trading Policy. Members were satisfied that for street trading during community events, and for traders expanding their wares outside shops on land they owned, traders did not require street trading licences, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Council NOTES the new MSDC New Street Trading Policy and has no further comment.

C25/26.071: Sayers Common Village Sign: Members considered the results of the consultation undertaken to reach a decision on whether to gild the cross and village name on the sign. A vote was taken which was unanimously in favour of supporting the result of the consultation, to allow Sayers Common Village Society to gild the sign, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Council AGREES to allow Sayers Common Village Society to gild the sign at their expense.

C25/26.072: Reports from Representative on Outside Bodies:

C25/26.072.1: South Downs National Park Authority: Cllrs Jackson and Dyke will join a seminar on 1 October 2025.

C25/26.072.2: West Sussex Association of Local Councils: Cllr Jackson and Cllr Street are invited to the WSALC AGM on 4 November 2025, with the Clerk. The Chairman has requested an October MSALC meeting regarding devolution.

C25/26.072.3: Hurstpierpoint Society: Cllr Dyke reported the Society are considering signage for Latchetts Lane (in partnership with the Parish Council) and future funding projects e.g. new benches in front of the Village Centre.

C25/26.072.4: Sayers Common Village Society: The SCVS wishes to liaise with the H&SC and Albourne Parish Councils over new developments planned for the area. The Chairman looks forward to these discussions.

C25/26.073: To note any information items, correspondence received or requests:

C25/26.073.1: MSDC Draft District Plan: The Chairman and Clerk had attended a master-planning meeting in May 2025 with MSDC and developers, and a further meeting is now arranged for 6 October 2025. It was noted that it is only because of the pressure applied to MSDC by the Parish Council and others, that this opportunity is available. The importance of the infrastructure delivery plan being in place prior to development (drainage, water, sewerage, flooding etc), will again be stressed.

C25/26.073.2: MSDC Parking Strategy: Members noted the Mid Sussex District Council Cabinet report of 15 September 2025, and received a verbal update on the parking charges to be introduced by MSDC. There were still concerns about how charges would be applied as some detail is not yet available. The technology to accompany automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) enforcement is being developed alongside the plan for the charging scheme. Formal consultation will take place in February 2026 and the Parish Council will make further comments then.

C25/26.073.3: WSCC Business Case for Devolution “Shaping West Sussex”: Members noted the business case prepared by West Sussex County Council for submission to Government by 26 September 2025. WSCC were requesting one county unitary but MSDC were requesting that West Sussex be split into two unitary authorities. The Parish Council will monitor developments in order to understand the impact on assets and services in the future.

C25/26.073.4: Trustee Training: Members noted the Village Centre Trustee training on Thursday 6 November 2025.

C25/26.073.5: Old Methodist Church: Members noted the old Methodist Church was for sale again by auction, this time with the Planning in Principle permission for up to six homes, advertised at a sale price of £650,000.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.06pm.

Chairman