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

Hurst Meadows Working Group Meeting

8th October 2026

Attendees: Cllr Malcolm Llewellyn (ML), Cllr Claire Majsai (CM) and Stephen Witchell (SW).

Apologies: Cllr Jayne Webb, Allan Brown, Dr Georgina Judd and Rebecca Rees.

Minutes

1. **Welcoming the new member to the Hurst Meadow Working Group - Cllr Jayne Webb.**
2. **Lost Woods Community Day update**
    - CM attended the lost woods community day
    - There was a good turnout of people, with lots of workshops to attend including Climate resilience, volunteer management, monitoring wildlife.
3. **Autumn Tree walk for Hurst Rethink/Volunteers**
    - CM is planning this for the last Saturday in October for an informal walk.
4. **Bench plaque enquiry**
    - It was agreed that as per our agreed approach to the Meadows, we will not be allowing any memorial plaques to be placed on the benches in the meadows, however we will investigate other options within the Millennium Garden of St Goerge's Green.
    - One option discussed was a memorial wall.
5. **Management Plan update**
    - SW is to update the draft management plan as discussed and send it out to ML and CM to review.
6. **Coppicing training**
    - Volunteers were approached to see how many would be interested in the coppicing training; we received 15 responses.
    - This was passed onto the Woodland Trust, and they will be in contact with training dates when they become available.
7. **Hedge laying**
    - SW is to meet with the hedge laying society on Monday 12th October 2026 to review the hedges and determine which ones can be laid this year.
8. **Any Other Business**
    - Volunteer project idea
        i. to help with the control of willow in Fifteen Acres.
        ii. To lay branches along paths especially in Tilleys Copse, to protect the Bluebells next year.
    - Dream for trees is a registered charity

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i. who would be keen to plant a Miyawaki mini forest possibly in Fairfield Rec. it was highlighted that this is MSDC land, SW will ask MSDC if this is possible on a small area to the Northeast of the cricket nets.
ii. SW is also to chase MSDC to see if there are any plans to install the pitch on the land south of Mildrid Durrant Way as planned when the land was released.

- Tilleys Copse Ash Trees
  i. CM highlighted a few Ash trees were looking dead along the West Boundary of Tilleys Copse. SW will investigate ahead of the tree surveys next year.
- SW is to include the Heritage Orchard report from Martin Sadler, please see below.
- The Grounds Maintenance Officer will be asked to remove any tree guards left on the cycle path in Fifteen acres. It was agreed to remove the tree guards from the other hedge plants.
- SW is to move forward with the moving of the vehicle gates by meadow view, ensuring we follow the boundary line.
- It was agreed to review the access through Edgerley Meadow and look into cutting paths next year. A site visit will be planned.
- SW is to ask for advise on scrapes from Adur River Trust.

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Heritage Orchard report – October 2026

It has been a difficult year in the orchard - over 100kgs of damsons picked but hardly any apples.

Up to this year there has been a small crop of Delma, Farleigh, Aylesbury and Shropshire damsons but this year after heavy rain in January and February (over 13inches of rain, 40% of the usual annual rainfall) the Merryweather damsons went into mass production with a total of 83kgs. picked with 75% being offered to the public at the Village Centre.

The remainder plus the four other varieties were taken by passers-by at the orchard. Three have shown their appreciation by returning some damson jam or chutney.

The apples flowered 6 weeks after the damsons, so most of the moisture in the ground had been taken up by the damsons. At the end of April we had our open day which was well attended. Shortly after this most of the apple flowers were open but strong wind blew off the petals so that the bees had difficulty finding the apples to pollinate.

In May the apples were attacked by Ermine Moth, so we spent some time removing the caterpillars that were snuggly protected behind their webbing. Then on June 2nd we had heavy rain (nearly 2 inches) and hail causing all the apples to be damaged by small holes to their skins.

The heat was building having 13 days of summer with a shade temperature of over 30 degrees centigrade. Last year we only had two. The 'June drop' was heavy with the trees shedding high numbers of fruitlets. In July a lot of apples gave up with their fruit with many maturing early, by August most dropped all their fruit with many going bad as soon as the rains reappeared because pests and disease got into the apples through the hail damaged skins.

By August only four trees had a reasonable crop. With the rain starting the trees have produced a lot of new growth so there are many fit looking trees, with much fruit budding ready for next year.

All trees have survived, except one new one, Rougemont which should have been planted earlier but due to personal reasons, the planting had to wait until March. Eight new trees were planted then, all grafted by me back in 2019. However, there were three Rougemont apples grafted so a replacement is available.

As a result of the indifferent weather there were very few apples so I have only managed to hand into the office two bags of fruit. Hopefully next year will be much better.

At least Butterfly group has had a good year with the butterfly count. I have certainly enjoyed them in the orchard especially when there at 7am to see so many Marbled Whites.

Martin Sadler