BERWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting of Berwick Parish Council
held on Wednesday 21st May 2025 at 7.40pm
This meeting took place in Berwick Village Hall

Present: Councillors Winter, Burrough, Smith, County Councillor Nick Bennett
There were no members of the public present
The Clerk was in attendance

1. **To appoint a Chair for the ensuing year**
   Councillors **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Keith Winter Chair for the ensuing year. Cllr Winter signed the Acceptance of Office.

2. **To appoint a Vice Chair for the ensuing year**
   Councillors **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Sally Carnie Vice Chair for the ensuing year.

3. **Apologies for absence**
   Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Barham, Carnie, Mills and District Councillor Alison Wilson.

4. **Declarations of Interests**
   There were no declarations of interest or changes to the Register of Interests.

5. **Confidential Items on the Agenda**
   It was **RESOLVED** there were no confidential items on the agenda.

6. **Public Questions**
   There were no members of the public in attendance.

7. **Reports from County and District Councillors**
   County Councillor Nick Bennett – a report was circulated prior to the meeting, attached at Appendix 1. Cllr Bennett was thanked for his report.
   District Councillor Alison Wilson
   A report was circulated, attached at Appendix 2.

8. **Minutes of the previous meeting**
   Minutes of the meeting held on 26th March 2025 were read, approved and signed by the Chair.

9. **Appointment of Councillors to serve as representatives of the Parish Council on the following bodies:**
   The following appointments were **RESOLVED**
   - East Sussex ALC Ltd – All Councillors as required
   - Wealden District Association of Local Councils – All Councillors as required
   - Village Hall Committee – Cllr Burrough
   - Tree Warden – Adrian Carnie
   - Cuckmere Flood Forum – Cllr Winter
   - Cuckmere Community Buses – Cllr Smith

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SDNPA – Cllr Mills
Parish Cluster Group – Cllr Winter
Working Group Against Over Development – To be agreed

10. Councillors' Areas of Responsibility

The following appointments were **RESOLVED**
Roads and Transport – Cllr Winter
Planning – Cllr Smith
Playground and Recreation Ground – Cllr Mills, Adrian Carnie will carry out monthly inspections.
Village Maintenance – Cllr Burrough

11. To approve the following subscriptions and insurance:

Councillors **RESOLVED** to approve the following:
Wealden District Association of Local Councils
East Sussex Association of Local Councils
Zurich Insurance
Information Commissioner

12. Meeting dates

Meeting dates already agreed: 23rd July 2025, 24th September 2025 and 26th November 2025
Councillors **RESOLVED** to agree the Extraordinary Meeting on 13th August 2025 when James MacCleary MP will be in attendance.
Councillors **RESOLVED** to agree the following Full Council meeting dates: 28th January 2026 and 25th March 2026.

13. Bank Accounts

i. Bank signatories – It was **RESOLVED** that Cllrs Winter, Burrough and Smith, and the Clerk would be signatories for the ensuing year.
ii. Online banking – It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk would begin the process of setting up online banking.

14. Code of Conduct

Councillors **RESOLVED** to adopt the Code of Conduct for the ensuing year.

15. Standing Orders and Financial Regulations 2025

Councillors **RESOLVED** to approve the Standing Order and Financial Regulations 2025

16. Reports from Outside Bodies

a) Village Hall Committee – Cllr Burrough reported that the committee would like a concrete path constructed from the recreation ground gate to rear of the village hall, this would prevent mud being walked into the hall. Two folding benches on the rear wall of the hall were also required to enable footballers to remove their boots before entering the hall. Following discussion regarding land ownership and path construction materials it was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk would send a grant application form to the Village Hall Committee, Cllr Burrough will attend the next committee meeting on 5th June 2025.
b) Cuckmere Community Buses – A full report was provided at the preceding Annual Parish Meeting by Paul Warren of Cuckmere Community Buses.
c) Tree warden – The tree warden had nothing to report.

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d) Cuckmere Flood Forum – No report.
e) South Downs National Park Authority – No report.

17. Parish Maintenance

a) Verges and Hedges – It was **RESOLVED** that the standard letter provided should include trees and the information provided by ESCC detailing the clearance measurements should also be attached to the letter.
b) The Berwick Way – Councillors noted that the bench has now been installed and has been well received by residents.
c) The Recreation Ground – the recent monthly inspection detailed vegetation growing through the bench, it was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk should arrange for this to be removed.

18. Finance

Councillors **RESOLVED** to approve the following:

a) Annual Governance Statement to 31st March 2025
b) Annual Accounting Statements 2024-25
c) Exemption from External Audit Certificate
d) Dates for the Exercise of Electors' Rights
e) Risk Assessment, Asset List and Statement of Internal Controls
f) To appoint Keith Robertson as the Internal Auditor for 2025-26
g) Bank Reconciliation Statement for March 2025
h) The following payments:

1	East Sussex Pension Fund	Pension April	£166.99
2	L Kemp	Salary April	515.36
3	Mass Media	Website updates (Final invoice)	126.00
4	Team 4	Payroll	12.00
5	ESALC Ltd	Subscription	90.89
6	Earth Anchors	Bench The Berwick Way	£772.48
7	Tipler Fencing	Bench installation	416.55
8	Zurich Municipal	Insurance	1575.85
9	Team 4	Payroll	12.00
10	East Sussex Pension Fund	Pension May	166.99
11	L Kemp	Salary May	515.16
12	ICO	Data registration	52.00
13	Parish Web and Host	Gov.uk domain, hosting and new website	784.00
			£5,206.27

19. Planning

i. To consider planning applications received from Wealden District Council:
WD/2025/0836/F Gatehampton, Station Road, Berwick. BN26 5UL
Following discussion Councillors **RESOLVED** to **SUPPORT** this application.

ii. To consider planning applications received from SDNPA
SDNP/25/01978/HOUS Comp Barn, Winton Street, Alfriston, BN26 5UL
Following discussion Councillors **RESOLVED** that there was **NO OBJECTION** to this application.
SDNP/25/01911/CND Comp Barn, Winton Street, Alfriston, BN26 5UL

Following discussion Councillors **RESOLVED** that there was **NO OBJECTION** to this application.

iii. To consider any planning applications received between the date of the issue of the agenda and the date of the meeting:
No applications have been received.

iv. To note any decisions made by Wealden District Council or South Downs National Park Authority
WD/2025/0311/F 4 Downsway, Berwick BN26 6TD – Approved.

20. Sussex Police Street Surgeries

The Clerk informed Councillors that there had been many requests by Parishes to hold Street Surgeries and that a suggestion has been made by Arlington Parish Council that, in order to hopefully host the surgery at an earlier date, Berwick and Arlington PCs could host a joint surgery. Councillors **RESOLVED** that the Clerk should make this suggestion to the Rural Policing Team.

21. New website and email accounts

The Clerk informed the meeting that the website was now complete and that she was able to make updates. All Councillors are now in receipt of the details for new email accounts.

22. Questions from Parish Councillors

Cllr Winter reported the bridleway from close to the station car park to Selmeston was difficult to negotiate and considered it would be impossible for horse riders. The Clerk was asked to report this to the Rights of Way team.
Cllr Burrough reported the footpath from Ludlay to the station was also difficult to negotiate, the Clerk will investigate and report to the Rights of Way team.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm

The next scheduled meeting of the Parish Council will be held on 23rd July 2025 at 7pm.

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East Sussex County Council

Summary of County Council achievements 2024/25

This summary sets out some of the key achievements of East Sussex County Council (ESCC) in 2024/25 (up to February 2025) under the four strategic priorities of the Council: www.eastsussex.gov.uk/your-council/about/key-documents/council-plans
The Council Plan for the forthcoming year will be on our website from 1st April 2025.

Driving sustainable economic growth

To help protect roads from future damage, investment in the county's road patching programme was doubled in July 2024, with a £1million (m) boost to the budget. Over the first three-quarters of the year, nearly 400 patching works and 88 **road improvement schemes** were completed. In addition, over 15,000 potholes were repaired and over 600 drainage schemes were completed. Work also began to complete the **Queensway Gateway** project to link the final section of the road to the A21, to reduce congestion and open up land for employment space.

As part of the Council's **Bus Service Improvement Plan** (BSIP), £18.5m was allocated to new bus priority measures in Eastbourne, Newhaven and Peacehaven with consultations on the schemes undertaken. Work was completed on a major upgrade of public transport facilities in Uckfield and the Flexibus services became more accessible with the creation of a single travel zone. ESCC was also awarded an additional £9.9m for new BSIP programmes. The fourth **East Sussex Local Transport Plan** 2024 – 2050 was adopted at Full Council in October 2024. The plan sets out how ESCC and partners will plan and provide transport for residents, businesses and visitors.

ESCC took on the responsibilities of the Local Enterprise Partnerships in April 2024 and worked with partners to produce a new East Sussex **Economic Prosperity Strategy**. A range of **business support programmes**, creating new jobs have also been delivered. The Newhaven Business Grants programme created 29.5 Full Time Equivalent jobs in the first three-quarters of the year and we expect the Rural Business Grants programme to create over 60 jobs with 11 businesses having received over £200,000 of grants. With the district and borough authorities in Lewes, Eastbourne, Rother and Wealden we also secured nearly £450,000 of funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, to deliver support and training to local businesses through the Ready To Grow and Big Ambitions schemes.

Promoting **employability and skills,** over 800 pupils attended Open Doors workplace visits over the first three quarters of the year, to gain experience of a real workplace. ESCC was also successful in gaining funding for a range of programmes to support young people to move into successful careers, including support for 315 year 10 students to develop personal and career development goals through the Steps to Success programme, funding for the East Sussex Digital Futures Accelerator programme offering activities to schools and employers to increase the number of students pursuing careers in the digital and technology sector, and a pilot programme in Hastings to inspire the next generation of engineers. In addition, 11 projects to support training and boost employability across Hastings and Rother were successful in securing £1m of funding from the Skills Capital Fund and nearly 1,000 people enrolled on Family Learning Programmes at East Sussex Libraries over the first three-quarters of the year.

In September 2024, the Council launched the **Excellence for All** vision, co-produced with representatives from the education sector, to look ahead to 2030, setting out our ambitions for an **education system** that delivers for all children and young people.

Keeping vulnerable people safe

In July 2024, Local Authority Fostering South East was launched; a new virtual **fostering** hub bringing together the expertise of 20 councils from across the region. ESCC joined other councils from across the South East to create the country's largest local authority fostering partnership, to increase the number of foster carers across the region

The East Sussex **Youth Justice Service** was rated good in an inspection by HM Inspectorate of Probation. The report, published in September 2024, said the service was well-led, highlighted partnership working as a strength and rated nine of the 13 areas inspected 'good' or 'outstanding' including leadership of the service, the dedication and commitment of staff, and the range of high-quality services in place to personalise support. It also noted that data from the past 18 months showed a reduction in the overall rate of re-offending among those children that had worked with the service. In February 2025, the findings of an inspection into services for **children and young people with special education needs and disabilities** were published, giving the East Sussex Local Area Partnership the middle rating for the delivery, planning and commissioning of SEND services.

East Sussex became the first county in the country to offer an **online service to support people at risk of contracting HIV**. In August 2024, ESCC in partnership with Preventx, The Love Tank CIC and LLoydsPharmacy Online Doctor, launched England's first online HIV Pre Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) service.

16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence began with White Ribbon Day in November 2024, including events, White Ribbon Champion and Ambassador drop-in sessions, a social media campaign and engagement with local sports clubs. A **Domestic Abuse** Small Grants Fund awarded funds to 6 local projects in November 2024, including support for victims/survivors from ethnic minority backgrounds, older people and those in temporary accommodation.

As of 31 December 2024, 1,965 guests had arrived in East Sussex under the **Homes for Ukraine** scheme, hosted by 882 sponsors. Over 800 people have subsequently moved into private sector accommodation.

Keeping vulnerable people safe continued…

Trading Standards was involved in over 230 active interventions over the first three-quarters of 2024/25 to protect vulnerable people, including installing call blockers to try to prevent people from falling victim to telephone scams.

The Council works closely with our partner Care for the Carers, who we commission to provide a wide range of services. In 2023/24 Care for the Carers provided information, advice, and support to 10,860 **carers** - up 12% from the previous year.

Helping people help themselves

Developments at 3 new **Youth Hubs** are progressing well; a topping out ceremony took place in Heathfield in December 2024, as the final section of roof panel was installed and the new extension and internal remodelling at the Joff Youth Hub in Peacehaven is progressing. Planning permission for the development of the Hollington Youth Hub was also granted in December 2024.

A new app designed to help residents lead a **full and healthy life in older age**, was launched in April 2024. The Life Transitions app supports residents to prepare for their future including events such as retirement, moving home, changes in health and mobility, finding new purpose, becoming a carer, or experiencing bereavement.

Reablement services are provided to help people to regain mobility and daily living skills, especially after a hospital stay. Between April and December 2024 93.8% of people who received short-term services did not request further support and between April and September 2024, 93.2% of older people discharged from hospital to reablement or rehabilitation services were at home 91 days after discharge.

Work continued on the **integration of health and social care** in 2024/25 with the development of 5 Integrated Community Teams, across the health and care system, aligning with borough and district boundaries. These teams will address local priorities and focus on multi-disciplinary team working with proactive care for the most complex and vulnerable patients. The five-year Shared Delivery Plan was refreshed for year 2 to continue delivery of the Sussex Integrated Care Strategy and the East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy.

19 **road safety** schemes were completed during the first three-quarters of 2024/25 to improve road safety infrastructure. ESCC was also awarded £875,000 from the Government's Safer Roads Fund to implement safety improvements on a section of the A2101 in Hastings. In addition, work began on measures on 16 priority roads to reduce driver speeds, including reductions in speed limits, Vehicle Activated Signs, road surface treatments, and new signage and lining. Over 3,600 people have also benefitted from 'Bikeability' courses.

The Council's External Funding team responded to over 180 enquiries over the first three-quarters of the year from the **voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (VCSE)**. The team has helped organisations secure £3.124m in funding over the same period.

Making best use of resources in the short and long term

The Council's **budget and Council Plan** for 2025/26 were approved at the meeting of Full Council on 11 February 2025. Councillors approved a budget spending £579.6m on services in 2025/26 which due to the increased demands for services and the increased costs of delivering them, is £55m more than the previous year. To meet these costs and demands, the budget includes use of over £11m of reserves, alongside savings of £13.5m and increasing Council Tax by 4.99%.

Following an expression of interest from the leaders of Brighton & Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council, in February 2025, the Government approved proposals to create a mayoral strategic authority for Sussex as part of the **Devolution Priority Programme**. As well as unlocking new powers and investment for the region, it will give the people of Sussex a stronger voice in how national decisions affect them and enable more decisions to be taken locally.

The Council has continued to work with partners to deliver carbon reduction and our climate change plan. The Council has received 90% of the £4.441m allocated from the Government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund to support the delivery of on street electric vehicle charge points. Seventeen **energy efficiency** projects were completed on Council buildings during the first three-quarters of the year, including LED lighting projects, heat decarbonization and 5 solar PV energy generation schemes. Carbon emissions for quarter 2 of 2024/25 were 6% lower on the same period last year and down 39% on the baseline year 2019/20.

The Council spent £412m with 891 **local suppliers** over 2024, equating to 62% of total contract spend. In addition, during the first three-quarters of the year, 8 contracts were awarded which were in-scope of the Social Value Measurement Charter. These contracts had a total value of over £57m with over £11m of **social value** commitments secured, including apprenticeships, work experience, creation of local jobs, and support to environmental initiatives.

To reduce costs, the Council has consolidated **office accommodation** with moves into one Eastbourne office hub and one Hastings office hub completed in 2024. Options for the County Hall campus were considered by the Lead Member in October 2024; it was agreed that the Council will remain at the site until alternative Council-owned accommodation at Sackville House becomes available in 2030, at which point re-location will be considered. In the short-term two blocks of County Hall are being vacated to reduce costs and to free up space for lettings.

Contact: Alice Pippard: alice.pippard@eastsussex.gov.uk 01273 481816 February 2025

REPORT FROM WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL
MAY 2025

1. At the Full Council meeting on 14 May, WDC adopted a new constitution. Councils are obliged by law to have a constitution which is up to date. WDC's constitution had been updated and amended over the years, with the result that it had become very long and unwieldy, and also contradictory in places. The new constitution is clearer and more user-friendly, and it is hoped that residents will find it more straightforward to consult and to find the information that they require.

   Notable changes include adjustments to the way that planning committees are organised. WDC will no longer have a North and South planning committee, but will instead have a Majors and a Minors Committee. This reflects best practice, in that the Majors Committee will have councillors who have been trained to look at larger developments (10 or more residential units) and who have the expertise to consider strategic planning applications, such as those for solar farms or battery storage. The Minors Committee will deal with applications for less than 10 residential units and all other householder applications, including those involving heritage issues.

2. Ward budgets of £10,000 will be allocated to each councillor to fund projects and initiatives which directly benefit our wards. Councillor ward budgets have been successfully used by councils across the country to support grassroots projects that may otherwise lack financial backing because they do not fall within existing grants programmes. The scheme is expected to be up and running by July, so I should be grateful if Parish Councils and Parish Meetings could spread the word amongst their residents, and encourage community groups to contact me directly if they would like to apply for funding (cllr.alison.wilson@wealden.gov.uk).

3. Full Council also approved the creation of a new fund, the Community Led Infrastructure Fund (CLIF). This new capital fund will be backed by monies collected from developers through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and is intended to target small and medium scale projects based in communities across the district. WDC is currently delivering a range of grant funding programmes and is contacted regularly with funding enquiries which do not fit within the terms and conditions of specific government grant programmes which often have strict funding criteria. The CLIF will help to bridge this gap and to fund locally led projects which meet the needs of communities. Examples of such projects include adaptations to community buildings, energy efficient measures, access improvements to outdoor spaces and installing new facilities and equipment. The CLIF will have a fund of £2M, all areas of the district will be eligible to access the CLIF and the grants awarded will be between £5,000 and £200,000 (subject to a low match funding requirement of 20%). If Parish Councils and Parish Meetings are aware of community projects which might benefit from the CLIF, please do get in touch (email address as above). Once the CLIF scheme has been set up, applications for funding will be made directly to WDC.

Alison Wilson
21 May 2025