Minutes of the Upper Beeding Annual Council meeting held at Upper Beeding Village Hall on Tuesday 26th May 2026 commencing at 7pm

Present: Councillors: S Birnstingl, J Edwards. J Cannon, C Deadman, F Heaver, B Harber (UBPC Chair), S Teatum, Warren.

Also present: Parish Clerk: Stephen Keogh
HDC Councillors: M Croker & R Noel.
WSCC Councillor: Victoria Finnegan

C: 0526:01 **Election of the Council Chair**
Cllr Harber was elected as Chair of the Parish Council for the 2026/27 municipal year, proposed by Cllr Warren, seconded Cllr Heaver, and **AGREED.**

C: 0526:02 **Chair's Declaration of Acceptance of Office**
Cllr Harber agreed to sign the Chair's declaration of acceptance of office.

C: 0526:03 **Election of Vice Chair**
Cllr Kardos was elected as Vice-Chair of the Parish Council for the 2026/27 municipal year, proposed by Cllr Harber, seconded Cllr Teatum and **AGREED**.
Cllr Kardos agreed to sign the Vice-Chair's declaration of acceptance of office.

C: 0526: 04 **Apologies for absence**
Apologies were received from Cllrs. F Bull, P Bull, and T Kardos.
County Councillor. P. Linehan.

C: 0526:05 **Declaration of Councillors personal or prejudicial interest**
The Chairman reminded councillors that previous declarations still stand (as defined under the Localism Act 2011).
No further declarations received on this occasion.

C: 0526:06 **Minutes of the last meeting**
It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on held on 28th April 2026
Proposed Cllr F Heaver: seconded Cllr S Birnstingl and **AGREED.**

C: 0526:07 **Public Adjournment**
There were no public present.

C: 0526:08 **Update from County Councillor –** to receive a report from Councillor Victoria Finnegan.
Victoria introduced herself, outlining her background:
Former NHS and healthcare sector experience.
Experience in policy writing, quality control, and data governance.
Parish Councillor (10 years) and District Councillor (approx. 3 years).
Involvement in local developments, including Glebe Fields and High Street Wi-Fi.

Chair of Policy and Scrutiny (Communities & Place) at Horsham District Council.

Recently appointed as West Sussex County Councillor.
Overview of County Council responsibilities:
Highways, SEND, adult social care, libraries, fire service.

West Sussex County Council Updates
Formation of **Alliance of West Sussex** with a memorandum of understanding:
Commitment to maintaining services and ensuring smooth transition (potential unitary authority).
Victoria has joined the **Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee (CYPSSC)**:
Includes SEND and school transport matters.
Council currently in early stages:
Training underway; formal work just beginning.

Abandoned Vehicles – High Trees Area
Three untaxed vehicles with no MOT reported.
Issue referred to:
Operation Crackdown, Horsham District Council, Ownership of land unclear; enquiries ongoing (Highways vs District vs South Downs).
Cllr Heaver asked that, as the location has regular issues, once the ownership has been confirmed can WSCC put a sign up with details etc.
Temporary Road Closure
Scheduled closure: 27th May 2026
Location: Junction of Castle Lane and Crofts Wood. Time: 9:00–15:30
Pedestrian/resident access maintained.

Council Term and Local Government Reorganisation
Term length currently uncertain:
Could be **2 or 4 years**, depending on reorganisation.
If **unitary authority proceeds**: District elections may be postponed.
Shadow authority elections likely.
If not: Normal election cycle continues.
There were no further questions, Cllr Finnegan departed.

C: 0526:09 **Update from District Councillor –** to receive an update from HDC Councillor, Mike Croker.
Local Plan (Plan to 2040)
Target adoption: January 2027 (subject to delays).
Key concerns:
Housing supply shortfall (approx. 15–20%).
Reassessment of previously rejected sites.
Reduced weight given to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
Consultation Timeline
Main modifications consultation: July–August
Hearings: October
Inspector's report expected: December (timeline considered optimistic)

New Local Plan – to 2045
Must begin by 30 June 2026.
Will run in parallel with existing plan.

Additional consultation expected in summer.
Note: Parish councils may need to adjust meeting schedules due to overlapping consultations.

Local Government Reorganisation
Consultation currently open (closing **15 June 2026**).
Awaiting Secretary of State decision (expected summer).
Structural change order anticipated in autumn.

Lithium-Ion Battery Storage Concerns
Task and finish group established at Horsham District:
Focus on safety of domestic battery storage (linked to solar PV systems).
Key issues:
Fire risks from inverters and installations in roof spaces.
Lack of regulation in domestic settings vs commercial.
Concerns from fire service and insurance sector.
Proposal:
Develop safety guidance for installations and grant applications.

Compliance and Enforcement
Horsham District Council has updated compliance procedures.
New webpage available.
Feedback invited from councillors.

Strategic Planning Questions & Concerns
Cllr Warren asked where the water is coming from help build the new homes?
Cllr Noel stated that due to repairs to the water infrastructure, there would be increased availability of water supply for large-scale housing developments.
Reliance on reduced leakage by Southern Water.
Long-term sustainability questioned.
Southern Water invited to attend future WSCC meeting (September) to address concerns.

General Discussion Points
Cllr Harber commented that there is a concern that developers may start favouring more profitable sites over allocated sites. This may include green field and AONB.
National issue of unoccupied housing with many homes unoccupied.
Concerns about coordination between planning, infrastructure, and demand.

C: 0526:10 **Neighbourhood Warden Report**
Councillors received and **NOTED** the monthly report for April 2026 provided by the Neighbourhood Wardens.

C: 0526:11 **Standing Orders** – Annual review of Standing Orders
The **Standing Orders** were circulated prior to the meeting.
These were reviewed and **ADOPTED** with no amendments.
Proposed Cllr Teatum, seconded Cllr Cannon and **AGREED.**

C: 0526:12 **Financial Regulations –** Annual Review of the Financial Regulations
The Financial Regulations circulated prior to the meeting. These were **ADOPTED** in their current form with no amendments.

Proposed Cllr Harber, seconded Cllr Warren and **AGREED.**
Cllr Birnstingl felt that the front two pages were surplus and may need to be deleted.
Cllr Harber stated that it may be sensible to scrutinise the regulations and bring them to the next full Council Meeting.

C: 0526:13 **Code of Conduct -** Annual review of the Members Code of Conduct
The Members Code of Conduct circulated prior to the meeting. This were reviewed and **ADOPTED** with no amendments.

Proposed Cllr J Cannon, seconded Cllr Birnstingl and **AGREED.**

C: 0526:14 **Committee Membership**
It was resolved to appoint members to the Community, Facilities, Planning, Finance and Staffing Committees for the municipal year 2026/27 as per the attached Committee Membership list.

Proposed Cllr Harber, seconded Cllr Deadman and **AGREED.**

C: 0526:15 **Representatives to Outside Organisations**
It was **RESOLVED** to appoint representatives to Outside Organisations for the municipal year 2026/27 as per the attached Outside Organisations list

Proposed Cllr Warren, seconded Cllr Birnstingl and **AGREED**.

C: 0526: 16 **General Power of Competence** – To adopt the General Power of Competence.
The details of the General Power of Competence were circulated prior to the meeting. This was reviewed and **ADOPTED**.

Proposed Cllr C Warren, seconded Cllr Cannon and **AGREED.**

C: 0526:17 **Consent for the Summons to Attend Meetings to be Transmitted in Electronic Form**
It was **RESOLVED** to accept the summons to attend meetings by electronic form.

Proposed Cllr S Birnstingl, seconded Cllr Cannon and **AGREED.**

C: 0526:18 **To agree the meeting schedule for 2026/2027**
The Meeting Schedule for 2026/2027 circulated with the agenda was **ADOPTED**.

Proposed Cllr J Cannon, seconded Cllr. Cannon and **AGREED.**
It was reiterated that some dates may change when necessary.

C: 0526: 19 **Community Governance Review**
The HDC Form and the Clerk's report circulated with the agenda was **NOTED.**
The Clerk reported that there was to be a meeting between UBPC Members and Henfield Parish Council members on Wednesday 27th May 2026 and a similar meeting would be held on Monday 8th June at 6.00pm,
The details of which will be circulated again.

Agenda to include:
Boundary of Small Dole

Allotments linked to development
Downs Link access
Boundary Proposal
It was **AGREED** that the group would propose to move northern boundary to Mill Stream to unify village.

It was still recognised that there was still very little known about the role of the Parish and Town Councils after the unitary authorities have been created.

C:0526: 20 **Community Committee Meeting –**
The meeting was inquorate so it was **AGREED** to accept the Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 12th May 2026.

C: 0526: 21 **Annual Accounts 2024/25**

i. **Internal Audit Report**.
The internal audit report by Mulberry & Co was accepted as a correct record of the Council processes.

ii. **Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26**
The 9 statements in section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return were reviewed.
It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Council's response to be 'yes' for all of the statements 1- 9 To approve the annual governance statement section 1 of the AGAR. 25/26.

iii. **Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024/25**
It was **RESOLVED** to approve section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return and that this be signed by the Chairman, noting this had been signed by the RFO prior to presentation as required section 2 of the AGAR 25/26

Notice of Public Rights and Publication
It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the Notice of Public Rights and Publication

C:0526: 22 **Project Update.**
The Clerk's report circulated with the agenda, was **NOTED.**

i. Skatepark Upgrade.
The contractor and the FOSDSP have been in contact trying to encourage a start of the install works. There were some issues with the link between the

ii. Saltings Loop Footpath Upgrade
The report circulated with the agenda, was **NOTED.**

C:0526: 23 **Financial Update –**
Income and Expenditure Reports (summary and detailed) to date.
Councillors received and **NOTED** the reports for April 2026.

C: 0526: 24 **Finance Matters** –

i. It was **AGREED** to **NOTE** that Mulberry Local Council Services Ltd would be selected as the internal auditor for the Council for the 2026/27 municipal year.

ii. It was **AGREED** to accept the Direct Debits and Bank Signatories for the 2026/27 municipal year.

iii. EDF Refund Update circulated with the agenda was **NOTED.**
Members   the Clerk for pursuing the refund.

C:0526: 25 **Bank Reconciliation**
Councillors received and **NOTED** the Bank reconciliation for April 2026

C:0524: 26 **Payments List**
Councillors received and **NOTED** all payments made in April 2026 totalling £16, 264.05 in accordance with the Financial Regulations.

C: 0524:27 **Correspondence**
Councillors received and noted correspondence received during April and May 2025.

C: 0523:29 **Chair's Announcements**
Thanked the Members for their support over the past year and for their vote of confidence.

C: 0523:30 **Matters raised by Councillors**
The following matters were raised by Councillors for discussion at future meetings: -

Cllr Warren
Can Beeding in Bloom be advertised on Facebook etc to gain extra volunteers?

Cllr Heaver
Possibly invite some speakers who the Parish Council have given grants to, to speak at the Annual Parish Meeting

Cllr. Cannon
Reminded Members about the Emergency Briefing Film taking place on 24th June 2026.
Also mentioned that a surveyor has attended the Sports Hall

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.40pm

Signed: Date: