

Minutes of the **WITHYHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING** held at **THE OLD STATION, GROOMBRIDGE** on **10th November 2025** at 7pm

PRESENT Councillors Nick Anderson, Robert Gordon-James, Diana Kelly (Chair), Penny Lawne, Jill Pardey, Sue Skinner, Judi Tuke, Linsey Winter

In attendance: Kelly Gaynor – The Clerk (Minutes)
Natalie Brett – Assistant Clerk (observe)
East Sussex County Councillor Georgia Taylor
Wealden District Councillor Jessika Hulbert

Members of the public are encouraged to attend meetings and there is a 10-minute opportunity for members of the public to address the Council. There were no members of the public in attendance.

1. **ENQUIRE WHETHER ANYONE PRESENT INTENDS TO FILM, PHOTOGRAPH AND/OR RECORD THE MEETING** – none.

2. **APOLOGIES** – Cllr Bowers Illness
Cllr Gaukroger– Work Commitments
Cllr Parekh-Jones – Illness
Cllr Rhodes - Family Commitments

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – None

4. **MINUTES**

4.1. Resolve that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 13 October 2025 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

003083 **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2025 were approved.

4.2. Matters outstanding from minutes (not listed as separate agenda items)

Following the resolution (002783) passed at the October 2024 Council meeting *"RESOLVED to submit the response to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy as recommended by CEAG"* — it was noted that a further submission or response would be required.

Due to the external consultation deadlines, a draft of the proposed further response will be circulated to Members in advance of the next Council meeting. Members will be invited to provide agreement by email to enable timely submission.

Any such agreement obtained by email will be formally **ratified at the December 2024 Council meeting** to ensure the decision is properly recorded and compliant with local government procedures.

Actions reported to this meeting as completed

Minute no.	Who	Item	Deadline by which to complete	Update
Pg 3287	Clerks	To request an update from Cllr Hulbert regarding the £10,000 grant uptake	November	Cllr Hulbert provided an update at the meeting
3064	Clerks	To advise CEAG flower bed redesign agreed	November	Completed
3065	Clerks	To advise CEAG funding request approved	November	Completed
Pg 3287	Clerks	To discuss with CEAG TPOs being part of their remit	November	Completed – referred to CEAG for discussion at next meeting
3066	Clerks	To advise RFO Parish Plan budget priorities agreed	November	Completed
Pg 3288	Clerks	To advise RFO further information sought for WPCIC subsidy request	November	Completed
Pg 3288	Clerks	To provide a link on GDPR training for all Councillors	November	Completed
3067	Finance Committee	RFO to contact mSporti	November	Completed, subsequent email advised GRG had not been used by MSporti since August 2025
Pg 3288	Clerks	To thank the volunteer Highway Coordinator	November	Completed
3068	Clerks	Adopt the Community Engagement Statement Policy		Completed
3069	Clerks	Adopt the Petitions Policy		Completed
3070	Clerks	Adopt the Reserves Policy		Completed
3071	Clerks	Adopt the Prepaid Card Policy		Completed
3072	Clerks	Adopt the Capital Expenditure Guidance Policy		Completed

Pg 3290	Clerks	New recording of Pending List	November	Completed
Pg 3290	Councillors	To think of potential Co-Opt Candidates	November	Completed – Note Co-option vacancy has been confirmed
2971	Clerk/RFO	WPC will not fund an extra 4 urban verge grass cuts in 2026	Autumn	ESCC notified 06/11/2025
Pg 3246	Cllr Parekh-Jones	Update council on progress of the Ridge Association when available		Record as completed To note under Ward Reports by Cllr Parekh-Jones when available
Pg 3202	Cllr Anderson	Monitor GCC/recreation ground vehicle gate and let Council know if more could be done	July	Record as completed Cllr Anderson to raise again once the cricket season starts (if necessary)

Actions from previous Minutes not yet completed

Minute no.	Who	Item	Deadline by which to complete	Update
3044	Clerks	Conduct a consultation on fencing the playground in Groombridge in the spring	Spring	
Pg 3290	Clerks	To consider Unsung Helpers event next year	Spring	
Pg.3100	Finance Committee	Consider Members Allowances at updated levels, travel and subsistence rates and costs for child/dependants' care in 2026/27 budget setting	Autumn	Information due by November
Pg 3246	Cllr Anderson	Share details of Ward Scheme to Cricket Club and advise that the repair of the fence is their responsibility under their lease	October	

Actions from these Minutes

Minute no	Who	Item	Deadline by which to complete
3295	Clerk	Council to agree CEAG response by email	December
3295	CEAG	CEAG to provide consultation response to clerk for circulation to council	19/11/2025
3299	Cllr Winter	Volunteered to attend next Community Café	22/11/2025
3299	Cllr Winter	Volunteered to take Speedwatch leaflets to next Community Cafe	22/11/2025
3299	Cllrs Tuke & Parekh-Jones	To liaise regarding Speedwatch volunteers	December
3299	Clerks	To advertise for Speedwatch Volunteers in Church and Parish magazines	December
3299	Cllr Skinner	To circulate a BETSI timetable of events (if available)	December
3300	Clerk	To confirm request of Groombridge Recreation Ground usage for May Fair	November
3300	Cllr Gordon-James	To confirm and liaise as Traffic Management for Groombridge May Fair	
3300	Clerks	To thank volunteer for placing street poppies and to request permission to have a photo for social media	December
3300	Responsible Finance Officer	To provide payroll and pension figures from November to next Council meeting	December
3302	Councillors	To consider Co Option Councillor vacancy	December
3302	Clerks	To advertise Co Option Councillor vacancy on social media	November
3302	Clerks	To advertise Co Option Councillor vacancy in Church and Parish magazines	December
3302	Clerks	To send a reminder to collect wreaths and street poppies for future re-use	December
3302	Clerks	To request slides from Wealden Town and Parish Conference on 21/10/25 for circulation	December

5. COMMITTEE MINUTES

Receive the following draft minutes of committees and to note recommendations contained therein and as far as requisite, the action taken by them.

5.1 Planning Committee Minutes 13.10.25 - Noted

5.2 Staff committee Minutes 27.10.25 - Noted

6. REPORTS FROM DISTRICT and COUNTY COUNCILLORS

County Cllr Taylor gave an update on East Sussex County Council Budget and advised an overspend of £25m for this financial year mainly attributed to the demand and cost of social care and children's care. The budget will be released on 26 November, and a financial statement will follow on 15th December. Exceptional Financial Support may be requested from the Government

District Cllr Hulbert advised involvement in Budget Scrutiny and that Wealden District Council is in good financial shape.

An update was then given regarding the Crowborough Army Camp noting that the Home Office had apologised for the way it was handled. Should any residence have concerns or comments they can contact Wealden District Council or Cllr Hulbert directly

The Chair reminded councillors that Withyham Parish Council does not have the responsibility or authority to influence or determine where asylum seekers are accommodated. The Council is a non-political body and therefore not involved in such decisions. Any enquiries regarding the housing of asylum seekers should be directed to Wealden District Council, your District Councillor or the Home Office.

Cllr Hulbert gave an update on the Ward Budget Scheme: £1500 had been awarded to BETSI for the rebuilding of the bus shelter. A further contribution had been made to Groombridge Cricket Club. Discussions were also ongoing with local primary schools

7. WARD REPORTS

(a) Groombridge Ward (Groombridge) to include speedwatch

Cllr Tuke advised speedwatch was continuing although it is becoming more difficult due to a lack of volunteers and availability. Cllr Tuke was thanked for her hard work on speedwatch.

Cllr Winter volunteered to attend the next community café on 22nd November and offered to take speedwatch leaflets at the same time to promote speedwatch

It was also suggested that information regarding this be placed in the Church and Village Magazines

It was further suggested to be discussed with Cllr Parek-Jones as speedwatch takes place within The Ridge too

Cllr Anderson advised the cricket club have yet to address the hole in the fence

Cllr Gordon-James and The Clerk met with a junior resident/parishioner regarding their desire for a skate park. The Parish Council was delighted to have engagement with a younger member of the community. The resident was signposted to relevant organisations

(b) Groombridge Ward (Withyham/Blackham)

Cllr Skinner advised that the BETSI Bonfire and Fireworks night had been a great success with approximately 200 people in attendance.

Blackham Remembrance event had also been very well attended.

Cllrs asked if a timetable of BETSI events was available

(c) Marden's Hill Ward

Cllr Pardey thanked the Parish Maintenance Person for continued success of the Speed Indication Device (SID) in reducing speed along London Road

It was also noted the WPC wreath had been laid at St John's Church and recorded in the order of service

Councillors were thanked by The Chair for laying wreaths on behalf of the council

Thanks were also given to our volunteer for placing street poppies within the parish

8. GROOMBRIDGE MAY FAIR 2026

8.1 request to use Groombridge Recreation Ground for May Fair 04/05/2026

The council were pleased to approve this request for this popular community event.

Cllr Gordon-James confirmed he is happy to act as liaison for traffic management

9. FIRE ALARM TEST REPORT

9.1 To agree recommendations

In addition to the clerks recommendations Cllr Gordon-James highlighted the lighting outside the front of the building was also not sufficient.

The Assistant Clerk thanked everyone for their assistance during and feedback following the fire drill

The Chair also expressed thanks to the Assistant Clerk

003084 RESOLVED to agree the recommendations in the report including spending within budget with addition of improvement to front of building lighting

10. ADOPT THE FOLLOWING POLICIES

10.1 Menopause policy

003085 RESOLVED to adopt Menopause policy

10.2 Internet, Email and Social Media Policy

003086 RESOLVED to adopt Internet, Email and Social Media Policy

10.3 Data Protection Policy

003087 RESOLVED to adopt Data Protection Policy

10.4 Document and Retention Policy

003088 RESOLVED to adopt Document and Retention Policy

11.. FINANCE

11.1 Note the report showing payments made to date against budgets – Noted

11.2 Authorise the payment of November invoices/note regular payments - Noted

It was advised that the payroll and pension figures were not reported to council this month due software error. Payments will be made and these will be reported to December council

Date: 06/11/2025

Withyham Parish Council

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Time: 11:22

Cashbook 1

User: DS

Current Bank A/c (HSBC)

Payments made between 16/10/2025 and 11/11/2025

Nominal Ledger Analysis									
Date	Payee Name	Reference	£ Total Amnt	£ Creditors	£ VAT	A/c	Centre	£ Amount	Transaction Details
01/11/2025	Employee	BACS132	5.98			4500	101	5.98	paint roller
10/11/2025	Commercial Services Trading Lt	BACS133	2,222.42		370.40	4205	201	1,504.11	Grass cutting Qtr2
						4206	201	59.64	Grass cutting Qtr2
						4260	203	288.27	Grass cutting Qtr2
10/11/2025	STREETLIGHTS.CO.UK	BACS134	753.95		125.66	4450	402	628.29	Maintenance contract
10/11/2025	Managed Technology	BACS135	298.18		49.70	4017	101	248.48	Usage and support Jul-Oct
10/11/2025	Fixlink Mark Anderson	BACS136	522.00		87.00	4500	101	435.00	Replace rad small mtg room
10/11/2025	Society - Local Council Clerks	BACS137	66.00		11.00	4007	101	55.00	Training KG
10/11/2025	Omnii Waste Management	BACS138	46.45		7.74	4506	101	38.71	Sep waste collections
10/11/2025	Employee	BACS139	54.27		5.67	4009	101	20.25	mileage conference
						4407	401	28.35	Items for PMP
10/11/2025	WDALC	BACS140	31.11			4008	101	31.11	Subs 2025/26
10/11/2025	N.Wealden Community Transport	BACS141	164.25			4401	401	164.25	Wealdlink Qtr3
10/11/2025	Ray Bailey	BACS142	40.00			4503	101	40.00	Window cleaning
10/11/2025	SME IT Solutions	BACS143	565.65		94.28	4013	101	114.91	Phone, BB
						4018	101	7.99	website
						4021	101	348.47	IT support
10/11/2025	Employee	BACS144	15.00			4407	401	15.00	woodfiller
10/11/2025	Employee	BACS145	21.86			4510	101	6.60	Milk
						4500	101	15.26	Draft excluder
10/11/2025	Volunteer	BACS146	16.20			4421	401	16.20	Mileage (Highways coord)
10/11/2025	Groombridge Village Hall	BACS147	55.86			4064	101	55.86	Oct Community Cafe
10/11/2025	The Premier Trust T J Newman	BACS148	327.46			4038	101	327.46	Insurance Old Station
10/11/2025	The Premier Trust N A Houghton	BACS149	327.47			4038	101	327.47	Insurance Old Station
10/11/2025	Employee	BACS150	30.20			4407	401	30.20	Mileage PMP
10/11/2025	Playdale Playgrounds Ltd	BACS151	1,158.30		193.05	4220	201	965.25	Roundabout repairs
						327		965.25	Roundabout repairs
						6000	201	965.25	Roundabout repairs
10/11/2025	Prepaid card	CB1Ppc1125	106.62			203		106.62	CB1 to PPC Nov
10/11/2025	British Gas Lite	DDBG1125	88.37			5101	500	88.37	Phoenix Hse/PO elec
10/11/2025	The Premier Trust N A Houghton	SONH1125	666.66			4012	101	666.66	Parish office rent Nov
10/11/2025	The Premier Trust T J Newman	SOTN1125	666.67			4012	101	666.67	Old Station rent Nov
Total Payments:			8,250.93	0.00	944.50			7,306.43	

003089 RESOLVED to pay the November invoices listed above totalling £8,250.93 + VAT; to pay by BACS or sign the cheques accordingly.

11.3 Consider any quotes - None

12. STAFFING MATTERS

12.1 Note the Pend List

The pend list was noted. Councillors were reminded that there continues to be an interim period where full capacity is not yet available and workloads must be managed in accordance with this.

14. CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk noted Co Option vacancy had been confirmed by Wealden District Council Cllrs were reminded that they can contact the Chair or The Clerk should they know of any interested residents. Advertisements would go out on Withyham Parish Council social media sites and the Church and Villages magazines,

The Clerk noted the accessible roundabout in Groombridge Recreation Ground is now repaired and fully functioning this has been shared on social media. The Clerk highlighted the services and assistance the Parish Maintenance Person had in assisting with this installation repair and future maintenance

The Clerks attended a conference organised by ESALC which was very informative The Clerk reminded those Cllrs who placed wreaths on behalf of the council that they Would need collecting and returning to the WPC office after a respectful period to allow for future reuse. (donations to the Royal British Legion would be made instead of repurchasing).

15. REPORTS FROM MEETINGS AND TRAINING ATTENDED BY COUNCILLORS

Cllr Anderson attended training on leading council and committee meeting with confidence which he found useful. He further noted that in comparison to other towns and parishes the training highlighted the professionalism of Wealden Parish Council.

The Chair and Cllr Gordon-James attended the well organised and informative Wealden Town and Parish Conference on 21st October 2025 one of the highlights of the agenda was about Local Government Reorganisation. Slides have been requested for circulation to all councillors

Other councillors were encouraged to attend training.

16. MATTERS OF URGENT IMPORTANCE FOR NOTING OR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDA:-

The Chair requested thanks be passed to the RFO for the continued support to the council in budget preparation and for the successful transition of her role

Items for December Agenda:

- CAGNE funding request
- Flight Path Consultation
- Local Nature Recovery Strategy response

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - Monday 8th December 2025 at Groombridge Old Station at 7pm unless otherwise notified by the agenda

The meeting ended at 8.02pm.