

4.2 Council April 2026

Matters Outstanding and Updates from Last Minutes

Actions outstanding from minutes prior to March 2026

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 2026	The Parish Council's consultation is now live: 7th April to 25th May 2026 . More detailed information shared in the April agenda item 13 meeting papers.
Pg 3290	Clerks	To consider Unsung Helpers event 2026	Spring 2026	
Pg 3330	Clerk	To receive Tree Survey Report and make recommendations to Council on actions.	February	Finally received March 2026 – minor work and one tree pruning required
003120	RFO	Draft update to Financial Regulations (authorisation thresholds and payments) for March Finance Committee / May ASM.	March Finance Meeting	Completed ready for May ASM
003120	RFO	Amend policy review spreadsheet so Fees and Charges are reviewed at budget setting, not the ASM.	March Finance Meeting	Completed

003120	RFO	Update Councillor Acceptance of Office forms to include consent for electronic summonses and agendas.	March Finance Meeting	Completed
003120	RFO	Update Investment Policy to remove A-rated bank requirement; report to March Finance Committee / May Council (FSCS limits apply).	March Finance Meeting	Completed ready for May ASM
003120	RFO	Draft Members' Allowances Policy, including Chair's allowance, for May Finance Committee / June Council; publish allowances on website.	March Finance Meeting	Completed ready for June Council Meeting
003150	Clerk	To commission a survey of the Parish to identify locations for additional defibrillator(s) Costs for the survey to be considered under the Clerks delegated authority	February	Email sent to First Responders to see if they would like to be involved – need to follow up
Pg 3369	Councillors	To agree a Councillor lead to be part of the Amblers Lead Team	February	Agreed to have a Councillor lead – Position is still available
Pg 3369	Councillors	To contact the community engagement coordinator if they would like to be involved	February	Position still available

Actions from ~March Minutes

Minute no	Who	Item	Deadline by which to complete	Update
Pg 3381	Clerk	To provide Councillor Hulbert with information received from Speldhurst Parish Council regarding Burrowswood	March	Completed
Pg 3385	Clerk	To chase status of A264 fingerpost with Jakk	March/April	Chased – will be removed from site in April with work to follow
003176	Clerk	To offer the Parish Maintenance Person a new 6-month Contract	March	Completed and accepted
Pg 3386	Clerk	To confirm to the Community Engagement Officer there will be a regular agenda item for CEAG update of news for council meetings	March	Completed – see agenda item 9
003179	RFO	To proceed with the drawdown of the PWLB loan and to complete the purchase of Groombridge Old Station .	March/April	Completed
003180	RFO	Advise Responsible Finance Officer: If the interest rate changes and the resulting annual loan repayment exceeds the current rental income, the shortfall will be met from Earmarked Reserves	March/April	Completed without exceeding current/previous rental amount
003182	Clerk	Contract Solar Dynamics for Inspection/Annual Service of Solar Panels and also to enquire regarding cleaning	April	Connectivity of meter to solar panels ongoing due to UKPN delays
003183	RFO	Advise Responsible Finance Officer: Agree budget overspend /use of earmarked reserves for work at Post Office/Phoenix House	April	Completed

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NOVEMBER 2019

L01-19 | CODE OF RECOMMENDED PRACTICE ON LOCAL AUTHORITY PUBLICITY (ENGLAND)

A code of recommended practice on local authority publicity ('the Code') was issued on 31 March 2011. By virtue of s.6 of the Local Government Act 1986, the Code applies to parish councils.

It is recommended that parish councils follow the Code, which is available via the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/recommended-code-of-practice-for-local-authority-publicity>.

Paragraph 28 of the Code says:

"Local authorities should not publish or incur expenditure in commissioning in hard copy or on any website, newsletters, newsheets or similar communications which seek to emulate commercial newspapers in style or content. Where local authorities do commission or publish newsletters, newsheets or similar communications, they should not issue them more frequently than quarterly, apart from parish councils which should not issue them more frequently than monthly. Such communications should not include material other than information for the public about the business, services and amenities of the council or other local service providers".

Paragraphs 34 and 35 of the Code are set out below:

"During the period between the notice of an election and the election itself, local authorities should not publish any publicity on controversial issues or report views or proposals in such a way that identifies them with any individual members or groups of members. Publicity relating to individuals involved directly in the election should not be published by local authorities during this period unless expressly authorised by or under statute. It is permissible for local authorities to publish factual information which identifies the names, wards and parties of candidates at elections.

In general, local authorities should not issue any publicity which seeks to influence voters. However this general principle is subject to any statutory provision which authorises expenditure being incurred on the publication of material designed to influence the public as to whether to support or oppose a question put at a referendum. It is acceptable to publish material relating to the subject matter of a referendum, for example to correct any factual inaccuracies which have appeared

in publicity produced by third parties, so long as this is even-handed and objective and does not support or oppose any of the options which are the subject of the vote”.

The Local Government Association has published a short guide to publicity during the pre-election period. The guide is available via the following link:

<https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/purdah>

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Agenda Item 9

WRITTEN QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 44

1) Question from Councillor Field to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment.

The booking system for the Household Waste and Recycling Service (HWRS) works well for those who use it. There are however many who for whatever reason do not. The result of this is charity shops reporting that items which should have been disposed of at the HWRS are "hiding" under a few legitimate donated items which means that the charities have to pay for their disposal. Parish councils are also reporting additional waste being left in or near their bins so that the Parish Council which pays for waste removal by weight is paying for items to be disposed of which would otherwise have gone to the HWRS.

What are the comparative figures for waste disposal at the HWRS before and after the booking system began?

Response by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

The booking system is straightforward and simple to use. Since its introduction on 24 November 2025, it has facilitated approximately 223,000 bookings. Residents are neither limited nor restricted in their ability to bring waste to the sites and are able to make same day bookings, subject to slot availability.

I am aware that the third sector, and the textile recycling industry in particular, is currently experiencing significant challenges. Several national textile recycling companies have recently ceased collections, which has had an impact on the flow of donations to charity shops. This can be observed at many supermarket car parks, where textile and bric-a-brac containers are full and often overflowing.

The decline in the quality of donations to charity shops is a longstanding trend driven by several factors, including the rise of fast fashion, low-cost manufacturing, increased consumption of inexpensive goods, and the absence of producer responsibility for the disposal or recycling of many of the items most commonly donated.

To date, the Council has not been made aware of any increase in waste collected by Parish Councils. Waste collection services are primarily delivered by district and borough councils, and none have reported similar issues to the East Sussex County Council Waste Team.

One of the reasons the booking system was introduced was to prevent traders from accessing the sites. It is unlawful to dispose of trade or business waste at household sites; such waste must be taken to a licensed commercial waste facility. Since the system was implemented, we have recorded an overall reduction in tonnage of approximately 10% at our household waste recycling sites, compared with the same period last year. This reduction is consistent with the original expectations that limiting trade waste would decrease the volume of material entering the sites and therefore reflects the intended purpose of the booking system.

2) Question from Councillor Taylor to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment.

Across several parishes there appear to be numerous unresolved problems where water is running down carriageways and damaging the road surface. In many cases, the drainage assets intended to remove water from the highway—such as gullies, grips, ditches and associated pipework—are either blocked, broken or obstructed.

As a result, water is not being properly discharged to watercourses or designated outfalls, which contributes to the deterioration of the road fabric and the formation of potholes.

Simply clearing gully pots is often ineffective if the connecting pipework or wider drainage infrastructure is not functioning. In one parish alone there are at least twelve outstanding drainage issues of varying scale, including at least two cases that have reportedly been known about for more than five years, have been investigated, and for which schemes were identified but not delivered.

Residents are increasingly concerned that without proper maintenance of drainage assets, road conditions will continue to deteriorate and lead to higher long-term repair costs.

Could the Lead Member please explain what action the County Council is taking to address the growing number of long-standing highway drainage issues within the ward?

Response by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

In 2025, the County Council reviewed and updated its Highways Asset Management Strategy. This included the Drainage Asset Management Plan – please find the following link for ease of reference:

<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/roads-transport/roads/highway-policies/drainage-asset-management-plan>

The Drainage Asset Management Plan forms part of the County Council's suite of strategic asset management documents and is aligned with the Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy. It complements other Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plans (HIAMP), including those for carriageways, footways, cycleways, and structures. The plan sets out the Council's approach to managing highway drainage infrastructure. It replaces the 2015–2018 Drainage Strategy and incorporates significant developments in asset management practices, risk-based planning, and the Council's commitment to network resilience. It provides guidance for internal teams and delivery partners involved in the operation, maintenance, and improvement of the highway drainage network.

During 2025/26 to date, East Sussex Highways has completed 117 separate drainage and flooding projects within Forest Row and Groombridge. Typically, this involves identifying and removing blockages in both gullies and pipes so that the system is flowing. However, at 21 sites, further works have been identified as being required and these will be followed up with additional works by the highway's drainage team.

a) What resources are currently allocated to highway drainage maintenance and repair?

Response by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment.

In 2025/26, East Sussex Highways utilised the following resources:

- East Sussex Highways typically employs four mechanical gully cleansing vehicles to complete the cyclical (planned) programme (circa 67,000 gullies attended per year in East Sussex)
- Ditching gangs to complete the cyclical ditch maintenance programme (approximately 137 miles).
- Two high powered surface water jetters to clear drainage defects and floods as well as carry out drainage investigations.
- One reactive gang to carry out minor works available for use at ad hoc known flooding hotspots.

Resources for 2026/27 are yet to be confirmed but will likely consist of the resources listed above plus a crew to tackle locations where cars are routinely parked and where jammed gully covers have been identified.

b) What work the County's drainage team is undertaking to address known failures in drainage infrastructure?

Response by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment.

To maximise the impact of limited resources, the Council prioritises drainage works based on risk, asset condition, and strategic importance. Investment planning focuses funding on schemes that offer the greatest benefit in terms of safety, resilience, and network performance. Drainage maintenance schemes are selected using a structured, risk-based methodology.

Key criteria include:

- Risk score – Reflecting asset condition, consequence of failure, and criticality.
- Incident History – Prioritising locations with frequent flooding or performance issues.
- Network Hierarchy – Favouring strategic routes, emergency access, and economically significant areas.
- Asset Type and age – With more frequent review of aging or data-deficient assets.
- Cost-Effectiveness – Supporting schemes that offer measurable performance gains and long-term savings.

- Once identified, schemes undergo feasibility assessment, budgeting, and approval before inclusion in the annual works programme.

The forecast investment into drainage infrastructure for 26/27 is £800,000 for routine and reactive works and £1,000,000 for capital works. The programme seeks to address existing drainage issues prior to carriageway schemes being delivered as well targeted work picked up from drainage investigations resulting from internal observations or public inquiries.

c) What plans are in place to resolve long-standing drainage cases that continue to damage the highway network?

Response by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment.

Drainage cases are prioritised as per the methodology noted above, noting the ongoing budget constraints the Council faces. In the long term we will continue to focus on the development areas noted in the Drainage Asset Management Plan. The aim is to:

- Improve condition data across all drainage and asset types
- Better understand system interdependencies and third-party influences
- Secure sustained investment and external funding to deliver long-term solutions.

By carrying out these activities we hope we can minimise reactive issues by tackling the underlying issues.

With respects to the Forest Row and Groombridge ward, there are no specific capital schemes proposed for 2026/27.

Withyham Parish Council - Updates for Noting

Report By	For Committee	Date	Agenda Item
Stephanie Chapman	Full Council	13 th April 2026	14. CEAG – Report

Confidential	Not Confidential	Exempt	Not Exempt
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11. Climate & Ecology Advisory Group (CEAG) Report

CEAG Updates:

- **Wild Verge Project:**
 - a) Mowing has begun around the edges of the verge to keep it looking like a designated wild verge project space.
 - b) Wild Groombridge held the first 2026 monthly survey on Saturday 14th March.
 - c) The wildflowers sign has been created by Wild Groombridge and the CEC and put up at the Wild Verge on the shed.
 - d) A temporary poster has also been put up and leaflets delivered to all Newton Willows addresses, as well as post on WPC's Facebook and website, with updates about the project from 2025 and what's happening in 2026.
- **Wildlife-Friendly Plant Bed:** The plants have been purchased and collected, and the bed has been planted by members of CEAG and the CEC. Huge thanks to Katrina and Mike from CEAG.
- **Thermal Imaging Camera:** is now closed for the 2025 – 2026 season.
- **National Projects:** the CEC attended the launch of The Climate Majority's Project "Mobilising the Silent Majority" on 31st March 2026 (online).

Councillors who would like further information or who wish to become involved are invited to contact Stephanie.

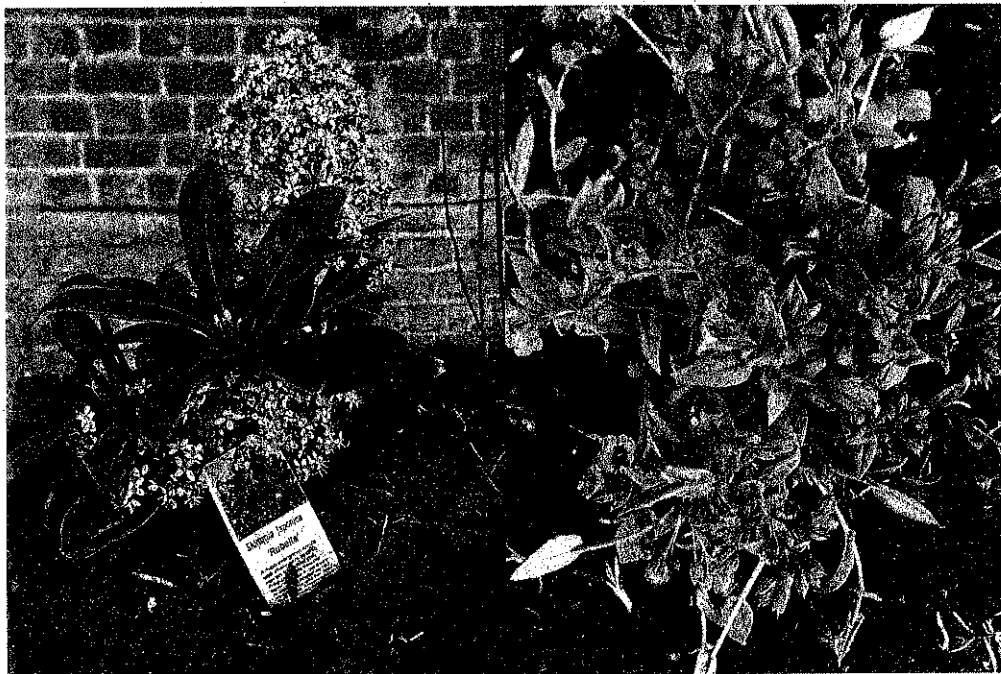
Wildflower Sign at The Wild Verge



Poster and Leaflets about the Wild Verge Project



Wildlife Friendly Plant Bed, The Old Station



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Withyham Parish Council - Pensions Discretions Policy

Responsibility: Finance Committee/Full Council
Review Cycle: Annually or earlier in the event of legislative changes

Date of Adoption/Renewal	Date for review
April 2025	April 2026

Introduction

Withyham Parish Council's (WPC) pension scheme operates under the National Employment Savings trust (NEST) according to the regulations relating to workplace pensions.

Employees eligible under auto-enrolment rules are entitled to enrolment in the NEST pension scheme at a 10% employer contribution, based on basic salary. The employee may make additional contributions. Enrolment for eligible workers should commence after the completion of successful probation (13 weeks) unless they choose to opt out.

This policy sets out Withyham Parish Council's approach to Pensions Discretions.

Principles

A key principle behind this policy is to set out the Council's approach to pension discretions, treating employees fairly and consistently whilst being open and transparent.

Employing Authority Discretions Regulations

The following table outlines Withyham Parish Council's approach to Discretions:

Discretion	Employer's policy on the exercise of this discretion
Whether to grant additional pension to a member	WPC does not exercise this discretion
Whether all or some benefits can be paid if an employee reduces their hours or grade on reaching 55 (flexible retirement)	WPC may exercise this discretion where there is no cost to the council and business needs are met.
Whether to grant application for early payment of benefits on or after 55 and before 60	WPC may exercise this discretion where a sound business case can be made for doing so.
Whether to grant employer contributions to members of staff who do not earn over £10,000 (current minimum earnings level for employer contributions to pensions)	WPC will abide by auto-enrolment guidelines (minimum earnings level) for employer contributions to pensions.

*This policy is to be reviewed annually to ensure it complies with current legislation.
At March 2024-2026 the total minimum contribution for auto-enrolment is 8%*

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WITHYHAM PARISH COUNCIL
BORROWING & INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Responsibility: Finance Committee/Full Council

Review Cycle: Annually, or earlier in the event of legislative changes/negative interest rates

Date of Adoption/Renewal	Date for review
April 2025 April 2026	April 2026 April 2027

INTRODUCTION

Should the Parish Council need a loan from the Public Works Board or wish to place an investment of its monies, the terms shall be negotiated by the Responsible Financial Officer in the name of the Council and shall be for a set period of time, in accordance with resolution from Full Council.

This policy sets out the financial management procedures for the monitoring of the cash flow and banking arrangements of Withyham Parish Council.

Authority reference is to the Council's Financial Regulations. The Local Government Act 2003 Section 12 provides the power to invest in the following circumstances - a. for any purpose relevant to its functions under any enactment; or b. for the purpose of the prudent management of its financial affairs. Section 15(1) of the Act requires a local authority to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Changes to loans and investments should be reported to the Full Council at the earliest opportunity.

Investments

This investment strategy assists Council with deciding where to invest funds and to confirm what level of risk the Council would be prepared to undertake. It is as follows:

- ~~Only use 'A' Rated high street banks or building societies registered in the United Kingdom~~
- The timeframe for any investment should be for less than 12 months*
- ~~No more than £85120,000 should be invested in any one bank in order to be within the FSA insurance scheme (The FSA Compensation Scheme limit is currently £85120,000).~~
- Should the Council budget exceed 500,000 Euros (thereby losing the protection of the FSCS), only use 'A' Rated high street banks or building societies registered in the United Kingdom
- All investments, deposits and interest will be in pound sterling (£)
- Finance Committee to have delegated decision-making powers to agree the investment of funds

- All investments and money under the control of the Full Council shall be in the name of Withyham Parish Council, and documents retained in the custody of the Responsible Financial Officer.

**Investments of more than 12 months must be shown as an investment on the fixed assets and investment register and could put the Council in a different audit regime*

Borrowing

All borrowings shall be taken out in the name of Withyham Parish Council.

Any formal decision to apply for and to exercise a borrowing approval must be made by Full Council.

The Council may borrow funds but will require the formal written approval of the Secretary of State.

The Council must contact East Sussex Associations of Local Councils (ESALC) to discuss the proposal and to obtain the Application Form for the Approval.

Borrowing must be for a specific, generally capital expenditure, purpose detailed on the application form and in a report to council.

Whilst the loan may be taken from any source, the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) is preferred. Irrespective of the source, an Approval is required and no mortgage or charge on property is allowed.

WITHYHAM PARISH COUNCIL

ASSET REGISTER AND DISPOSALS POLICY

Responsibility: Finance Committee/Full Council

Review Cycle: At least every three years, or earlier in the event of legislative changes

Date of Adoption/Renewal	Date for review
May-April 2026 ³	April-May 2026 ² 2029

1 Background

1.1 Local councils must maintain an asset register to ensure fixed assets are appropriately safeguarded. This includes items of a capital nature where values tend to be high and which have a useful life of more than one-year used by the council to deliver its services (Governance and Accountability for Local Councils: A Practitioner's Guide (England)). Fixed assets are also known as non-current assets. Fixed assets acquired in any year should be added to the asset register for management purposes. The Council's Financial Regulations, section 14 refers to the custody of Assets, Properties and Estates.

2 Scope of Asset Register

2.1 In order to ensure transparency and reasonableness, the following items are included in the Council's asset register, whether purchased, gifted or otherwise acquired, together with their holding location:

- land and buildings held freehold or on long term lease in the name of the Council
- community assets
- vehicles, plant and machinery
- assets considered to be portable, attractive or of community significance
- other assets estimated or known to have a minimum purchase value of £100.00
- long term investments, shares and loans made by the Council

2.2 The values indicated in the asset register will inform the 'total fixed assets' section of the Annual Return with the exception of assets held on trust.

2.3 The following items fall outside the definition for inclusion and are therefore excluded from the Council's asset register:

- Land of buildings held on short term lease/rented
- Land and buildings maintained or services, but not owned by the Council
- Assets rented or loaned to the Council
- Stock items intended for resale
- Stationery and other consumable items
- Boundaries of land owned (fences, gates, hedges)
- Floor or land surfaces and drainage
- Plants and trees
- Assets with a purchase or resale value of less than £100.00
- Repairs

- Cash, short term investments and other current assets
- Intangible assets (e.g. trademarks, internet domain names, contingent assets, broadcast rights)
- Negative assets (e.g. provisions, borrowings, creditors and contingent liabilities)

A separate section of the asset register will contain a schedule of disposals. Asset disposals must comply with the Asset Disposal Procedure referenced in this policy.

3 Valuation of Assets

3.1 Once recorded on this asset register, the value of assets must not change from year to year until disposal. Concepts of depreciation and impairment adjustments are not appropriate for local councils (Governance and Accountability for Local Councils: A Practitioner's Guide (England)).

3.2 Assets must be valued by one of the following means based on available information:

- ideally apply the purchase price (net of VAT if VAT has been reclaimed);
- otherwise apply the purchase price (gross of VAT if VAT has not been reclaimed or where the VAT status is unclear)

3.3 Where it is not possible to trace the purchase price of the asset the insurance valuation should be applied. As a last resort a nominal value of £1 may be applied. This should also be used for assets gifted to the Council.

3.4 There is no guidance where land or buildings have been subject to substantial renovation and improvement to such an extent that the new market value bears no relation to the original purchase cost. In order to avoid renovation and improvement work being separately recorded on the asset register, and in these exceptional circumstances only, a market value supplied by a qualified surveyor may be entered.

4 Procedure for updating the Asset Register

4.1 The start point is the asset register for the end of the previous financial year. The financial ledger should be reviewed for all purchases made during the year. Consideration should be given to identify any assets that have been gifted to the Council. Any assets which fall into the categories stated in 2.1 above should be added to the asset register, with their values recorded at the purchase price (net of VAT if VAT is being reclaimed) or at £1 if gifted to the Council.

4.2 The financial ledger should also be reviewed for all asset sales during the year. Consideration should be given to identify any assets that have been lost, disposed of or gifted by the Council. Any assets which fall into the categories stated at 2.3 above should be removed from the asset register and recorded in the schedule of disposals. The asset register should record any assets loaned by the Council, including the person or organisation borrowing the asset, its location and the date when the loan period ends.

4.3 It is the Council's responsibility to ensure a 'stock take' of asset register items should occur to ensure that all asset register items can be physically verified. Any assets which cannot be located should be removed from the asset register and

recorded in the schedule of disposals. The disposal procedure should be carried out in accordance with section 6.

4.4 The asset register and schedule of disposals shall be reviewed annually and approved by Council. This policy shall be reviewed every three years and approved by Council.

5 The Asset Register and Insurance

5.1 For insurance purposes, the asset register shall include a column to record the replacement value of each asset.

5.2 The asset register will be used to inform the insurers of Council assets. For the purposes of insurance, the value to be used is the replacement value and not the purchase price as per the asset register. The Council should ensure land and buildings are valued accurately for insurance purposes. Buildings should therefore be valued every 5 years to ensure the appropriate insurance is held.

6 Asset Disposal Procedure

6.1 Asset disposals must be referred to the Finance Committee for consideration and recommendation to the full Council. Following consideration of a written reason for disposal from the RFO or Clerk, the asset disposal decisions, and the reasons for taking them, should be documented. Not only does this assist in the audit process, it also highlights successes and problems for future reference.

6.2 All proceeds from disposal are the property of the Council and must be accounted for and reported to the full Council.

6.3 the best value outcome to the Council must be a major consideration when disposing of assets. Disposals should be based on a fair market value for each item. The price established should be based on:

- Current market value
- Condition of the item
- Age of the item
- An assessment of the usefulness of the item. External advice should be sought for IT equipment. All devices must be reformatted prior to disposal to delete any data they contain

6.4 Items can be available for disposal because they are:

- Required to be disposed of under a particular policy
- No longer required because of a change of procedure, function or usage pattern
- Occupying storage space and not needed for the foreseeable future
- No longer complying with health and safety standards
- Beyond repair but able to be sold for scrap

6.5 Options for the disposal of assets are:

- Sale by public tender
- Donated to a community service or organisation
- Scrap

Choice of the most appropriate option will normally be influenced by the nature of the goods for disposal and market value.

6.6 Assets disposed of should be recorded on an Asset Disposal Form to provide an audit trail and ensure they are correctly recorded in the disposals register.

6.7 Sale by tender/external sales should be advertised using appropriate channels for the nature of the goods for disposal and market value. Assets should be sold as seen and no warranty given or implied. Payment should be received prior to the asset being released.

6.8 Items cannot be purchased by staff or councillors for the purpose of managing conflict of interests and fair offering.

6.9 Where the Council has determined that the goods have no residual value, or where their disposal is unlikely to produce sufficient revenue, it may authorise the donation of the goods to another community group or organisation.

6.10 Where items have negligible value or the cost and time involved in managing the sale process would exceed the financial benefit, the equipment may be scrapped.

6.11 Any asset disposal should be correctly recorded to ensure transparency and accountability. The asset disposal form (appendix A) should be used and the RFO Clerk should update the asset register/asset disposals register following disposal for audit purposes.

Policy first adopted: April 2023

Appendix A

Asset Disposal Form*Form to be completed by the Clerk or RFO*

Asset(s) to be disposed of					
Asset Ref	Location	Description	Purchase Date	Original cost	Disposal value
Reasons for Disposal:					
Method of Disposal:					
Sold ☐ Donated ☐ Scrapped ☐					
Additional information:					
Date of Disposal: Minute Ref:					
Clerk <u>or</u> RFO's signature					
Date					
Asset Register/Disposal Register updated ☐					

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WITHYHAM PARISH COUNCIL
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) USE POLICY

Responsibility: Finance & Administration/Full Council

Review Cycle: 3 yearly or earlier in the event of legislative changes

Date of Adoption/Renewal	Date for review
April 2026	April 2029

Purpose

This policy sets out how Withyham Parish Council will use Artificial Intelligence (AI) safely, lawfully, and responsibly to support its work.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is technology that enables computers and software to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence, such as understanding language, recognising patterns, or making predictions.

It works by processing large amounts of data using algorithms that learn and improve over time.

The Council recognises that AI may assist with efficiency and communication but must not replace human judgement or statutory responsibilities.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All Councillors
- The Clerk and any other employees
- Contractors, consultants, and volunteers

It applies to all AI tools, including:

- Generative AI (e.g. text, image, or document generation tools)
- Translation tools
- Transcription tools
- Analytical or predictive AI systems

Legal and Regulatory Framework

The Council will comply with all relevant legislation and guidance, including:

- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018

- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988
- Computer Misuse Act 1990

The Council will also have regard to guidance issued by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and the Local Government Association (LGA).

Policy Principles

The Council will apply the following principles when using AI:

Human Oversight

AI is an assistive tool only. All outputs must be reviewed by a competent person before use.

Data Protection

No personal, sensitive, or confidential data shall be entered into AI systems without proper authorisation and compliance with data protection law.

Transparency

Where AI contributes materially to content, the Council will ensure transparency in its use where appropriate.

Accuracy

AI outputs must not be relied upon without verification.

Equality and Fairness

AI must not be used in a way that introduces bias or discrimination.

Proportionality

AI will only be used where it is appropriate and beneficial to Council operations.

Acceptable Use

AI may be used for:

- Drafting non-sensitive correspondence
- Preparing initial drafts of reports or policies
- Summarising publicly available information

- Supporting research
- Assisting with non-sensitive translations
- Generating ideas for communications and engagement

All outputs must be checked before use.

Prohibited Use

AI must not be used to:

- Process personal, confidential, or sensitive data
- Make decisions on behalf of the Council
- Provide final legal, financial, or professional advice without review
- Upload confidential documents to external AI platforms
- Generate misleading, biased, or inappropriate content

Risk Management

The Council has identified risks associated with AI use and applies mitigation measures as follows:

AI Risk Assessment Table

Risk	Description	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation / Controls	Relevant Legislation
Data protection breach	Personal data entered into AI tools	High	Medium	No personal/confidential data input; staff training; Data Protection Impact Assessment where required	UK GDPR; Data Protection Act 2018
Inaccurate outputs	AI produces incorrect information	High	High	Mandatory human review and verification	General legal duty of care
Bias / discrimination	AI outputs reflect bias	Medium	Medium	Review for neutrality and equality considerations	Equality Act 2010
Loss of accountability	AI appears to make decisions	High	Medium	All decisions remain human-led and recorded	Public law principles

Risk	Description	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation / Controls	Relevant Legislation
Confidentiality breach	Sensitive information exposed	High	Medium	Prohibit uploading confidential documents	UK GDPR
Reputational damage	Poor AI outputs published	High	Medium	Editorial review before publication	General governance duty
Copyright infringement	AI reproduces protected content	Medium	Low	Review and edit outputs	Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988
Cyber security risk	Use of unapproved tools	High	Low–Medium	Approved tools only; IT security practices	Computer Misuse Act 1990
Legal non-compliance	AI advice is outdated or incorrect	High	Medium	Verify against current legislation	Various statutes
Lack of transparency	AI use not disclosed	Medium	Medium	Disclose where appropriate	ICO guidance
Over-reliance on AI	Reduced professional judgement	Medium	Medium	Training and oversight	Governance best practice
Record keeping issues	AI drafts not retained properly	Medium	Low	Store final documents in official systems	FOIA 2000
Digital exclusion	Reduced accessibility	Medium	Medium	Maintain alternative communication methods	Equality Act 2010

Roles and Responsibilities

Full Council:

- Approves and reviews this policy

Clerk:

- Oversees implementation
- Ensures compliance with legislation
- Approves appropriate use of AI tools

Councillors and Staff:

- Use AI in accordance with this policy
 - Ensure outputs are reviewed and appropriate before use
-

Training

The Council will provide appropriate guidance and awareness to ensure:

- Understanding of safe AI use
 - Awareness of data protection responsibilities
 - Knowledge of risks and limitations
-

Monitoring and Review

- This policy will be reviewed annually by the Clerk and every 3 years by Council
 - Updates will be made in response to legislative or technological changes
 - Any incidents involving AI use will be reported to the Clerk
-

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Public Consultation

Playground Fencing at Groombridge Recreation Ground



Withyham Parish Council is seeking residents' views on the possible installation of a fence around the playground area within Groombridge Recreation Ground.

Please see the images below, however we advise visiting the location before completing the survey. Closing date for responses is at noon on Monday 25th May 2026

The playground was intentionally designed by the original Playground Group comprising Parents, Children and Councillors, to allow free flow between the play equipment and the wider recreation ground, enabling children to move seamlessly while supporting a variety of activities for all users.

The Parish Council has been advised that the land may be subject to historic enclosure provisions requiring it to remain an open space. As such, any proposal to install fencing must be carefully considered and justified, for example on safety grounds, to ensure it does not unlawfully restrict public access. The Parish Council has completed its own risk assessments and does not currently consider the playground to pose a safety risk for children. However, the Council wishes to hear from residents.

White lines denote possible fence location. Please do visit the site.



**Withyham Parish Council, The Old Station, Station Road, Groombridge. TN3 9RD.
Tel: 01892 864557 E-mail: clerk@withyhamparishcouncil.org.uk**

Consultation Questions

Where do you live?

- ☐ Blackham
- ☐ Groombridge
- ☐ Mardens Hill (St Johns, Crowborough)
- ☐ Withyham
- ☐ Outside of the Parish

Current Playground Safety

In your view, does the playground in its current open state present significant safety concerns for its users?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

Restrict public access

Do you think the proposed fence would restrict the use of the wider recreation ground by other users (e.g., families, walkers, sports groups)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

Overall View

Taking into account the needs of all users and the Council's current assessment, which of the following is your view:

- ☐ I support the installation of a fence around the playground
- ☐ I am against the installation of a fence around the playground
- ☐ I am unsure



Please return completed questionnaire to the Parish Office or Post Office.

Clerk

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 12 March 2026 16:04
To: Clerk
Subject: Re: Groombridge Village Hall - Public Consultation
Categories: Kelly

..... And maybe putting a copy of the Notice on the Parish Notice Board outside the Post Office, please?

Sent from my iPhone

On 12 Mar 2026, at 12:52, Clerk <clerk@withyhamparishcouncil.org.uk> wrote:

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for providing the Village Hall Consultation Document and for giving us advance notification. We appreciate being kept informed and recognise the importance of this consultation.

We will place the matter on the agenda for next month's Parish Council meeting so that councillors can review the document and consider any response. We will, of course, treat the information confidentially until it is released publicly.

Regarding dissemination, we will explore the possibility of including the consultation on the Parish Council website and let you know what can be arranged.

Kind regards

Kelly Gaynor

The Clerk
Withyham Parish Council
The Old Station
Groombridge
East Sussex
TN3 9RD
01892 864557

The Parish Office is open 9.30-12.00 Monday to Friday. Other times are available by appointment.

<Image001.png>

This message is intended for the use of the addressee only, unless otherwise stated, and may contain confidential or privileged information. If you have received it in error please

notify the sender and destroy it. You may not use it or copy it to anyone else unless indicated. Email is not a secure communications medium. Please be aware of this when replying. All communications sent to or from Withyham Parish Council may be subject to recording and/or monitoring in accordance with relevant legislation. Although Withyham Parish Council has taken steps to ensure that this email and any attachments are virus free, we can take no responsibility if a virus is actually present and you are advised to ensure that the appropriate checks are made. Any views or opinions presented are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of Withyham Parish Council unless otherwise specifically stated.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 11 March 2026 13:04
To: Clerk <clerk@withyhamparishcouncil.org.uk>
Subject: Groombridge Village Hall - Public Consultation

Dear Natalie

I am writing on behalf of the Trustees of Groombridge Village Hall in my role as both a Trustee and Clerk to the Trustees.

Although the Parish Council has no direct responsibility for the Village Hall, its position as a potentially interested party and its role as a Civic representative of the local community is recognised by the Trustees. I am therefore attaching for the Council's advance information a Village Hall Consultation Document that will appear in April's Village Magazine. Naturally, the Parish Council is invited to respond to the Consultation with its comments. The deadline is 15th June so there is plenty of time.

The Consultation document should be self-explanatory but if any clarification is required please do not hesitate to let me know. I am also wondering whether WPC can assist in the dissemination of this news - for example, is there scope to put this on WPC's web-site?

I would be grateful if the Parish Council could bear in mind that this document is not presently in the public domain - and won't be until towards the end of this month when we hope to have contacted all our stakeholders (hirers etc). Until then, please can you treat this advance notification with an appropriate level of confidentiality?

With thanks and kind regards

[REDACTED]
Trustee and Clerk to Trustees of the King Edward VII Institute

King Edward VII Institute, Groombridge

Registered Charity No: 305234

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

March/April 2026

Residents in the District of Groombridge in the counties of East Sussex and Kent and regular users of the King Edward VII Institute (commonly known as Groombridge Village Hall) are being contacted to consult about plans to change the constitution of the charity to enable the transfer of operations and property to a new charity called King Edward VII Institute Groombridge Village Hall. This new charity will be set up to operate as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with a constitution modelled on the Charity Commission's approved standard form for village halls.

The King Edward VII Institute is presently registered with the Charity Commission with a constitution based on a Grant of Land and a Trust Deed dating back to 1911. Since then, the Governance of the Village Hall has remained substantially unchanged and is no longer considered by the Trustees to be best suited to today's Hall Management environment.

The main reason for converting to a CIO is to modernise the Hall's governance structure and constitution to bring it into line with many other community halls and organisations. This will enable our Village Hall to deal with all stakeholders (hirers, contractors etc) as a single incorporated entity rather than as a body of individual Trustees as at present. As part of the process of conversion, the CIO will also become the direct owner of the Village Hall, whereas ownership is presently vested in the Official Custodian for Charities. However, the Village Hall will still be subject to the same restrictions on disposal of charitable lands as it is at present. It will simply now be held in the name of the CIO, which provides greater clarity about ownership and therefore greater security for the charity's assets.

Another reason for converting to a CIO is that some grant funds are only open to charities that are incorporated, and this is likely to be the case increasingly in the future.

It is considered by the present Trustees that conversion to a CIO will enable the management and ownership of the Village Hall to become even closer to the community which it serves both in fact and in practice. A CIO will also provide much clearer lines of accountability and responsibility for those running the Village Hall thereby facilitating the retention and recruitment of such necessary volunteers. Indeed, the Trustees hope this change will encourage a greater diversity of participation from villagers across the current users and local population.

The Trustees therefore intend to apply to the Charity Commission to transfer operations and property to the CIO and will eventually close the present Charity. As the Hall's land will be registered in the name of the new charity this transfer technically counts as disposal of charity land. For such a transfer to take place, the Charity Commission require this consultation to take place to determine if the beneficiaries of the facilities support the application.

Please respond to Richard Thirkell to express your support for or concern about the proposed change by June 15th 2026

Richard Thirkell – Trustee and Clerk to the Trustees of King Edward VII Institute

Email: trusteesecretary@groombridgevillagehall.org.uk

Address: King Edward VII Institute c/o Benchmark Barn, Groombridge Lane, Eridge Green, Tunbridge Wells, TN3 9LA



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Rt Hon Steve Reed OBE MP
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities &
Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Leaders of councils in Sussex
By email

25 March 2026

Dear Leaders,

Thank you for your continued efforts to deliver new unitary councils in East Sussex and Brighton and Hove and West Sussex. I very much appreciate the efforts you have made to develop proposals in your areas to the ambitious timescale we set out for this programme. This Government is undertaking the biggest reform of local government in a generation, ending the two-tier system and replacing it with new single-tier unitary councils. This agenda is key to this government's vision of local councils that deliver good services for residents and are equipped to drive economic growth, while empowering their communities.

I am writing to let you know that, after carefully considering the four proposals I received for reorganisation across East Sussex and Brighton and Hove, and West Sussex, I cannot currently give you a decision on which, if any, proposal in your areas will be taken forward at this time. I have outlined the reasons for this below, along with the next steps to progress reorganisation in your areas.

On the five unitary, pan-Sussex proposal from Brighton and Hove City Council, I very much recognise the arguments made around the geographies suggested, in particular balancing the distinct urban, rural and coastal communities in the areas. However, I have concerns around the costs associated with implementing this proposal and we are concerned about the disaggregation risks this proposal carries. Specifically, I am particularly concerned about the risk to vulnerable service users as a result of disaggregation during the implementation phase, as there was a lack of joint working on the proposal.

I feel the two unitary proposal for East Sussex and Brighton from East Sussex County Council, Eastbourne Borough Council, Hastings Borough Council, Lewes District Council and Rother District Council has some positive strengths, especially in relation to the service delivery of the new authorities. However, I have significant concerns about keeping Brighton and Hove on its current footprint.

Both my Ministers and I have been forthright in our ambitions to leverage the power of local government reorganisation to support economic growth and design public services that respond to residents. A key component of this is facilitating the growth of smaller cities such as Brighton and Hove. By keeping Brighton and Hove on its current boundaries the two unitary proposal limits opportunity for future economic growth in the city as well as the ability to build new homes there. By binding Brighton and Hove into its current geographies, we limit the city's future potential as a key economic engine on the south coast and do nothing to combat the issue of Brighton and Hove's high affordability ratio. The proposal also fails to adequately address the financial stability of councils, and we understand that this reflects the representations made to the department in your previous submission letters and consultation responses.

In West Sussex, I would like to seek further views to ensure that the proposals reflect the distinct communities and identities in the area, while maintaining balance under the Mayoral Combined Authority. The consultation revealed a concern that the two unitary proposal risks diluting the rural identity and economic profile of areas like Chichester by grouping them with coastal districts. I note that there was also some support from Adur and Worthing for the concept of a coastal unitary which could focus on specific coastal challenges and local needs. I also received representations from other government departments that Chichester should be placed with Horsham as it would be a better fit in terms of needs and demographics, rather than placed with Worthing, Adur and Arun. I would therefore like to understand views on whether there would be appetite for this at a local authority level.

To be clear, I have not reached decisions on which proposal/s, if any, to implement. I am, however, considering modifications that could address my concerns. I have attached an option for potential modification of the proposals to this letter for your consideration. This would see four unitary councils for Sussex and involves modifying the West Sussex proposal for two unitary councils, so Chichester was no longer part of the coastal unitary but was instead part of the inland unitary; and modifying both East Sussex and Brighton and Hove proposals so as to expand Brighton and Hove as requested by Brighton and Hove (and in consequence reducing the size of the East Sussex unitary). These will form the basis of a further technical consultation where I will seek views on the options for potential modification, carried out on a condensed timeline after the local elections.

I do not take this decision lightly and I know that this will be a disappointment given you were expecting decisions. I would like to reassure you that we are still fully committed to delivering reorganisation in your areas with elections in May 2027 and changes coming into effect from April 2028. I fully recognise the need for clarity on the future of local government in East Sussex and Brighton and Hove and West Sussex. My officials will be in touch to support all councils and provide more information on next steps.

I look forward to continuing to work closely with you to deliver the vital improvements that reorganisation can facilitate. I am copying this letter to your Chief Executives, MPs, and the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Reed". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

RT HON STEVE REED OBE MP

Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government

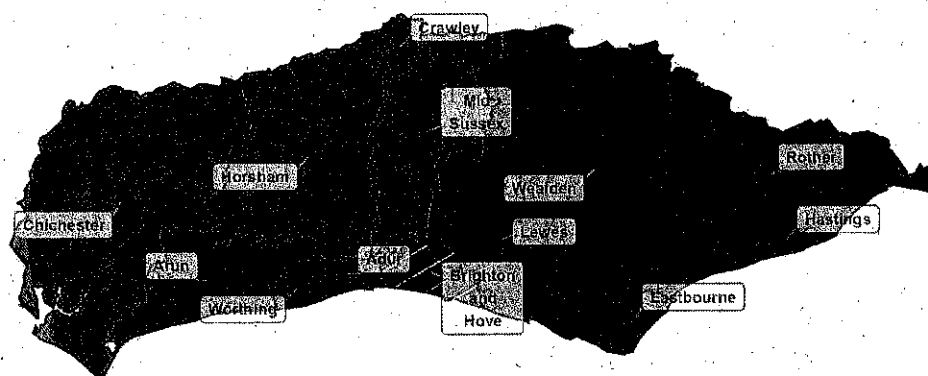
Map:

Unitary A: Eastbourne, Hastings, Rother, Wealden and remaining parts of Lewes (pop: around 478,000)

Unitary B (coastal): Arun, Adur, Worthing (pop: around 437,000)

Unitary C: Brighton plus following wards and parish from Lewes (as requested) – East Saltdean & Telscombe Cliffs, Peacehaven West, Peacehaven East, Peacehaven North, Falmer Parish (from Kingston ward) (pop: around 308,000)

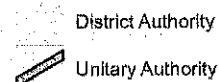
Unitary D (urban): Crawley, Chichester, Horsham, Mid Sussex (pop: around 537,000)



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Withyham Parish Council

Sent via email to:

clerk@withyhamparishcouncil.org.uk

31 March 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

Proposed telecommunications base station at:**Cell Ref:** CS-23656023 VMO2-081071**Address:** Telecommunications site at Withyham Road, Groombridge, Tunbridge Wells, TN3 9QT**NGR:** 552530, 136878

Cornerstone is the UK's leading mobile infrastructure services company, acquiring, managing and owning over 20,000 sites and they are committed to enabling best in class mobile connectivity for over half of all the country's mobile customers. Cornerstone oversee works on behalf of telecommunications providers and wherever possible aim to:

- Promote shared infrastructure
- Maximise opportunities to consolidate the number of base stations
- Significantly reduce the environmental impact of network development

Cornerstone is in the process of progressing a suitable telecommunications site in the following area:

- Groombridge

As part of a continued network improvement program, the deployment of new telecommunications infrastructure in this area will address the following technical requirement:

- To improve multigenerational network services and capacity for Virgin Media O2 (VMO2)

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the proposed development outlined below before any works take place. We understand that you are not always able to provide site specific comments, however, Cornerstone and the operators are committed to consultation with communities on their mobile telecommunications proposals and as such would encourage you to respond.

Mobiles can only work with a network of base stations in place where people want to use their mobile phones or other wireless devices. Without base stations, the mobile phones, and other devices we rely on simply won't work.

Best Practice guidance and National Planning Policy suggest a preference for the use of existing sites and the upgrade of established infrastructure that has been put in place for preceding generations of mobile networks, as is the case in this instance.

To ensure that the proposed site and development represent the best available coverage solution, the operator has first sought to:

- Take account of all relevant Development Plan policies;
- Review the Local Planning Authority mast register;

In the first instance, all correspondence should be directed to the agent.

Cornerstone Planning Consultation Letter to Councillors - Standard V.3 - 15/04/2021

Registered Address:
Cornerstone Telecommunications, Infrastructure Limited,
Hive 2, 1530 Arlington Business Park, Theale, Berkshire, RG7 4SA.
Registered in England & Wales No. 08087551.
VAT No. GB142 8555 06

 Cornerstone, Hive 2,
1530 Arlington Business Park,
Theale, Berkshire, RG7 4SA

- Consider if there are existing base station sites available for use in the locale; and
- Evaluate the planning history of the site in question

The proposed development at the subject site is as follows:

- Removal of 17.5m street furniture mast with 3No. antennas (RAL6009 Green), 1No. cabinet (RAL6009 Green), and all ancillary development
- Replacement with 20m street furniture mast with 6No. antennas (BS00A05 Grey), 2No. cabinets (RAL6009 Green), and all ancillary development

All elements of this proposal have been limited in terms of size and amount to ensure the delivery of public benefit via the mobile services it will provide, i.e.: maintained, improved and UpToDate mobile communications services. It is considered that the proposed site and design strike the best available balance between all operational and planning considerations and a set of planning drawing has been attached for your consideration.

All Cornerstone installations are designed to be fully compliant with the public exposure guidelines established by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP). These guidelines have the support of UK Government, the European Union and they also have the formal backing of the World Health Organisation. A certificate of ICNIRP compliance will be included within any planning submission that may follow.

Thanks in advance for any feedback you may be able to provide on the information provided above and/or in the attached documentation. Should you have any queries regarding any aspect of this consultation, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned quoting the subject cell reference.

Yours faithfully



Jodie Kane MRTPI
Planning Consultant
Email: jkane@lipsltd.co.uk
Mobile: 07920110583

For and on behalf of Cornerstone

In the first instance, all correspondence should be directed to the agent.

Cornerstone Planning Consultation Letter to Councillors - Standard V.3 - 15/04/2021

Registered Address:
Cornerstone Telecommunications, Infrastructure Limited,
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 **Cornerstone, Hive 2,**
1530 Arlington Business Park,
Theale, Berkshire, RG7 4SA

www.cornerstone.network

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 01/04/2026

Cost Centre Report

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
100 Receipts							
1000 Misc Receipts	0	2,000	2,000			0.0%	
1010 Wealden Rall/SVR rent	0	4,800	4,800			0.0%	
1011 WRC/SVR rebate utilities	(453)	800	1,253			(56.6%)	
1020 Meeting room income	0	400	400			0.0%	
1040 Community Cafe receipts	0	650	650			0.0%	
1062 PO & Ph Hse Rent	0	16,800	16,800			0.0%	
1063 Post office/Phoenix Hse Rebate	(924)	2,500	3,424			(37.0%)	
1064 WPCIC Contribution	0	4,000	4,000			0.0%	
1070 Tanyard grass cutting contribu	0	270	270			0.0%	
1076 Precept	0	235,731	235,731			0.0%	
1090 Bank Interest	0	2,500	2,500			0.0%	
101 Administration							
4000 Staff Salary	0	(66,000)	66,000		66,000	0.0%	
4001 Staff on-costs	0	(19,000)	19,000		19,000	0.0%	
4003 Parish Maintenance Contract	0	(4,700)	4,700		4,700	0.0%	
4005 Clerical Support & overtime	0	(2,000)	2,000		2,000	0.0%	
4006 Planning Committee	0	(500)	500		500	0.0%	
4007 Training	0	(2,000)	2,000		2,000	0.0%	
4008 Annual Subs inc SALC/NALC	0	(1,800)	1,800		1,800	0.0%	
4009 Conferences & Networking	0	(1,000)	1,000		1,000	0.0%	
4010 Chairman's Allowance	0	(1,300)	1,300		1,300	0.0%	
4011 Councillors' Allowances	0	(950)	950		950	0.0%	
4012 Parish Office rent	0	(16,000)	16,000		16,000	0.0%	
4013 Telephone/Broadband	0	(1,400)	1,400		1,400	0.0%	
4015 Stationery & non-electric equi	0	(1,800)	1,800		1,800	0.0%	
4016 Computer Software/Hardware	0	(1,600)	1,600		1,600	0.0%	
4017 Photocopier Lease/Maintenance	0	(1,500)	1,500		1,500	0.0%	
4018 Website	0	(1,000)	1,000		1,000	0.0%	
4019 Community Communication	0	(1,800)	1,800		1,800	0.0%	
4020 APA expenditure	0	(600)	600		600	0.0%	
4021 IT Support	0	(4,200)	4,200		4,200	0.0%	
4030 Hire of Halls	0	(100)	100		100	0.0%	
4038 Insurance	0	(2,400)	2,400		2,400	0.0%	
4039 Staff Recruitment	0	(500)	500		500	0.0%	
4040 Payroll, audit & legal Fees	0	(5,000)	5,000		5,000	0.0%	
4041 Staff Committee	0	(500)	500		500	0.0%	
4051 Community Resilience	0	(500)	500		500	0.0%	
4060 Election Expenses	0	(1,200)	1,200		1,200	0.0%	
4061 Parish Action Plan & Projects	0	(500)	500		500	0.0%	

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 01/04/2026

Cost Centre Report

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
4062 Withyham Parish Volunteers	0	(100)	100		100	0.0%	
4064 Community Cafe expenditure	0	(650)	650		650	0.0%	
4065 Climate & Ecology Working Grou	0	(1,200)	1,200		1,200	0.0%	
4500 Office associated repairs	0	(4,500)	4,500		4,500	0.0%	
4501 New Office equipment electroni	0	(400)	400		400	0.0%	
4502 Office utilities	0	(2,000)	2,000		2,000	0.0%	
4503 Office maintenance contracts &	0	(1,200)	1,200		1,200	0.0%	
4506 Office waste	0	(650)	650		650	0.0%	
4510 Meeting Room catering	0	(400)	400		400	0.0%	
4600 Bank charges	75	(200)	275		275	(37.5%)	
<u>102 Grants & Donations</u>							
4101 Grants	0	(10,000)	10,000		10,000	0.0%	
4106 Youth Act/Facilities	0	(500)	500		500	0.0%	
<u>201 Groombridge</u>							
4200 Recreation Ground Rent	0	(320)	320		320	0.0%	
4201 Recreation Ground Purchases	0	(500)	500		500	0.0%	
4202 Recreation Ground Repairs	0	(2,000)	2,000		2,000	0.0%	
4205 Mowing Groombridge Rec & Newto	0	(6,800)	6,800		6,800	0.0%	
4206 Mowing Tanyard	0	(900)	900		900	0.0%	
4211 Waste Collection Service	0	(1,500)	1,500		1,500	0.0%	
4213 Dog Waste Collection	0	(2,100)	2,100		2,100	0.0%	
4219 Groombridge Playground PWLB rep	0	(5,663)	5,663		5,663	0.0%	
4220 Groombridge Play Area maintena	0	(1,000)	1,000		1,000	0.0%	
4222 Groombridge Playground - inspe	0	(550)	550		550	0.0%	
4225 Park Corner Pond	0	(100)	100		100	0.0%	
4230 Trees	0	(3,000)	3,000		3,000	0.0%	
4231 Station Rd Fenceline/hedge	0	(2,000)	2,000		2,000	0.0%	
<u>202 St Johns</u>							
4240 Maintenance of Reading Rm Land	0	(790)	790		790	0.0%	
4241 Maintenance of Manor Pound	0	(500)	500		500	0.0%	
<u>203 Withyham/Blackham</u>							
4260 Mowing & hedge Teasley Mead	0	(1,800)	1,800		1,800	0.0%	
4261 Mowing Balls Green	0	(870)	870		870	0.0%	
4265 Rental Teasley Mead	0	(65)	65		65	0.0%	
4266 Rental Balls Green	0	(65)	65		65	0.0%	
4267 Teasley Mead Rec Equipment rep	0	(300)	300		300	0.0%	
4268 BG Playground - Repairs	0	(300)	300		300	0.0%	
4270 Play Inspection BGm & TMeat	0	(200)	200		200	0.0%	

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 01/04/2026

Cost Centre Report

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
401 Highways/Footways/Transport							
4401 Wealdlink Bus Service	0	(628)	628		628	0.0%	
4402 External Furniture Repairs	0	(200)	200		200	0.0%	
4403 Roadside Shelters	0	(200)	200		200	0.0%	
4405 Telephone boxes (adopted)	0	(150)	150		150	0.0%	
4406 Defibrillators	0	(1,900)	1,900		1,900	0.0%	
4407 PMP works/equip/maintenance	0	(750)	750		750	0.0%	
4410 Notice Boards	0	(100)	100		100	0.0%	
4415 Rights of Way	0	(500)	500		500	0.0%	
4420 Finger Posts and signs	0	(1,000)	1,000		1,000	0.0%	
4421 Highways	0	(1,500)	1,500		1,500	0.0%	
4426 GB Village Sign Maintenance	0	(300)	300		300	0.0%	
4428 Grit Bins	0	(350)	350		350	0.0%	
4429 Salt Spreaders/Salt	0	(600)	600		600	0.0%	
402 Lighting							
4450 Energy & Maintenance 39 lights	733	(2,500)	3,233		3,233	(29.3%)	
4451 Repairs Renewals Streetlights	0	(2,000)	2,000		2,000	0.0%	
4452 New Columns	0	(4,000)	4,000		4,000	0.0%	
500 Post office							
5001 CIC Subsidy/Grant	0	(9,000)	9,000		9,000	0.0%	
5100 PO Building Annual PWLB repay	0	(16,800)	16,800		16,800	0.0%	
5101 PO building utilities repayment	0	(3,000)	3,000		3,000	0.0%	
5200 Phoenix Hse maintenance	0	(10,000)	10,000		10,000	0.0%	
901 Earmarked Reserves							
9037 EMR Parish Assets	0	(22,000)	22,000		22,000	0.0%	
Grand Totals:- Income	(1,376)	270,451	271,827			(0.5%)	
Expenditure	(808)	270,451	271,259	0	271,259	(0.3%)	
Net Income over Expenditure	(568)	0	568				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(568)	0	568				

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Current Bank A/c (HSBC)

Payments made between 11/03/2026 and 31/03/2026

Nominal Ledger Analysis							
Date	Payee Name	Reference	£ Total Amnt	£ Creditors	£ VAT	A/c Centre	£ Amount Transaction Details
11/03/2026	BNP Paribas	DDCOPIER	388.70		64.78	4017 101	323.92 Copier lease and admin fee
24/03/2026	Cooper Burnett LLP	BACS238	261,764.17			4507 101	239,916.00 Old Station Purchase
						4507 101	15,084.00 Old Station Purchase
						337	-15,084.00 Old Station Purchase
						6000 101	15,084.00 Old Station Purchase
						4040 101	6,764.17 Old Station Purchase
						337	-6,764.17 Old Station Purchase
						6000 101	6,764.17 Old Station Purchase
24/03/2026	HSBC	BACS238A	30.00			4600 101	30.00 Charge Old Station Payment
31/03/2026	WMA Electrics	BACS223	240.08		40.01	5200 500	200.07 Sensor lights Ph Hse
31/03/2026	Lili Waste Management	BACS224	38.14		6.36	4506 101	31.78 Parish Office bins Feb
31/03/2026	How Green Nursery	BACS225	264.18		44.03	4065 101	220.15 Plants for Station garden area
31/03/2026	Greenspace Ecological Solution	BACS226	480.00		80.00	4065 101	400.00 Ecological Appraisal
31/03/2026	Green Hippo Print Ltd	BACS227	60.00		10.00	4065 101	50.00 Wild verge sign
31/03/2026	Employee	BACS228	4.79			4500 101	4.79 Panel pins
31/03/2026	Employee	BACS228	36.90			4407 401	36.90 Mleage
31/03/2026	Ray Bailey	BACS229	40.00			4503 101	40.00 Windowcleaning
31/03/2026	Employee	BACS230	2.99			4510 101	2.99 Biscuits (planting)
31/03/2026	SME IT Solutions	BACS231	140.51		23.42	4013 101	117.09 Phone, Bband
31/03/2026	Employee	BACS232	6.99		1.16	4500 101	5.83 Draught excluder
31/03/2026	Employee	BACS232	5.98		1.00	4202 201	4.98 Line paint
31/03/2026	Clear Insurance Management Ltd	BACS233	80.84			4038 101	80.84 Insurance Old Station
31/03/2026	David Newcombe Tree Services	BACS234	936.00		156.00	4260 203	780.00 Teasley Mead hedge
31/03/2026	Groombridge Village Hall	BACS235	49.00			4064 101	49.00 C Cafe hall hire (Jan)
31/03/2026	Quaife Woodlands	BACS236	975.00			4230 201	975.00 Tree Survey
31/03/2026	Employee	BACS237	12.38		2.06	4410 401	3.99 PMP items (Amazon)
						4220 201	6.33 PMP items (Amazon)
31/03/2026	Prepaid card	CB1 PPC YE	98.06			203	98.06 CB1 to PPC Year end
31/03/2026	Everflow	DDEFPO326	258.30			5101 500	258.30 Post Office/Ph Hse water
Subtotal Carried Forward:			265,913.01	0.00	428.82		265,484.19

Date: 02/04/2026

Withyham Parish Council

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Time: 12:18

Cashbook 1

User: DS

Current Bank A/c (HSBC)

Payments made between 11/03/2026 and 31/03/2026

Nominal Ledger Analysis

<u>Date</u>	<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>£ Total Amnt</u>	<u>£ Creditors</u>	<u>£ VAT</u>	<u>A/c</u>	<u>Centre</u>	<u>£ Amount</u>	<u>Transaction Details</u>
31/03/2026	Octopus	DDOCTO0326	193.10			4502	101	193.10	Energy Old Station
Total Payments:			266,106.11	0.00	428.82			265,677.29	

Date: 09/04/2026

Withyham Parish Council

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Time: 13:13

Cashbook 1

User: DS

Current Bank A/c (HSBC)

Payments made between 01/04/2026 and 14/04/2026

Nominal Ledger Analysis

Date	Payee Name	Reference	£ Total Amnt	£ Creditors	£ VAT	A/c	Centre	£ Amount	Transaction Details
13/04/2026	Society - Local Council Clerks	BACS1	69.30		11.55	4007	101	57.75	Training (RFO)
13/04/2026	Rialtas Business Solutions Ltd	BACS10	252.00		42.00	4016	101	210.00	Finance software 26-27
13/04/2026	Employee	BACS11	6.48			4510	101	6.48	Catering Ambler meeting
13/04/2026	Volunteer	BACS12	10.35			4421	401	10.35	Mileage Highways Coordinator
13/04/2026	Various	BACS13	5,751.98			4003	101	385.54	Salary
						4005	101	336.42	Overtime
						4000	101	5,030.02	Salaries
13/04/2026	Viking Direct	BACS2	106.43		3.10	4064	101	103.33	Community cafe items
13/04/2026	Wealden Citizens Advice	BACS3	950.00			4101	102	950.00	Grant towards running service
13/04/2026	Withyham & Blackham PCC	BACS4	800.00			4101	102	800.00	Grant to Blackham churchyard
13/04/2026	Rosemary Newton Trust	BACS5	302.21			4200	201	302.21	GRG rent 26-27
13/04/2026	Groombridge Village Hall	BACS6	49.00			4064	101	49.00	Hire c.cafe
13/04/2026	SME IT Solutions	BACS7	465.72		73.87	4021	101	359.36	IT support
						4018	101	32.49	Website
13/04/2026	Lill Waste Management	BACS8	46.57		7.76	4506	101	38.81	Office waste bins
13/04/2026	N.Wealden Community Transport	BACS9	170.50			4401	401	170.50	Wealdlink qtr1
13/04/2026	Prepaid card	CB1PPC0426	157.83			203		157.83	CB1 to PCard April
13/04/2026	British Gas	DDBG0426	142.10			5101	500	142.10	PO/Ph Hse electricity
13/04/2026	Everflow	DDEFOS0426	16.42			4502	101	16.42	Water Bill
13/04/2026	NEST Pensions	DDNEST0426	678.06			4001	101	678.06	Pensions April
13/04/2026	Octopus Energy	DDOCTO0426	617.12			4502	101	617.12	Electricity & Gas
13/04/2026	UK DMO	DDPWLB0426	2,831.28			4219	201	2,831.28	Loan repayment (playground)

Total Payments:	13,423.35	0.00	138.28	13,285.07
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COUNCIL - April 2026**17.4 Agree Earmarked Reserves 2026/27**

March Finance Committee recommends to Council the following Earmarked Reserves for 2026/27:

Code	Name	End 25/26 (£)	Suggested 26/27 (£)
327	Groombridge Play Area <i>Funds remaining from fundraising for the new Groombridge playground for use on equipment/maintenance</i>	2,012.83	2,012.83
329	Road Safety Projects	3,000	3,000
332	WPC Volunteers <i>ringfenced as this was a grant from WDC</i>	1,940.10	1,940.10
333	Parish Office Repairs	3,000	3,000
336	CIL <i>to be used to support the development of the local area by funding:</i> <i>• The provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or</i> <i>• Anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area</i>	22,738.42	22,738.42
337	Parish Assets (<i>purchases and maintenance</i>)	43,687.77 (<i>after Old Station purchase and legal fees</i>)	65,687.77 (<i>includes £22,000 from 26/27 Precept</i>)
338	Environmental Improvements <i>Parish Plan environment/climate</i>	3,916.17	3,916.17
340	Streetlights (<i>new columns are £3-5K</i>)	3,000	3,000
342	FUTURE Elections <i>Next election not expected until 2027, should vacancies arise then an election could be called for which WPC would be liable to pay</i>	6,768.39	6,768.39
		£90,063.68	£112,063.68

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8.3 Scheme of Delegation (to recommend to May Council ASM)

The RFO was asked to check 2.2.6 against the Grants guidelines and amend if required.

003192 RESOLVED to recommend the Scheme of Delegation with the above amendments to May Council.

8.4 Pensions Discretions Policy (to recommend to Council)

003193 RESOLVED to recommend the Pensions Discretions Policy to April Council.

8.5 Borrowing and Investment Strategy (to recommend to Council)

The RFO was asked to amend the maximum Council budget to 500,000 Euros.

003194 RESOLVED to recommend the Borrowing and Investment Strategy with the above amendment to April Council.

8.6 Asset Register and Disposals Policy (to recommend to Council)

003195 RESOLVED to recommend the Asset Register and Disposals Policy to April Council.

9. ACCOUNTS AND FINANCE

9.1 Note expenditure against budget report (to March 2026) - noted

9.2 Note 2026/27 budget (from April 2026) - noted

9.3 Consider any Virements and Journals – none required

9.4 Review draft 2026-27 Earmarked Reserves to recommend to Council

The RFO clarified use of CiL funds and confirmed the expected 2025/26 total year end EMR figure.

003196 RESOLVED to recommend Earmarked Reserve allocations for 2026/27 to Council.

9.5 Consider quotes – none

9.6 Recommend to Council re-appointment of Internal Auditor for 3 years 2026-2029

The meeting noted the quote received from Mulberry LAS and agreed that they are independent and competent.

003197 RESOLVED to recommend re-appointment of Mulberry LAS for 3 years 2026-2029 to Council.

10. RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER (RFO) REPORT

The RFO updated the meeting on progress with the purchase of the freehold of Groombridge Old Station and confirmed that the interest rate secured for the Public Works Loan annual repayments is less than the current rental income.

11. MATTERS OF URGENT IMPORTANCE FOR NOTING OR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA:

It was confirmed that the Groombridge Old Station Fire Risk Assessment had been considered by Council.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – to be confirmed at the ASM in May.

The meeting ended at 8.25pm

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