

Minutes of the **WITHYHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING** held at **THE OLD STATION, GROOMBRIDGE** on 18th May 2026 at 7pm

PRESENT Cllrs Nick Anderson, Emma Bowers, Alan Gaukroger, Robert Gordon-James (Chair from item 1) Diana Kelly, Penny Lawne, Deviani Parekh-Jones, Beth Rhodes, Sue Skinner (from item 8) & Linsey Winter

In attendance: Kelly Gaynor – Clerk (Minutes)
Natalie Brett – Assistant Clerk (observe)
County Cllr Georgia Taylor (to item 11)
Debbie Siddle (to item 2)
Stephanie Chapman (to item 2)
Member of the Public (to item 1)

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.

A member of the public attended the meeting to provide an update on the fire at the Dorset Arms public house in Withyham.

It was confirmed that the fire was contained to the small kitchen area and, thankfully, no one was hurt. The front of the building was unaffected; however, the pub is currently unable to operate due to the kitchen damage.

The intention is to rebuild as soon as possible, noting that Listed Building Consent will be required before any dismantling or works can begin. The Council will be kept informed of progress in due course.

The member of the public was thanked for attending. The meeting expressed concern and conveyed condolences regarding the incident and the damage caused and looked forward to the Dorset Arms reopening.

The Parish Council also joins the community in the huge relief that no one was injured and thanked the fire service for their swift response in containing the fire from spreading further.

The member of the public left the meeting

- 1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**
003217 RESOLVED unanimously to elect Councillor Gordon-James as Chairman of the Parish Council. Cllr Gordon-James thanked the meeting, signed the Declaration of the Acceptance of Office and confirmed that they would continue to abide by the Code of Conduct

Councillor Kelly submitted their resignation as both Councillor and Chair of the Council with effect from 18 May 2026. The resignation was noted by Members. The new Chair was formally presented with the Chain of Office

The new Chair expressed thanks on behalf of the Council for over 26 years of dedicated public service. A presentation was made of a Pachira aquatica plant, in recognition of her commitment, leadership and service to the parish and its residents, symbolising prosperity, good luck and success.

- 2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN**
003218 **RESOLVED** unanimously to elect Cllr Lawne as Vice Chairman of the Parish Council. Cllr Lawne thanked the meeting and signed the Declaration of the Acceptance of Office and confirmed that they would continue to abide by the Code of Conduct
- 3. APPOINTMENT/CONFIRMATION OF THE RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER**
003219 **RESOLVED** that Debbie Siddle be reconfirmed as Responsible Finance Officer to the Parish Council for the Municipal year
- 4. ENQUIRE WHETHER ANYONE PRESENT INTENDS TO FILM, PHOTOGRAPH AND/OR RECORD THE MEETING** – none.
- 5. APOLOGIES** – Cllr Pardey Work Commitments
Cllr Tuke Family Commitments
Cllr Hulbert – Family Commitments
- 6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – Councillor Parek-Jones (item 13) as a member of The Ridge Association
- 7. MINUTES**
7.1. Resolve that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on Monday 13th April 2026 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman
003220 **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 13th April 2026 were approved.

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

Actions reported to this meeting as completed

Minute no.	Who	Item	Deadline by which to complete	Update
Pg 3405	Councillor Gordon-James	To request a copy of the Traffic Management Plan from St Thomas' School PTA Representative	April	Completed
Pg 3405	Clerk	To consider uses for the telephone box at The Ridge and request to convert to book exchange to bring to council for approval	May	Completed see item 13 on this agenda
003201	RFO	Adopt the Pensions Discretions Policy	April	Completed
003202	RFO	Adopt the Borrowing and Investment Policy	April	Completed
003203	RFO	Adopt the Asset Register and Disposals Policy	April	Completed
003204	Clerks	Adopt Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy	April	Completed

003205	Clerks	Adopt the Lone Worker Policy	April	Completed
003206	Clerk	To respond to support GVH Public Consultation to convert to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) on behalf of Withyham Parish Council	April	Completed
003207	Clerk	To respond to support the replacement telecommunication infrastructure	April	Completed
003209	RFO	To agree the Earmarked Reserved as recommended by Finance Committee	May	Completed
003210	RFO	To re-appoint Mulberry LAS for 3 years 2026/2029	May	Completed
003211	RFO	To obtain an alternative free of charge prepaid card	May	Ongoing
Pg 3408	Clerk	To follow up on Councillor vacancy	May	Completed
Pg 3408	Clerk	To seek quotes following tree survey	April	Completed
Pg 3408	Clerk	To speak with Highways Coordinator regarding attending occasional Council meetings to provide updates	April	Completed

Actions from previous Minutes not yet completed

Minute no.	Who	Item	Deadline by which to complete	Update
Pg 3405	Clerk	To review the donated football goal net	April	Not donated (yet)
003044	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 midday 25th May 2026.
Pg 3290	Clerks	To consider Unsung Helpers event 2026	Spring 2026	To be moved to December/Christmas
003120	RFO	Draft Members' Allowances Policy, including Chair's allowance, for May Finance Committee / June Council; publish allowances on website.	March Finance Meeting	Drafted ready for June Finance/July 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 – followed up 20/04
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 in Amblers	February	Position still available
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 Followed up 06/05
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

Cllr Skinner joined the meeting

Actions from these Minutes

Minute no	Who	Item	Deadline by which to complete
Pg 3414	Clerk	To action all associated responses required for Chair/Councillor resignation including but not limited to: banking, IT and monitoring office etc	immediate
Pg 3418	Cllr Skinner	Blackham Village Hall: noticeboard – to send pictures to the Clerk	May
Pg 3418	Clerk	To report the faded parking lines at Balls Green to WDC	June
Pg 3418	Clerk	To provide Cllr Bowers with the gate code	May
Pg 3418	Clerk	To request the grass cut at Teasley Mead before 13 th June	May

003211	Clerk	To confirm to The Ridge contact conversion of telephone box to book exchange	May
003225-003230	Clerk	Adopt the Committees' Terms of Reference	June
003231-003247	Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer	Adopt the agreed Policies	June
Pg 3426	Clerk	Publish Calendar of Meeting Dates 2026-2027	June
003249	Clerk	Honorary Freedom of the Parish Certificate	May

8. 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.

8.1 Planning Committee 13th April 2026 - Noted

5.2 Planning Committee 27th April 2026 - Noted

9. REPORTS FROM DISTRICT and COUNTY COUNCILLORS

County Councillor Taylor and District Councillor Hulbert had provided reports which had been shared with the Councillors prior to the meeting

Councillor Taylor thanked Councillor Lawne for input on Corseley Road

10. WARD REPORTS

(a) Groombridge Ward (Groombridge) Cllr Anderson reported that parking at the Mayfair went well and no complaints were received. Parking in Corseley Road continues to be challenging

(b) Groombridge Ward (Withyham/Blackham) Cllr Skinner reported the Quiz Night at Blackham Village Hall was next month (29th June) and details had been put on the Withyham Parish Website. It was also reported that the Village Hall noticeboard was in need of attention. Further information and pictures to be forwarded to the Clerk.

Cllr Bowers advised that the white lines in the Balls Green Car Park were faded - this needs to be referred to WDC

It was advised that the Balls Green gate wasn't locked, and the code was required to secure

It was also advised that a donated football goal net had been placed in the park

It was also requested that the grass be cut at Teasley Mead park before 13th June

(c) Marden's Hill Ward It was noted that Cllr Pardey had held an open garden in aid of Hospice in the Weald which the Clerk and RFO had attended

11. ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY (APA) update, roles and responsibilities

Instructions had been circulated prior to the meeting and were noted. Cllrs Bowers and Parekh-Jones advised they were otherwise committed and wouldn't be able to attend the event this year. The Assistant Clerk was thanked for her hard work and reminded everyone to bring a cake

Cllr Taylor left the meeting

12. WITHYHAM PARISH COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY

12.1 WPCIC report circulated prior to the meeting was noted.

- 13. TO CONSIDER THE RIDGE ASSOCIATION REQUEST TO USE THE DECOMISSIONED PHONE BOX AS A BOOK EXCHANGE**
003221 **RESOLVED** to allow WPC phone box asset at The Ridge can be used as a book exchange. Cllr Parekh-Jones mentioned Men's Shed's might be able to help. The clerk confirmed the Parish Maintenance Person was also available.

14. ANNUAL AUDIT

14.1 Consider the Annual Internal Audit Report 2025-2026 (Report and AGAR page 3)

This has been circulated prior to the meeting and was noted

14.2 Consider the effectiveness of the system of internal control, and approve and sign the Annual Return Governance Statement (AGAR page 4)

Statement	Evidence	Comments (Council May 2026)
1 We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements	Experienced, trained RFO Financial control systems in place and audited Reports made to Council meetings (monthly) Reports further scrutinised at quarterly Finance Committee Accounting statements prepared appropriately Bank reconciliations undertaken by RFO, countersigned by Chair of Finance Committee, and considered quarterly at Council Budget setting undertaken annually and progress monitored at Council and Finance Committee meetings Borrowing and Investment policy in place	Confirmed

2 We maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness	Model Standing Orders and Financial Regulations adopted and reviewed annually Payments process in place; procedure adopted by Council and reviewed by Finance Committee Internal audit twice a year, which is reported to Council and any action required monitored by Finance Committee Staff Committee has responsibilities for employment matters Employers' liability insurance and fidelity guarantee in place VAT recovered every 6 months using the VAT126 form Asset register in place and reviewed by Council annually	Confirmed
3 We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there were no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulation and proper practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this smaller authority to conduct its business or on its finances.	RFO & Assistant Clerk CiLCA qualified Eligibility to apply General Power of Competence reviewed every election year and clearly minuted Clerk and RFO attend relevant training to understand laws and practices. Finance Committee members encouraged to attend relevant training. Internal audit twice a year, which is reported to Council and any action required monitored by Finance Committee Covered by the larger council transparency code: the website covers the information that is required	Confirmed

4 We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations	Notice of electors' rights made public at appropriate times via website and noticeboard according to proper practices	Confirmed
5 We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this smaller authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required	Risk management assessment reviewed annually by Finance Committee and Council, as well as asset schedule and insurance provision Any action required undertaken by RFO and monitored by Finance Committee	Confirmed
6 We maintained throughout the year an adequate and efficient system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems	Internal auditor appointed by Council Internal audit twice a year attended by RFO, which is reported to Council and any action required monitored by Finance Committee	Confirmed
7 We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit	Internal audit twice a year, which is reported to Council and any action required monitored by Finance Committee No matters raised in previous External audit	Confirmed
8 We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this smaller authority and, where appropriate have included them in the accounting statements	Due consideration given to all activities/impacts and their financial effects at Council and Finance Committee All minutes of meetings publicly available and members of the public given access to meetings and information.	Confirmed
9 Trust funds including charitable.	n/a	n/a
10 We have put in place arrangements for the effective IT and data management in accordance with proper practices during the year under review	IT policy on council website. Privacy policy on council website. Accessibility statement referencing WCAG 2.2 AA reviewed in the year and is on council website.	Confirmed

003222 RESOLVED to approve the Annual Return Governance Statement and authorise the Chairman to sign it

14.3 Approve the Annual Return Accounting Statements (end of year accounts to 31st March 2026) and authorise the Chairman to sign (AGAR page 5)

The Clerk had circulated the Annual Return including the Accounting Statements prior to the meeting and the Council considered these.

003223 RESOLVED to approve the accounting Statements (end of year accounts to 31st March 2026) and authorise the Chairman to sign the Annual Return Accounting Statements.

14.4 Confirm dates for the Notice of Electors' Rights

Dates were confirmed as commencing on Wednesday 3rd June 2026 and ending on Tuesday 14th July 2026

The RFO was thanked for their exceptional work

15. FINANCE**15.1 Note the report showing payments made to date against budgets**

This report had been circulated prior to the meeting and was noted

15.2 Authorise the payment of May invoices/note regular payments

Date	Payee Name	Reference	£ Total Amnt	£ Creditors	£ VAT	A/c	Centre	£ Amount	Transaction Details
18/05/2026	SME IT Solutions	BACS14	588.23		98.04	4013	101	117.09	phone bband
						4018	101	9.99	website
						4021	101	363.11	IT support
18/05/2026	Society - Local Council Clerks	BACS15	46.20		7.70	4007	101	38.50	Training Emergency Briefing
18/05/2026	K Gaynor	BACS16	162.87		27.14	4015	101	5.41	Lightbulbs
						4220	201	24.12	Paint Gb playarea marking
						4500	101	106.20	Office maintenance items
18/05/2026	K Gaynor	BACS16	17.49		2.92	4015	101	14.57	Carbon monoxide alarm
18/05/2026	Employee	BACS17	26.28			4407	401	26.28	Mileage
18/05/2026	David Newcombe Tree Services	BACS18	180.00		30.00	4230	201	150.00	Tree works (from survey)
18/05/2026	Managed Technology	BACS19	218.26		36.38	4017	101	181.88	Copier (prev contract)
18/05/2026	Groombridge Village Hall	BACS20	67.48			4064	101	67.48	C Cafe usage Apr26
18/05/2026	Mulberry Local Authority Servi	BACS21	156.00		26.00	4040	101	130.00	Internal Audit
18/05/2026	E.S.C.C.	BACS22	879.78		146.63	4450	402	733.15	Streetlights energy (2025/26)
18/05/2026	STREETLIGHTS.CO.UK	BACS23	753.95		125.66	4450	402	628.29	Streetlights contract 1of2
18/05/2026	Ray Bailey	BACS24	40.00			4503	101	40.00	Windowcleaning
18/05/2026	East Sussex Association of Loc	BACS25	1,016.82			4040	101	1,016.82	NALC & ESALC subs
18/05/2026	Muskateer Services Ltd	BACS26	112.80		18.80	4503	101	94.00	Annual legionella check
18/05/2026	Viking Direct	BACS27	528.57		88.10	4510	101	73.58	coffee
						4015	101	366.89	Tables, stationery
18/05/2026	Commercial Services Trading Lt	BACS28	36.60		6.10	4261	203	30.50	Grass cutting BG
18/05/2026	Knockout Print	BACS29	1,076.95		30.00	4019	101	896.95	newsletter
						4020	101	150.00	APA boards
18/05/2026	Newman Business Solutions Ltd	BACS30	183.89		30.65	4017	101	153.24	Copier usage (new contract)
18/05/2026	Various	BACS31	5,428.33			4003	101	428.48	Salaries
						4000	101	4,999.85	Salaries
18/05/2026	Prepaid card	CB1PPC0526	346.69			203		346.69	CB1 to PPC May26

18/05/2026	Unity Trust Current Acc	Cb1UTB0526	20,000.00		205	20,000.00	CB1 to UTB (fscs limit)
18/05/2026	British Gas	DDBG0526	263.65	5101	500	263.65	PO/PhHse Elec
18/05/2026	Everflow	DDEFOS0526	28.77	4502	101	28.77	Water parish office
18/05/2026	Everflow	DDEFPO0526	80.52	5101	500	80.52	Water PO/Ph Hse
18/05/2026	Lili Waste Management	DDLW0526	50.21	8.37	4506 101	41.84	Lili Waste Management
Subtotal Carried Forward:			32,290.34	0.00	682.49	31,607.85	

Date: 14/05/2026

Time: 10:28

Withyham Parish Council

Cashbook 1

Current Bank A/c (HSBC)

Payments made between 18/05/2026 and 22/05/2026

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User: DS

Nominal Ledger Analysis									
Date	Payee Name	Reference	£ Total Amnt	£ Creditors	£ VAT	A/c	Centre	£ Amount	Transaction Details
18/05/2026	NEST	DDNEST0526	651.88			4001	101	651.88	Pensions May26
18/05/2026	Octopus Energy	DDOCTO0526	123.28			4502	101	123.28	Parish office energy
18/05/2026	UK DMO	PWLB0526	8,389.48			5100	500	8,389.48	PWLB Post office 1of2
Total Payments:			41,454.98	0.00	682.49			40,772.49	

003224 RESOLVED to pay the May invoices listed above totalling £40,772.49 plus VAT; to pay by BACS or sign the cheques accordingly.

15.3 Consider any quotes – There were no quotes

15.4 Note and reaffirm Authorisation of regular Payments by Direct Debit
Council noted and reaffirmed these existing agreements

Name of company	Purpose	Amount (monthly)
NEST Pensions	Pension contributions	10% of salaries
Octopus Energy (Parish Office)	Electricity	varies
Everflow (Parish Office)	Water charges	Varies
Everflow (Post Office/ Phoenix House)	Water charges	Varies
British Gas Lite (Phoenix House/Post Office)	Electricity	Varies (<i>offset as both commercial and residence billed for their consumption</i>)
BNP Paribas leasing	Copier rental agreement	£148.92+VAT per quarter
Public Works Loans	Post Office Playground Parish Office	£16,778.96 p.a. £5,662.56 p.a. £15,918.36 p.a.
Lloyds UTB Corporate Purchasing Card	Monthly top up of prepaid card balance	Varies

No Standing Orders

(5 minute comfort break)

16. REVIEW AND ADOPT COMMITTEES' TERMS OF REFERENCE**a) Finance Committee**

003225 **RESOLVED** to adopt the Terms of Reference for the Finance Committee

b) Planning Committee

003226 **RESOLVED** to adopt the Terms of Reference for the Planning Committee

c) Staff Committee

003227 **RESOLVED** to adopt the Terms of Reference for the Staff Committee

d) Climate and Ecology (Advisory) Committee

003228 **RESOLVED** to adopt the Terms of Reference for the Climate and Ecology Advisory Committee

e) Assets Working Group (Advisory) Committee

003229 **RESOLVED** to adopt the Terms of Reference for the Assets Working Group Advisory Committee

f) Rights of Way (Advisory) Committee

003230 **RESOLVED** to adopt the Terms of Reference for the Rights of Way Advisory Committee

It was noted that Finance Committee, Planning Committee and Assets Working Group Advisory Committee had reviewed their Terms of Reference prior to the Annual Statutory Meeting, but the other Committees had not. They would do so and return to Council with any amendments if there were any.

17. APPOINTMENT OF WARD CHAIRS

The 3 ward chairs remained unchanged and were AGREED as follows:

- Groombridge (Groombridge Ward) - Cllr Anderson
- St John's (Marden's Hill Ward) – Cllr Pardey
- Withyham/Blackham (Groombridge Ward) – Cllr Skinner

18. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO COMMITTEES

Existing memberships were circulated prior to the meeting

a) Finance

AGREED Cllrs Anderson, Gordon-James, Lawne, Gaukroger, Parekh-Jones and Winter. One Councillor vacancy

Members of the Finance Committee are named on the Bank Mandates

b) Planning

AGREED Cllrs Gordon-James, Lawne, Gaukroger, Rhodes, Pardey & Parekh-Jones. One Councillor vacancy

c) Staff

AGREED Cllrs Gordon-James, Anderson, Gaukroger and Winter. One Councillor vacancy

d) Climate and Ecology (advisory)

AGREED Cllrs Anderson, Tuke and Winter. Members of the public as noted

e) Building Assets (advisory)

AGREED Cllrs Gordon-James, Lawne, Gaukroger, Tuke & Winter. One Councillor vacancy

f) Rights of Way (advisory)

AGREED Cllrs Lawne and Tuke. One councillor vacancy. Members of the public as noted

Please note: Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs are voted at the first Committee meeting after the ASM

19. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

A paper was circulated prior to the meeting and agreed as follows:

Organisation	Representatives
Ashdown Forest Parishes Liaison Committee	Cllr Rhodes/Gaukroger
Blackham Village Hall (WPC is a Custodian Trustee)	Cllr Skinner
Groombridge Sports Ground Association	Cllr Gordon-James
Groombridge Village Hall	Cllr Winter
NALC Reps and County Association (ESALC and AiRS) AGM	Chair/Vice Chair
North Wealden Community Transport Partnership (Wealdlink)	Cllr Gordon-James
Parish Planning Panel (WDC)	Chair of Planning Cttee/Clerks
Speedwatch Co-ordinator	Cllr Tuke
Traffic and Road Safety Representative	Volunteer Highways Coordinator
Wealden District Association of Local Councils	Cllr Lawne/Anderson
Withyham Charity	Cllr Pardey
Withyham Community Interest Company – WPC rep	Cllr Gordon-James

Arrangements for Reporting Back:

Councillors to ensure that they report back verbally from meetings attended at Council meetings and/or via email to the clerks for circulation.

20. REVIEW THE FOLLOWING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

20.1 Standing Orders (incorporating updates by NALC)

The Standing Orders were circulated prior to the meeting

003231 RESOLVED to adopt the Standing Orders

20.2 Financial Regulations (recommended by March Finance Committee)

The Financial Regulations were circulated prior to the meeting

003232 RESOLVED to adopt the Financial Regulations

20.3 Scheme of Delegation

The Scheme of Delegation had been circulated prior to the meeting

003233 RESOLVED to adopt the Scheme of Delegation

20.4 Asset Register (Inventory of Land and other Assets)

The updated Asset Register had been circulated prior to the meeting

003234 RESOLVED to adopt the Asset Register

20.5 Complaints Procedure

The Complaints Procedure was circulated prior to the meeting

003235 RESOLVED to adopt the Complaints Procedure

20.6 Procedures for Requests Made Under Freedom of Information

The Procedures for Requests Made Under Freedom of Information were circulated prior to the meeting

003236 RESOLVED to adopt the Procedures for Requests Made Under Freedom of Information Standing Orders

20.7 Data Protection Policy

The Data Protection Policy had been circulated prior to the meeting

003237 RESOLVED to adopt the Data Protection Policy

20.8 Policy for Dealing with the Press/Media

The Policy for Dealing with the Press/Media had been circulated prior to the meeting

003038 RESOLVED to adopt the Policy for Dealing with the Press/Media

20.9 Employment (Disciplinary Procedures)

The Employment (Disciplinary Procedures) had been circulated prior to the meeting

003239 RESOLVED to adopt the Disciplinary Procedures

20.10 Employment (Grievance Procedures)

The Employment (Grievance Procedures) had been circulated prior to the meeting

003240 RESOLVED to adopt the Grievance Procedures

- 003241** 20.11 Fees and Charges (recommended by March Finance Committee)
RESOLVED to adopt the Fees and Charges
- 003242** 20.12 Borrowing & Investment Strategy (recommended by March Finance Committee)
RESOLVED to adopt the Borrowing & Investment Strategy
- 003243** 20.13 Pensions Discretions Policy (recommended by March Finance Committee)
RESOLVED to adopt the Pensions Discretions Policy
- 003044** 20.14 Risk Management Policy (recommended by March Finance Committee)
RESOLVED to adopt the Risk Management Policy
- 003045** 20.15 Pay Policy (recommended by March Finance Committee)
RESOLVED to adopt the Pay Policy
- 003246** 20.16 IT, Internet, Email And Social Media Policy
The IT, Internet, Email And Social Media Policy had been circulated prior to the meeting
RESOLVED to adopt the IT, Internet, Email And Social Media Policy
- 003247** 20.17 Code of conduct
The Code of conduct Policy had been circulated prior to the meeting
RESOLVED to adopt the Code of conduct Policy

21. REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS WITH OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES, NOT FOR PROFIT BODIES AND BUSINESSES

These had been circulated prior to the meeting. Council reviewed and AGREED these arrangements

22. REVIEW THE COUNCIL'S AND EMPLOYEES' MEMBERSHIPS OF / SUBSCRIPTIONS TO OTHER BODIES

These had been circulated prior to the meeting. Council reviewed and AGREED these arrangements

23. CONFIRM ARRANGEMENTS FOR INSURANCE COVER

This had been circulated prior to the meeting. Council noted these arrangements (second year of a 3 year undertaking with clear Group)

24. CONFIRM COUNCIL MEETING DATES FOR YEAR AHEAD.

This had been circulated prior to the meeting. Council AGREED the Calendar of Meetings for 2026/2027

25. COUNCIL TO REAFFIRM CIVILITY AND RESPECT PLEDGE

003248 **RESOLVED** to reaffirm the Civility and Respect Pledge

26. CEAG UPDATE FOR NOTING

Council noted the work being done and that compliments had been received on the flower bed at the front of the office

27. CLERK'S REPORT

27.1 Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972

The Clerks explained the criteria for the Honorary Freedom of the Parish and the proposal for Di Kelly

003249

RESOLVED to confer the Honorary Freedom of the Parish

The Clerk reported that action required from the Tree Survey had been completed.

The RoSPA inspections are due in June at Balls Green and Teasley Mead

The Groombridge Playground Consultation is open until noon Saturday 23rd May

The office has received comments questioning if the proposed fence would be

similar to the school fence, the office has advised this would not be the case

The office team have had a particularly busy month, and the Clerk would like to formally recognise and thank the team for the significant amount of work undertaken and successfully delivered during this period. Their continued commitment, professionalism, and support are greatly appreciated.

The Clerk also thanked the councillors in advance for their attendance and contribution to the APA

28. REPORTS FROM MEETINGS AND TRAINING ATTENDED BY COUNCILLORS

None.

Cllr Gaukroger noted unavailability for the next Ashdown Forest Liaison Committee,

Cllr Rhodes requested details to see if they could attend

Cllr Parekh-Jones mentioned an interest in a Fundraising Training Course

29. MATTERS OF URGENT IMPORTANCE FOR NOTING OR INCLUSION ON

FUTURE AGENDA:- Consideration of further recognition of Di Kelly's contribution to Withyham Parish Council

30. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - Monday 8th June 2026 at Groombridge Old Station at 7pm unless otherwise notified by the agenda

The meeting ended at 8.23pm.