

**ANNUAL MEETING OF WASHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES** of the Annual Meeting of Washington Parish Council held on Monday 12th May 2025 in the Washington Village Hall (Doré Room) School Lane, Washington RH20 4AP

**PRESENT:** Cllr C. Brookes, Cllr A. Dillaway, Cllr B. Hanvey, Cllr O. Jupp, Cllr T. Keech, Cllr A. Lisher and Cllr J Thomas

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Cllr P Marshall (WSCC). Apologies received from Cllr E. Beard (HDC),Cllr J Grech (HDC) and Cllr C. Fisher (HDC). No other members of the public.

**ALSO:** Clerk to the Council.

**ABSENT:** 1

Cllr Lisher, as the Presiding Chairman opened the meeting at 7:00pm.

**APCM/25/5/1 Election of the Chair 2025/26**

The Council **RESOLVED** that Cllr Lisher be elected Chairman for the forthcoming

 year. There were no other nominations and Cllr Lisher was duly elected.

**APCM/25/5/2 Election of the Vice Chair2-25/26**

 The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously that Cllr Keech be elected Vice-Chairman for

 the forthcoming year. There were no other nominations and Cllr Keech was duly

 elected.

**APCM/25/5/3 Apologies for Absence**

 The Council **RESOLVED** to accept apologies from Cllr Thomas. Cllr Thomas entered

 the meeting at 7:22pm.

**APCM/25//5/4 Declaration of Members’ Interests.**

 Councillors were reminded to return their updated Declarations of Interests forms if they

 have not already done so. There were no interests declared on any agenda items, as defined

 under the Localism Act 2011 and the Council’s Code of Conduct.

 **APCM/25/5/5** M**inutes of the last Full Council meeting**

 The Council **RESOLVED** to defer to the next meeting the adoption of the minutes of the Full

 Council Meeting on 7th April and Extraordinary Meeting of the Council on 28th April 2025.

**APCM/25/5/6 Public Forum**

 There were no public representations.

**APCM/25/5/7 County and District Reports**

 **WSCC Reports**

 Cllr Marshall gave his reports (Appendix A) to the meeting and responded to questions from

 Members.

 *7:22pm Cllr Thomas entered the meeting.*

 Cllr Marshall was thanked for his contributions before leaving the meeting

 **HDC Reports**

 A report (Appendix B) from the District Council Members Cllrs Beard, Grech and

 Fisher was previously circulated and summarised by the Chairman at the meeting

 in their absence.

**APCM/25/5/8 Clerk’s Report**

The Clerk’s report (Appendix C) was previously circulated and noted. The following

 items of recommendation were considered:

 **DC/25/0675 - Hightrees, Thakeham Copse. Storrington (Washington parish)**

 *Surgery to 2x Oaks*

 The Council discussed this planning application and **RESOLVED** to defer to the Tree

 Officer for the Local Planning Authority.

 **SDNP/24/05124/FUL -** **Stable Cottage, Highden, London Road, Washington RH20 4BA**

 *Conversion of storage area of existing dwelling into habitable space, including bedroom*

 *above and creation of a new 1 bed flat adjacent*

The Council discussed this planning application and **RESOLVED** to make no further

 comment.

 **Quarterly editorials in the Sussex Local**

The Council reviewed and **RESOLVED** to agree to continue the quarterly editorials in

 the Sussex Local magazine. It was agreed that these are to be written by the Chairman

 the next edition being in July 2025.

**APCM/25/5/10** **Financial Matters**

 The Council **RESOLVED** to approve amended payments of invoices totalling **£7,273.48**.

 It was noted that the invoice for £166.72 was approved at the last meeting and be

 deducted from this schedule. Cllr Dillaway and Cllr Keech to authorise online payments.

 

 **Income Report**

 The Council **RESOLVED** to note income received since the last meeting totalling **£32,679.69**

 for the following receipts:

* First 2025/26 precept payment for the parish paid by HDC: £23,660.37
* Hire fee for surveys paid by Rampion Extension Development Ltd: £1,050
* CIL monies planning references DC/20/0717/Vineyards and DC/21/2765/Merrylands, Rock Road: £6,073.20
* VAT refund July 2024-March 2025: £1,896.12

 **Bank reconciliation:**

 The Council **RESOLVED** to note the reconciled balance of  **£52,192.62** on the

 Lloyds Bank statement for April 2025

 Cllr Keech proposed and all agreed to review the budget reserves position at each meeting to

 consider transferring funds to the Nationwide business savings account in order to benefit

 from more interest.

 **Lloyds Bank mandate for salary payments**

The Council deferred this item to the next appropriate meeting

**APCM/25/5/11** **Membership and Terms of Reference of Committees**

 The Council reviewed the membership and terms of reference of the Committees.

 The Clerk advised that the Standing Orders permit more members at any time if positions are

 not filled and to appoint substitute members. The Council agreed that more members should

 be added to those Committees under strength as soon as the Council membership increases.

 It was noted that a minimum of three is required for a quorum of each committee.

 The Council **RESOLVED** the following:

 **Open Spaces, Recreation Ground and Allotment (OSRA) Committee**

 To Appoint Cllrs Keech, Hanvey, Dillaway, Brookes, and Jupp; and to adopt the Terms of

 Reference without amendment.

 **Finance Committee**

 To Appoint Cllrs Dillaway, Hanvey and Keech; and to adopt the Terms of Reference with

 an amendment to include the responsibility to manage Community Infrastructure Levy

 (CIL) business

 **Personnel Committee**

 To AppointCllrs Dillaway and Thomas; and to adopt the Terms of Reference with an

 amendment for membership to be not less than three and for staff appraisals to

 be conducted by up to two members.

 **Planning & Transport (PT) Committee**

To AppointCllrs Dillaway, Hanvey, Keech, Lisher and Thomas; and to adopt the Terms of

 Reference with one amendment for membership to be not less than four.

**The Joint Storrington & Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan (SSWNP)**

 **Steering Group**

 To Appoint Cllrs Dillaway, Keech and Cllr Lisher. The Terms of Reference were not reviewed.

**APCM/25/5/12** **Membership of Working Groups and Outside Organisations**

 The Council reviewed membership of the following:

 **The CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) Working Group**

 The Council **RESOLVED** to disband this Working Party and noted the Council’s

 agreement under minute item APCM/25/5/11 for CIL business to be a new

 responsibility of the Finance Committee.

 **WSALC** **(West Sussex Association of Local Councils)**

 The Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Thomas to serve as a representative and for

 Cllr Lisher to be a substitute for the 2025/26 municipal year.

 **APCM/25/5/13 Local Government Devolution/Re-organisation Working Group**

 The Council reviewed and **RESOLVED** not to create this working group. It was

 agreed that LGR business is to be discussed by the whole Council.

**APCM/25/5/14** **Annual membership and subscriptions**

 The Council reviewed and **RESOLVED** to agree the 2025/25 membership and subscription

 of the following:

 West Sussex Association of Local Councils (WSALC)

 Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)

 The National Allotment Society (NAS)

 **APCM/25/5/15 Annual Fees and Charges**

 The Council reviewed and **RESOLVED** to agree the Council’s amended fees and charges,

 as recommended by the OSRA Committee at its meeting on 28th April 2025 Minute

 Reference O/4/25/8

**APCM/25/5/16 Banking**

 The Council reviewed its banking arrangements for the Council’s accounts and

 **RESOLVED** they are adopted without amendment; and to add Cllr Brookes as a

Full Power signatory on the Council’s Lloyds, Nationwide and Redwood accounts.

 Cllr Lisher and Cllr Keech to action the mandate.

**APCM/25/5/17 Standing Orders**

 The Council reviewed Standing Orders and NALC’s guidance on the latest changes (April

 2025) in the Model Standing Orders (England) 18 (17 in the Council’s version) to comply

 with the new procurement legislation and to ensure consistency with NALC’s Model

 Financial Regulations.

 It was noted that NALC has also updated Model Standing Order (England) 14 to better

 reflect Code of Conduct requirements: 14a, 14b and 14c have been removed; and the

 language in the document changed to gender-neutral terms to align with its policy and

 the Civility and Respect Project.

 It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Council’s Standing Orders with the following

 amendments as per the NALC guidelines:

1. Section 14: Code of Conduct Complaints: remove 14a-c
2. Section 14e: amend wording to: Standing Order 14d to become 14a to reflect the above changes
3. Section 17: Financial Controls and Procurement: remove C and replace with the following text in bold as mandatory:

*Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold*

*specified by the Government from time to time, the Council must*

*consider whether the contract is subject to the requirements of the*

 *current procurement legislation and, if so, the Council must comply*

 *with procurement rules..’*

iv Section 17: add sub section d and the following text:

 ‘*Neither the Council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with*

 *delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to*

 *accept the lowest value tender*

 v Section 17e-m: remove

 vi To amend the whole document to gender-neutral terms

 **APCM/25/5/18 Financial Regulations**

The Council reviewed its Financial Regulations. Members noted NALC’s guidance on the

 updated model document and changes to 5.4, 5.7 and 5.11 to reflect the Procurement

 Act 2023 and the Procurement Regulation 2024 which came into effect in early March.

 It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Financial Regulations with the following mandatory

 amendments as per the NALC guidelines.

 5.4 **For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the**

  **estimated value will exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, the full**

 **requirements of The Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement**

 **Regulations 2024 or any superseding legislation (“the Legislation”), must**

 **be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that**

 **contract.**

 **5.7 For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the council**

 **must comply with any requirements of the Legislation regarding the**

 **publication of invitations and notices**

 **5.11: Contracts must not be split to avoid compliance with these rules.**

**APCM/25/5/19** **Code of Conduct**

 The Council reviewed and **RESOLVED** to adopt the Code of Conduct policy without

 f amendment.

**APMC/25/5/20 Policies and Risk Assessments**

 To Council reviewed the following Policies:

 **Financial Risk Assessments Policy**:

 The Council **RESOLVED** to agree the policy without amendment and to

 appoint Cllr Keech as the internal financial controller.

 **Non-Financial Risk Assessment Policy**

 The Council **RESOLVED** to agree the policy with the following amendments:

1. The volunteers who cut the grass at the Vera’s Shelter to monitor it’s condition as part of the Clerk’s role in risk management.
2. The safety inspections of the Recreation Ground, MUGA and Play Area

are conducted weekly instead of two-weekly, as required by the insurance policy, as part of the Clerk’s role in risk management.

Cllr Keech proposed and the Council **RESOLVED** that the OSRA Committee reviews the option of engaging a paid or voluntary position for the safety inspections of the Council’s assets at its next meeting.

 **Winter Maintenance Plan**

 The Council **RESOLVED** to agree the policy with one amendment for the OSRA

 Committee to review the grit distribution arrangements for the parish.

 **Local Emergency Plan**

 The Council **RESOLVED** to agree the policy with one amendment to the

 emergency contact details to be shown as the 2025/26 Chairman.

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 The Council reviewed and **RESOLVED** to adopt the following policies without

 amendment:

 **Complaints Procedure**

 **Complaints Form**

 **Co-option Policy**

 **Publication Scheme**

 **Documents Retention Policy**

 **GDPR Subject Access**

 **Communications Protocol**

 **GDPR Privacy Notice**

**APCM/25/5/21 Asset Registers**

 The Council reviewed and **RESOLVED** to agree the Asset Registers for the

 Council and the Washington Recreation Ground Charity for the 2025/26

 municipal year.

**APCM/25/5/22 Insurance**

 The Council reviewed its insurance schedule, policy and renewal documents .

 Members noted that the Council’s three-year fixed insurance policy expires

 on 31st May 2025 and that the current insurer will change from Aviva

 Insurance Limited to Ecclesiastical Insurance Office plc.

 Insurance quotations to renew the existing policy on a one year and three-

 year fixed term were reviewed. Two other insurers declined to quote.

 The Council **RESOLVED** to agree the following:

1. amended insurance valuations for 2025/26
2. to renew the proposed policy at £1,174 fixed for three years from May 2025-May 2028 underwritten by Ecclesiastical Insurance Office plc.

**APCM/25/5/23 2024/25 Internal Audit Report and Letter**

 The Council reviewed the end of year Internal Audit Report and it was noted

 that in the Auditor’s opinion, “*that the systems and internal procedures at*

 *Washington Parish Council were well established and followed. “*

 The Council **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the report and comment on

 the recommendation that supporting documentation with the agendas will be

 published as per the Information Commissioner’s Office guidelines.

 The Clerk reported that the Council has been randomly selected by the External

 Auditor for an ‘intermediate’ review. Members noted that the Clerk will provide

 the additional financial information requested.

**APCM/25/5/24 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) Section 1. 2024.25**

 The Council reviewed the Annual Governance Statement Section 1 and **RESOLVED**

 that the Council affirms its response to Statements 1-9 as ‘Yes’ and that Section 1 be

 duly signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.

**APCM/25/5/25 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) Section 2. 2024.25**

 The Council reviewed the Annual Accounting Statement Section 2 and noted

 that it has been previously signed by the RFO prior to presentation as required. It was

 **RESOLVED** to approve Section 2 of the AGAR and to be duly **s**igned by the Chairman.

**APCM/25/5/26 Notice of Public Rights**

 The Council reviewed and **RESOLVED** to note the period for the exercise of the Notice

 of Public Rights to be 3rd June to 14th July 2025.

**APCM/25/5/27 Any Urgent Items**

 None.

**APCM/25/5/28 Chairman’s Announcements**

 None.

**APCM/25/5/29 Date of next meetings**

 Planning & Transport Committee Meeting: Monday 19th May 2025, 7:00pm

 OSRA Committee Meeting: Monday 19h May 2025, 7:45pm.

 Full Council Meeting: Monday 2nd June 225, 7:30pm

 There being no further business the meeting was closed at 8:21pm hours

 Signed………………………………….

 Dated………………………………….

 **Appendix A**

 **WSCC Reports:**

 **Hampers Lane Quarry meeting:**

 WSCC are still pursuing a meeting with the operator about mud and debris on the A283 from

 visiting lorries. Date to be confirmed.

 **Devolution**:

 Cllr Marshall gave the following overview:

* The UK Government’s December 2024 Devolution White Paper mandates:
* All areas without a combined authority mayor must adopt one by 2028.
* Two-tier councils (county + district/borough) will be replaced with single tier

 unitary authorities by 2028.

* Sussex has volunteered to adopt the mayoral model early by 2026 for better

 access to devolved, multi-year funding and greater strategic influence on

 infrastructure, health, planning and transport.

* The proposed mayor-led body will involve a committee with 2 votes each from

 West Sussex, East Sussex, and Brighton & Hove, plus the mayor — a shared

 strategic leadership model rather than top-down control.

* **Local Government Devolution/Reorganisation**
* Separate from devolution, this reform aims to replace two-tier systems (County,

 Borough and District Councils) with unitary councils.

* Four potential models for West Sussex:
	1. A **single West Sussex unitary** (~900,000 population).
	2. A **reduced unitary (~700,000)**, possibly merging areas like Adur & Worthing with Brighton & Hove.
	3. **East/West split** of West Sussex.
	4. **North/South split**, though problematic (e.g., splitting Chichester).
* Significant challenges include local resistance, integration of social care, and

 funding. transition could cost £30–50 million, though long-term savings (up to

 £140 million over 5 years) are expected from larger units.

 **Parish & Town Councils**

* No national devolution paper for town/parish councils is expected
* Future responsibilities will be agreed locally with unitary councils.
* Concerns exist about unfunded liabilities being passed down (e.g., car parks,

 ponds) and parish councils being tempted to overextend, risking financial strain

 and higher precepts.

 **Overall Concerns**

 The reforms do not address core issues like underfunding or increasing statutory

 care demands

* The process is complex, politically sensitive, and still evolving, with full business

 cases due by September 2025 and elections for new unitaries expected by May

 2027.

 **A member asked:**
 As a Washington resident, what do you see the outlook for the parish under the

 proposed devolution and local government reforms?

 **Cllr Marshall responded :**

* Opportunities exist for parish councils like Washington to play a stronger role in

 local services through devolution.

* Responsibilities could include **local recycling, public rights of way, grass cutting**,

 and other services currently managed by the County.

* Success depends on securing **adequate and sustainable funding** to support these

 responsibilities.

* There is **risk and uncertainty**, as changes in parish council membership over time

 (e.g., turnover of councillors or clerks) could shift priorities and affect continuity.

* Cllr Marshall emphasised the importance of **long-term planning and financial**

 **stability** for any devolution at the parish level.

Appendix B

HDC Ward Councillors' Update to Washington Parish Council 12 May 2025

 ● The Washington application by Wiston Estate was approved for 5 houses despite representations from Emma and others on 8 May, including Cllr Jason Thomas, who reflected the views of local residents. The committee did not ask many questions regarding local concerns except in relation to the issue regarding the additional traffic that would be generated by the development. We acknowledge the hard work that parish councillors put into compiling evidence and statements.

● The Stork and Nature Recovery Festival went ahead on Bank Holiday Monday 5 May at Chanctonbury Leisure Centre with over 1000 visitors, 40+ stall holders, many talks and an opening ceremony with Isabella Tree to mark the awarding of Storrington and Knepp as the UK’s European Stork Village. BBC Countryfile filmed the event. The feedback on the event from the stall holders, food vans, participants and those who gave their time to deliver talks, volunteered e.g. traffic marshals, and organised the day has been incredible. The event showed that bringing a community event with the values of the natural world at the heart is much needed. The Stork Festival will be an annual event as a European Stork Village is required, amongst other things, to dedicate a special annual event to the White Stork or nature conservation.

 ● Horsham District Council have approved a new constitution which is now in place. Two main changes are:

○ the abolition of “PDAGs’ i.e. Policy and Advisory Groups, which have by new Policy and Scrutiny Committees in their place. Emma is to sit on the subgroup to help develop HDC’s devolution Community Asset Transfer (CAT) policy and Claudia will sit on a task &

finish group to look at S106 enforcement i.e. ensuring that developers meet their Section 106 legal agreement obligations; and

○ the abolition of the two planning committee groups (North and South) formed by all councillors (i.e. those representing wards in the north of Horsham District sitting on

Planning North and those representing wards in the south of Horsham District sitting on Planning South) unless a councillor opts out of sitting on a planning committee, and the replacement with one smaller committee made of 15 ‘politically balanced’ councillors (i.e. the number of councillors from each party reflecting the proportion of councillors from each party on the Council) to determine larger/controversial planning applications across the entire district. Motions from the Conservatives (to leave the planning arrangements as before) and the Greens (to keep the two committees but with reduced membership) both failed. Greens will only have three seats in the new planning committee. Joan has one of these three seats. Another new rule is that new Planning Committee members may not vote on any applications which come up within their own ward. This new system has some negative consequences i.e. we won’t have a vote on any Storrington and Washington applications, but the risk of being accused of predetermination has now gone (apart from Joan as she is on the planning committee and therefore has a vote, though not on applications in the ward) which means that Emma and Claudia can work with residents to strengthen arguments to help provide reasons to refuse unsuitable applications and also work with developers to put forward residents’ concerns and have them addressed. The first new Planning Committee sits this coming week. Only time will tell if this new arrangement is an improvement

**Appendix C:**

**Clerk’s Report – APCM 12th May 2025**

**Planning Applications in the parish**

 **DC/25/0675 - Hightrees, Thakeham Copse. Storrington (Washington parish)**

*Surgery to 2x Oaks*

*One Drive link to notification:*

 [DC250675 - High Trees Thakeham Copse Storr - surgery to 2 x oaks - Consultation.pdf](https://1drv.ms/b/c/c3efb697c9fee2ed/EYgQnUnsqrVKs7sUk5t1ndwBbQqJlkkK6K7Bjbc1bw5gsQ?e=4ks42X)

 **RECOMMENDATION:** To defer to the Local Planning Authority’s Arboriculture officer

 **SDNP/24/05124/FUL -** **Stable Cottage, Highden, London Road, Washington RH20 4BA**

 *Conversion of storage area of existing dwelling into habitable space, including bedroom*

 *above and creation of a new 1 bed flat adjacent*

 *One Drive link to notification:*

[SDNP2405124FUL - Stable Cottage Highden London Rd Wash - conversion works.pdf](https://1drv.ms/b/c/c3efb697c9fee2ed/Ed8PC05ycOhDi8P4o_l8hEIBs8HGM3D5sQGvRLlIBKRYOA?e=RXhH1d)

 **RECOMMENDATION:** to consider commenting on the application

 **Quarterly editorials in the Sussex Local magazine.**

 Next edition is July and the deadline for copy is 4th June. Previously , former Cllr Heeley

 produced the council’s editorial for the magazine. There is no charge.

 **RECOMMENDATION**: To consider continuation of the quarterly editorials and to

 nominate a member to produce the copy.

 **Village Hall projects update**

 The Village Hall (VH)emailed (14th April 2025) the CIL Working Party’s presiding Chairman with a

 revised update on their the outstanding requirements for their improvements project to

 include solar panels which they are seeking to fund from CIL monies. The Chairman has advised

 that this is reviewed by the relevant committees.

 **RECOMMENDATION:** VH to make a grant application in the usual way, to be considered

 by the Finance Committee with recommendation to Council.

 **Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and Devolution**

 The SSPC are setting up a Working Party in preparation for LGR/local devolution.

 their Clerk has informed the WPC Clerk that the SSWNP Consultant has **‘**strongly

 recommended’ that both Parish Councils consider clustering in some way - perhaps

 merging completely in order to strengthen our position in preparation for devolution.

 The SSPC Clerk is making enquiries with a PC which merged recently, in order to

 understand the process and potential pitfalls, before exploring that option. SSPC will

 report back with any advice, and will keep WPC in the loop regarding any discussions.

 It is suggested that whether our councils cluster or not, it would be good to work closely

 with each other going forward.

 **Council’s Mobile Phone Contract**

 The Council’s 24-month mobile phone SIM only contract with Tesco ended 8th May and is

 continuing on a rolling monthly basis at the same charge of £9 per month. The same

 allowances apply unlimited mins - unlimited texts -12 GB and with the further option to

 tweak these if required.

 End of Report

 **Glossary:**

 SSPC: Storrington & Sullington Parish Council

 SSWNP: Storrington & Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan

 LGR: Local Government Re-organisation