



Woodmancote Parish Council, The Pavilion, Blackstone Lane, Blackstone, Henfield, West Sussex BN5 9TA
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Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting of Woodmancote Parish Council (WPC) held at The Pavilion, Blackstone Lane, Blackstone, Henfield BN5 9TA on 9th September 2025 at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllr R Noel (Chairman), Cllr Dixon (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Austin, Cllr Batchelor and Cllr W Noel.

Others Present: HDC Cllr M Croker, four members of the public and the Locum Clerk.

82. Apologies – Cllr Donald.

83. Declarations of interest - Cllr R. Noel advised that he knew the applicants for planning applications 1267 and 1268. Cllr Austin also advised he also knew the applicants for planning applications 0020 and 1367. Both councillors requested dispensations in order that they remain in the room when those applications were discussed. They agreed not to take part in any debate and not vote on them. Councillors **AGREED**, unanimously, that Cllrs R. Noel and Austin be granted dispensations as per Standing Order 13 and could remain in the room for the planning agenda item.

84. Public participation.

- A resident complained about the speeding traffic outside his property (A281) and asked that WPC take action to reduce speeding. The Chairman advised that speed limits were a matter for WSCC but agreed to raise this matter with them. He also suggested that, as he was concerned about speeding, that he joins the Woodmancote Community Speedwatch scheme. The resident agreed to contact the Clerk for more details;
- A resident repeated her previous complaint about the siting of roadside signs by a café. The Chairman reported that he had spoken to the owner who advised that the signs were a temporary arrangement supporting a seasonal activity and would be removed soon;
- A resident congratulated WPC for organising and running an excellent village fete. He suggested that better signage and advertising would attract more visitors. He also remarked on the improved meeting documentation; and
- A resident referred to the parish noticeboards. The Chairman noted that 3 noticeboards require replacement or repair and asked the Clerk to add this matter to the next agenda for review.

85. Minutes – the draft Minutes, having been circulated previously, were taken as read. Members **AGREED** that the Chairman could sign the Minutes as a true record.

86. Action Updates.

- **60 – Policies** – Clerk to present new versions for approval at the November 2025 meeting; and
- **63 – Hall Lease** – The Chairman advised that agreement to finalise the lease with the Trustees, the Cricket Club and WPC's solicitor had been reached. The Cricket Club had agreed to pay all legal fees. The Chairman suggested that a full council extraordinary meeting be held on 14th October 2025 in order that Members could agree the final lease terms. He also advised that the Cricket Club had enquired when the planning permission might be sought. Members agreed that the Cricket Club could hire the new Hall extension if necessary for the appropriate hire fee. A trial period might be initiated due to concerns about litter and mess made previously. The Chairman was asked to send a copy of the proposed Hall extension plans to the Clerk for publishing on the WPC website.

87. Reports from Outside bodies – the Chairman invited HDC Cllr Croker to provide an update that included:

- HDC had received a response to their final appeal letter sent to the Planning Inspectorate after being advised to withdraw the HDC draft local plan over a failure to meet the duty to cooperate. The Planning Inspectorate had now requested further evidence to support HDC's assertion that they had complied with the duty to cooperate requirements. In the meantime, HDC officers will work on drafting a new plan;
- The hiatus caused by the delay in agreeing a new local plan has seen a slew of new and speculative housing development applications; the most recent being an application to build 3,500 new homes west of Ifield;
- WSCC and the seven local authority West Sussex districts had put forward two costed options for the planned Local Government Reorganisation structure. The options must be submitted to the Secretary of State by 27th September 2025.
 - Option one, as preferred by WSCC, would see all local authorities in West Sussex combined into one unitary authority. 96 councillors are proposed with an electorate of circa 7,000 residents per ward. The estimated payback for this proposal would be in the order of 3 years; and
 - Option two would propose 2 unitary authorities across West Sussex. The western unitary authority could comprise Chichester, Arun and Worthing councils. The eastern unitary authority could comprise Mid Sussex, Horsham and Crawley councils. Arun council could be part of either proposal. Payback would be more expensive with this option which is estimated to be 6 years.
- It is unsure if the WSCC elections will take place in 2026 given the mayoral elections are scheduled for the same time. The new mayoral authority will be called the Sussex and Brighton Combined Authority;
- The planned refit of the Capitol theatre is due to commence however with a reduced specification to save costs e.g. the replacement of heat pumps with gas-fired boilers; and
- The Chairman reported that Bramber Brooks will reopen to the public following works by the EA and HDC.

88. Planning.

a. New Planning Applications.

- **DC/25/1105 - Nut Knowle Cottages, Brighton Road, Woodmancote** - Erection of a 55sqm 8.8kWp ground-mounted solar array PV system within the garden.
Members voted, unanimously, to SUPPORT the application.
Members requested that all exterior lighting (including floodlights) should be facing in a downwards direction and be fitted with a sensor in order to reduce light pollution.
- **DC/25/1267 - Old Dairy, East Cottage, Blackstone Gate Farm, Henfield Road, Albourne** - Erection of a dog grooming/reception building, erection of a stable / barn building for mixed equestrian and dog daycare, change of use of land for exercising dogs and boarding, and associated works (Retrospective).
Members voted to SUPPORT the application. Members asked HDC note the following requested conditions.

Access - Exit and entrance should be made by the main entrance to the north of the site which would be a safer access point. This would be better suited for safer exit and entry.

Floodlights - Exterior lighting including floodlights - such lights should be facing in a downwards direction and be fitted with a sensor in order to reduce light pollution.

Parking - the increased site activity will require more car parking than indicated.

- **DC/25/1268 - Blackstone Gate Farm, Lavender Cottage, Henfield Road, Albourne** - Erection of a new dwelling (Retrospective).

Members voted to SUPPORT the application. Members asked HDC note the following requested conditions.

Access - Exit and entrance should be made by the main entrance to the north of the site which would be a safer access point. This would be better suited for safer exit and entry.

Floodlights - Exterior lighting including floodlights - such lights should be facing in a downwards direction and be fitted with a sensor in order to reduce light pollution.

- **DC/25/1282 - Woodhouse Farm, Wheatsheaf Road, Woodmancote** - Removal of Condition 2 of previously approved application DC/25/0825 (Prior Notification for conversion of existing agricultural building to 6No. dwellinghouses) in relation to obscured glazing windows.

Members voted to OBJECT to the application.

The removal of the previously made condition would lead to a major reduction in privacy to the neighbouring properties. Members agreed with neighbour comments that the windows will overlook the adjacent properties. The photographs submitted with the application were misleading and one clearly showed the rear fence of the adjoining property.

- **SDNP/25/03149 - Bellows, Bramlands Lane, Woodmancote** - New stable block and feed barn to replace old stable blocks beyond repair.

Members voted to SUPPORT the application.

Members requested that all exterior lighting (including floodlights) should be facing in a downwards direction and be fitted with a sensor in order to reduce light pollution.

HRA/25/0020 - Woodhouse Farm, Wheatsheaf Road, Woodmancote - Application under Regulation 77 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 relating to Prior Approval consent DC/25/0825

Members had no objection the application.

- **DC/25/1367 - Woodhouse Farm, Wheatsheaf Road, Woodmancote** - Prior notification for the erection of an agricultural storage barn

Members voted to SUPPORT the application. Members asked HDC note the following requested conditions.

Floodlights - Exterior lighting including floodlights - such lights should be facing in a downwards direction and be fitted with a sensor in order to reduce light pollution.

b. Decisions and appeals – none.

- c. Other Planning Matters –** The Chairman suggested that the lack of a HDC Local Plan could result in speculative planning developments across the District. The WPC Neighbourhood Plan (NHP) was “made”, following referendum, in 2015 but is now out of date. He suggested that all Members re-familiarise themselves with the current plan and proposed that the NHP be updated in order to provide a degree of planning protection to the parish. Cllr Austin surmised that the NHP would only require minor amendments. He also agreed to contact the previous planning consultant who worked on the original plan for his thoughts. The Chairman agreed and suggested that a new call for sites process, and housing allocation review might also be required. Members asked the Clerk to add the renewal of the NHP to the agenda for the next meeting.

89. Parish Maintenance.

- **Bus Stop Bike Store** – the provision of a bike store at the bus stop by Blackstone Lane was discussed. Cllr Batchelor suggested that this was a much-needed proposal to help school children and adults leave their bicycles in a safe place when they went to catch a bus. The chairman agreed to contact WSCC highways for suitable advice;
- **Village Gateways** – the provision of village gateways was discussed. It was suggested that the installation of gateways could reduce speeding. Examples of other gateways in neighbouring parishes were reviewed e.g. in Bramber parish. Members asked the Chairman to discuss the impact of both village gateways and speed indicator devices (SID) with Shermanbury PC. The Chairman and Cllr Dixon agreed to review WPC's SID speed data and report back on their findings; and
- **Bench repair** – no decision had been made regarding the wording on the proposed bench plaque. The Chairman suggested that the new Hall might be named the Allen Hall to reflect their family's contribution.

90. Finance - To approve the September 2025 payments – the following payments were approved.

WPC PAYMENTS SCHEDULE - September 2025					
Supplier	Services	Payment	Amount	VAT	TOTAL
Moore	External audit fee	BACS	£ 341.25	£ 68.25	£ 409.50
WSCC	Clerk's final salary/pension/NI	BACS	£ 183.38	£ -	£ 183.38
Craig Dixon	Ground anchors	BACS	£ 35.99	£ -	£ 35.99
Paul Richards	Locum Clerk services - Sept 2025	BACS	£1,136.25	£ -	£ 1,136.25
Roger Noel	Gate springs	BACS	£ 35.64	£ -	£ 35.64
		TOTALS	£ 1,732.51	£ 68.25	£ 1,800.76

The Clerk reported that the External Auditor had concluded their audit. A number of observations had been made regarding errors and accuracy, but these had now been resolved. The Completion Certificate was noted, and the Clerk was asked to make it available on the WPC website. The Clerk also outlined the 2026/27 budget and precept process. A draft budget would be circulated ahead of the October extraordinary meeting.

91. New Community Hall – the Chairman referred to lease negotiations as mentioned at agenda item 86 earlier. During these negotiations, the Cricket Club had asked WPC to remove a dangerous tree on the playing field that was encroaching on Blackstone Lane. Cllrs Austin, Dixon and R. Noel agree to remove the tree. The proposed planning application was discussed and the Chairman reported that WPC's architect had suggested that the cost for preparing an application was circa £4,000 plus the cost for the necessary reports (water neutrality, environmental, structural survey etc.). Cllr W. Noel reminded Members of the need to seek 3 quotes. Members **AGREED** that a public meeting be held in October to invite residents to review the proposed Hall design

92. New Clerk – the Clerk was asked to prepare a job description, person specification and advert for the Clerk vacancy. He agreed to circulate a draft to all Members.

93. Reports - none.

94. Correspondence – the Correspondence report was noted.

95. Items for next meeting and date of next meeting – to discuss:

- Update on WPC policy updates;
- Noticeboard repair and/or replacement;
- Neighbourhood Plan update;
- 2026/27 Budget and Precept (first draft); and
- Lease update.

The meeting closed at 21:22

Signed:

Date: