Woodmancote
PARISH COUNCIL
West Sussex

Minutes of Woodmancote Parish Council Meeting held on 10th March 2026 at 7pm
at The Pavilion, Blackstone Lane, Blackstone, Henfield BN5 9TA

Present:	Cllr R. Noel (Chairman), Cllr M. Batchelor, Cllr K. Donald and Cllr W. Noel.		
Clerk:	Celia Price, BA (Hons) Community Governance, FSLCC		
Also Present:	HDC Cllr M. Croker	Members of the Public:	1

The Chairman welcomed all those present and opened the meeting

148. Apologies for Absence
Apologies were received from Cllr David Austin and Cllr Craig Dixon.

149. Declarations of Interest
The Chairman reminded all present that declarations of interest stand.

150. Public Adjournment
A resident raised concerns regarding the sewer repairs completed by Southern Water north of Blackstone on Blackstone Lane, noting that the verge has been left in a poor state of repair and the entrance to the treatment works requires attention.

The Chair offered to write to Southern Water to raise these concerns.

151. Minutes of the meeting held on 13th January 2026
It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 13th January 2026 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

152. Action Updates
The Chair provided an update on the current action list. Members noted progress on a number of ongoing actions including matters relating to the Blackstone Playing Field lease, Route 17 bus stops and the need to obtain further quotes for the new noticeboard and bike rack.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk will continue to provide services to the Council on a contractor basis and will not be placed on the Council's payroll in the short term.

153. Horsham District Councillor report
Cllr Croker provided an update on HDC matters. He advised that a Local Government Reorganisation briefing had taken place on 16th March and it is uncertain whether the anticipated changes will proceed as previously anticipated, but an update from Government is expected soon. He confirmed that WSCC elections will take place on 7th May 2026, with a list of candidates due to be published on 10th April.

In relation to finance, Cllr Croker reported that the District Council's budget had been approved, but concerns had been raised regarding high levels of capital expenditure; there will be a 2.94% increase on the HDC precept. He also updated members on the food waste collection service which will commence shortly, although the government target will be missed by approximately two weeks.

Finally, Cllr Croker advised that Local Plan hearings are due to resume on 21st April. These sessions will be live streamed with initial focus on housing need. It was noted, based on the current NPPF figures, housing numbers could increase by 30% over the next 15 years.

Cllr Roger Noel added he had attended an "Around the District" meeting, which had been well received. He shared concerns raised at the meeting regarding Neighbourhood Plans. Previous advice to delay

plans was reiterated, with further concern regarding the prospect that future changes to the NPPF may reduce the ability of Parish Councils' ability to comment on some planning applications.

154. Chairman's Report

The Chairman reported that discussions regarding the Blackstone Playing Field lease are nearing completion. Amendments to the lease include index-linking rent in line with CPI on a five yearly basis, provision for the area required for the new Community Village Hall and confirmation that responsibility for the playground and trees will be transferred to the lessee. It was noted that the PFA Agreement will be annexed to the lease. The full draft lease will be published on the Council's website, with a public drop-in session proposed, subject to confirmation of Pavilion availability.

An update was provided regarding the bus stop provision, confirming that a meeting had taken place and that Stagecoach has indicated support for new poles outside Dragons, subject to site inspection, with two new bus shelters being installed opposite the current ones.

A quote of £800 for hedge cutting was considered and it was **RESOLVED** to accept the quotation and to authorise the works.

155. Reports

Cllr Wendy Noel reported attendance at a Community Partnership meeting and advised that a Community Planning Alliance is scheduled for 18th April. She also noted that a recent volunteer group meeting was well attended with several groups recruiting new volunteers and raising awareness. The event was sponsored by HDC.

Cllr Roger Noel reported attendance at the WSALC Chair's meeting, advising that the topics covered included the NPPF, planning powers reduction for parish councils and the importance of emergency and resilience planning.

155. Planning

The following new planning application was reviewed and discussed.

- **DC/26/0274 Hole Farm Barn, Brighton Road, Henfield**
  Single storey infill extension and conversion of garage into annex accommodation.

It was **RESOLVED** to support the application.

156. Finance

i) To receive and note payments as previously authorised.
ii) To receive and note bank reconciliations up to 28th February 2026.
iii) To review and discuss year-to-date budget.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the reports for items i), ii) and iii)

iv) The following quotes were discussed.

a) Noticeboard
It was **RESOLVED** to obtain more quotes and investigate other options

b) Bike Rack
It was **RESOLVED** to obtain more quotes as the quote received was considered too great,

c) Speed Indicator Device
It was **RESOLVED** to purchase the device as quoted once permission has been granted and poles installed by WSCC.

d) Architect fees
It was **RESOLVED** to accept the quote of £4200 to produce plans for submission to HDC and to proceed with the application following the public drop-in session.

v) The internal auditor has yet to confirm the year end audit date. It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk should arrange this and advise members for information.

vi) The appointment of the internal auditor was discussed. Documentation was circulated prior to the meeting, which was reviewed and discussed. It was **RESOLVED** to reappoint Mulberry LAS for a 3-year term.

157. Governance

The following draft policies were reviewed.

i) IT Policy
ii) Scheme of Delegation
iii) Planning Applications Policy
iv) Grants Policy

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the policies.

158. Annual Parish Assembly

The Annual Parish Assembly is scheduled for 12th May 2026 at 7.30pm. The format was discussed with two speakers invited to provide talks on Wildlife and the Woodmancote Martyrs. The Annual Parish Council Meeting will commence at 6:30pm and will take place before the Annual Parish Assembly.

159. Correspondence

The Chair advised that correspondence had been received from Hampshire Pensions, regarding the former Clerk's pension, which he was dealing with, and a list of general correspondence had been circulated highlighting items of interest for members.

Cllr W Noel reminded members about the Easter Egg Hunt at the Parish Church on Easter Monday.

160. Items for the next agenda and date of the next meeting

None

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8:48pm