

SLAUGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council Meeting MINUTES

Thursday 30th January 2025 at 7.00pm – The Sports Pavilion, High Street, Handcross

Sally Mclean - Clerk to the Council Email clerk@slaugham-pc.gov.uk Website: <http://www.slaughampc.co.uk>

Press and Public are welcome to attend - The Parish Council is an open and transparent local authority and encourages public attendance at meetings.



Present: Cllr's Julia Elliott (Chair), Eric Prescott, Gary Marsh, David Dunn, Jane MacNaughton, Philip Morris, Debbie Beckinsale

Others Present: None

1. **Apologies for Absence:** To receive and accept apologies for absence. Cllr's Lesley Read, Bob St George, James Keating, Adrienne Melville
2. **Declaration of interest from members in respect of any items on the agenda:** To record any declarations of interest: None
3. **Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting/s held on 28th November 2024** -To receive and accept the Minutes To include attendance Cllr David Dunn - Proposed Gary Marsh, Second Eric Prescott Accepted
4. **Adjournment for questions from the public:** Council to consider adjournment of the meeting in accordance with Council's Standing Orders, to receive questions from members of the public in attendance in respect of items on the agenda
5. **Matters from District & County Councillors:** to receive verbal reports from representatives of other authorities
 - 5.1. **Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC):** Press Release/s updates *cc'd in advance*
 - Devolution updates postponed for two weeks **What is the timeline?**
 - **10th January 2025:** Submission of expression of interest by upper tier authorities to join the priority devolution programme to government.
 - **January 2025:** Government decides whether to issue a formal invitation to Sussex upper tier authorities to submit reorganisation proposals.
 - **March 2025:** Upper tier authorities to submit indicative reorganisation plans.
 - **Spring 2025:** Devolution consultation on the plans following which a Ministerial decision will be taken as to whether to proceed with a Combined Authority.
 - **Autumn 2025:** The Government Spending Review will then confirm future mayoral investment funds for new mayoral areas, which could include Sussex.
 - **Autumn 2025:** Areas to submit their reorganisation proposals. At this time relevant legislation will be laid before Parliament in relation to the creation of Combined Authorities.
 - **End of 2025 to early 2026:** Ministers will consider proposals for the unitary authorities and the phasing of implementation of these with statutory consultations being undertaken on the first tranche of proposals.
 - **2026:** Mayoral elections and decision to move to Mayoral Strategic Authority.
 - **2027:** Elections for a new unitary shadow authority.
 - **2028:** Reorganisation completed and unitary councils go live.
 - It is envisaged that this will impact the work currently undertaken by the Town and Parish Councils, more will become clearer through the consultation process.
 - District Plan Stage 2 has been delayed no response from PIMMS – This is being followed up officers at MSDC
 - Budget & Corporate Plan due to go before cabinet on the 27th February 2025
 - 5.2. **West Sussex County Council County Local Committee (WSCC/CLC)** – Press Release/s updates *cc'd in advance*

6. **Committee Reports:** Council to consider the recommendations, receive and note committee and advisory group/updates: To approve meeting and or briefing notes received in advance of the meeting convened:
 - 6.1. **Finance & Policy Committee:** To update members on current activities: To approve meeting/note minutes and recommendations: 25th November 2024: *papers cc'd in advance*
 - 6.1.1. To review and approve the Income and Expenditure Year Ended 31st March 2025 Proposed Cllr Marsh, Cllr Dunn RESOLVED
 - 6.1.2. To review and approve Trial Balance Current Year Cllr Marsh, Cllr Dunn RESOLVED
 - 6.1.3. To review and adopt the recommended budget for the financial year to include staff salary and national increases 1st April 2025 – 31st March 2026 Cllr Marsh, Cllr Dunn RESOLVED
 - 6.1.4. To review and approve the recommended precept for 2025/26: Proposed Cllr Prescott, Cllr Beckinsale RESOLVEDThe Committee recommends that the Council adopt a precept of £170,000 for the 2025/26 financial year, reflecting an increase of £31,000 from £139,000 to £170,000. With the tax base rising from 1860.3 to 1972.0, this equates to an annual increase of £11.49 per Band D property, bringing the total to £86.21—a percentage increase of approximately 11%

	Tax Base	Precept	Band D	Increase
2023/24	1781.4	£136000	£76.34	
Current 2024/25 <i>This presented a reduction of approx. £1.62 on a BAND D property.</i>	1860.3	£139000	£74.72	£3000.00
Proposed 2025/26	1972.0	£170000	£86.21	£31000.00

The Committee would advise that the increase in this year's precept has been primarily allocated to ear marked reserve (EMR) funding for several major projects scheduled for delivery 2025/26. These projects aim to enhance and maintain key community assets and infrastructure. The reserves will be distributed as follows:

- **EMR Car Park MacNaughton Hall:** £20,000
- **EMR Knappes Field:** £5,000
- **EMR Tree Surgery:** £3,000
- **EMR Furnace Pond/Common Land:** £5,000
- **Neighbourhood Plan Review:** £10,000

The Council recognises the importance of managing its reserves responsibly and remains committed to seeking additional funding opportunities wherever possible. This proactive approach will help safeguard the Council's reserves and reduce the financial burden on the community while ensuring these essential projects are successfully delivered.

- 6.2. **Recreation:** To update members on current activities and to approve meeting/note minutes from meeting held:
Allotment: Rubbish and rodent clearance has been completed. Additional rubbish removal may be required following the ground clearance work at Knapes Field, which is expected to be completed by the end of February. This will be assessed at that time. We will also review the site layout to explore opportunities for reconfiguring and increasing plot availability.
 Cllr Read has established a communication group with current plot holders to support the formation of an association. This initiative aims to encourage better plot maintenance, promote composting, and foster a sense of community while keeping the site tidy as a whole.
 The clearance of Knapes Field is progressing well, though further work is needed. A maintenance programme, including scarification, will be required to remove bramble roots and allow the grass to establish.
 The Clerk is currently drafting a management plan for the site, which is essential for the Council to proceed with future funding applications.
- 6.3. **Neighbourhood Planning: Land at St Martin Close** - To update members on current activities to review and approve meeting/note minutes where required: Minutes 20th January 2025
 The Slaugham Parish Council's Neighbourhood Planning Committee convened on January 20th, 2025, to discuss various agenda items, including updates on local housing projects and the District Plan Hearing.
- **St Martins Close Housing Project Update:** Cllr Eric Prescott provided an update on the St Martins Close housing project, noting the lack of progress and the need to revisit options for enabling the delivery of affordable homes. The committee approved the appointment of Dowsett Mayhew as planning consultants to advance the project.
 - **District Plan Hearing Stage 1:** Key issues from the District Plan Hearing Stage 1 were discussed, including concerns about the housing strategy, unmet needs, and sustainability. The plan period was extended to 2040, and Stage 2 hearings are expected in early 2025
 - **Review of the Neighbourhood Plan (NHP) Action:** The committee approved the appointment of Dowsett Mayhew to assist with progressing the site at St Martins Close and to review the Slaugham Neighbourhood Plan following the adoption of the District Plan, anticipated in late 2025 into 2026
- 6.4. **Planning Committee:** Members to consider updates: To approve meeting minutes of meeting/notes *cc'd in advance*
- 6.5. **Communications Committee:** Members to consider updates: To approve meeting minutes of meeting/notes – Committee to meet to review project. Cllr Morris advised that he will be leaving Handcross later this year and will be stepping down. However, he would like to continue supporting the project where possible in the meantime.

7. **Chairman's Report:** to receive verbal report for the Chair:

- 7.1. The English Devolution White Paper was published by central government on 16 December 2024. This document outlines the government's plans to expand and deepen devolution across England, granting mayors powers. It focuses on devolution and local government arrangements within England. [English Devolution White Paper - "Power and Partnership: Foundations for Growth"](#). What might this mean for local town and parish councils. NOTED

8. **Clerks Report** – to receive information, verbal or written report from the Clerk papers *cc'd in advance*

- 8.1. To update members on other matters/projects currently being pursued by the Clerk.
- 8.1.1. Tree planting project, by Nymans, Handcross - The trees have been procured and are currently in quarantine. The planters will be ordered using the enhancement funds, and the utility surveys have been received. We awaiting a date for planting.
 TRO Speed Reduction 30 mph Application by South Lodge – Further work is needed to determine what additional measures can be installed. Additional meetings are planned to progress this.
- 8.1.2. Adoption of the sales pavilion, Woodgate – The pavilion can serve as an alternative space for meetings, offering a departure from the traditional parish hall functions. It provides a unique opportunity as an adult space and is an eco-friendly building, ensuring a sustainable and versatile environment for various activities. We discussed various leases and the opportunities they present. These will be sent to us for review ahead of the transfer. The sales team will remain in situ until the summer, with a possible transfer to the parish in the autumn. Thakeham is keen to receive a commitment from the Parish Council, as building control will need to sign off on the site, and any changes the Council would like must be embedded before that happens. The Clerk will forward the relevant information and papers ahead of adoption.. The Council are supportive of continuing to explore the acquisition.
- 8.2. Handcross Community Bus – Committee request for guidance regarding future management challenges update.
 The Community Bus Committee is experiencing administrative difficulties, with the committee now reduced to just four volunteers. The remaining members are planning to step down, and no replacements have been identified. This situation is concerning, as the bus service is a vital lifeline for the rural villages, providing access to essential services and supporting the social and wellbeing needs of elderly and vulnerable residents in Handcross and neighbouring villages. The key issue is recruiting volunteers with local knowledge, as well as the necessary skills and commitment to manage the service and engage with the community.
 To address this, the Clerk wrote to the Local County Councillor to urge West Sussex County Council (WSCC) to provide guidance and explore potential solutions. She also reached out to the Clerks of the four neighbouring villages, whose residents also rely on this valuable service. A fantastic response was received from all four villages, with members from each village expressing their support by sending volunteers who are interested in joining the committee. This collaborative effort demonstrates the community's commitment to keeping the service operational and highlights the potential for a stronger, more sustainable committee moving forward. The meeting will be held on a Friday morning, date to be determined, which she will share with the Council. She encourages members to attend if available.

The Clerk and Cllr Prescott attended the recent MSALC meeting: The meeting of the Mid Sussex District Association of Local Councils (MSALC) was held on January 21, 2025, via Zoom, chaired by Cllr Douglas Denham St Pinnock.

- **Neighbourhood Policing Report:** Inspector David Derrick provided a comprehensive report on recent policing issues, including crime statistics, covert operations, and the new 'Cuppa with a Copper' initiative. He emphasized that Mid Sussex is relatively safe and offered his contact details for further communication.
- **Discussion on MSDC Communication:** Trevor Leggo and Cllr Denham St Pinnock expressed concerns about the lack of engagement and responsiveness from Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC), highlighting a comparison with the more cooperative Horsham District Council.
- **Devolution Proposals:** Trevor Leggo and Cllr Denham St Pinnock summarized the government's invitation for bids to establish new strategic authorities, with West Sussex, East Sussex, and Brighton & Hove submitting a joint bid. This move was largely supported by the Clerks, who viewed it as a welcome and needed change, provided that the new authority truly award additional powers to allow Parishes to make important decisions and improvements to their local communities.
- **Planning Update:** Trevor Leggo informed members about a paper by planning consultant Steve Tilbury on changes to the National Planning Policy framework, noting that the role of Neighbourhood Plans remains unaffected for now.
- **Burgess Hill Development Concerns:** Cllr Williams raised concerns about the lack of progress and transparency in the Burgess Hill development project, suggesting a Freedom of Information request to obtain more information.
- **Weald to Wave Initiative:** Cllr Grace inquired about the follow-up on the Weald to Wave initiative, and it was agreed that the matter would be raised again in a future meeting.
- **Speeding Issues:** Various councillors discussed ongoing efforts to address speeding issues in their parishes, with suggestions for collaboration and enforcement to ensure effectiveness.

9. Finance Matters Payments and receipts The Committee is asked to RESOLVE to approve: Bank Reconciliation for month November & December Approval in line with scheme delegation (*Ref: Bank Payment Analysis January cc'd in advance attached*)
RECOMMENDATION: The Committee approves the schedule of payments for December 2024 & January 2025 as listed: Proposed
 Cllr Marsh Second Cllr Prescott

Slaugham Parish Council				Slaugham Parish Council			
Date: 29/01/2025		Page 1		Date: 29/01/2025		Page 1	
Time: 12:38		User: SM		Time: 10:57		User: SM	
Bank Reconciliation Statement as at 31/12/2024 for Cashbook 1 - Current Bank A/c				Bank Reconciliation Statement as at 30/11/2024 for Cashbook 1 - Current Bank A/c			
Bank Statement Account Name (s)	Statement Date	Page No	Balances	Bank Statement Account Name (s)	Statement Date	Page No	Balances
Treasurers	31/12/2024	113	1,000.00	Treasurers	30/11/2024	112	1,000.00
Business Investment	31/12/2024	83	115,991.37	Business Investment	30/11/2024	82	125,573.83
			116,991.37				126,573.83
Unrepresented Payments (Minus)		Amount		Unrepresented Payments (Minus)		Amount	
		0.00				0.00	
			0.00				0.00
			116,991.37				126,573.83
Unrepresented Receipts (Plus)				Unrepresented Receipts (Plus)			
		0.00				0.00	
			0.00				0.00
			116,991.37				126,573.83
Balance per Cash Book is :-			116,991.37	Balance per Cash Book is :-			126,573.83
Difference is :-			0.00	Difference is :-			0.00

Slaugham Parish Council									
Date: 29/01/2025		Page 1				User: SM			
Time: 14:21		Cashbook 1				Current Bank A/c			
Payments made between 01/01/2025 and 29/01/2025									
Nominal Ledger Analysis									
Date	Payee Name	Reference	£ Total Amnt	£ Creditors	£ VAT	A/c	Centre	£ Amount	Transaction Details
02/01/2025	British Gas	DDR	707.58			4502	401	707.58	British Gas
06/01/2025	Adobe Product	DDR	19.97		3.33	4122	101	16.64	Adobt Support
07/01/2025	Canva	BACS	13.00			4121	101	13.00	Canva Website
15/01/2025	Adobe Product	DDR	9.98		1.66	4122	101	8.32	Adobe Support
27/01/2025	SSE Energy Supply	DDR	452.72		21.56	4500	501	431.16	Street Light Energy UMS
29/01/2025	Handcross Sports Pavilion	BACS	2,000.00			4416	401	2,000.00	Handcross Sports Pavilion
29/01/2025	West Sussex County Council	BACS	5,986.80			4100	101	5,986.80	Staff Salaries December 2024
29/01/2025	Ellis Cleaning Services Ltd	BACS	100.80		16.80	4418	401	42.00	Sports Pavilion
						4414	401	42.00	Mac Hall
29/01/2025	Direct Technical Services	BACS	754.44		125.74	4501	501	263.70	Maint Agree
						4510	501	365.00	Repairs Cuckfield Lane
29/01/2025	Three Mobile PPCC	BACS	10.79		1.80	4414	401	8.99	Wifi Mac Hal
29/01/2025	Parish Office	BACS	254.80			4140	101	187.20	Travel
						4145	101	45.00	Use of Home
						4138	101	20.00	Tel/Mob/WIFI
						4140	101	2.60	Parking Fees
29/01/2025	Parish On Line Mapping	BACS	180.00		30.00	4124	101	150.00	Parish On line Mapping
Total Payments:			10,490.88	0.00	200.89			10,289.99	

10. Correspondence/Information Items/Publications/Consultations: (*Correspondence cc'd in advance to members*)

11. Highways/Footpaths: to review highways projects/consultation items: Members are asked to consider the following:

- 11.1. Nymans TRO 30mph speed reduction additional traffic calming, B2114 See Item 8.1.1
- 11.2. Bus Shelter requirement: Woodgate, Parish Lane, Pease Pottage – Cllr Marsh to chase Thakeham

12. Police / NHW Report / Resilience Group Reports

- 12.1. Crime Reports cc'd members – Updates issued to members in advance

13. Any other matters that the Chairman wishes to raise for future discussion:

- Bus shelter damage at Woodgate and Horsham Road – The Clerk to ask Cllr Read to investigate Horsham Road, Cllr Marsh to raise Woodgate with Thakeham
- Warninglid TRO speed reduction – Cllr Dunn to contact Cllr Pete Bradbury
- Cllr Prescott – Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is an environmental management concept where development projects are required to leave the environment in a better state for biodiversity than before the project. It ensures that new developments contribute to enhancing biodiversity, rather than just minimizing negative impacts.
 - Purchasing biodiversity credits from established schemes, which fund conservation projects.
 - Investing in projects that restore habitats, protect endangered species, or enhance ecosystems.
 - Working with conservation organisations to manage land or natural spaces.

Cllr Prescott and Cllr Marsh are attending training and will provide further advice next month.

14. Date of next meeting/s –

Signed: _____ Date: _____