



MINUTES of the **ORDINARY MEETING** of the **TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber on **Monday 24th November 2025 at 7pm**

Present: Stuart Condie Town Mayor
David Eggleton Deputy Town Mayor

Diane Black
Matthew Cornish
Cedric de Souza *
Robert Eggleston *
Anne Eves
Bob Foster
Jon Gardner
Matthew Goldsmith *
Janice Henwood
Simon Hicks
Trevor Hines
Mohammad Hossain
Tofojjul Hussain
John Orchard
Andy Stowe
Brenda Williams
Peter Williams
Adam White

** Denotes non-attendance.*

*Also in attendance: Julie Holden - Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Sam Kimblin - Administrative Support Officer
8 Members of the Public*

The meeting opened with a Presentation from James Shillaker and Maria Morrissey-Lane from the Burgess Hill Rugby Football Club.

James explained that the Club is well established and is best known for the men's seniors who are unbeaten this season. There is also a women's team, but due to life events the team has quite a turn over and while is less successful, is none the less committed and enjoyed. There are also juniors and youngsters from all ages are involved.

He thanked Burgess Hill Town Council (BHTC) who have always supported their activities and would be keen to have a closer relationship for joint working. Mid Sussex DC (MSDC) have not always been so helpful. He invited all councillors to come and watch their matches. His daughter is captain of the Red Roses team and she grew up in Burgess Hill.

Problems with pitch management. MSDCs contractors did some drainage work which caused damage and have taken a long time to do the repairs. Parking can be difficult near the rugby club and at Poveys Close.

Problems with renewing the lease and reduced use all of their pitches. Concerns were expressed about the timescale for renewing the lease. Cllr Hicks offered, if James gets in touch, he will raise those issues at MSDC as a District Councillor.

The Rugby Club were thanked for attending and updating the Council on their activity.

297. OPEN FORUM

A member of the public asked about the date clash between the BHTC Summer Fayre and the Classic Car event on 14th June 2026. At the last Council meeting, it was reported that this would come back to the Community Engagement Key Area Group (KAG) Meeting as an agenda item. It was also questioned as to why this was an operational decision.

The KAG chair replied that the matter was discussed and decided at the Community Engagement KAG under the item Programme of Future events, held on 23rd October.

298. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The following apologies for absence were accepted:

Cllr Eggleston	Personal Commitment
Cllr Cedric de Souza	Family illness
Cllr Goldsmith	Personal Commitment

299. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations were received from:

Cllr Hicks	Declared a personal interest as he is an allotment holder.
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300. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor thanked the Community Engagement Team and other officers for all their hard work on Armistice Day, Remembrance Sunday and the Christmas Lights switch on.

The Council thanked Graham Fairbairn for his 23 years' service as The Councils Finance Officer and wished him well for his forthcoming retirement on 28th October.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is due to be re-issued before Christmas. There are rumoured to be significant changes which may affect how

Local Planning Authorities deal with major applications. This could be of concern as Mid Sussex District Council don't have a 5 year land supply. This will be considered by the Planning Committee in due course.

301. COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED: The Minutes of the Meeting of the Council, held on Monday 29th September 2025 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

302. PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES

RESOLVED :The Minutes and decisions of the meetings of the Planning Committees held on 14th July, 6th October, 27th October and 17th November were agreed.

303. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT KEY AREA GROUP NOTES OF MEETING

The Chair asked Council to approve the notes, in particular notes 73 and 74 as written in the agenda.

A proposal for amendments to the notes was moved to include:

1. A vote was held on the date of the summer fayre in June 2026
2. Delete the whole first sentence at the top of page 29
3. On page 30 under Resolved, it should say that a vote was taken place at the KAG, and the KAG members had agreed for the summer fayre to take place on 14th June.

The Chair confirmed with the KAG Chair that the notes as circulated had been approved by herself as correct.

The amendment was defeated

Another Cllr raised a query about the chalet options. The KAG Chair said that the decision was made at the KAG that chalets will be further discussed in January.

RESOLVED: The notes and decisions of the Community Engagement Key Area Group held on 23rd October 2025 were agreed.

304. CUSTOMER SERVICES KEY AREA GROUP NOTES OF MEETING

The chair gave a summary of the main points.

It was asked if a public consultation was held on the draft policy

The KAG chair replied that public consultation for each application for use, is part of the scheme.

There was a query regarding whether charities would be charged, as their charge could have gone to the Mayors Charity. It was advised that Charities would only be charged the admin fee.

RESOLVED: The notes and decisions of the Customer Services Key Area Group held on 28th October 2025 were agreed.

305. FINANCE KEY AREA GROUP NOTES OF MEETING

The chair proposed that the notes of the meeting of 10th November.

A Councillor said they find it difficult to support the increase in the precept as set out in the papers. One of the Council's long-term goals is to employ Community Wardens, but there is no provision in the 2026-2027 budget for this, and that was a missed opportunity.

The Vice Chair of the KAG replied that the budget for the 2026/27 financial year has not been finalised yet. Further efficiencies are being investigated which could reduce the potential increase in the rates. Even with these possible savings, it's unlikely that a community warden scheme could be included in the forthcoming budget without a significant increase.

RESOLVED: The notes and decisions of the Finance Key Area Group held on 10th November 2025 were agreed.

306. TO AFFIX THE COUNCILS SEAL TO THE LEASE FOR DOWNSVIEW MEADOW (GATEHOUSE LANE ALLOTMENT)

The Chief Executive introduced the item. There is a seal register in the Chief Executive's office which is available for any Councillor to view on request.

RESOLVED: Agreed to approve the affixing of the Council seal to the lease for the Gatehouse Lane Allotments for 2026- 2030 inclusive.

307. MOTION TO REVIEW AND REPLACE THE KEY AREA GROUP STRUCTURE

Cllr Stowe introduced his motion stating that KAGs undermine the credibility of the Council and create unnecessary tension when there are questions over procedural errors.

He stated that the KAG chairs should be working with officers to draw up the agendas, with reports prepared for each of the items. The KAG can then properly discuss the issues and vote on whether to support recommendations or not. He suggested that things can go wrong when procedures are not followed properly. The agenda should be issued with 3 days before the meeting and should not significantly deviate from the agenda. Discussing items off the agenda might deny members of the public from being aware that the item would be discussed. He also mentioned that the KAGs had Terms of Reference, were they in need of updating?

A Point of Order was called as some of the comments made by the proposer were felt to be a direct accusation as to the integrity, honesty and transparency of the

Council, it's Councillors and its' officers. The motion suggested that KAGs are not properly constituted, but are informal groups, which showed a lack of understanding about how the Council conducts its business.

The Chair asked the proposer to desist from saying anything which is a personal criticism of the Councillors and Officers or damages the reputation of the Council.

Cllr Stowe advised he had not made any criticism of the Council nor officers and was simply outlining his concerns with the operation of KAGs

Cllr Stowe suggested that one option would be to review the KAG process, improve the documentation and ensure chairs and members fully understand their roles and responsibilities.

But the preferred option would be to discontinue the KAGS and replace them with one monthly Full Council meeting. This would mean that all Councillors are involved in every discussion and decisions are made collectively, officer time is used more efficiently and residents can follow our work more easily. The change would strengthen transparency, accountability, public confidence in our governance.

The key benefits would be improved decision making, improved accountability, respects political balance and administrative efficiency.

It would simplify the scheduling and duplicating of meetings. This might save officer time and result in faster implementation of decisions. One monthly meeting would be easier for residents to follow and attend. There would still be a role for Working Groups.

Cllr Stowe recommended his motion, which had been duly seconded, to the Council: That Burgess Hill Town Council discontinues the current Key Area Group (KAG) structure — with the exception of the Planning Committee — and replaces it with a regular monthly meeting of the Full Council to consider all matters of Council business.

A discussion ensued which included the following points:

KAGS are quite powerful and more councillors should be attending more KAG meetings. But not every councillor can attend every KAG. All councillors should be permitted to speak out about specific KAG decisions at full Council.

The comment as to political balance should be considered further and a proposal to review this and voting on specific KAG decisions would be submitted when the standing orders are reviewed.

Chairs of KAGS work with officers and staff and they value the knowledge and expertise shared. The individual KAGS have knowledge of what will work and what won't, therefore saving time and money. If KAGS are dispensed with, the monthly Council meetings would be too long and detailed, and there is a risk that very few decisions would be made.

KAGS are currently conducted in accordance with our standing orders.

All other parish and town councils have public KAGS or sub-meetings, which are open to the public. Replacing these with more involved Working Groups would be undemocratic and a step backwards.

The KAG meetings mean that councillors can discuss things more easily in smaller groups and can get into the detail and discuss different options more easily.

Councillors should raise queries with minutes timely and receive replies.

Several councillors supported the current KAG structure.

Cllr Henwood spoke as the seconder of the motion; she had concerns about several aspects of how the KAGS currently work including inaccurate minutes, unclear delegation, mistaken participation in discussion and voting. She suggested the motion should be seen as constructive criticism and an opportunity to examine how to better govern the Council.

Cllr Stowe summed up by stating that, he was proposing one longer Council Meeting per month, instead of 2-3 separate KAGs a month. Which would focus on efficiency and freeing up officer time.

All Cllrs should have the opportunity to scrutinise decisions, with a full understanding of all the matters concerning a particular issue.

A recorded vote was asked for

For	Against	Abstain
Cllr Henwood	Cllr Condie	None
Cllr Stowe	Cllr Eggleton	
	Cllr Black	
	Cllr Cornish	
	Cllr Eves	
	Cllr Foster	
	Cllr Gardner	
	Cllr Hines	
	Cllr Hicks	
	Cllr M Hossain	
	Cllr T Hussain	
	Cllr Orchard	
	Cllr White	
	Cllr B Williams	
	Cllr P Williams	

RESOLVED: The motion was defeated.

308. [BANKING ARRANGEMENTS](#)

RESOLVED: It was agreed to add the new Head of Finance, David Hood, to the Town Council's bank mandate and to issue a corporate card.

309. BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE

Cllr Peter Williams introduced the report.

It was asked about an up-to-date street map and the Head of Customer Services is looking into this, but securing appropriate advertisement is holding things up. It was asked if we can spend town council money on a town map so that we don't wait for advertising.

It was argued that if we map the town then we are chasing a moving target. As soon as we produce a map, it will be out of date. A digital map online – which can be printed off, would be better as this can be amended easily as the town expands.

It's important to make the residents of Brookleigh and other new communities to feel welcome and we encourage the community centre to get up and running.

An aspiration mentioned was Community Wardens – these are needed in the town as at least two shops recently had damage to their shopfronts. It has been quoted as £100,000 a year to hire 2 x community warden including all associated costs to hire staff. The CEO said an alternative is to have a security company as wardens and this will bring the cost down. Community Wardens have more powers than a PCSO and the Town Council can dictate where they patrol.

It was clarified that the stage used at last weekend's events was hired and was not owned.

RESOLVED: Council noted the progress against the current Business Plan as set out in the report.

310. YOUTH COUNCIL – WSCC REPRESENTATIVE

It was commented that the Youth Council is a very commendable meeting.

It was referenced that another organisation used to employ a part time member of staff to assist with administration, and could this be considered? The Councils representative to the Youth Council (Cllr B Williams) advised she currently does the admin and it's working quite well.

RESOLVED: It was agreed to invite West Sussex County Council to appoint one of their Councillors as a representative to the Youth Council.

311. WSCC PLACE AND CONNECTIVITY CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive Officer introduced the report.

It was commented that a submission around map 5 had been missed out of the response regarding improving the route via Burnside which currently has steps.

A request was made for updates to be made by BHTC by attendees at Place and Connectivity Meetings meetings, as they don't circulate their own meeting notes.

The CEO advised that there was only one meeting which was 14 months ago and the fact of this was reported back. The Leader advised that the plans shown then were markedly different to the final scheme.

A member of the public commented that BHTC seems to generally support phase 2, but has anyone measured the success of Phase 1, and what are the measures of success? Lots of cyclists don't use the current cycle paths and still use the roads. Some cycle improvements have resulted in bottle necks on roads and car journeys taking much longer. It was felt that WSCC carry out consultation exercises but appear to take no notice of the submitted responses.

It was suggested that including a sentence to the consultation to ask what the success measures would be useful.

The chair advised that the Council had spent a lot of time formulating this response to WSCC. He advised that Town Councillors also inspect the current cycle routes and report problems to WSCC. The Chair acknowledged and thanked the group effort in making this detailed response.

RESOLVED: It was agreed to add the following two items to BHTC's response to the WSCC Place and Connectivity Programme:

1. The comments regarding map 5 and the steps alongside Burnside, previously provided by Cllr Eves and

2. After "..... centre for sport and wider strategic locations" to add...

"It would be useful to have greater visibility of the key success indicators, both quantitative and qualitative, that will be used to inform the policy evaluation for determining success or otherwise. "

312. DIARY DATES

The forthcoming meetings and diary dates were noted.

The Meeting was closed at **8.37pm**

Chairmans Signature

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