



MINUTES of the **ORDINARY MEETING** of the **TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber on **Monday 26th January 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
David Hood - Head of Finance and Corporate Services
Sam Kimblin - Administrative Support Officer
Jennifer O'Grady - Head of Community Engagement Team
(left after minute number 320)
13 Members of the Public

The meeting opened with a presentation to Fred Avery in recognition of his many years supporting the town's heritage and history. Fred thanked the Town Mayor and Councillors and for supporting the town's Heritage and History Association since it was founded in 1969.

The association has worked with the Town Council on 12 major projects over the years including the opening of Cyprus Hall in 1990 and the museum in 1993. Valuable donations from the Town Council helped to update their IT equipment.

Fred donated a 1933 edition of a book entitled "The Story of Burgess Hill" to the Town Council with a signed dedication and was presented with an engraved shield.

313. OPEN FORUM

One member of the public said that her daughter died at the age of 23, almost 7 years ago and is buried at Burgess Hill burial ground.

The family find great comfort in decorating her grave with items that her daughter would love. This is the way that their family grieves and this is the way that they can keep her alive and remember her. At Christmas and Halloween, they decorate the grave in a special way. If she is asked to remove most items off the grave, this will cause great distress.

Another member of the public spoke about his infant son who is buried in the children's section. They have a small grey picket fence around the grave and white stones in the middle and this represents his cot which was grey in colour. After 7 years, he received a phone call from the Council saying that many items on his son's grave must be removed. He could understand if he had been told 2 weeks after laying the stones of erecting the fence that those items are not permitted in the burial ground. But not to be told after 7 years of looking after the grave. He asks if the Council and the family can come to some kind of compromise and understanding.

The Leader of the Council gave an update: "We as a Council recognise the emotion that has been expressed this evening. David Hood, Head of Corporate Services, will be seeking to meet with the families affected by the recent communication, together with the Corporate Services Officer and myself, Peter Williams, as Leader of the Town Council. We wish to meet with you and discuss this matter in detail, informally and in private."

Another member of the public said that death comes to us all and this latest development has deeply affected many people in this town.

It was replied that the Council is very much aware of the emotions involved and we are going to meet with the families affected.

Another Councillor said that his view was that he personally wishes the Council to find a compromise and that councillors want to see a resolution as soon as possible. We need to find a balance between the regulations and the needs of the people.

314. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The following apology for absence was accepted:

Cllr Mohammad Hossain	Unwell
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315. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations were received from:

Cllr Cornish	Declared a personal interest in item 9 from the Finance KAG as a Trustee of the Park Centre
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316. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Holocaust Memorial Day service will be held on Tuesday 27th January at 11am at St John the Evangelist Church. All are invited to attend.

The Deputy Town Mayor attended the Burgess Hill Tamil School's New Year Pongal Festival Celebration last weekend. The Community School has been open in Burgess Hill for 7 months and the Town Mayor is planning to attend one of their weekly sessions shortly.

A query was raised under Standing Order 28.7 that the list of complaints received by the Council is not being reported at the required frequency to the Full Council meeting. It was replied that complaints are reported twice a year at the Staff and Member Development Key Area Group, which in turn reports to Full Council.

The Chair agreed to look at the complaints reporting process.

317. COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED: The Minutes of the Meeting of the Council, held on Monday 24th November 2025 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

318. POLICE MATTERS

Inspector Derrick presented his report.

Burgess Hill - Last 3 months (01.10.25 – 31.12.25)

- 2,934 incidents reported – 593 Cat A, 160 Cat B, 260 Cat C
- 162 with Domestic Abuse Tag
- 1,220 incidents attended by Police
- Of the 1,220 incidents attended – these include 88 violent crimes, 123 medical incident/concern, 118 suspicious acts, 160 road related incidents, 39 road traffic crash, 44 Anti-social behaviour, 20 burglaries

Recorded crime in Burgess Hill – compared to the previous year (Oct 2024 – Dec 2024)

- -7.9% Rolling Year (RY) reduction in Total Crime
- -13.3% RY reduction in Burglary

- -33.3% RY reduction for Robbery (this will be as a result of the change to classification for shoplifting assaults)
- -18.8% RY reduction in Possession of Weapons offences
- -3.9% RY reduction in recorded Domestic Abuse crime
- -20.8% RY reduction in Public place crime

Inspector Derrick thanked the councillors and the Chief Executive for working with him so well for the past 3 years. It's been an honour and a privilege to work with the Town Council. The Leader of the Council wished the Inspector a very happy retirement and thanked him for his interest in us as a Council.

319. PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES

RESOLVED: The Minutes and decisions of the meetings of the Planning Committees held on 8th December and 5th January were agreed.

320. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT KEY AREA GROUP - NOTES OF MEETING

RESOLVED: 1) To commend Ramize Easter for her hard work in delivering the 2025 Christmas Market.
2) The notes and decisions of the Community Engagement Key Area Group held on 12th January and 19th January were agreed.

321. FINANCE KEY AREA GROUP - NOTES OF MEETING (TO INCLUDE THE PROPOSAL FOR APPROVING THE 2025/26 BUDGET

The Chair of the Key Area Group (KAG) introduced the report.

A vote was held and carried on Note 120.

Note 120 - 1) RESOLVED: To recommend to Council to approve the budget as shown in the papers with the addition of £9,665 for the vehicle replacement.

The Chair and Officers looked at value for money and cost savings before the KAG meeting took place. This reduced the proposed precept increase from 10% to 6.7%.

A member of the public commented that the Council should be aiming to lower the precept every year, so residents pay less tax. Instead of aiming for our precept increase to be lower than that of other towns. Some residents feel that not all the events put on are value for money.

Another member of the public queried the insurance pay out for the maintenance vehicle. It was replied that insurance only pays the current market value, which is not the full cost of replacement.

There were a number of unanticipated costs this year, including the stolen truck and higher employers' national insurance contributions. The only way to make significant cost reductions is to reduce staff numbers and make redundancies. Some work that officers do is very important but remains "unseen" by the general public.

This Council has remained consistently under budget for a number of years. This is a considerable achievement.

A recorded vote was requested on Recommendation number 1. This was to approve the Revenue Budget represented as expenditure of £1,482,681 (expenditure + community build reserve), less income of £153,649 to give a total of £1,329,032 for the 2026/27 financial year as set out in the papers to the KAG of 19th January 2026.

The votes were as follows:

For	Against	Abstain
Cllr Condie	Cllr Stowe	None
Cllr D Eggleton		
Cllr Black		
Cllr Cornish		
Cllr De Souza		
Cllr R Eggleston		
Cllr Eves		
Cllr Foster		
Cllr Gardner		
Cllr Goldsmith		
Cllr Henwood		
Cllr Hines		
Cllr Hicks		
Cllr T Hussain		
Cllr Orchard		
Cllr White		
Cllr B Williams		
Cllr P Williams		

The vote was carried.

RESOLVED:

1) To approve the Revenue Budget represented as expenditure of £1,482,681 (exp + community build reserve), less income of £153,649 to give a total of £1,329,032 for the 2026/27 financial year as set out in the papers to the KAG of 19th January 2026.

RESOLVED:

2) To approve the use of unrequired earmarked reserves of £5,523 as set out in the papers of the Finance KAG of 19th January, to reduce the precepted amount to £1,323,509.

RESOLVED:

3) To adopt the remainder of the notes.

322. LEVY OF PRECEPT ON MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL 2026/27

The CEO explained that Council have already agreed the budget. This vote is to agree that the demand should be made to Mid Sussex District Council to require them to collect the levy. Cllr Stowe wished to state that he did not support this recommendation.

RESOLVED: It was agreed to Levy a precept on Mid Sussex District Council comprising £1,323,509 to be paid in two equal instalments by 30th April and 31st October. The Precept equates to a Band D annual charge of £98.38.

323. REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

A detailed discussion was held which included the following points.

Cllr Henwood proposed an amendment to recommendation number 3 on page 6 of the Agenda. Her proposal also affects recommendation number 1.

Proposal 1: In the draft terms of reference, we should delete the first paragraph which states that the KAG should accept delegated powers from the Council and any acts and proceedings undertaken will be deemed to be the acts and proceedings of the Council.

Proposal 2: The required quorum for KAGs should be changed from 3 to 4 councillors. Most of the KAGs have 7 councillors sitting on them. If the minimum quorum is 3, it means that 3 councillors can make important and binding resolutions on behalf of the whole Council. The other 13 councillors, who are not members of that particular KAG, do not have a vote on the decision.

The Cllr is proposing a change to our current working practices and decision making processes as she believes this will be more democratic.

It was highlighted that the changes being proposed in the agenda are fairly minor. They mostly regularise current practice. KAGs have always had decision making powers as per the standing orders, but this seems to have become confused.

Some members of the public spoke on this item. One stated that KAGs should not have this kind of power. The Full Council meeting appears to be only rubber stamping decisions already made. If binding decisions are made, then the KAG notes should be more detailed.

Because of the power of the KAGs, members of the public have to attend lots of different KAGs if they wish to have their voice heard. If they wait to attend full Council, it is too late to have a say, as the decision has already been made.

An alternative view is that KAGs could discuss issues in detail and make recommendations and these could then be approved at the full Council meeting.

But under the proposals in the Agenda, it means that Standing Order 14 is the only way to reverse decisions made at KAGs.

It was clarified that only elected councillors can make decisions at KAG meetings. However, at panels and working groups, some of the decision makers can be non-councillors.

After some discussion, Cllr Henwood agreed to withdraw her two proposals if it was agreed to set up a working group to review the Standing Orders and make recommendations to the full Council.

A member of the public asked, at each KAG, how do you decide which items are decisions that can be made at the KAG and which items are recommendations, that need to be brought to the full Council for a final resolution?

It was replied that this is covered by the Standing Orders under 3.2B.

A recorded vote was requested on recommendation numbers 1, 2 and 3.

Recommendation 1 - The votes were as follows:

For	Against	Abstain
Cllr Condie	Cllr Cornish	Cllr D Eggleton
Cllr Black	Cllr Eves	
Cllr De Souza	Cllr Foster	
Cllr R Eggleston	Cllr Henwood	
Cllr Gardner	Cllr Stowe	
Cllr Goldsmith		
Cllr Hines		
Cllr Hicks		
Cllr T Hussain		
Cllr Orchard		
Cllr White		
Cllr B Williams		
Cllr P Williams		

RESOLVED:

1 – To approve the draft standing orders and Financial Regulations at Appendix A showing the amended references to the Head of Finance and Corporate Services and the updated Public Contracts procurement Thresholds and the KAG and Committee Terms of Reference.

Recommendation 2 - The votes were as follows:

For	Against	Abstain
Cllr Condie	Cllr Stowe	None
Cllr D Eggleton		
Cllr Black		
Cllr Cornish		
Cllr De Souza		
Cllr R Eggleston		
Cllr Eves		
Cllr Foster		
Cllr Gardner		
Cllr Goldsmith		
Cllr Henwood		
Cllr Hines		
Cllr Hicks		
Cllr T Hussain		
Cllr Orchard		
Cllr White		
Cllr B Williams		
Cllr P Williams		

RESOLVED:

2 - To re-name the Key Area Groups to Committees, and amend their “notes” to “minutes” and amend the references as such.

Recommendation 3 - To approve the updated terms of reference for each committee

The proposal includes some slight amendments to the terms of reference to how the Council are operating but they are broadly the same as now. One amendment is the change to quorum numbers on the grants Panel from 2 to 3 councillors, but they are significantly the same.

For	Against	Abstain
Cllr Condie	Cllr Eves	None
Cllr D Eggleton	Cllr Henwood	
Cllr Black	Cllr Stowe	
Cllr Cornish		

Cllr De Souza		
Cllr R Eggleston		
Cllr Foster		
Cllr Gardner		
Cllr Goldsmith		
Cllr Hines		
Cllr Hicks		
Cllr T Hussain		
Cllr Orchard		
Cllr White		
Cllr B Williams		
Cllr P Williams		

RESOLVED:

3 - To approve the updated terms of reference for each committee

RESOLVED:

4 – To agree an amendment to 12(i) of the Standing Orders, as outlined in the Agenda.

Recommendation 5 – A discussion was held to consider if the KAGs (or Committees) should be required to have political balance in their membership. It was highlighted that having political balance would actually result in the Conservatives and independent councillors having less places on KAGs and committees than they currently hold.

Cllr Eves **withdrew** her proposal to consider a new SO regarding political balance.

Recommendation 6 – Following some discussion, the proposal in the agenda was amended to set up the suggested idea of a working party to review the standing orders against the NALC model.

RESOLVED: To set up a working party to review the NALC Model Standing Orders and bring back to Council recommendations to consider these for the Burgess Hill Town Council Standing Orders.

After the vote - Cllr De Souza left the room briefly.

324. EUROPEAN FRIENDSHIP VISIT

A member of the public asked if the funds listed on the agenda represented the total remaining funds left in the pot, or whether it was an annual allowance? It was confirmed that it was a total reserve with no current ongoing allowance.

There are some plans for the remaining money left in the fund. These include young people from Schmallerberg visiting one of our theatre groups. Schmallerberg might also fund some of our young people to visit a theatre group in Schmallerberg. It is possible that additional twinning groups could be set up in the future.

Cllr De Souza returned to the room.

RESOLVED: To approve expenditure of £600 for the European friendship groups visits this year.

325. DRAFT ROTA OF MEETINGS FOR 2026/2027

RESOLVED: The meeting dates as set out at Appendix D were agreed.

326. DIARY DATES

The forthcoming meetings and diary dates were noted.

The Meeting was closed at 8.52pm

Chairmans Signature

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