

Crowhurst

PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes of the **ANNUAL MEETING** of the Parish Council held on
Monday 19th May 2025 at 7.30pm
in Crowhurst Village Hall, Forewood Lane, Crowhurst.

Parish Councillors present: Cllrs Geoff Thomas (Chair), Lynda Roller, John Goddard & Sue Laimbeer

District/County Councillors present: None

In attendance: Maureen Collins, Parish Clerk and 2 members of the public

1.	ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN Cllr Geoff Thomas was elected to continue as Chairman of the parish council.
2.	ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN Cllr Sonia Plato was elected to continue as Vice-Chair of the parish council.
3.	DECLARATIONS OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE & REGISTERS OF MEMBERS INTERESTS The Chair signed his acceptance of office form and the Vice-Chair (who was not present at the meeting) will sign her form in due course. The clerk reminded members of the need to update their register of interests if there were any changes.
4.	PUBLIC QUESTIONS Dean Sergeant attended the meeting to request to use the Recreation Ground on an informal basis on a Monday evening between 6-7pm. He is a Volunteer Coach for a group of 8-10 eleven-year-old football players who want to keep fit over the Summer. Councillors agreed to this request, on the understanding that this did not extend beyond the end of August and that they avoided the cricket square and croquet lawn.
5.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Sonia Plato and Kathryn Field, ESCC.
6.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST Received from: Cllr Thomas – Village Hall Committee Cllr Laimbeer – Annual Fayre and the Environment Group and The Plough Inn, Crowhurst Cllr Roller – Environment Group
7.	ADOPTION OF MINUTES The Chairman was authorised to approve and sign the minutes of the ordinary meeting of Crowhurst Parish Council held on 14 th April 2025 as a true and correct record.
8.	DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS The proposed dates for future meetings of the parish council had previously been circulated and were approved. They are confirmed as: 2025 – 16 th June, 21 st July, 15 th September, 20 th October, 17 th November & 15 th December. 2026 – 19 th January, 16 th February, 16 th March, 13 th April & 18 th May

	All meetings will take place at 7.05pm in the Village Hall, Crowhurst as agreed by Councillors at the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday, 17 th March 2025 (Minute 10).
9.	<p>MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED IN THIS AGENDA:</p> <p>10.1 Councillor Vacancy – The vacancy continues to be advertised on the website, on the notice board and in the Crowhurst News.</p> <p>10.2 The Attenuation Pond – Illegal fishing in the Attenuation Pond has been reported to the Environment Agency and the local and rural crime police teams who had advised on the need for better signage. The Rural Crimes team will be making patrols throughout the summer months, as will Alfie Mason, the local Fisheries Officer. The Chair, Cllr Thomas advised that he had spoken to Ben Coles of Combe Valley CIC regarding the matter and will further raise the issue of signage.</p>
10.	<p>REPRESENTATIONS FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS</p> <p>There is currently a vacancy for district councillor following the resignation of Chas Pearce. County councillor Kathryn Field was absent but had nothing to report since the last meeting.</p>
11.	<p>TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING:</p> <p>To consider the following new Planning Application (retrospective) and provide comments to Rother District Council:</p> <p>RR/2025/575/P – Hill House Farm, Barn at land adjoining Crowhurst Lane, Crowhurst.</p> <p><i>Proposal: Change of use from an agricultural building to non-agricultural storage use (B8).</i></p> <p>After a brief discussion councillors agreed to neither support or object to the application and the clerk will submit the following comments online:</p> <p><i>Crowhurst Parish Council neither supports nor objects to this application and asks that if Rother District Council are minded granting permission they take note of Crowhurst's Neighbourhood Plan and Design Guide and Dark Skies policy.</i></p>
13.	<p>RFO REPORT:</p> <p>13.1 Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR)</p> <p>13.1.1 The clerk had previously circulated the full report from Michelle Webber of Mulberry & Co. following the audit. There were no recommendations and councillors approved the report.</p> <p>13.1.2 The clerk then read aloud the Annual Governance Statement and members agreed to the signing thereof. GT and the clerk duly signed the form.</p> <p>13.1.3 Section 2 the Accounting Statement had previously been circulated and was approved for signing.</p> <p>13.1.4 The clerk confirmed the dates of the Notice of Electors' Rights to be 3 June to 14 July 2025.</p> <p>13.2 The end of year financial report to 31st March 2025 had previously been circulated together with a summary of variances against budget. These were approved.</p> <p>13.3 The end of year Bank Reconciliation to 31st March 2025 together with supporting bank statements had been circulated and was approved. This was signed by Cllr John Goddard in line with Financial Regulations.</p> <p>13.4 The payments report for May 2025 was approved for payment.</p> <p>13.5 The list of regular payments had been circulated and was approved. The Chairman signed a copy of the list.</p> <p>13.6 The financial report to 30th April '25, together with the bank reconciliation had been circulated and was approved.</p> <p>13.7 The clerk had previously circulated a summary report of planned spending and reserves. She was instructed to move the £20,000 from car park reserves and add £10,000 to both the Playground refurbishment and Pavillion project reserves. This was noted.</p> <p>13.8 Retrospective approval was given for a one hour finance training session (Edge IT) for the clerk at a cost of £85.00 plus VAT.</p>

14.	<p>RECREATION GROUND:</p> <p>14.1 Cllr Plato was not at the meeting but was thought to have the inspection folder. GT offered to do the next inspection as councillors were unsure of whose name was on the list. There were no additional issues, and the clerk will report the various ongoing jobs to the handyman (see 14.2).</p> <p>14.2 Cllr Goddard had recently met with the new handyman, Matt Bumpass. The clerk will send him the current list of repairs needed. Mr. Bumpass has been asked to prioritise the Recreation Ground lights as these require urgent attention.</p> <p>14.3 Councillors approved the hire of the Recreation Ground for birthday parties on 28th June and 27th July. The clerk will add the events to the Recreation Ground calendar.</p> <p>14.4 Councillors approve the payment to G B Pest Control of £100 and thanked Mr. Burgess for attending to the task so promptly.</p> <p>14.5 The clerk has recently been in contact with Stephen Greenfield, Chairman of Crowhurst Football Club. He is currently acting as Club Secretary for both the senior and youth sides. The club would like to add an additional youth team next season and will be starting a veteran's team, playing on Sunday afternoon. The Chair (GT) asked the clerk to prepare a report to be discussed when councillors next meet.</p>
15.	<p>STANDING ORDERS, FINANCIAL REGULATIONS & OTHER POLICIES</p> <p>15.1 The new model Financial Regulations 2025/'26 had been circulated. The Chairman noted that a councillor should sign off end of year bank reconciliations and supporting bank statements as a record for the parish council (2.6). This was done by Cllr John Goddard. The Financial Regulations were adopted subject to clarification of clauses 2.7 and 15.</p> <p>15.2 The new model Standing Orders 2025/'26 had been circulated and were adopted. Ten minutes will be allowed for public questions, with each person being given a maximum of 3 minutes to speak. The meeting length was set at two hours, with an option for the Chair to extend this by an additional 30 minutes if required.</p>
16.	<p>CROWHURST COMMUNITY MUGA</p> <p>The recent MUGA reopening had gone well, with about 30 people attending the event.</p>
17.	<p>PAVILLION/RECREATION GROUND REFURBISHMENT</p> <p>After a brief discussion, the clerk was requested to contact Tilmann Lenz to request a quote for providing initial plans for a refurbished Pavillion.</p>
18.	<p>COUNCILLOR UPDATES ON EXTERNAL BODIES</p> <p>GT reported that Combe Valley CIC had recently had a Board Meeting. There are plans to develop the area around the Discovery Centre and lots of events have been planned. Finance and Governance are in good order. With regards to the Village Hall, the Committee is still looking for a new secretary, and plans are currently being made to improve the committee rooms at the back of the hall.</p>
19.	<p>CLERK'S REPORT/CORRESPONDENCE</p> <p>19.1 A letter has been received from ESCC Highways detailing work to be carried out on Telham Lane between Monday, 9th June and Friday, 20th June. The clerk will contact Steve Royston to ask him to send out a message to villagers via village email.</p> <p>19.2 An email has been received from a resident regarding the caravan at Court Lodge Cottages.</p> <p>19.3 An email has been received from a resident in Station Road regarding dead and dying ash trees. The clerk has contacted Chris Page from Network Rail for advice.</p>
20.	<p>INFORMATION FROM COUNCILLORS/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS</p> <p>Cllr Roller reported that a notice will be going into the next edition of the Crowhurst News informing residents that the Sunday Social will continue again next winter. LR is currently working with the RVA to look for organisations that can give financial support and donations from local village groups or</p>

	individuals would be very welcome. There will be ten sessions in total, and the aim is to have a speaker at each session. There have already been several offers of help with this. The initiative will run very much as it did last year but will finish at 3pm. Volunteers are always needed, so if you can spare an hour or two, please let Cllr Roller know.
21.	DATE OF NEXT MEETING The next ordinary meeting will be held on Monday 16th June 2025 at 7.05pm in the Village Hall.

Signed

Dated