

Crowhurst

PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes of the Ordinary of the Parish Council held on
Monday 21st July 2025 at 7.05pm
 in Crowhurst Village Hall, Forewood Lane, Crowhurst.

Parish Councillors present: Cllrs Geoff Thomas (Chair), Sonia Plato (Vice Chair), Lynda Roller, John Goddard and Sue Laimbeer

Parish Councillors absent: Cllr Koorosh Ashrafi

District Councillor Nicola McLaren and County Councillor Kathryn Field

In attendance: Maureen Collins, Parish Clerk and 3 members of the public

1.	PUBLIC QUESTIONS: Mr Kemp asked when the new picnic bench was going to be set up in the picnic area. The clerk advised that this would be discussed under 'Matters Arising'.
2	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: There were no apologies for absence.
3.	DECLARATION OF INTERESTS: Received from: Cllr Plato – Crowhurst Environment Group and Youth Club Cllr Thomas – Village Hall Committee Cllr Laimbeer – Annual Fayre Committee, Crowhurst Environment Group and Strolling Group Cllr Roller – Crowhurst Environment Group
4.	MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: The Chairman was authorised to approve and sign the minutes of the Ordinary meeting of Crowhurst Parish Council held on 16 th June 2025 as a true and correct record.
5.	MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED IN THIS AGENDA: 5.1 Councillor Vacancy – This is still being advertised on the notice board. The clerk encouraged those present to spread the word that the Parish Council have a vacancy. Anyone who is interested is very welcome to come along to a meeting to see what is involved and to have an informal chat. 5.2 Replacement of Bollard Lighting on Recreation Ground – A second quote has been received from TS Electrical Services Sussex and the clerk will obtain another quote from a local company as a comparison. This will be discussed further at the September meeting. 5.3 Barrier Gate – After a brief discussion, it was agreed that the clerk should contact Colin Ford to obtain a second quote for a replacement barrier gate. 5.4 Community Orchard – There are still two outstanding jobs to be completed in the Community Orchard – the installation of the new picnic bench and the guards for the fruit trees in Muriel's Meadow. Various options were discussed and councillors agreed that the clerk should ask Colin Ford for a quote to complete the work.
6.	REPRESENTATIONS FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS: Recently elected District Councillor Nicola McLaren reported that Cabinet's decision to lease 12 public toilets across Rother was challenged by Icklesham and Sedlescombe Parish Councils, who wish to take over their local facilities under the Services and Assets Disposal Framework. RDC confirmed their expressions of interest will be considered in due course by the Council. Rother District Council has been named the most improved district council in the UK for climate action, rising from 50 th to 9 th place nationally as it works toward a net-zero target by 2030.

	<p>With housing, the council continues revising its local plan in light of a new Government target of 932 homes per year, noting significant land constraints due to the topography of the High Weald area and its protected areas. Crowhurst PC has submitted its development needs via RDCs questionnaire. The Chair, Cllr Thomas, advised Cllr McLaren that Network Rail have a site in Crowhurst that could be freed up for housing, but it had previously been difficult to engage them on this matter. Any help from RDC to enable a meeting would be much appreciated.</p> <p>Rother has been selected for a government grant to support affordable housing, though details remain pending. Finally, the grant scheme for community orchards has reopened, offering funding between £500 and £5,000 for green space creation and tree planting.</p> <p>County Councillor, Kathryn Field, was pleased to advise that plans to close an adult provision in Eastbourne, forcing users to travel to Bexhill has been withdrawn.</p>
7.	<p>TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING:</p> <p>1)To consider the following new Planning Applications and to provide comments to Rother District Council.</p> <p>RR/2024/1969/P Hyfield Stables, Swainham Lane, Crowhurst</p> <p><i>Additional information/amended plans and/or description.</i></p> <p>Cllr John Goddard had looked at the amended plans. He had noted that the changes to be made relate to the building being in a slightly different place resulting in minor changes to the driveway. Councillors agreed that there was no need to add to the comments previously submitted to RDC.</p>
8.	<p>FINANCIAL MATTERS:</p> <p>8.1 The financial report to 31st June 2025 had been circulated and was approved by members.</p> <p>8.2 The payments report for July 2025 was considered and approved.</p> <p>8.3 The bank reconciliation to 31st June 2025 had been circulated. It was approved by members and signed by the Chair (GT).</p> <p>8.4 Councillors approved the retrospective payment of £60.00 to Ciaran Day for fees associated with the updating of the Parish Council website.</p> <p>8.5 Councillors approved the payment to the handyman, Matt Bumpass of £325.00 plus VAT for labour, and £78.19 for materials.</p>
9.	<p>RECREATION GROUND:</p> <p>9.1 Cllr Roller undertook the inspection this month. She noted that generally the Recreation Ground is looking to be in good condition. Her main concerns were the woodchip in both playgrounds which needs raking, the grass in the picnic area which is very uneven and the pooling of water by the gate from the car park. Cllr Roller also noted that the end of handrail to the Youth Club hut is disintegrating and had been taped up. Cllr Plato advised that this was put in place by the Pre-school and that it is likely to be their responsibility to arrange for it to be repaired but will check this with the Youth Club Committee.</p> <p>9.2 The Rec Users meeting has been rescheduled. It is now being held on Thursday, 11th September at 7:00pm in the Village Hall.</p> <p>9.3 Gareth Bright met with DNA Security to discuss the installation of two CCTV cameras on the Recreation Ground: one pointing at the car park and another near to the MUGA. He was advised that due to the size of the area to be covered, it was unlikely to be feasible for a small parish council and could run into tens of thousands of pounds. The poles for the cameras alone would cost approx. £1500 each, in addition to cabling costs and a high end camera, which would be necessary to achieve the quality of image required. It was also unlikely that CCTV would deter vandalism. Mr. Bright agreed to contact DNA Security again to discuss the feasibility of a solar powered CCTV system and he will report back to the September meeting.</p> <p>9.4 It had been noted that the floors of the changing rooms in the Pavillion are becoming damaged, probably from the spikes on sports boots. Councillors discussed the purchase of mats but after some discussion it was decided not to purchase these as they caused their own problems, and it was not considered to be cost effective as we are currently drawing up plans to renovate the Pavillion.</p> <p>9.5 Councillors agreed that the hedge on the left of the path from the car park to the Pavillion and Youth Club Hut could be sympathetically cut back at the end of August once bird nesting had finished. The clerk was instructed to contact Nick Stell to ask him to do this. Nicola Stell had reported</p>

	that the roadside hedge to the right of the car park entrance has become overgrown. As there is no path here, councillors decided not to cut the hedge back as this would encourage pedestrians to walk in the road, rather than to cross over and use the pavement on the other side.
10.	MILLENIUM GARDEN Colin Ford is in the process of obtaining a quote for the materials needed to complete the repairs needed to the bank in the Millenium Garden. These need to be agreed with councillors before the job can go ahead. The labour costs of £997 have already been approved.
11.	ATTENUATION POND David Dennis, Managing Director of Bexhill Wild Domesday CIC, presented a proposal to the Parish Council regarding the Crowhurst Lake. He outlined a plan to reconnect Powdermill Stream to the lake via a licensed pipeway, aiming to restore oxygen levels and biodiversity. Given the streams status, EA consent would be required, and while the Environment Agency could not provide funding, external sources would need to be explored. Mr Dennis also proposed a fishing scheme involving licensed angling and a warden, modelled on Pebsham Lake's successful system. This would help deter illegal activity, offer controlled public use, and generate income. Mr Dennis invited the Parish Council to consider approving the concept in principle. With Council support, he would proceed to make a formal application to the Environment Agency and the Angling Trust, to have survey work done to save the lake for wildlife and to assist in the setting up of a recreational asset. After some discussion, councillors were minded in principle to support developing the pond as suggested but noted that there would need to be consultation with the local community. Cllr Thomas undertook to pass the information Mr Dennis had presented to the Combe Valley Countryside Park CIC, as the Attenuation Pond is on the agenda to be discussed at the next Board meeting. Cllr Plato queried whether there would be a negative impact on the diverse range of fish present in the Powdermill Stream from carp present in the Attenuation Pond.
12.	ANNUAL FAYRE REPORT This has been deferred to the next meeting to allow the Annual Fayre Committee time to finalise all the expenses from the Fayre and to reconcile the accounts.
13.	PAVILION REFURBISHMENT PROJECT: Councillors considered the proposal received from Mr. Tillmann Lenz, Architect Dipl-Ing MA. Following a discussion of the proposed fee structure and scope of services for architectural support, councillors expressed their satisfaction with the proposal and agreed to proceed on this basis. The total fee of £2,400 was noted, inclusive of concept development, planning application, detailed design, and reduced site co-ordination. Councillors acknowledged that additional consultants (e.g. structural engineer, building surveyor) may be required and that associated application fees are not included in this estimate. Council members expressed their appreciation for all that Mr Lenz has done to date. The clerk will write to Mr. Lenz to ask if he is willing to present his proposal to the working group, at a meeting to be held at the Pavillion. Mr. James Parker, Parker and Son, has kindly offered to do a free survey of the Pavillion. Councillors expressed their thanks for this very generous offer, and they look forward to arranging a date for this to take place. A structural survey will also need to be carried out. James Parker would be able to recommend a suitable person and will be contacted by the clerk.
14.	COUNCILLOR UPDATES ON EXTERNAL BODIES (IF ANY): There were none.
15.	CLERK'S REPORT AND INFORMATION FOR COUNCILLORS: 15.1 The clerk had contacted ESCC Highways regarding continuing concerns regarding falling branches and leaning trees on Chapel Hill. ESCC Highways replied that the only action that can be taken currently is to advise the landowner of their responsibilities regarding overhanging trees on a public carriageway, as the trees are not considered an immediate safety concern. The clerk will write to ESCC Highways to ask what constitutes an 'immediate safety concern'. 15.2 Cllr Thomas has been contacted by St Georges church to ask if we would like to join in the Christmas Tree Festival which is taking place again this year. After a brief discussion it was decided that the Parish Council did not wish to take part.

	<p>15.3 District Councillor Nicola McLaren kindly offered to assist in obtaining the Tree Preservation Order (TPO) number and a fair copy of the order relating to the 1066 Crowhurst Yew for Parish Council records. Cllr McLaren has also agreed to support Dr Feltwell's suggestion and expressed support towards the principle of applying for personhood status for the Yew tree. The Parish Council agreed to support an application for personhood status for the ancient yew tree in St George's Churchyard.</p> <p>15.4 Requests have been received from Katie Cesar, Space for Yew, and Emily Loughton to use the wooded area next to the Preschool for Forest School sessions. A detailed proposal has been received from Ms Cesar and one will follow from Emily Loughton. We have also suggested that they contact Sarah Blackford regarding Quarry Wood, which may be a more suitable venue. The clerk will contact them both to suggest that they meet with a small group of councillors at the Recreation Ground to discuss.</p> <p>15.5 The clerk has received acknowledgement that PKF Littlejohn has received and logged the AGAR Form 3 for Crowhurst Parish Council.</p> <p>15.6 Graham Ellis of Composting Solutions has been back in touch following a period of illness. The clerk has written to him to ask if he would be willing to meet councillors and representatives of Edendale Lodge in September to look at a possible site.</p> <p>15.7 Messages and emails had been received from a gentleman who is a remote viewer regarding a site in Crowhurst. The clerk will write to Mr. Vincent to suggest that he contacts the landowner to ask for access.</p> <p>15.8 The annual playground inspection is due this Autumn. Councillors agreed to use Play Inspections again this year and approved the cost of £185.00 plus VAT.</p> <p>15.9 The Recreation Ground has been booked for a private hire on Sunday, 27th July between 2pm and 7pm.</p> <p>Cllr Plato advised that the Youth Club has received funding to provide five 2-hour sessions for 11–18-year-olds during the summer holidays. These will take place in the Youth Club hut or on the MUGA/Recreation Ground. Activities include kick boxing, skateboarding, cricket, stoolball and table tennis.</p> <p>Cllr Roller gave a brief update on the Sunday Social. She is currently applying for grants from Broadstock, Bexhill Lions, and Bexhill and Senlac Rotary Clubs. Cllr Roller will also approach Sainsburys and Tesco, as they have been very generous with grocery items in the past. There will be 10 Sunday Social sessions during the next season and there are currently 4 speakers booked. If anyone is willing to give a short presentation, or knows of someone who is, please contact Cllr Roller.</p>
16.	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The next ordinary meeting will be held on Monday 15th September 2025 at 7.05pm in the Village Hall.</p>

Signed

Dated