

# Crowhurst

## PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes of the Ordinary of the Parish Council held on  
**Monday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2025 at 7.05pm**  
 in Crowhurst Village Hall, Forewood Lane, Crowhurst.

Parish Councillors present: Cllrs Geoff Thomas (Chair), John Goddard and Sue Laimbeer

In attendance: Maureen Collins, Parish Clerk and 6 members of the public

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| <b>1.</b> | <b>PUBLIC QUESTIONS:</b><br>There were no questions from members of the public.   |
| <b>2</b>  | <b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:</b><br>Apologies for absence were accepted from Cllr Lynda Roller, Cllr Sonia Plato, District Councillor Nicola McLaren and County Councillor Kathryn Field.  |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>DECLARATION OF INTERESTS:</b><br>Received from:<br>Cllr Thomas – Village Hall Committee<br>Cllr Laimbeer – Annual Fayre Committee, Crowhurst Environment Group and Strolling Group   |
| <b>4.</b> | <b>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:</b><br>The Chairman was authorised to approve and sign the minutes of the Ordinary meeting of Crowhurst Parish Council held on 21 <sup>st</sup> July 2025 as a true and correct record.   |
| <b>5.</b> | <b>MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED IN THIS AGENDA:</b><br><b>5.1</b> Councillor Vacancy – This is still being advertised on the notice board. The Chairman 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.<br><b>5.2</b> Community Orchard – The new picnic bench has been installed in the Community Orchard. The Chair, Cllr Thomas conveyed the Parish Council's thanks to Cllr Goddard for doing this.  |
| <b>6.</b> | <b>REPRESENTATIONS FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS:</b><br>District Cllr Nicola McLaren was unable to attend the meeting but had submitted a written report to the Clerk. Cllr McLaren sent apologies due to attending the Rother District Council Full Council Meeting, where two motions were tabled—one on the Rights of Rother Trees, highlighting the 1066 Yew, and another on the Rights of Rother's Waterways—with thanks to Sonia and Tree Warden John Feltwell for their support. The Parish Council's completed Housing Survey was acknowledged, and a follow-up meeting invitation from Holly Harrison was noted. The deadline for the Community Grants Fund has been extended to the end of October, and the Household Support Fund is now open to assist residents with essential costs. Work has also begun on the new Sidley Hub, part of a £19.3 million Levelling Up Fund project to enhance community facilities.<br>Rother County Councillor, Kathryn Field also sent her apologies as she was also due to attend the Rother District Council Full Council Meeting. |
| <b>7.</b> | <b>TOWN &amp; COUNTRY PLANNING</b><br>1)To consider the following planning applications and provide comments to Rother District Council:<br><b>RR/2025/1408/P</b><br><b>Park Farm, Breadsell Lane, Crowhurst</b><br><i>Demolition of cattle building and construction of equestrian building (Retrospective).</i><br>Members were concerned that a cattle building had been demolished and an equestrian building   |

erected without permission. If permission had been sought the Parish Council would have requested the following conditions and would like this to be considered should retrospective approval be granted.

1. No or limited external lighting (downlighters only) to protect dark skies as detailed in policy CE32(v) of the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan.
2. Any new hard-standing to be made of a porous material to limit run-off (see Policy CE5 of the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan).
3. The Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan Design Guide is followed regarding building style and material used.

The Clerk will submit comments to this effect.

#### **RR/2025/1635/P**

##### **Park Farm, Breadsell Lane, Crowhurst**

*Proposal: Alteration to dwelling including demolition of modern conservatory, replacement windows and doors, re-roofing, internal alterations and refurbishment, external landscaping including replacement boundary walls and fences and proposed external oil tank. Alterations to outbuildings. (Part retrospective).*

Cllr Goddard had been to visit the site. After discussing the matter, members agreed to submit the following comments online:

Crowhurst Parish Council supports this application. If permission is granted, the following conditions are requested:

1. No or limited external lighting (downlighters only) to protect dark skies as detailed in policy CE32(v) of the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan.
2. Any new hard-standing to be made of a porous material to limit run-off (see Policy CE5 of the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan).
3. The Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan Design Guide is followed regarding building style and material used.

#### **RR/2025/1636/L**

##### **Park Farm, Breadsell Lane, Crowhurst**

*Proposal: Alteration to dwelling including demolition of modern conservatory, replacement windows and doors, re-roofing, internal alterations and refurbishment, external landscaping including replacement boundary walls and fences and proposed external oil tank. Alterations to outbuildings. (Part retrospective).*

Cllr Goddard had been to visit the site. After discussing the matter, members agreed to submit the following comments online:

Crowhurst Parish Council supports this application. If permission is granted, the following conditions are requested:

1. No or limited external lighting (downlighters only) to protect dark skies as detailed in policy CE32(v) of the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan.
2. Any new hard-standing to be made of a porous material to limit run-off (see Policy CE5 of the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan).
3. The Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan Design Guide is followed regarding building style and material used.

#### **RR/2025/1667/PIP**

##### **Land adjoining Telephone Exchange, Chapel Hill, Crowhurst**

*Proposal: Erection of a dwelling house along with access and car parking.*

The Parish Council noted that this is a proposal in principle, which assesses a site's suitability for housing development before the technical details required for full approval are submitted.

After some discussion, Councillors agreed to submit the following comments: Crowhurst Parish Council objects to Permission being granted in Principle as the land concerned is outside of our development boundary. The development boundary is where there should be a presumption for

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|           | <p>development and identifies suitable areas, not based on the number of houses needed. We respectfully urge Rother District Council to uphold the integrity and status of our Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>Stating that the Neighbourhood Plan has a deficiency of 12 dwellings is somewhat disingenuous. The draft figures for Crowhurst are 33 with potential (if land is available) for a further 12. As far as we are aware, that further land is not available for development so we are only 3 short which can be incorporated into currently identified sites - Rother District Council recently did a call for new sites but nothing was clearly identified.</p> <p>The comment, "development that requires a countryside setting" refers to something that cannot be built in a developed area (such as a stables) not that as the site is outside of the development boundary that any building on it requires it to be a countryside development or that the weight of NP policy CS1 should be reduced.</p> <p>The Parish Council also considered and would support the comments and submission from residents about how the development could impact on the local community, environment, and road safety.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new dwelling would cause noise, disruption, loss of light and privacy, and damage to habitats of local wildlife such as badgers, foxes, squirrels, and owls, negatively affecting the Chapel Hill community.</li> </ul> <p>The statement that the development would not adversely impact on the character and quality of the landscape, as required by CNDP Policy CE1 1. is incorrect. The woodland along the south side of Chapel Hill is a significant landscape feature of the village.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The description of nearby cottages as modern suburban is contested; the Victorian cottages opposite range from 120 to 140 years old, including the original village Police Station!</li> <li>• The claim of no recent road incidents is contradicted by vehicle crashes reported by residents, including damage to property and requiring Police Involvement.</li> <li>• Concerns about road access and pedestrian safety: The statement that the site has safe and suitable access is challenged due to limited visibility, frequent congestion from parked vehicles and large vehicles, and the lack of pavement or pedestrian refuge, making walking and driving hazardous. In addition, large agricultural vehicles pass along Chapel Hill daily creating an additional hazard, exacerbating safety concerns.</li> </ul> <p>There is further concern regarding the amount of water coming downhill with already Inadequate drainage during periods of heavy rain. With more land concreted uphill, this could have a negative impact on those properties downhill.</p> <p>2) Members noted that Planning Permission had been granted for the installation of solar panels, security fencing, CCTV cameras, underground cabling, inverters, environmental enhancement measures and other ancillary development in Swainham Lane, Fields to the South and East. <b>(RR/2023/1202/P).</b></p> |
| <b>8.</b> | <p><b>FINANCIAL MATTERS:</b></p> <p><b>8.1</b> The financial reports to 31<sup>st</sup> July and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2025 had been circulated and were approved by members.</p> <p><b>8.2</b> The payments report for August and September 2025 were considered and approved.</p> <p><b>8.3</b> The bank reconciliations to 31<sup>st</sup> July and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2025 had been circulated. They were approved by members and signed by the Chair (GT).</p> <p><b>8.4</b> Councillors noted the decrease in interest rates for the Nationwide Business 95 Day Saver Account and the Co-op Business Savings Account.</p> <p><b>8.5</b> Councillors approved the payment to Nick Stell of £50.00 for cutting back the hedge.</p> <p><b>8.6</b> Councillors approved back pay to the Clerk of £116.48 following the amendment of local government pay scales, and they noted the new pay rate for the month of August onwards.</p> <p><b>8.7</b> Councillors approved Assertion 10 training for the Clerk at a cost of £15.00 plus VAT (Mulberry Training).</p> <p><b>8.8</b> Councillors noted receipt of the Precept payment of £17, 608.50 from Rother District Council.</p>  |

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| 9.  | <p><b>RECREATION GROUND:</b></p> <p><b>9.1</b> Cllr Goddard carried out this month's playground inspection and noted that the new picnic bench requires staining before winter; the Clerk will ask local handyman Matt Bumpass to complete the task. The wooden edging around the play area also needs attention, but councillors agreed to wait for the annual inspection before deciding on repairs—the Clerk will request that the inspection team specifically assess this area. In addition, two swing seats were found to need replacement, and councillors approved the quoted cost of £86.00 plus VAT per seat. Cllr Goddard will pass the details to the Clerk, who will arrange the order. He had also obtained a quote for a new barrier gate, at a cost of £422 plus VAT. Councillors agreed to this purchase and Cllr Goddard will pass the details to the Clerk. Cllr Thomas is keen to see the playground refurbishment move forward as a matter of urgency. The clerk will contact Cllrs Roller and Plato to arrange a date to meet at the end of the month.</p> <p><b>9.2</b> Councillors have agreed to await the findings of the forthcoming annual inspection report before determining any necessary action regarding the woodwork on the junior slide.</p> <p><b>9.3</b> Gareth Bright was not at the meeting, and further discussion on the installation of CCTV was deferred until the next meeting.</p> <p><b>9.4</b> The Clerk had been in contact with Rise Electrical to obtain a second quote for the replacement of the first five of the bollard lights on the Recreation Ground. Cllr Goddard took the details and will arrange to meet the contractor.</p> <p><b>9.5</b> Councillors agreed that the clerk would contact Steve Gower to ask him if he was willing to undertake the annual clearance of the gully running alongside the Recreation Ground.</p> <p><b>9.6</b> After a brief discussion, councillors agreed to the MUGA group's request for a further round of spraying of the horsetail. The clerk will contact John O'Conner to ask them to do this. This was previously done at a cost of £150.00 plus VAT. A member of the public present at the meeting asked that the PC make sure that the chemical used was safe for use near to a water course and that it would be effective at this time of the year.</p> <p><b>9.7</b> Cllr Laimbeer reported that the Rec User Group meeting had gone well, but that it had been poorly attended, with only 3 of the user groups represented – The Croqueteers, the Football Club and Strolling Group.</p> |
| 10. | <p><b>RIGHTS OF ROTHER TREES AND ROTHER RIVERS</b></p> <p>Crowhurst Parish Council formally notes its support for the motions proposed by District Councillor McLaren at the Rother District Council full meeting held on 15th September 2025.</p> <p>In particular, the Council agrees the following:</p> <p><i>Crowhurst Parish Council supports the recognition of 'personhood status' for the 1066 Yew Tree and, together with the community of Crowhurst, commits to taking on its guardianship. This commitment is made in collaboration with the Parochial Church Council of St George's Church, Crowhurst, East Sussex, to ensure the protection and preservation of the 1066 Yew Tree for future generations.</i></p>  |
| 11. | <p><b>ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE</b></p> <p>It was resolved that the Parish Council will, on behalf of the village, proceed with the registration of The Plough as an Asset of Community Value. This action recognises the establishment's significance to the social interests and wellbeing of the local community.</p> <p>The Clerk will keep councillors informed of the progress of the application.</p>   |
| 12. | <p><b>NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN GROUP</b></p> <p>The Chair, Cllr Thomas, will liaise with Chris Davidson to set a suitable date to meet with Holly Harrison of Rother District Council to discuss the Parish Councils response to the Housing Survey. The response to the Call for Sites; Gypsy, Traveller and Show People Accommodation, was deferred until the next meeting.</p>   |
| 13. | <p><b>PAVILION REFURBISHMENT PROJECT</b></p> <p>The working group will be meeting with the architect, Mr. Tillmann Lenz at the end of the month. Cllr Laimbeer agreed to make the arrangements.</p>   |
| 14. | <p><b>PLAYGROUND REFURBISHMENT PROJECT</b></p> <p>Cllrs Thomas, Roller and Plato will meet at the beginning of next month to develop plans to move the project forward.</p>   |

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| <b>15.</b> | <b>ANNUAL FAYRE REPORT</b><br>The Annual Fayre committee have had to delay their committee meeting due to holidays and unavailability of members.   |
| <b>16.</b> | <b>GRANT REQUESTS</b><br>The Crowhurst Environment Group submitted a request for a grant of up to £550 to cover their annual insurance costs. Following a brief discussion, Councillors agreed to support the request. The Group will confirm the exact insurance amount with the Parish Council once known.<br>Crowhurst Youth Club requested a grant of £800 towards their annual insurance costs, which last year totalled £1,685.59. The request follows the unexpected rewiring of the Youth Club Hut, undertaken at a cost of £8,000, which has significantly reduced the Club's financial reserves. After due consideration, Councillors agreed to support the request and approved a one-off grant of £800 to the Youth Club.   |
| <b>17.</b> | <b>MILLENIUM GARDEN</b><br>Colin Ford has agreed to do the repairs before the bad weather sets in. He is currently sourcing materials and hopes to start the job in the next few weeks.   |
| <b>18.</b> | <b>COUNCILLOR UPDATES ON EXTERNAL BODIES (IF ANY):</b><br>Cllr Thomas advised that although he was not present at the last meeting, David Dennis received the support of Combe Valley Countryside Park CIC who approved his ideas in principle, subject to wider consultation and relevant permissions being identified and sought.   |
| <b>19.</b> | <b>CLERK'S REPORT AND INFORMATION FOR COUNCILLORS</b><br>19.1 Repair to road Telham Lane/Forewood Lane – Case number issued. The clerk continues to correspond with ESCC Highways. No further action has been taken by them despite assurance that the barrier had been re-erected (which it had not).<br>19.2 Forest School – Katie Cesar has signed a lease on some land in Battle.<br>19.3 Graham Ellis has been contacted again to ask if he wishes to meet GT plus representatives of Eden Lodge to discuss this as a possible site for community composting.<br>19.4 There will be a Community Police Street Meeting at the Village Hall in Crowhurst on the 18 <sup>th</sup> October at 11:00am to midday.<br>19.5 The Parish Council has received a £50.00 donation from Mr Ron Picknell to be used for the Sunday Social.<br>19.6 ScribeFest Webinar is taking place on 9 <sup>th</sup> October 9:30am to 4:00pm. Lots of training and free to all. The link has been circulated.<br>19.7 Utility Aid have provided the Parish Council with quotes for the renewal of our electricity contract. Scottish Power has come back as the most competitive. The clerk will check the price of Octopus Energy and will discuss at the next informal meeting.<br>19.8 Two emails have been received from a resident regarding noise pollution and a possible planning breach at Court Lodge. Residents affected have been encouraged to report to RDC as a noise nuisance and possible breach of planning.<br>19.9 The footpath warden, Pam Woolley has advised that a tree has fallen across the cutting that goes from Quarry Wood. This was in the past cleared by volunteers from PC. Cllr Goddard offered to go and clear it. The Chair, Cllr Thomas, thanked Cllr Goddard on behalf of Parish Council.<br>19.10 The football club has reported that they recently lost five footballs into the stream, but that they were unable to get them back due to the overgrown vegetation on the bank. The clerk advised that the Environment Agency is due to clear this soon. They will remove the existing fence and replace this with stock fencing. |
| <b>20.</b> | <b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b><br>There was no other business.   |

**21.**

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next ordinary meeting will be held on **Monday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2025 at 7.05pm in the Village Hall.**

Signed .....

Dated .....