



MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT 7.00 P.M.
ON THURSDAY 27 MARCH 2025
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER

Councillors

Cllr C Bennett

Cllr R Burbridge*

Cllr A Morrison*

Cllr H Nicholson*

Cllr D Nicholas*

Cllr M Scully* (Chairman of the Council)

Cllr E Townsend*

Cllr R Tyler*

Cllr C Walker (Vice Chairman of the Council)

Cllr M West*

Cllr G Worthington

PRESENT*

ALSO PRESENT: Parish Clerk B. Bell, Trevor Cobby, Brian Steel, one member of the public.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Council AGREED the prior commitment apologies of Cllr C Bennett and C Walker, and work commitment apology of G Worthington.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- Cllr E Townsend declared she is a Surrey County Councillor and Waverley Borough Councillor.
- Cllr A Morrison declared he is a Waverley Borough Councillor.
- Cllr R Burbridge declared she is a Trustee of Rowleys.
- Cllr D Nicholas declared he is a member of Cranleigh Football Club.

3. CO-OPTION OF NEW PARISH COUNCILLOR FOR CRANLEIGH EAST WARD

There were three nominations for the Parish Councillor vacancy on Cranleigh East Ward: Trevor Cobby, Jacek Golab and Brian Steel. Candidates present were invited to speak for two minutes about their application for the vacancies:

- Trevor Cobby said he has lived in the village since 1974 and his family have attended the local schools and church. He has been involved with the Football Club, Cricket Club, Royal British Legion and Sports and Social Club. He knows a lot of people in Cranleigh and would like to listen and share the thoughts of the community with the Council. He thinks the Council is doing a fantastic job and he would like to be part of it.
- Brian Steel said he is now approaching retirement after a career starting with studying botany at Imperial College so he cares about the environment. He now works developing artificial intelligence. His interests are amateur dramatics and musical theatre of which he has vast experience as a musical director. He is interested in developing the town twinning links and would like to serve the community. He is a member of the Liberal Democrats but knows the Parish Council is non-political.

The Council took a signed ballot. The results of the first ballot were:

Trevor Cobby	3
Jacek Golab	2
Brian Steel	3

The candidate with the least amount of votes was struck off and a new ballot between the remaining candidates:

Trevor Cobby	4
Brian Steel	4

Chairman's casting vote in favour of Trevor Cobby.

The Council AGREED to co-opt Trevor Cobby who signed his declaration of acceptance of office and left the meeting due to a previous commitment.

The Chairman thanked all candidates for standing for nomination.

4. PUBLIC SESSION

A member of the public asked about arrangements for car parking during the Leisure Centre build. The Chairman said the Parish Council has offered the use of the tennis courts to WBC either as parking or storage compound during the build.

5. MINUTES

The draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 20 February 2025, having previously been circulated, were AGREED signed by the Chairman as a true record.

6. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Council NOTED the Chairman's Report:

- The Chairman spoke with the Manager of Caffe Nero about the illuminated sign followed concerns raised by High Street residents. The manager agreed to turn off the illumination whilst Caffe Nero applied for advertisement consent. The Chairman also raised concern about the piles of rubbish outside the front of Caffe Nero. Cllr E Townsend said there is insufficient space for a large bin, so the rubbish will be placed at the top of the steps on collection day.
- The Chairman has contacted the Leader and Chief Executive of Waverley Borough Council to ask them to re-arrange their visit to a Parish Council meeting.
- The Chairman reported that he had received an email from the Chairman of the Arts Centre raising concern about competition from Cranleigh Village Hall. The Chairman offered again to meet with the Chairman of the Arts Centre to improve the relationship as there are opportunities for both venues to serve the community. The Vice Chairman of the Council and Chairman of the Property & Asset Committee will also be invited to attend the meeting.

7. CLERK'S REPORT

The Council NOTED the following report:

- Octopus have installed a smart meter in the Council Office which has upset the timers for the storage heaters, which they acknowledge is a known issue and now refuse to remove the smart meter. The Clerk is monitoring the electricity consumption and bills.
- The Council has received a concern about the War Memorial surface which is being investigated by the cleaning company. Cllrs R Burbridge and H Nicholson offered to have a look at the War Memorial and report back to the Council.
- Members are encouraged to complete the survey issued by the Surrey District and Borough Councils yesterday on their initial proposal for three unitary authorities in Surrey.

- The Council's nomination for the Clerk to attend HM King Charles III Royal Garden Party was unsuccessful. SALC said unfortunately, SALC is only able to nominate one councillor from our sector to attend the Royal Garden Party each year and this year the board have chosen Cllr Mary Mansell, Holmwood Parish Council. However, the SALC board wrote to the Clerk to thank her for her impressive service to the sector. They said we may be the lowest tier of local government, but it is the one, we feel can make a massive impact on your community if done well – which the Clerk clearly does.

8. REPORT FROM SURREY AND WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

Cllr E Townsend reported:

- The planning application for the Leisure Centre has been approved and there are some s106 funds to improve the link between the Leisure Centre and Downs Link.
- There is funding to improve the Downs Link from the bridge between the Band Room and Paddock Field to Elmbridge Road to provide a horse friendly surface and increase the width of the path. Some illumination will be added to the entrances to the Downs Link.
- The Obelisk junction will be closed at night for four weeks for improvements.
- The car park and Village Way potholes have been reported and followed up.
- Concerns about the impact of the waste trucks on the Village Way car park surface have been raised.
- The Chairman asked about the faded line markings for the disabled bays in the High Street, Cllr E Townsend said she has reported them.
- The Chairman asked for an update on the skate park, Cllr E Townsend had no update.

Cllr A Morrison reported that WBC have bought their grounds maintenance in house.

9. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

- The minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting 17 February 2025 were AGREED.
- The minutes of the Property and Asset Committee Meeting 09 January 2025 were AGREED.

10. FINANCIAL MATTERS

1. The expenditure list for March 2025, circulated earlier, was AGREED by the Council and Cllrs R Burbridge and D Nicholas will authorise the online payments for March.
2. The bank reconciliation to 28 February 2025 was AGREED and signed by Cllr H Nicholson.
3. The cashbook reconciliation to 28 February 2025 was AGREED.
4. The Council AGREED to redeem £50,000 in the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund.
5. The Council AGREED to appoint Cllr R Tyler as reserve for the year end internal audit on 07 April 2025.

11. OUTSIDE BODIES

- Beryl Harvey Conservation Field – The Property & Asset Committee has recommended an independent ecology report of the field and allotments. The Council's Grounds Manager will continue to maintain the Conservation Field in the interim. The pile of logs will be removed by the tree surgeons, who will also reinstate the woodland walk and footpath over the ditch from Snoxhall.
- Centenary Garden – The Property and Asset Committee need to make a decision about the circular benches.
- Community Speedwatch – Roadside training to be arranged for Hannah.
- Recreation Users – The Council is only receiving bookings from the adult team. The Football Club failed to respond to requests from the Clerks to make arrangements to collect keys for the Village Hall for their quiz night and discuss technology use, thus they needed help out of hours on Friday and Saturday night and then left all their kit in the kitchen which prevented any use on Monday.

- Youth Council – This month, the Youth Council visited Rowleys and discussed what they can offer young people. Next month they are learning about animals that served in the war as part of VE Day. They will be making purple pom poms to signify animals service in the war and will be releasing racing pigeons who played a vital role in the war. The May meeting will be the VE day event and for their June meeting the Youth Council are making Morris dancer hats for the Parish and Youth Council to wear in the carnival parade. Two DBS checked Councillors are needed for the carnival. The Cranleigh Show have asked if the Youth Council would like to help at the Show on Sunday 03 August and have a stand, but unfortunately Councillors were unavailable to help.
- VE Day – Cranleigh 1000 Club is enquiring as to whether there is an opportunity for the Cranleigh 1000 Club to hold its May draw at any of the VE day celebration event as the charity needs to be transparent in their draws so as many people as possible see the draw for themselves. Cllr E Townsend abstained from this item as she is a member of the Cranleigh 1000 Club. The Council AGREED for the draw to be held at the VE Day event. The Clerk reported on the plans for VE Day:
 - Service at 9.00am at the War Memorial led by Rev Woodhams, organised by the Cadets, Royal British Legion to lay a wreath.
 - VE Day Event:
 - Church bells will be rung at 6.30pm
 - War memorial will be illuminated that evening.
 - Advertising banner organised.
 - Rainbows and Beavers making a craft maple leaf to represent the assistance of the Canadians in the war. Scouts and guides will hold a tea party that afternoon. Scouts and Guides will be collecting donations for the Food Bank.
 - Cranleigh School of Dance performing at 7.30pm
 - Horsham Band playing at 8.30pm.
 - Cadet Parade led by the Parish Council Chairman and Deput Lord-Lieutenant at 9.15pm. Road closure booked.
 - Beacon lighting at 9.30pm, In2Drama will led I vow to thee my country and national anthem.
 - Youth Council to light lamp of peace for animals who served in the war.
 - WWII vehicles and tank will be in attendance.
 - Fire Service will bring fire engine and put the beacon out at the end.
 - Village Way finger post will be decorated with poms poms.
 - Union flags will be flown along High Street before Easter until after the carnival.
 - Alpher Coffee serving tea, coffee, toasties
 - First Aid booked
- Carnival - Cllrs C Bennett, R Burbridge, D Nicholas and M Scully will arrange to meet to organise the Council stand.

12. COUNCIL STRUCTURE

The Council AGREED to appoint Cllr T Cobby to the VE Day working party.

13. BANK MANDATE

The Council AGREED to appoint Cllr H Nicholson as an authorised signatory on the CCLA and Lloyds accounts.

14. HENRY SMITH CHARITY

The Council AGREED the following payments:

- Cranleigh Community Fund £6,970
- Food Bank £830
- Rowleys £500

15. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The Council NOTED the following report:

There were presentations from Surrey County Council on the High Street improvements, Cranleigh BID, Cranleigh Heritage Trust and Cranleigh Health and Wellbeing. The Chairman presented awards for members of the community who have helped over the last year.

16. ROWLEYS CENTRE FOR THE COMMUNITY

The Council NOTED that the funding from Waverley Borough Council has decreased every year over the last four years for Rowleys. The Council will invite Rowleys to make an application to the Parish Council for grant funding.

17. NALC ANTI BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

The Council ADOPTED the NALC model policy which refers to risk assessments already in place at the Parish Council.

18. SCC PUBLIC FOOTPATH DIVERSION CONSULTATION

SCC are consulting on the diversion of public footpath 352 Elmbridge Road which is required by the Wey & Arun Canal Trust as part of the restoration of the canal through Cranleigh. The Council had no objection to the footpath diversion but asked that the applicant be sensitive with the removal of hedgerow and trees.

19. DEVOLUTION

Surrey is part of the priority reorganisation of local government. Surrey County Council submitted their interim plan to the government on 21 March 2025 and must submit their final proposal by 09 May 2025. The aim is for a shadow unitary authority to be in place for May 2026 and unitary authority complete by May 2027.

WBC issued this Press Release on 14 March 2025: A proposal for Local Government Reorganisation, which would see the county divided into two or three unitary councils has been published by all 11 of Surrey's district and borough councils. This move is part of Surrey's involvement in the first wave of Local Government Reorganisation, which the Government has stated is a pre-requisite to unlock the benefits of devolution.

The proposal asserts that by reducing the number of elections, councillors, and senior managers, Surrey could realise significant financial savings. Additionally, the new councils would benefit by eliminating the duplication of services and finding further economies of scale. The evidence suggests that two unitary councils would offer greater financial savings (£35m pa) than three (£20m pa).

However, dividing the county into three distinct areas: North-West, South-West, and East – each covering around 400,000 residents – could offer far more than just financial benefits. This structure would allow the new authorities to recognise existing cohesive geographic and economic regions that give each authority a genuine sense of identity.

This would lead to more effective service delivery and better alignment with local needs. It would also enhance the ability to foster local economic growth.

The vast majority of district and borough leaders agree the three unitary authority option would strike the best balance between efficiency and maintaining genuine local accountability, as well as maximising opportunities for economic growth by ensuring that unitary authorities reflect the economic geography of Surrey.

Councillor Paul Follows, Leader of Waverley Borough Council, said:

"This is a pivotal moment for the future of local governance in Surrey. By moving to unitary councils, we can streamline services, reduce costs, and better respond to the needs of our communities. At the same time, we recognise the opportunity to strengthen our local economies and create more cohesive, dynamic areas. But only if the new councils represent areas that have a consistent geography, local economy and identity that residents recognise.

I am convinced that only the three unitary option could deliver new councils that unlock all of the potential benefits, while remaining fully responsive to local needs and accountable to local people."

The Clerk reported that Surrey County Council and the 11 District and Borough Councils had agreed a part A proposal to government, but Surrey had prepared their own part B proposal for two unitary authorities and the 11 District and Borough Councils had prepared their own part B proposal for three unitary authorities. The government will review the part A and part B submissions for Surrey and make their recommendations for Surrey to enable SCC and the District and Borough Councils to submit their final proposal by 09 May 2025. The government will consult on this proposal during July 2025 and make its decision on Surrey local government reorganisation in the autumn.

Work will continue on the potential debt proposition, devolution opportunities, implementation and transition. The legislative process will begin in January 2026 with the shadow authority being elected in May 2026 and the vesting date for the new unitary authorities to commence in April 2027. At the same time, work will also commence on the new mayoral strategic authority which will begin in 2027 or 2028.

The Clerk said SCC have agreed to work with Town and Parish Councils through local reorganisation and devolution through the Surrey Association of Local Councils. SALC are working on a bespoke training package for Town and Parish Councils wishing to take on devolved services to upskill Clerks and Councillors.

At the recent meeting of the Surrey Branch of the Society of Local Council Clerks, there were presentations from Councils in Wiltshire and Cornwall who had been through local government reorganisation and devolution. Falmouth Town Council in Cornwall had actively engaged in the process which has seen their precept increase from £800,000 in 2008 to £3.67million this year. Their staff structure has changed from Clerk and Deputy Clerk to Clerk and six heads of service. The original plan was for services to be devolved from 2014, one tranche per year for four years. Falmouth has just completed tranche 3 ten years later.

The message from other Councils is that there is everything to gain for the local community for Town and Parish Councils to take on devolved services, but they come without funding necessitating Town and Parish Councils to increase precept, but Town and Parish Councils can generally deliver the services cheaper and better. Town and Parish Councils should look at what assets and services they might like to take on now, and form Working Parties to examine the assets and services in detail. It was advised that these working parties should not include dual or triple hatted members.

It was advised to obtain your own independent asset valuations and prepare your own budget for delivering services. Concerns were raised that some authorities had placed a moratorium on the devolution of services until after vesting day, so confirmation will be required for Surrey and Waverley.

The Council AGREED to forward the letter from SALC to the Minister of State Jim McMahon OBE MP to our County and Borough Councillors extolling the value of working with Town and Parish councils through local government reorganisation and devolution.

20. CRANLEIGH VILLAGE HALL

The Council AGREED to ask for volunteers to help with Cranleigh Village Hall.

21. PUBLIC WIFI

The Council AGREED in principle to the request from Cranleigh BID for public WIFI equipment to be located in Cranleigh Village Hall, subject to confirmation of equipment details, testing and insurance.

22. LAND USE IN ENGLAND CONSULTATION

The Council had no comments.

23. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PROPERTY AND ASSET COMMITTEE

The Council considered the recommendations of the Property & Asset Committee and made the following decisions:

- The Council AGREED for the Property & Asset Committee to consider community asset transfer of land or property within the ownership of Waverley Borough Council. The Council AGREED to ask WBC for the freehold transfer of the public conveniences on the Common as the Parish Council already has a 125 year repairing lease for the building.
- The Council AGREED to submit the pump track proposal to Waverley Borough Council to be considered in conjunction with the new skate park plans.
- The Council AGREED to appoint the Ecology Co-op to prepare a report on biodiversity net gain to support the planning application for the machine shed. The report can be funded from the admin professional fees budget this financial year.
- The Council DEFERRED consideration of re-allocation of the s106 funding from the MUGA to recreational use to the Property & Asset Committee.
- The Council AGREED to appoint a Working Party of Cllrs A Morrison, D Nicholas and M Scully and to invite Cllrs C Bennett and T Cobby and Grounds Manager Nick Barnett to join the Working Party to review the Snoxhall Pavilion and Community Centre consultation comments and to provide designs for the refurbishment of the Pavilion and Community Centre together for presentation to the Council's architect for a quotation for the preparation of the planning application for the refurbishment of both buildings.
- The Council had obtained three quotations for the entrance gates to Snoxhall Fields and AGREED to appoint Stronghold to supply and install one large post and two gates for the entrance to Snoxhall Fields to be funded from the Forward Maintenance Plan 2025/26 budget.
- The Council AGREED to seek quotations for the levelling of the southern boundary of the Elmbridge allotments, to fence the area and create a new composting bay at the front of the site.
- The Council AGREED to seek quotations for a parking area for the Elmbridge allotments.
- The Council AGREED to review the Conservation Plan for the Beryl Harvey Field and to appoint the Ecology Co-op to undertake a biodiversity study of the Beryl Harvey Conservation Field and allotments to be funded from the admin professional fees budget next year. The Council AGREED to acknowledge the offer of help from the Conservation Volunteers and will provide them with an update once the ecologist has completed their report and the Council has considered its recommendations. The Council AGREED that the Council's Grounds Manager will continue to maintain the Beryl Harvey Conservation Field in the interim.
- The Council AGREED to the removal of the log pile left by the tree surgeons on the advice of Surrey Wildlife Trust's ecologist.
- The Council DEFERRED a decision on the repair of the Leisure Centre bridge to the next meeting.
- Cllr H Nicholson left the meeting having declared an interest as she is related to Benn Nicholson. The Council AGREED to appoint Benn Nicholson to clear the Knowle Lane ditches to be funded from the Forward Maintenance Plan EMR in the new financial year. Cllr H Nicholson returned.
- The Council AGREED to appoint a contractor to install two additional CCTV cameras at the Village Hall.
- The Council AGREED to defer a decision on the quotation for the automatic door closers pending the fire risk assessment being undertaken in May 2025.

- The Council AGREED to postpone the decision on a raked seating system, as the concept was part of a collaboration with Cranleigh Arts Centre who are no longer pursuing the project. The Council AGREED to recommend to full Council to sand and seal the floor using the property maintenance budget next year. The Village Hall will need to be closed for seven days for the sanding and sealing of the floor.
- The Council AGREED to appoint Coolair to install a dehumidifier under stage to protect the new stage from the damp under floor, subject to checking noise level of the dehumidifier. The dehumidifier can be funded from the Village Hall property maintenance budget next year.
- The Council DEFERRED a decision on the floodlight replacement pending further information.

24. DEBTORS

The Council considered this agenda item in private and confidential session: reason – commercial in confidence.

The Council NOTED the long term debtor and awaits further information.

25. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 17 April 2025.

The meeting closed at 8.56pm.

Signature.....

Date.....