



Imogen Whitaker – Clerk and RFO to the Council
T: 01243 575094/E: clerk@birdhamparishcouncil.gov.uk

**Minutes of the Hybrid Parish Council Meeting
Held on Wednesday 11th March 2026 at 7pm**

Present: Cllr Timothy Firmston (Chair), Cllr Catherine Salamons (vice-Chair), Cllr Elizabeth Hamilton.

Chichester District Council: Cllr Elizabeth Hamilton, Cllr Iain Ballantyne

West Sussex County Council: Cllr Pieter Montyn

In attendance: The Clerk (Zoom) Cllr Gordon Churchill (Zoom) two members of the public

1. Apologies

Cllr Susan Taylor.

2. Declarations of interest

There were none.

3. Minutes – to approve and sign the minutes of the meeting February 11th 2026, and the Extraordinary Planning Meeting of February 19th 2026.

The minutes were proposed by Cllr Hamilton and seconded by Cllr Firmston. They were unanimously **AGREED** and were duly signed by the Chair.

4. Public Question time from residents of Birdham in accordance with Standing Orders 3d – 3l

There were none.

5. Anti-social behaviour on Recreation Ground

A member of the public had written twice to the clerk reporting possible drug dealing and anti-social behaviour from young people on the recreation ground. The clerk had reported this to the police. The response from the Police Community Support Officer for Birdham, Lukasz Kowalski was as follows:

“Can I please ask you to encourage residents to report similar issues directly to Sussex Police at the time of the incident on 101/999?”

Not only would we have more information about timing, suspect description, direction of travel etc, but we would have an opportunity to

catch them in the act, search them and hopefully arrest them after finding drugs.

I am happy to monitor and patrol this location, but suspects are unlikely to be dealing drugs in front of me. Live reports would give us grounds to search those involved, and deal with the issue in an efficient way.

It may reassure you to know that two young males were detained yesterday in Birdham by officers in an unmarked car, not far from the Recreation Ground.

Two electric bikes were also seized, and one male was arrested in relation to drug offences.

They could be involved in what was seen on Birdham Recreation Ground but without any details, we are unable to link them to those offences.”

We urge all residents not to hesitate to report any incidences immediately. Details were given in the Birdham Autumn 2024 Newsletter as follows:

“Residents need to report each incident to the Police using the 101 reporting facility so that the police can build up a picture of what is occurring when, where and by whom. The Police work on intelligence and gather the information when it has been reported. Then resources can be allocated to resolve the issues. The Police cannot work in an information vacuum.”

6. To receive reports from CDC members for Birdham

Cllr Iain Ballantyne

- Continuing from last month’s report Cllr Ballantyne confirmed that the council had approved the increase in council tax of £5.74 per annum for a tax band D property.
- From the CDC £18.8 million budget there was a forecast surplus of £145,000 which would go into general reserves
- CDC was continuing to support local sporting facilities (Westgate, Southbourne and the Grange) plus £6m on the local enterprise hub in Chichester.
- Contrary to what was reported on the BBC the food waste collection programme is on schedule and will start being rolled out in March – May of this year.
- As projected the £500,000 grant to Hyde Martlett to build 15 affordable homes for locals with a link to Birdham was approved.
- On the 150 house development opposite Birdham Stores there was still discussion about the Construction Management Plans which would indicate where contractors are to park etc. This document is not public but remains with the CDC planning team. The added problem is the projected closure of roads coming directly south off the A27 (Donnington) in October this year for a six week period. This will

involve construction lorries being detoured through Hunston – all of which remains to be confirmed.

End of report

Cllr Elizabeth Hamilton

- a) The implementation of the food waste programme will cost £1.235 million with no subsidy from the government.
- b) Works on sea wall at Selsey will receive some funding.
- c) **Grants and Concessions Panel** – will have about £150K and Cllr Hamilton encouraged people to apply – an application form can be obtained from David Hyland at CDC
dhyland@chichester.gov.uk
- d) The Stubcroft Farm application has come back with some minor changes – to await notification.

End of report

(Cllr Ballantyne left the meeting at 7.32pm)

7. Planning matters including appeals, applications and CDC delegated decisions

- i. **Planning Enforcement Notices – new and/or updates** - none
- ii. **Notifications of Planning Appeals** - none
- iii. **Planning applications to be decided.**

Planning Application number	Address	Details	Comments to be submitted
BI/26/00313/DOM	Swallow Cottage Crooked Lane Birdham Chichester	Erection of a two storey rear extension to replace existing conservatory (Removal of condition 7 from planning permission BI/24/01065/DOM).	NO OBJECTION

iv. Delegated Decisions to be noted:

Planning Application number	Address	Details	Decision
BI/25/02546/FUL - Minor Dev	1 Pool House Lock Lane	Replacement retaining sea wall realigned landwards	PERMIT
BI/26/00171/FUL	Land Northwest Of Premier Business Park Birdham Road Appledram West Susse	S73a use of land for the stationing of a caravan for residential purposes and the construction of a	DECLINE TO DETERMINE

v. Council Response to NPPF consultation and CDC Housing supply consultation

The date for responding to the NPPF consultation has expired. The protection for the Harbour will continue. The new NPPF will demand the same planning laws be applied nationwide with fewer possibilities to appeal.

Neighbourhood plans do not have an expiry date so for the moment the Birdham plan is valid and will continue to be taken into consideration. However Local Plans will be on a continuous review and update programme. CDC Housing supply consultation: good document and clearly CDC have under control without citing any future sites for development with the new increased numbers to be achieved. As the housing market has stagnated it is difficult to project as housing supply is only counted on completed developments not those that have received planning permission but are not constructed.

No comments to be submitted.

8. Birdham Parish Ditch Review 2026 and follow-up action

Mr Clive Barrington who had spearheaded the last review and had checked all the ditches and culverts in Birdham and Earnley, and particularly the big issues in Walwyn Close and had solved the flooding in Church Lane. In 2016 an immense amount of work had been achieved. The biggest problem is getting riparian owners to clear their own ditches. For the last ten years not a lot had been done. He said that Birdham had survived this winter, but it did not mean that all was well. Culverts were blocked and overhanging vegetation was cut by farmers and just left in the ditch. He said more infrastructure needs to be done such as small channels being created in Westlands Lane which drained off the road into the ditch.

He said that issuing the Riparian leaflet was not useful as people just ignored it. A tough line needed to be taken with riparian owners – it was their responsibility.

Cllr Salamons asked if the council undertook the work, could it be recharged to the owners? She also asked whether it was better to ask individuals to clear their own section of the ditch or to get it done collectively and then charge them. Getting individuals to do their own section is preferable – a resident in Church Lane has done a superb job.

The ditches would need to be cleared but then the spoil needs to be removed by reputable contractors.

The clerk said that Birdham had made an agreement with WSCC to undertake a ditches' maintenance programme to which Birdham PC would contribute. The report had been written by Ray Drabble at WSCC and submitted to councillors on USB drives in 2019.

The clerk will contact WSCC and see if this agreement can be found and if a programme could be undertaken to which Birdham would contribute financially.

Action

Clerk

9. Motion to adopt the Model Publication Scheme

The MPS is a document provided by the Information Commissioners Office and constitutes the list of available documents for the public on how the council is formed and run, its spending etc.

The clerk will be updating and then uploading all the necessary documents to the website.

The motion was proposed by Cllr Salamons, seconded by Cllr Hamilton and unanimously **AGREED**.

10. To receive a report from WSCC member for Birdham.

Cllr Pieter Montyn

- a) The gas works are scheduled for October, but the exact date is still not known. Grosvenor Road coming south of the A27 will be completely closed causing a massive diversion. He said that different parties were working on their own without communicating with each other. He is trying to rectify that.
- b) The development on Birdham Road still has 3 outstanding pre-commencement conditions which have not been determined. He said that the gas works at Donnington would create a massive problem for 20 – 30 HGVs trying to get down to Birdham. The start date of the development is still unknown. One of the pre-commencement conditions is the sewage treatment – again no comments from Southern Water as to what they will do with the sewage, but if nothing is done the same situation will occur as at Clappers Lane
- c) The speed watch group have contacted him and are concerned about the consistent speeding ignoring the 45mph speed limit. He said that this was a matter for the police.
- d) Cllr Montyn reminded the meeting of the WSCC elections on May 7th and urged everyone to register to vote. He said that there was one more cabinet meeting before then with more motions on the agenda than usual.
- e) The government has still not responded to the proposal from WSCC to have one large Mayoralty of East/West Sussex and Brighton and Hove, which in WSCC's view would be more economically robust.

11. Clerk's report

i. Correspondence

- Connectivity in Birdham The clerk had written to WSCC before Christmas and had received a detailed response back. She will forward to councillors and any further questions can be discussed at next meeting
- Mr Adrian Dover who has cut the grass and cleared the bus-stops for many years for the council is retiring. The clerk to send him a letter of thanks for all his work.

Action	Clerk
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- Signatures for receipt of computers: Cllrs Taylor and Churchill to sign
- Damaged tree on recreation ground will be pruned shortly after its injury last Spring – thereafter every two to three years to keep the crown at a reasonable size for the weakened trunk.
- The abandoned vehicles in Florence Close: one is being dealt with by Hyde Martlett as on their land and the other will be reported when the MOT expires in May as on WSCC highway.

Action	Clerk
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- There are updated powers for councils to deal with persistent litter louts including litter thrown from a vehicle window. The fine will be £500 which will double if unpaid after 28 days.

ii. To set the date for the Village meeting in November.

If possible to set the date on the Saturday after the Parish Council meeting on 11th November. Clerk to check available dates with Betty Geary.

Action

Clerk

The clerk suggested that this meeting could centre on resilience in time of war or major climate incident. Food, water and emergency contacts.

iii. Payments for Consideration

With the addition of the annual bill for IT support and MS365 for £1602.40 + VAT the payments were proposed by Cllr Hamilton, seconded by Cllr Salamons and unanimously **RESOLVED**.

iv. Bank reconciliation - circulated

(Cllr Montyn left the meeting at 8.39pm).

12. Councillor Reports

- i. Recreation Ground and Bequeathed Land** – nothing to report for the playground and the issue of anti-social behaviour was dealt with above.

The scouts have implemented their new path from the scout hut to join the recreation ground path so that wheelchairs could have a safe exit in the event of an emergency. It has been done with the same surface as the current path.

An agreement or some form of documentation will establish that the Parish Council is responsible for the maintenance of this path as it is on Parish Council land.

Action

Cllr Salamons

ii. Village Green and Kingfisher, Triangle and Village pond

Cllr Firmston reported that the digging out of the dangerous Hemlock Water Dropwort will begin shortly.

A sighting of a friendly water vole eating grass on the bank and then swimming away to its nest has been logged onto the Sussex Wildlife Trust.

- iii. Communication working group** the next newsletter will need to be produced before November so that the drop-in day can be advertised.

- iv. Community Resilience** – needs to be publicised more widely

13. Reports of meetings attended by Councillors

Cllr Firmston had attended the Chair's forum (West Sussex Association of Local Councils) and circulated his report to councillors.

14. Other items of interest from Councillors

15. Items for inclusion on the next Agenda

Parish Council Village meeting

Ditch Maintenance schedule

16. Date and arrangements of next meeting

11th November 2026 at Birdham Village Hall at 7pm

Balances on accounts:

Current account	£49,974.43
Deposit account	£100,292.10
NS&I	£7,226.52
	£157,493.05

Received since last meeting	£292.10
	£292.10

Paid since last meeting

Scribe	subscription	£66.00
Betty Geary	litter picking	£70.00
I Whitaker	Clerk's salary	£1,188.59
Nest	Pension	£86.68
Parish Council Websites	hosting and support	£329.04
PWLB	Village hall loan	£8,591.04
MJ Visual	Village hall AV system WITHDRAWN	
		£10,331.35

Payments for consideration

scribe	subscription	66
betty geary	litter picking	70
I whitaker	clerk's salary	1088.75
nest	pension	79.4
Orchard IT	councillor laptops 3	1864.8
		£3,168.95

Bank accounts as of

Current Account	£49,974.43
Deposit Account	£100,292.10
National Savings	£7,226.52
Total	£157,493.05

Opening balance 01/04/25	£156,002.85
add receipts in the year	£107,191.68
less expenditure to date	£105,701.48
Balance	£157,493.05

Less

Reserve @ 50% of Precept	£36,908.00
Total	£36,908.00

Ringfenced Funds

Op Watershed	£2,400.00
Culvert Ditch Maintenance	£18,000.00
Adams bequest fencing	£9,500.00
CIL Payments	£29,618.55
NHB	£6,327.06
NP	£225.00
Car charging points	£2,250.00
Trees	£6,500.00
Ponds improvement long term	£4,000.00
Resilience	£200.00
Bequeathed land works and maintenance	£3,500.00
Youth	£10,000.00

Total	£92,520.61
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Available Funds

Total	£28,064.44
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Outstanding PWLB

Total	£82,778.78
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