

ITCHINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Monday 29th September 2025 in the Jubilee Room of the Village Hall

Present: Cllr Alan Strudley – Chairman
Cllr Lorraine Awcock
Cllr Jenny Cass
Cllr Rob Fryatt
Cllr Rebecca Jackson
Cllr Brian O'Connor
Cllr Simon Ott
The Clerk Jan Critchley
District Cllr Kasia Greenwood
County Cllr Amanda Jupp

112 Apologies for Absence – were received from Cllr Nick Yeo, Cllr Ross Dye, Cllr Elaine French, Cllr Sarah Peay and District Cllr Tricia Youtan.

113 Declarations of Interest - *Members are reminded to make any declaration of personal and/or prejudicial interest that they may have in relation to items on the agenda.* Cllr Rob Fryatt declared a personal interest in relation to Sigma Homes Development as he lives near to the development site.

114 Minutes of the last Meeting to be approved

The Minutes of the last meeting on 28th July 2025 had been circulated ahead of the meeting. The Minutes were approved, accepted and signed by the Chairman.

Action

115 To consider any matters arising from the last Meeting that are not on this Agenda

All matters arising are on this agenda.

116 Reports from County and District Councillors

Report from County Cllr Amanda Jupp had been circulated – for the full report go to the Parish Council website.

Key points from Amanda's report are as follows:

1. Adult Services - The County Council is celebrating news that its Adults Services have been rated 'good' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in its report published on 29th August 2025.
2. Economy and Skills - The County Council has launched Skills Bootcamps, a new initiative designed to help people gain in-demand skills that local employers are actively seeking.
3. Highways - How often do the verges get cut? Rural cuts - In the countryside, or where there are no pavements, WSCC only maintain the verges from a highway safety perspective. Verges in rural areas receive cuts in the following order: one visibility splay cut for safety – five weeks during April and May – one 1-metre-wide cut to grass and vegetation overhanging the road (July to Sept) – one overall cut a year from end September to beginning of December.
4. On-Street Parking Charges: The County Council has confirmed that updates to on-street parking charges will come into effect from 1 October 2025.
5. Local Government Reorganisation: An Extraordinary Meeting of WSCC took place on 23rd September 2025 to debate the Council's preferred option for Local Government Re-organisation in West Sussex. This was followed by a meeting of the Cabinet which resolved to support Option A (one single unitary on the footprint of West Sussex) as the Council's preferred solution for Local Government Reorganisation in West Sussex.
6. Transforming grass cuttings into Biochar - Biochar is a very stable carbon-rich material made from plants. It can be incorporated into construction materials like concrete and asphalt. Because it is very slow to decompose it can safely store carbon for centuries, which can help reduce carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. WSCC are planning road trials to investigate the use of biochar in road maintenance and seeing if biochar made from grass cuttings collected from roadside verges could be used in our road repairs

Report from District Cllr Kasia Greenwood had been circulated - for the full report go to the Parish Council website. Key points from Kasia's report are as follows:

1. Local Government Reorganisation - Horsham District Council, along with the other six district and borough councils, is stating its preference for a two unitary council model for West Sussex which would see the creation of a new Unitary Authority combining Horsham District Council, Crawley District Council and Mid Sussex District Council areas.
2. Local Plan Update – HDC calls for renewed scrutiny of Local Plan rejection. HDC has written a letter to Mr Luke Fleming, the Local Plan Inspector examining the Horsham District Local Plan, in response to his initial findings letter. The letter is available to view on the Local Plan Examination pages of the Council's website: <https://www.horsham.gov.uk/planning/local-plan/local-plan-examination/Examination-Library>

3. HDC launches judicial review against Secretary of State's planning decision. HDC has formally initiated a judicial review challenge against the Secretary of State's recent decision to grant outline planning permission for 800 homes at the Horsham Golf and Fitness site, Worthing Road, Horsham.

Report from District Cllr Tricia Youtan had been circulated in her absence.

1. The majority of HDC members continue to press forward with plans for the improvement of The Capitol Theatre, although they have found a problem trying to achieve carbon neutral objectives due to the glass front of the building being totally unsuitable for this.
2. There have been rumours regarding the inhabitants of Cisswood Hotel which has housed immigrants since 2020 when it was approved for the use of Ukrainian refugee families. Although there are other refugees now living there, they are families with the exception of two single males. There have been little problems for the local area and although there are a very few other refugees living in temporary accommodation, we as a District have very few people in comparison to other areas.
3. HDC continue to work towards ensuring that the Government is kept informed of our preferred unitary authority area whereby District Council is abolished and then all is under the control of an area controlled by whatever County Authority is decided upon. It is thought to cut unnecessary duplication costs, but there is considerable concern regarding the loss of local representation. Parish Councils will remain and this change is scheduled to take place in 2027 with elections for a mayor and newly elected County Councillors.

117 **Open Session for Members of the Public**

Alison Whitehorn addressed the Parish Council to put forward the idea of registering Assets of Community Value, with a view to adding value to the community. The Chairman said that as a Parish Council we could register Assets of Community Value which gives you advanced notification if the owner is going to sell an asset and would give the community an opportunity to get a plan together to make a bid for that asset. Things that fall into this category are for example; pubs or shops. If the Parish Council wanted to pursue this, they could go ahead and make an application to register and this would form part of the development process. Phil Jowlett addressed the Parish Council to add that although it is realised that there is a need for suitable housing, if you look at the history of developments in the area, villages eventually lose their community assets and villages become just housing estates. Also, there are concerns about the lack of infrastructure with more proposed developments. Scott Symington addressed the Parish Council to ask what is the Parish Council's position regarding this proposed development? The Chairman re-iterated that a planning application has not yet been submitted for the Parish Council to review, but the Parish Council has been working with a planning consultant. Until the planning application is submitted, the Parish Council cannot formally make a representation. Gavin Dray addressed the Parish Council to ask whether the hedgerow, that is integral part of the proposed development, is protected. Cllr Lorraine Awcock said that it is covered by the Hedgerows Act, but a landowner has the ability to request its removal.

118 **Sigma Homes Development**

No more updates to report.

119 **Planning**

1. New Planning Applications

CA/25/0106 - Directors of Ashmiles Residents Management Company Ltd. 3 Bramble Close, Barns Green - Tree surgery as follows: - T1. Oak. 1 metre radial reduction to north east from 10 metres to 9 metres to clear from 3 Bramble Close. 2 metre radial reduction of lower heavily leaning branch to north east over leylandii hedge from 11 metres to 9 metres.

Itchingfield Parish Council has no objections.

DC/25/1456 - Mr Stuart Holme, 20 Smugglers Way, Barns Green RH13 0PP. Site address : - Field to the north east of Muntham School opposite Rugby Pitch. Barn will be located at bottom of first field closest to rugby Pitch.

Itchingfield Parish Council has looked at this planning application and there is no indication on the planning application as to where the barn is to be sited. Itchingfield Parish Council therefore considers that this application should be rejected so that more relevant information can be provided.

DC/25/1156 - Mr Eric Mariani, Stable House, Marlands Park Estate, Barns Green - Installation of outdoor swimming pool with associated pool surround.

Itchingfield Parish Council has no objections to this planning application.

DC/25/1301 - Mr Sam Darkin, Rectory Cottage, Fulfords Hill, Itchingfield - Part single storey rear extn./part first floor rear extension.

Itchingfield Parish Council has no objections to this planning application.

DC/25/1328 - Mr and Mrs Garland, "Timbers", 6 The Coopers, Itchingfield - Alterations, external and refurbishment including two storey rear Extension and front roof extension and new front portico.

Itchingfield Parish Council has no objections to this planning application.

DC/25/1251 - Mr S Smith, Land at Sumners Ponds, Chapel Road, Barns Green - Variation 1 to planning application DC/21/2697, Erection of 32no residential dwellings including 35% affordable housing, 6 no commercial units and 1 no reception building. Creation of access and circulation routes, parking, hard and soft landscaping together with a sustainable drainage system. To amend the approved plans to enable the retention of the (an) existing building with associated alterations to provide 3 commercial units,(C1-C3) as opposed to reconstructing it and revised cladding to units C4-C6 .

Itchingfield Parish Council would like to make the following comments. The floor plan shows the existing Sumners Ponds Reception facility still in the barn building, whereas this reception facility is also shown within the Sumners Ponds car park reception area in the various approved site plans attached to this variation request. There is no variation request for this and needs correcting. This could be a significant issue as the approved traffic circulation on the site could be materially and adversely affected.

Itchingfield Parish Council feels that this application should be refused until the matter of the siting of the Reception is clarified.

DC/25/1029 - Shannon Witney, Kingfisher Farm, West Chilton Lane, Billingshurst, (Barns Green) - Use of the land for the stationing of caravans for residential purposes for 5 gypsy pitches together with the formation of additional parking, hard standing, landscaping and utility/dayrooms ancillary to that use.

Itchingfield Parish Council observes that it is clear that work on the site has commenced, therefore this application should be regarded as retrospective. It is further stated in the application form under "Description of the proposal" that work has not started.

Under materials it states that walls will be brick, roofs will be tiled. Plan showing indicative pictures of the caravans show metal structures with essentially flat roofs. In practice the structures on site have pitched tiled effect roofs, but are of prefabricated mobile home construction. No provision is made for the collection of waste or of recycling. The method of disposal of surface waste via soakaways is not sustainable as shown in assessments for application DC/25/0934 for 10 Gypsy pitches adjacent to the current application site. The method of disposing of foul waste via cess pits is similarly not viable on this site. Notwithstanding the above there are already 11 traveller pitches without planning consent following refusal of appeal APP/Z3825/A/11/2150329 on the Kingfisher Farm Site. The Traveller and Travelling show people act 1994 states that sites should be limited to no more than 11 pitches in order to minimise the likelihood of internal disputes leading to violence. Also adjacent to the south of the proposed site is an established Romany settlement of 14 permitted pitches. The proposed numbers of pitches for Kingfisher Farm is already causing issues around disruptive and anti-social behaviour in the local established community. It is also apparent that the site is not being used for gypsy occupation alone as proved during recent police action. Bearing in mind the above there are surprisingly no objections from the locality. I understand this is due to the fear of reprisals if their details are published.

Itchingfield Parish Council therefore strongly recommends this planning application for refusal.

The Chairman asked District Cllr Kasia Greenwood to ask HDC Planning why these planning applications are even being accepted and validated as they are not fit for purpose. District Cllr Kasia Greenwood said that she will raise this issue with HDC on the Parish Council's behalf and ask about the application process.

Action

2. Miller Homes Update

As stated at our last meeting, the Chairman reiterated that the Parish Council has engaged a Planning Consultant of their own to be guided and be given support on how to be effective in responding to a planning application once it has been submitted. The planning consultant has advised that opposing the planning application outright is unlikely to be successful. The Parish Council will follow due process in responding to the planning application when it is submitted to achieve the best possible outcome for the community. Members of the public were reminded that they have a right to make independent representations via the planning portal.

3. DC/25/0522 - The Clerk reported that she had received two emails from near neighbours to Rye Farm Stables regarding their disappointment on the outcome of the permitted planning approval for retrospective Planning Application DC/25/0522. The Chairman said that the Parish Council would like District Cllr Kasia Greenwood to give HDC feedback on this, stating that the Parish Council spent a lot of time reviewing this planning application which has now been permitted and the Parish Council feels that it has been completely ignored and it would be good to know from the HDC Planning Officers that there is some value attributed to comments that the Parish Council makes particularly as by putting this development on this site in the first place without permission, someone had to trespass onto private property in order to install an air-conditioning unit. Surely this is not something that HDC should be condoning. There are also many concerns to do with conditions of parking outside Rye Farm Stables in Rye Farm Lane and this valid concern was also raised by the Parish Council in its representation.

Action

120 Highways, Local Traffic and Roads

1. SID's – In his absence Cllr Nick Yeo has suggested that we invite George Fort from HDC Highways to our next meeting to give an update. This was agreed.

Action

121 Greener Barns Green

Cllr Jenny Cass reported that the team will be meeting scheduled with Victoria Wylliedeecheverria, Sustainability Officer at HDC on 3rd October 2025. The team will then be able to come to the next meeting with a list of things that they are looking at and timescales.

122 Correspondence – none.

123 Finance – All payments for approval since 28th July 2025

1. There are seventeen payments to be made paid

The following cheques were paid out of meeting:

£47,817.34 to Eibe in respect of the fencing and surface work to complete the new playpark.

£1,620.00 to Squires Planning for Professional Fees

£450.00 to the Play Inspection Company in respect of an independent inspection of the new playpark.

£79.00 to Treetop Design and Print in respect of A5 Flyers for the Public Meeting.

£2.55 to HMRC in respect of interest due on an online submission.

£441.00 to Squires Planning for Professional Fees

The following cheques were then drawn at this meeting:

£129.25 to Barns Green Village Hall in respect of meetings in August and September 2025.

£57.00 to EE Home Broadband in respect of the Internet Service for August and September 2025.

£104.99 to Microsoft in respect of the Annual Subscription from August 2025.

£42.25 to HDC in respect of the emptying of the dog bins from October, November and December 2025.

£40.00 to Roy Tingley in respect of the strimming of the verge by the level crossing in August 2025.

£14.00 to Vision ICT in respect of a survey email added from August 2025 to March 2026 pro-rata.

£1,600.00 to the Barns Green Playing Field and Village Hall Trust in respect of a grant towards Public and Employees Liability and Trustee Insurance as agreed at the November 2024 meeting.

£200.00 to Pete Cochran in respect of Litter Warden duties for August and September 2025.

£1,298.83 to the Clerk comprising of £1,224.76 salary for August and £74.07 expenses.

£1,298.63, to the Clerk comprising of £1,224.56 salary for September and £74.07 expenses.

£1,649.20 to HMRC in respect of Employers NI and Employees Tax for July, August and September 2025.

2. Bank Reconciliation as at 03 September 2025 and Bank Statements were signed by the Clerk and Chairman.

124 Registering of Assets of Community Value

Following on from the discussion earlier in the meeting, the Chairman asked that all the Councillors give some thought as to what they would consider registering as Assets of Community Value. Then we can discuss this at the next meeting.

Action

125 Clerk's Salary

The Parish Cllrs considered the Clerk's Salary with effect from 1st April 2025 using the recommendations from the National Association of Local Councils on the new pay scales for 2025-2026 to be implemented from 1st April 2025. It was proposed by Cllr Brian O'Connor that the Clerk's salary be increased in line with the NALC recommendations with effect from 1st April 2025, seconded by Cllr Lorraine Awcock, agreed unanimously. The Chairman expressed his thanks to the Clerk for all her hard work throughout the year.

126 Any other Business – none.

127 Date of Next Meeting – Monday 27th October 2025. There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.28pm.