

Cowfold Parish Council
Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council, Annual Meeting of the Trustees of
Cowfold Recreation Ground, Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on
Monday 12th May 2025 commencing at 7.45pm in the Allmond Centre

Cllrs Present	Everest Payne Towle Fisher	Clark Harsum Howell Reading	Lynn Lambert (HDC) Joanne Knowles (HDC)
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Clerk - Trevor Parsons and 3 members of the public.

Annual Meeting of the Council

Agenda

Meeting opened at 7.45pm

Cllr Jo Newman has notified Cllr Everest of her resignation from the Council. We thank Cllr Newman for her work for the Council including her work regarding the allotments.

As previously signposted, Cllr Everest confirmed her decision to step down as Chair and Councillor with immediate effect. All councillors showed their gratitude to Cllr Everest for all the service to the Council and Community over many years.

The above changes will result in three vacancies at Cowfold Parish Council. The Clerk will notify Horsham District Council where the applications to fill the vacancies will be advertised on the HDC website.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Maria French.

2. Election of the Chair and Acceptance of Office

Cllr Clark proposed Cllr Reading to be Chair for the next 12 months, seconded by Cllr Payne, carried unanimously. Cllr Reading completed and signed the Acceptance of Office.

3. Election of the Vice-Chair and Acceptance of Office

Cllr Payne proposed Cllr Towle to be Vice-Chair for the next 12 months, seconded by Cllr Howell, carried unanimously. Cllr Towle completed and signed the Acceptance of Office.

Meeting Closed at 8.05pm

Annual Meeting of the Trustees of Cowfold Recreation Ground

Agenda

- 1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Maria French.

- 2 Chairperson's report.

Parish Councillors are the nominated trustees of the recreation ground and are therefore legally obliged to hold an annual meeting of the trustees.

The Parish Council has engaged the services of Surrey Hills solicitors to confirm the legal position of the Council in respect of plans to build a footpath between the playground and the Scout Hut. The legal advice was that there was no issue with continuing with these plans. The solicitor pointed out that the land was unregistered. The Council will deliver the original conveyance to the solicitor who will then register the land formally.

There are no bank accounts or financial statements for the recreation ground and the nil return to the Charity Commission has been submitted.

Meeting closed 8.05pm

Ordinary Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Maria French.

2. Declaration of Interests

None

3. Approval of Minutes of the last Meeting.

The minutes of the last ordinary meeting were emailed to councillors prior to the meeting and were unanimously approved by councillors.

4. Matters arising

Oak Tree – The Clerk reported that we have received the letter from Sussex Timber in recommended pruning actions going forward so that the oak tree can be preserved. This letter has been forwarded to our solicitor, Surrey Hills Solicitors (who were recommended by WSALC). They will forward to the insurance company solicitors, Keogh's for a response.

Speed Reduction – Cllr Howell reported at 467 signatures had been collected on the petition towards the target of 1000 signatures. The Parish Open Day on Friday 16th May will be used to raise awareness of this and the Neighbourhood Plan and hope to obtain even more signatures. Cllr Howell reported that within the last five years, there had been 20 serious accidents and 3 fatalities within the Parish boundary.

EDF Solar Farm, Picks Hill – CPC has been made aware of plans for a new solar farm. EDF are currently circulating a survey for residents to complete.

Parish Clerk – For a trial period of four weeks the Clerk has relocated from the Allmond Centre to the Village Hall on Mondays and Thursdays 2pm – 4.30pm working from the pop-up post office room.

Parish Clerk - The Contract of Employment makes the Clerk eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) with employer contributions of 18.2% until 31/03/2026, after which the next triennial assessment rate for the parish council community pool will apply.

Roles & Responsibilities – Following the election of the new Chair being Cllr Steve Reading and recent resignations, it was agreed that a review of roles & responsibilities is required, especially around new Finance, Planning and Open Spaces Committees

5. District and County Councillor Reports

Cllr Lynn Lambert (HDC) reported that:

- Despite the incoming devolution changes, the Neighbourhood Plan still holds some weight and recommends that it should go to a referendum once signed off by HDC.
- IDP – Councils need to access funds before devolution.
- Oaks Farm appeal was dismissed.
- SNOWS – Continues to move at pace.
- New Planning system is coming in for HDC staff and enhanced training will be undertaken.

Cllr Joanne Knowles (HDC) reported that:

- CC Dance Studio application is now open online on the HDC website for public comments

<https://public-access.horsham.gov.uk/public-access/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=makeComment&keyVal=SV4JK1IJNV00>

- Devolution – the full case will need to be submitted to Government by 26/09/2025.

Cllr Sarah Payne (WSCC) reported that:

- The Big Fix is a repair campaign introduced by Recycle Devon to counteract throwaway culture. The Big Fix started in 2019 and encourages residents to make use of their local repair cafés. In 2024 the campaign saw a total of 163 repair cafés getting involved and successfully fixing 3,177 broken items across the UK. WSCC continues to support these cafes in West Sussex.

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/land-waste-and-housing/waste-and-recycling/recycling-and-waste-prevention/recycling-news/the-big-fix/>

- The childrens home in Cuckfield was audited recently and received an “outstanding” grade.
- WSCC continue to support the Home Library service which assists with support accessing services.

<https://arena.westsussex.gov.uk/-/home-library-direct>

6. Robin Carr – Land Development

6.5 acres of land has been acquired at the bottom of Henfield Road by Landacre Limited in November 2024. The outline application to build homes on the site will be sought in due course. Mr Robin Carr addressed the meeting on behalf of Landacre and took questions from Councillors. The Council’s main issue at this point is how access to the site will be gained and that the fields shown are on a flood plain. We hope to continue our engagement with Landacre during the process.

7. As an employer listed in Part 2 of Schedule 2 of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013, Cowfold Parish Council has the power to designate who within the organisation can join the pension scheme.

Councillors considered the matter and resolved that Cowfold Parish Council agrees to join the Local Government Pension Scheme, as administered by West Sussex County Council, and that the Clerk be given the opportunity to join.

The Council resolved to adopt the Auto Enrolment Staging Date of 1st May 2025. In addition, Councillors unanimously adopted the Employer LGPS Discretions Policy.

8. Correspondence Received

No correspondence from the public received.

9. Finance - To ratify payments since last meeting.

Councillors were provided with the list of payments prior to the meeting and ratified all the below payments

Treasurers Account – Payments made since April Council Meeting

16/04/2025	HDC	£16.40 DD	Bins
28/04/2025	Countrymans	£878.40	Grasscutting – April
28/04/2025	Clerk Salary	£4,061.65	Feb / Mar / April
28/04/2025	PAYE	£2,110.85	Feb / Mar / April
01/05/2025	HDC	£112.64 DD	Dog Bins
02/05/2025	Connie Towle	£819.00	AC Caretaking
06/05/2025	Lloyds Bank	£5.24	Bank Charges
08/05/2025	Paul ABarrow Tree Serv.	£1008.00	Tree pruning
08/05/2025	Surrey Hills Solicitors	£132.00	Legal Advice – Oak Tree

Allmond Centre No 2 Account – Payments made since April Council Meeting

14/04/2025	EDF	£215.39	Electricity
22/04/2025	Lloyds Bank	£4.25	Bank Charges
24/04/2025	T Mothe	£45.00	Window Cleaning
28/04/2025	BT	£24.29	Internet
28/04/2025	Business Stream Water	£123.59 DD	
28/04/2025	Business Stream Water	£168.15 DD	
02/05/2025	Connie Towle	£378.92	AC Cleaning

10. Financial Reports

The Clerk confirmed at the six-month precept had been received and the balances as at 8th May 2025 were:

Lloyds Bank	Main Account	£42,656.10
Lloyds Bank	No 2 AC Account	£ 1,323.39

Lloyds Bank	Deposit Ac	£ 6,024.39	
Lloyds Bank	Call Ac	£ 2,837.59	
Lloyds Bank	Fixed Term Deposit	£50,000.00	Maturity 19/09/2025

11. Date of next meetings

Monday 16th June 2025

Monday 14th July 2025

Meeting closed at 9.30pm.