

Cowfold Parish Council
Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 13th April 2026
commencing at 8.00pm in the Allmond Centre.

Cllrs Present	Towle – Vice-Chair Howell	Payne Thorpe Bennison	Clark Dittmer
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Clerk - Trevor Parsons. There were six members of the public present.

Public consultation

Villagers raised concerns regarding the cutting back of brambles at Kicking Field on Good Friday causing harm to nesting birds and small animals. The work was being undertaken by contractors on behalf of the Council. Cllr Towle was asked by residents attend the site on Good Friday morning and agreed to halt the cutting back work. At this point the contractors left the site.

The Parish Council has agreed to work with a working party group to agree a maintenance schedule for Kicking Field and the pond. A meeting will take place in September to agree a suitable plan.

Meeting opened at 8.15 pm

4.26.1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Reading.

4.26.2 Declaration of Interests

No declaration of interest received.

4.26.3 Approval of Minutes of Last Meeting and Updates on Actions Agreed

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 16th March 2026 were approved by Councillors and duly signed by the Vice-Chair.

4.26.4 District and County Councillors Reports

Cllr Lynn Lambert (HDC) reported

- Local Plan hearings commence next week, the examiner wants to agree numbers for the plan moving forward. Then strategic planning will be working on evidence to inform decisions on sites to be allocated. This includes site work assessment which builds on earlier work and consideration of infrastructure, sustainability, market delivery/absorption, viability and habitats. Main modifications and public consultation in the summer of 2026 with further hearings in September.
- Around 112 tonnes of food waste have been collected by HDC since operations started earlier this year. Waste that would otherwise be placed in land-fill.

Cllr Joanne Knowles (HDC) reported

- The HDC Volunteer Awards Nominations will remain open until 5pm on 17th April 2026
- Business grants to support sustainable growth are still available

[LEAP Small Business Grants | Horsham District Council](#)

Cllr Sarah Payne (WSCC) reported

- West Sussex County Council elections take place on Thursday 7th May 2026. Voters need to register to vote by 20th April, register for postal vote by 21st April and proxy by 28th April 2026.
- She will not be standing for re-election to WSCC.
- WSCC highways will be repairing the verges on Oakfield Road following the recent damage caused by lorries installing new roofs on the road.
- Central Government is still consulting regarding the Local Government Reorganisation.

4.26.5 Clerk's Report including actions from previous meetings

Cowfold Community Hub CIO

The planned action to apply to the Charity Commission to create a new CIO has been delayed due to sickness. Cllr Towle and the Clerk to arrange a new date in the next couple of weeks.

Recreation Bank Account

The planned action to open a new bank account has been delayed whilst our details at the Charity Commission are updated. This has now been done, and the Clerk will apply for the new account in April.

Niblock Scaffolding

On 1st April I met with a representative of Nicklock Scaffolding Social Values Team who has offered to make improvements to the Acorn Avenue playground area. They work with Saxon Weald, We await their proposals.

I took the opportunity to show the representative the damage caused by the heavy lorries associated with the roofing improvements, to the verges in Oakfield Road, which was raised with WSCC Highways last month.

4.26.6 Cowfold Clean Up Day Update

Posters have been put up around the village and posted on Facebook to advertise the event. Everyone to meet at the Allmond Centre to delegate tasks and for a briefing. Hand tools only to be used at the event.

Tea and coffee will be served at the Allmond Centre between 2pm – 4pm.

4.26.7 Email Hygiene

To ensure email correspondence remains compliant, councillors are asked to start a new email thread for each new or unrelated topic.

4.26.8 Clerk Appraisal

The Clerk's appraisal with the staffing committee held in July 2025 identified areas for improvement resulting in the Pay Grade remaining at SCP35. On 26th March 2026, the staffing committee conducted the Clerk's annual review and in general agreed that the Clerk's performance had improved.

The staffing committee recommend that the Clerk's pay grade is raised from SCP 35 to SCP 36 as per the contract of employment.

The next appraisal will be held in September 2026.

Parish Councillors unanimously agreed to increase the pay grade to SCP 36 backdated to January 2026 (being 6 months after the July appraisal).

4.26.9 Representative Reports

4.26.9.1 Finance

- **Update and Ratify payments made in March 2026**

Councillors approved the payments made in March 2026 listed separately and were advised of the balances as at 2nd April 2026.

Lloyds Bank --Treasurers Account £4,261.71

Lloyds Bank – No 2 Allmond Centre £2,079.77

Lloyds Bank – Instant Access Account £52,057.77

Lloyds Bank – Greening & CIL £ 7,795.78

Action : Clerk to arrange a meeting of the finance committee.

4.26.9.2 - Open Spaces

Cllr Towle raised a concern regarding poor condition of the stake park with several boards now lifting. Councillors discussed the matter and agreed to close the stake park until it is made safe. Councillors have considered the costs and subsequently made the decision to remove the skate park completely.

A request has been received from a resident to install a gate of some description at the Acorn Avenue entrance to the Kicking Field as bikes are exiting the Field at high speed.

Action: Clerk & Councillors to visit the site to agree a suitable arrangement to slow down the cyclists.

Councillors agreed to put up the hanging baskets again this year using budgeted and Greening Cowfold funds.

4.26.9.3 - Road & Transport

1) Councillors Thorpe & Howell met with WSCC Highways on 8th April to review the bus stops through the village. They expressed concerns about the safety of two stops (Bulls Bridge & Homelands) so WSCC Highways will talk to Stagecoach to gauge drivers views on usage of these

stops and safety aspects. If Stagecoach are in agreement, we could ask residents whether these stops can be discontinued. The bus stop outside the village hall requires some maintenance, replacement of Perspex windows & repairs to roof. WSCC Highways should be able to provide the funding for this work. The bus stop outside the surgery is in good repair, but could benefit from a clean (power wash?) at the Village Clean Up day. Unfortunately, there is insufficient space on the pavement on the other well-used bus stop near to Hare & Hounds pub.

2) Traffic Update – The Clerk has already provided the latest speed report separately which evidences a 20% increase in traffic between February and March going through Cowfold on the A272. Part of this may be due to the recent overnight closing on A23 with traffic diverted through the village.

No update received yet from WSCC Highways on A272 & A281 Safety Review.

4.26.9.4 - Allmond Centre

Cllr Thorpe informed the meeting that Brewers have agreed to donate a quantity of paint towards the redecoration of the Allmond Centre. This work will be undertaken by our friends at Camilia Botnar shortly.

Allmond Centre bookings are up, especially Fridays, but due to a waterlogged pitch, revenues from Cowfold FC will be lower than expected.

4.26.10 Date of next meeting Monday 11th May 2026 which will include the Annual Meeting of the Council, Annual Meeting of the Trustees of Cowfold Recreation Ground and Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council

This meeting will include the appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair for 2026 – 2027.

The meeting closed at 9.45pm