

RUSTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES: of the Monthly Meeting held on 23 February 2026

PRESENT: Councillors Lee (In the Chair), Mrs C Broomfield, M Broomfield, Mrs A Cooper, Mrs P Gregory, R Grevett, Mrs S Partridge, Ms M Revell, D Rogers, Mrs C Stevens and P Warren

In attendance: Mrs C Ward (Clerk of the Council) and Ms R Costan (Deputy Clerk of the Council)

26/26 CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING

In the absence of Councillor Cooper, Chairman of the Council, Councillor Lee, Vice-Chairman, Chaired the Meeting.

27/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bennett (Indisposition), Ceiriog-Hughes (Personal), Cooper (Indisposition) and Ms Lloyd (Work Commitment). These apologies were accepted by the Council.

28/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest by Members.

29/26 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 January 2026 were signed by the Chairman of the Meeting as a correct record.

30/26 SUSSEX POLICE

The Chairman of the Meeting welcomed PCSO Raju to the Meeting, and thanked him, on behalf of the Council, for taking the time to attend.

PCSO Raju then provided the Council with details of the recent crime figures and advised on other initiatives currently taking place, including increased foot patrols in the centre of the Village.

He also responded to a question from the Chairman of the Meeting in connection with the bogus Charity Worker who had stolen money from elderly members of the public on at least two reported occasions.

Councillor Mrs Cooper referred to an alleged accident which had occurred on the A259 as a result of anti-social driving behaviour. PCSO Raju said that he was aware that anti-social driving was a regular issue on the A259, this was also the case in the Car Park underneath and surrounding the Sainsburys Store.

Councillor Mrs Partridge said that the problem was caused, in the main, by the fact that the gate was not locked when the Store was closed, which she understood had been a condition of the planning permission during the rebuilding of the Store, when the underground Car Park had been constructed. PCSO Raju said that the owners had been requested to lock the gate when the Store was closed, but had not agreed to do so.

(a) Matters Arising

The Clerk referred to Minute 5/26(a) and said that she had, at the beginning of February, received a report from a trader in the Village that Citizen Safari UK members, 'dressed from head to toe in camouflage gear' have been active in Rustington for a number of days, videoing, openly harassing, intimidating and goading people in the centre of the Village.

She said that she had reported this anti-social activity to the Anti-Social Behaviour Team at the Arun District Council and PCSO Raju. PCSO Raju had advised her that he had spoken with residents and business owners recently in this regard and had given them reassurance. He said it was advisable not to engage with them and avoid any confrontation as they were expecting reaction from the public. He confirmed that anyone was permitted to film in a public place, but he would urge people to call the Police immediately if there was evidence of intimidating behaviour.

She then referred to information that had been received via Councillor Lee from PCSO Raju that on 5 February 2026, in the Churchill Car Park, an unknown female, claiming to be collecting for charity, stole money from an elderly member of the public. It was believed that this was the same individual who stole money from another elderly resident in the centre of the Village a couple of months prior to this incident. She said that as requested by PCSO Raju, this incident had been displayed on the Council's Facebook Page and shared as widely as possible.

The Chairman of the Meeting advised that the crime figures so far in the current month numbered 33. He said that the total number of crimes reported for January numbered 45, of which 19 were for shoplifting.

He reminded the Council that overall, Rustington was still, very much, a low crime area.

The Council NOTED this information.

31/26 DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Ms Edwards.

Councillor Gunner advised the Council that he had nothing of any significance to report at the present time.

Councillor Mrs Cooper then reported on District Council matters as follows:-

- *Changes to Waste Collection Services - New waste bins now being delivered to households in Rustington*
- *2026/2027 Budget - Meeting to agree Budget on 25 February 2026.*

The Council NOTED the above information and the Chairman of the Meeting thanked Councillor Mrs Cooper for her Report.

32/26 COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Councillor Mrs Cooper, in her capacity as a County Councillor, reported on County Council matters as follows:-

- *2026/2027 Budget considered and agreed at Full Council Meeting on 20 February 2026 - £2.3 Billion*
- *At the Business Planning Group it was decided that the plan for the Zachary Merton Hospital and Land represented a significant change - Resulted in Integrated Care Board asking for an urgent Meeting to make Presentation to Group - At which it was stated that nothing had changed, with care in the community continuing, as a result of the Zachary Merton decision - Still trying to get urgent item included on the Agenda for the Health and Social Care Meeting on 4 March 2026, as the permanent closure and proposed sale should be considered to be a significant change for many reasons.*

The Council NOTED the above information and the Chairman of the Meeting thanked Councillor Mrs Cooper for her Report.

33/26 **CLERK'S REPORT**

(a) **Grant Aid - Arun and Chichester Citizens Advice**

The Clerk reported the receipt of a letter of thanks and appreciation from the Arun and Chichester Citizens Advice in respect of the Grant Aid of £1,500.00 awarded towards the core running costs and, in particular, the outreach service for Rustington clients.

The Council was pleased to NOTE this information.

(b) **Donations - Littlehampton Concert Band**

The Clerk reported the receipt of an email from Littlehampton Concert Band, expressing its thanks and appreciation in respect of the donations of £200.00 and £300.00 respectively, in recognition of its participation in the 2025 Carol Concert and the forthcoming 75th Anniversary of the Festival of Britain Musical Concert, which would be being held on 13 June 2026.

The Council was pleased to NOTE this information.

34/26 **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Chairman of the Meeting reported on the Chairman's official representation and attendance at Meetings, Events and Functions since the last Monthly Meeting as follows:-

- Grand Opening of Aydo Restaurant - 28 January 2026 - Accompanied by Councillor Lee, Vice-Chairman

The Council NOTED this information.

35/26 **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The Council NOTED the Report of the Planning Committee Meeting held on 26 January 2026.

36/26 **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

The Council received the Report of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 23 February 2026. (Verbal Report from the Chairman of the Committee).

The Council RESOLVED that the Recommendations contained in the Report of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 23 February 2026 be APPROVED.

37/26 **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) POLICY**

The Clerk said that she had previously circulated a draft Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy for the Council's consideration.

Following a brief discussion, the Council RESOLVED to adopt the draft Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy as presented. A copy of the Policy is attached and forms a part of these Minutes.

38/26 **VACANCY - WEST WARD**

The Clerk referred to Minute 2/26 and said that the vacancy in the West Ward, following the resignation of Councillor Mrs Allen, was advertised with effect from 9 February 2026 on all of the Council's Notice Boards throughout the Village and on the Council's Website, giving members of the public an opportunity to claim a By-Election. She said that if a By-Election was not called for by 27 February 2026, then the Council would be able to fill the vacancy via the co-option process.

The Council NOTED this information.

The Clerk referred to Minute 12/26 and said that an Invitation had been extended to Mrs Alison Griffiths, MP, but following the recent Government announcement that the County Council Elections would be being held on 7 May 2026, effectively meant that the pre-election period of sensitivity prior to the Elections would have begun, she had spoken to Mrs Griffiths in this regard, with a view to holding the Invitation in abeyance for the 2026 Meeting. She said that Mrs Griffiths had been in agreement with this.

The Council NOTED the above information and AGREED that there should not be any other official Guest Speaker invited to the aforementioned Meeting.

40/26 THE WOODLANDS CENTRE - MAJOR REDESIGN AND REFURBISHMENT PROJECT

The Clerk referred to Minute 13/26 and said that a further Design Workshop had taken place on 12 February 2026, the Summary Notes of which had yet to be received.

The Council NOTED this information.

41/26 RUSTINGTON YOUTH CENTRE

(a) Review of Youth Provision

The Clerk referred to Minute 14/26 and said that the Littlehampton Army Cadets were still using the Centre for one session per week, but had confirmed that this hiring would increase to two evenings per week with effect from 1 April 2026.

Councillor Mrs Stevens then reported in her capacity as a Member of the Review of Youth Provision Working Party, on further progress made since the last Meeting. She said that the next Meeting of the three Parish Councils' Group would be being held on 26 February 2026, when the research undertaken by all three Councils (Angmering, East Preston and Rustington) would be considered.

The Council NOTED this information.

(b) Junior Table Tennis Club

The Clerk reminded Members that she had previously circulated an email and proposal received from the Operations Director, Worthing Table Tennis Club, as follows:-

'I am writing to propose a programme of junior table tennis activities at the Woodlands Centre in Rustington, aimed at increasing participation in sport among local children and creating a sustainable pathway for ongoing engagement.

Below is a draft outline of the proposed activities, delivery plans, and associated costs.

1. *April Easter Holiday - "Come and Try Table Tennis" Afternoon*

- ***Date & Time:*** Saturday 28th March 2pm-5pm
- ***Target Age Group:*** Children aged 6-13
- ***Capacity:*** Up to 16 children
- ***Cost to Participants:*** Free
-

This will be a three-hour taster session designed to introduce local children to table tennis in a fun and welcoming environment.

Staffing & Resources

- *Coach supported by volunteers*
 - *Coach wages: £25 per hour × 3 hours = £75*
 - *Hall hire: Provided by Rustington Parish Council*
 - *Balls (retained at the centre for future sessions): £20*
 - *Van hire: £200*
 - *Two table tennis tables to be donated to Rustington Parish Council for ongoing use and storage on site*
- Total Cost: £295***

2. *Weekly Term-Time Junior Table Tennis Club*

Following the taster session, we propose a weekly term-time table tennis club to provide regular activity and progression opportunities.

- ***Session Fee:*** £2.50 per child per session
- ***Booking:*** Available as a block of up to 14 weeks for summer term 2026
- ***Capacity:*** Up to 12 children per session

Staffing & Resources

- *Coach: £25 per hour*
 - *Hall hire: Provided by Rustington Parish Council*
 - *Bats: Provided by Worthing Table Tennis Club*
- Total Cost for One Term (14 weeks): £350***

Overall Project Cost

- *Easter Holiday Taster Session: £295*
- *Weekly Term-Time Club (1 term): £350*

Grand Total (excluding optional food provision): £645

We believe this programme would provide accessible, positive sporting opportunities for children in Rustington while leaving a lasting legacy through donated equipment and regular weekly sessions.

Thank you for considering this proposal. I would be happy to discuss any aspect in more detail or adjust the programme to meet your priorities.'

Following a further discussion, the Council RESOLVED that the proposal received from Worthing Table Tennis Club for an April Easter Holiday - "Come and Try Table Tennis" Afternoon, and a Weekly Term-Time Junior Table Tennis Club (one term) in the sum of £645.00, be APPROVED, with the required funding being borne from balances, if this proved to be necessary.

42/26 MAINTENANCE AND MONITORING OF FIRE AND INTRUDER ALARM, SYSTEM, EMERGENCY LIGHTING, FIRE EXTINGUISHERS AND FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT REVIEWS CONTRACT

The Clerk referred to Minute 74/25 (Full Council Meeting - 24 March 2025 refers) and reminded the Committee that Marble M&E Group had, at that time, been awarded a 12-month Contract, that was due to expire shortly. She advised that the services provided throughout the year in respect of this Contract and other plumbing and heating works had been most satisfactory.

She said that a Quotation for the Council's Maintenance and Monitoring Charges for the fire and security systems for all of the Council's facilities, for a further 12-month Contract in the sum of £3,832.50 plus VAT, had now been circulated to Members for consideration. This represented a 5% increase on the current Contract.

She said that Marble M&E Group had confirmed that if the Council was to agree to a 3-year Contract, the cost could be fixed at £3,832.50 plus VAT per annum for the entire term of the new Contract.

Following a brief discussion, the Committee RECOMMENDED that a Three-Year Contract for the Maintenance and Monitoring of Fire and Intruder Alarm Systems, Emergency Lighting, Fire Extinguishers and Fire Risk Assessment Reviews and the Monitoring of the CCTV system at The Woodlands Centre and Youth Centre, at a set cost of £3,832.50 plus VAT per annum be awarded to Marble M&E Group.

43/26 RUSTINGTON IN-BLOOM

Councillor Lee reported that the next Meeting of the Committee would be taking place on 25 February 2026.

He said that there were a number of projects/activities in the pipeline at the moment including:-

- Table at the Charities Monthly Market at the Methodist Church on 7 March 2026
- Installation of 'railing' planters in North Lane courtesy of Lottery Funding
- Five large wooden planters to be built, in anticipation for future installation as follows:-
 - Shops Forecourt, Sea Lane - Near its junction with The Grangeway
 - Grass Verge, Windmill Drive - Near junction with Allangate Drive
 - Grass Verge, Mill Lane - Opposite The Windmill Public House
 - Grass Verge, The Martlets - Near its junction with Holmes Lane
 - One other location yet to be decided
- Hedgehog Houses being given to three local Primary Schools.

He said that he would be meeting with the Clerk to discuss a formal representation being made to the Council, in the near future, requesting its support with some of the planned production/installation/planting and maintenance of new wooden planters at various locations.

The Council NOTED this information.

44/26 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FESTIVAL OF BRITAIN MUSICAL CONCERT - 13 JUNE 2026

The Clerk referred to Minute 16/26 and said that the Band had now agreed the draft programme for the Concert which, instead of focusing on the 'prom type' content, was a programme that celebrated British music more generally.

She said that the timing of the Concert would be from 2.30 pm to approximately 4.30 pm, with doors opening at 2.00 pm. She said that tickets for the Concert would be available from the Samuel Wickens Centre with effect from 1 May 2026, and Members would be contacted by email prior to the aforementioned date for their ticket requirements. She advised that there was a full advertisement in the current Newsletter (Winter Edition) and the Concert would also be publicised on the Council's Facebook Page.

The Council was pleased to NOTE this information.

45/26 FUTURE OF ZACHARY MERTON HOSPITAL AND LAND

The Clerk referred to Minute 17/26 and reminded Members that she had previously circulated further correspondence with Mr Jennings, the Chief Executive Officer of the NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board,

the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, together with a letter of support from East Preston Parish Council, a letter to Mr Jennings from a parishioner and the Rustington Residents Association, in this regard.

She said that she had also circulated a copy of email correspondence from another local elector with the Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust, in respect of a Freedom of Information Request.

The Council NOTED this information.

Following a further detailed discussion, the Council RESOLVED that the next step would be for a Public Meeting to be held arranged prior to the start of the pre-election period of sensitivity, which would commence on 30 March 2026, to ensure maximum attendance. It was further AGREED that the appropriate personnel from the NHS should be invited to address the Meeting and respond to questions from the audience, together with the local MPs, Press and TV Contacts, neighbouring Parish Councils, the Rustington Residents Association and the Zachary Merton League of Friends.

The Council then RESOLVED that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, Councillors Mrs Cooper and Bennett, and District Councillor Gunner should continue to be AUTHORISED to progress the Council's action in this regard.

46/26 RUSTINGTON GOLF CENTRE ROUNDABOUT

The Clerk reminded Members that she had previously circulated an email received from Councillor Warren in this regard.

In his email Councillor Warren had expressed his continued concern that the operation of the current roundabout to be not fit for purpose. He had previously recommended that a Survey should be carried out to give factual evidence, but this was postponed pending the opening of the new Lyminster by-pass. He was now repeating his observations, noting that the additional dualling of the A259 and the large housing development under construction at the Golf Centre had already increased the level of problem which would continue further when all of the properties therein were occupied.

His observations were as follows:-

- 1. Traffic approaching from Rustington over the railway bridge has increased considerably and at certain times in the day queues back to the Worthing Road roundabout and beyond.*
- 2. A high proportion of this traffic wishes to take the third exit (towards Worthing) but due to lack of patience a proportion of motorists use the left hand lane on approach for this purpose and enter the roundabout also without signalling their intention. This lane is clearly marked for first and second exit use only.*
- 3. Motorists who follow the rules when taking the third exit find themselves in the right hand lane of the dual carriageway with many then having considerable difficulty changing to the slower lane due to faster vehicles approaching on their left that have taken the wrong lane on entry.*
- 4. Traffic emerging from the Golf Centre/housing complex often queues due to the problem of finding a clear safe route on to the roundabout. This again is made more difficult due to traffic on the roundabout but in the wrong lane and also traffic approaching from the west on the A259 travelling at 50mph and only slowing marginally if the roundabout appears clear. Once 191 new properties are occupied traffic exiting from the Golf Centre road will be much increased.*

Councillor Warren was of the opinion that the roundabout should now be surveyed, in order to consider alternatives prior to the new housing development being completed.

Following a detailed discussion, the Council RESOLVED that a representation should be made to the West Sussex County Council Highways Department, based on Councillor Warren's observations, together with a request for a Survey of the roundabout and surrounding area to be undertaken as soon as practicably possible.

47/26 RUSTINGTON GREENSWARD

The Clerk reminded Members that she had previously circulated email correspondence between the Chairman and The Millfield Overstrand Working Group regarding its primary objective to ensure that the Rustington Greensward should be 'permanently preserved as an open, accessible local amenity, retaining its current character, usage and protections.' The Group was concerned as the current Local Government Re-organisation would mean that the Arun District Council, together with the West Sussex County Council, in particular, would be replaced with a new Unitary Authority. She advised that District Councillor Gunner had also informed her that he had received the same representation.

The Clerk said that the Chairman had responded by confirming that the Council remained firmly committed to ensuring that the Rustington Greensward was preserved as an open space, and that it would be vigilant in understanding the implications of the Local Government Reorganisation for its protection. He had also stated that, as the discussions around governance structures progressed, the Parish Council would be pressing for clear reassurance from whichever Authority assumed responsibility that the Greensward should remain protected as open public amenity space, and making it clear that its preservation was not negotiable as far as it was concerned.

Following a detailed discussion, the Council RESOLVED that an initial approach should now be made to the Chief Executive of the Arun District Council to register its interest in assuming responsibility for the Rustington Greensward, should it decide at any time in the future that it could be transferred under its Community Asset Transfer Policy to the Parish Council.

48/26 ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL - ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW PROGRAMME

The Clerk reminded Members that she had previously circulated an email received from Lauren Fairs-Browning, Electoral Services Manager, in this regard.

The Council NOTED this information.

49/26 ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL - CIL INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN (IIP) CONSULTATION 2026

The Clerk reminded Members that she had previously circulated an email received from Leah Nicholls, CIL Assessment, Spend and Monitoring Officer, Planning, together with associated documentation, advising that the District Council was commencing its annual review of the Infrastructure Investment Plan (IIP) for the period 2026-2029. She said that the consultation period was running from 29 January to 31 March 2026, following which projects would be recommended for inclusion in the IIP for the next three years.

She then advised that an application was currently being progressed for District Council CIL funding towards the provision of the replacement of the majority of the play equipment in the Woodlands Recreation Ground Play Area. She reminded the Council that it was currently building up a fund for this purpose which, from 1 April 2026, would stand at £40,000.00 plus any interest accrued.

The Council was pleased to NOTE this information.

50/26 ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL - TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL'S CLIMATE CHANGE GROUP MEETING - 5 FEBRUARY 2026 - BIODIVERSITY FOCUS

The Clerk referred to Minute 20/26 and reported that she had previously circulated a Report from Councillor Mrs Stevens on her attendance at the Town and Parish Councils' Climate Meeting on 5 February 2026, together with the official Minutes of the Meeting.

Councillor Mrs Stevens then elaborated on the points covered in her Report and drew the Council's attention, in particular, to her proposal that it should consider establishing a Climate Change Working Party, in recognition of the increasing focus on climate-related matters and the rapidly evolving nature of the area. She said that funding via the District Council's Community Infrastructure Levy might be available, although this had yet to be considered.

She also advised that Middleton and Arundel had established projects in place, and it would be beneficial for their work to be reviewed with possible collaboration being explored. She said there may also be areas which would overlap with the Rustington In-Bloom Committee's activities.

Following a further discussion, the Council RESOLVED that a Climate Change Working Party should be set up at the Annual Meeting of the Council on 18 May 2026.

51/26 WEST SUSSEX ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS - RESERVOIR SAFETY REFORM CONSULTATION

The Clerk reminded Members that she had previously circulated an email received from Emily Simpson in this regard.

Following a brief discussion, the Council NOTED this information and AGREED to take no further action in this regard at the present time.

52/26 WEST SUSSEX ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS - ADALC MEETING - 3 FEBRUARY 2026

The Council NOTED the Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 February 2026, together with an email received from Val Knight, Clerk of Kingston Parish Council in this regard.

Councillor Mrs Cooper then reported that she had attended the aforementioned Meeting, together with the Chairman.

53/26 RUSTINGTON CHAMBER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE

Councillor Mrs Stevens reported on her attendance at a Meeting of the Rustington Chamber of Trade and Commerce held on 10 February 2026.

She said that the Meeting generated some good ideas, with three new members, who were most enthusiastic and had taken on various roles to ensure that the Chamber could get off to a strong start. There were several possible projects identified during the Meeting as follows:-

- Targeting the Industrial Estates finding out what they needed and getting them onboard
- Advertising Campaign, a new website was already under construction and should be ready mid-March
- Increasing membership from current 20 to 100 by 2027, last year it was at zero
- Looking into tackling crime and the cost of the DISC Systems which Guess Jewellers already used in Littlehampton
- Workshops and social events
- Bringing the constitution up to date

- It was not possible to offer free membership to Charities but the morning Chamber Network Meetings at The Lamb Inn run by Janet were free to everyone. This would still give the Charities access to local business without incurring any costs.

She said that she had also been asked to respond to a number of questions regarding Section 106 Funding and she had obtained the relevant information from the Clerk and Finance Manager/RFO and forwarded it onto the Chairman.

She confirmed that the next Meeting would be held on 10 March 2026 and bi-monthly going forward.

The Council NOTED the above information and the Chairman of the Meeting thanked Councillor Mrs Stevens for attending the Meeting, and providing such a comprehensive Report.

54/26 DOCUMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS CIRCULATED

The Council NOTED the following Documents and Publications previously circulated for Members' information:-

- (a) Arun Dementia Alliance - Meeting Minutes - 28 January 2026
- (b) Arun District Council - News Release - New Community Safety Grant Fund launched to support projects across Arun
- (c) Arun District Council - Latest News Release - Changes are coming to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme
- (d) CAGNE - February Bulletin - AGM & Route 4
- (e) Care UK - Future Care Planning - Free Event at Ayton House
- (f) Carers Support West Sussex - January Newsletter
- (g) East Preston Parish Council News - 29 January 2026, 5 February 2026, 11 February 2026 and 19 February 2026
- (h) National Association of Local Councils - Chief Executive's Bulletin - 29 January 2026 and 19 February 2026
- (i) RHS - February Community Garden Update
- (j) West Sussex County Council - Highways, Transport and Planning - News and Updates - 30 January 2026 and 20 February 2026
- (k) West Sussex County Council - News Release - 26 January 2026, 28 January 2026, 30 January 2026, 3 February 2026 x2, 6 February 2026, 9 February 2026, 10 February 2026, 12 February 2026 x2, 13 February 2026 x2, 17 February 2026 and 19 February 2026 x3
- (l) West Sussex County Council - Residents' eNewsletter - February 2026 Edition

There being no further business the Meeting concluded at 8.30 pm.

Chairman:

Date:

There were no questions received either preceding, or at, the Meeting for consideration during the Public Question Time, held prior to the commencement of the formal proceedings.



RUSTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) POLICY

(Adopted 23 February 2026)

1. Purpose of This Policy

This policy explains how staff, councillors, contractors, temporary workers and consultants can safely use AI tools (like ChatGPT, Copilot, Bard, Bing, Grammarly and similar tools).

Our aim is to:

- Make sure AI is used safely and legally
- Protect people's personal information
- Keep our work accurate, ethical and secure

AI is changing quickly, so this policy will be reviewed every six months.

2. What We Mean by "AI"

AI means computer systems that can do tasks that normally need human thinking.

Examples include:

- Chatbots and virtual assistants
- Tools that predict, analyse or summarise information
- Machine Learning
- Autocorrect, translation, or grammar tools
- Facial recognition tools
- Smart devices and monitoring tools

Some of these features may appear inside everyday software like email or video-calling tools.

3. The Most Important Rule:

NEVER put personal, sensitive, or confidential information into a public AI tool.

Do not enter:

- Case notes or personal stories
- Names, addresses, contact details
- Health information
- HR information or financial details
- Anything that can identify a person

Why?

Most public AI tools store what you type and may use it to train their systems. This means your data could appear in answers given to other users. This is a data protection risk.

4. Traffic-Light Guide to Safe AI Use

RED – Do Not Do This (High Risk)

Never use AI for:

- Any personal data (even if the name is removed)
- Asking for advice about real people or real cases
- Making important decisions (e.g., hiring, funding, or assessments)

These actions break data protection laws.

AMBER – Use with Care (Medium Risk)

Allowed only if the information is fully anonymised:

- Summarising non-sensitive documents
- Writing newsletters or general communications
- Analysing feedback where all personal details are removed
- Brainstorming ideas

Before using AI, remove:

- Names → use [Person]
- Places and addresses → use [Location]
- Contact details
- Birth dates, ages, or anything that could identify someone
- Job titles that point to a single person (e.g., “the headteacher at [School]”)

GREEN – Safe to Use (Low Risk)

These tasks do not involve any confidential information:

- Research on public topics
- Learning new skills (e.g., Excel formulas)
- Improving your own writing
- Creating public images or posters

5. Your Duty: Turn Off Data Training

If you use a public AI tool, you must switch off data training in your account settings.

- ChatGPT: Settings → Data Controls → turn off “Improve the model for everyone”
- Google Gemini: myactivity.google.com → turn off “Gemini Apps Activity”
- Microsoft Copilot (personal): Privacy → turn off model training for text and voice

This protects your information from being used to train AI systems.

6. Accountability

- Human responsibility: You must check all AI-generated content for accuracy, fairness and tone before using it.
- Transparency: If AI is used in a major way (e.g., a chatbot for service users), we will make this clear to the public.
- Compliance: Breaking this policy - especially the RED rules - may lead to disciplinary action.

If you are unsure, stop and ask for help before using AI.

(Adopted 23 February 2026)