RUSTINGTON PARISH MEETING

MINUTES: of the Annual Assembly of the Parish Meeting held on 9 April 2026

PRESENT: Rustington Parish Councillors A Cooper (In the Chair), J Bennett, Mrs C Broomfield, M Broomfield, Mrs A Cooper, Mrs P Gregory, G Lee, Ms M Revell, D Rogers and Mrs C Stevens, County Councillor Dr J Walsh, District Councillors Ms L Edwards, and S Gunner, Mrs C Ward, Mrs C Harris and Mrs J Millard (Rustington Parish Council), A Allchin, Mrs A Allchin, P Cavell, Ms P Overington-Gould and M Rix (Rustington Residents Association), Ms A Clarke and C Fuller (Arun Community Transport), T Dines, Ms P Farr, Sergeant A Johnston and PCSO R Raju (Sussex Police), Mrs Y Kidd (Georgian Gardens Community Primary School), S Marsden (Littlehampton District Lions Club), Mrs S Marsden (Rustington Heritage Association), P Seear, Mrs J Ward and M Warrington (Littlehampton District Lions Club and Rustington In-Bloom)

APOLOGIES: Rustington Parish Councillors J Ceiriog-Hughes, R Grevett, Ms L Lloyd, Mrs S Partridge and P Warren, Miss A Bowers (Georgian Gardens Community Primary School), Mrs S Holmes (Community First Responders), Mrs J Pickering (Rustington Players) and Inspector Ross Wickings (Sussex Police)

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1. WELCOME BY THE CHAIRMAN

Prior to the commencement of the formal business of the Meeting, the Chairman welcomed all present to the Meeting and thanked them for taking the time to attend.

2. REPORT FROM SUSSEX POLICE AUTHORITY

The Chairman welcomed Sergeant Johnston and PCSO Raju from the Arun Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) to the Meeting.

Sergeant Johnston then addressed the Meeting. He advised that there were now two Sergeants based at Littlehampton, nine PCSOs, with two in training, one of which it was anticipated would cover the outer areas of Littlehampton e.g. Rustington, etc. There were also two Police Constables, with a third joining the Team imminently temporarily for a three-month period, and the Neighbourhood Youth Officer.

He provided the Meeting with an overview of the overall criminal activity level in Rustington, which he stated was fairly stable and had fallen by 10.8% as compared to the previous year. He referred to the fact that the most common crimes were vehicle related, anti-social behaviour and theft related, although many of the reported incidents were lower level. He said that shoplifting remained a key concern, particularly in the Retail Park (Sainsburys, etc.).

He then referred to a recent increase in incidents involving a group of young people wearing balaclavas and engaging in anti-social behaviour, criminal damage and attempted thefts. He said that several individuals had been identified as being of interest and their parents had been contacted, with anti-social behaviour contracts in the process of being issued.

Sergeant Johnston also mentioned the ongoing problems with illegal e-scooters, e-bikes and nuisance motorbikes. He explained that the Police faced difficulties in pursuing offenders safely, but assured the Meeting that this remained an operational focus, with support from traffic policing colleagues. He encouraged parishioners to report any associated incidents they might witness, as this would assist the Police with gathering intelligence and enforcement.

He then referred to begging, street drinking and unauthorised encampments, and said that whilst reports of individuals begging and street drinking remained relatively low, action could be taken if behaviour became aggressive or persistent. Again, he asked parishioners to report any concerns to the Police so that targeted action could be taken.

Sergeant Johnston then responded to questions from attendees which focused mainly on speeding, noisy vehicles (motorbikes with silencers removed, in particular), lack of visible Police patrols, caravans parked on the public highway and the need for speed enforcement activity. He acknowledged the concerns raised and committed to further patrols, speed enforcement where possible, and continued partnership working the Arun District Council and other Agencies.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Meeting, expressed his thanks and appreciation to Sergeant Johnston and PCSO Raju for attending the Meeting and providing such interesting and comprehensive information.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Assembly of the Parish Meeting held on 10 April 2025 were approved by the Meeting and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE RUSTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

The Chairman, Councillor Cooper, reported on the activities of the Parish Council during the preceding year. A copy of this Report is attached and forms a part of these Minutes.

5. AUDITED STATEMENT OF THE PARISH COUNCIL'S ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

The Meeting received the Audited Statement of the Parish Council's Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025.

The Clerk reported that the External Auditors, Moore East Midlands, had stated that the information contained in the Council's Annual Return was in accordance with proper practices and, apart from one very minor administrative omission, no other matters had come to their attention to give cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had not been met.

The Clerk said that these Accounts were available for inspection in the Council Offices.

6. FINANCES FOR THE YEARS ENDING 31 MARCH 2026 AND 31 MARCH 2027

The Meeting received a Report from Councillor Bennett, in his capacity as Chairman of the Parish Council's Finance and General Purposes Committee, on the Council's finances for the years ending 31 March 2026 and 31 March 2027. A copy of this Report is attached and forms a part of these Minutes.

7. LOCAL SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

The Chairman advised the Meeting that the Governing Bodies from each of the three Primary Schools in Rustington had been invited to submit a written Report to the Council prior to the Meeting, to enable them to be distributed to everyone in attendance. Representatives from the Schools could then attend the Meeting, if they so wished, to respond to any questions that might be posed 'from the floor'.

He confirmed that a written Report had been received from Miss Amie Bowers, Headteacher, Georgian Gardens Community Primary School.

The recently appointed School Governor in attendance, Mrs Y Kidd, then spoke positively about the School and the importance of its place within the local community.

Councillor Bennett, in his capacity as a School Governor, advised that there was currently one vacancy for a Community Governor. He also responded to a question raised by District Councillor Gunner in connection

with mathematics attainment, by explaining that the School had changed its teaching approach, introduced additional support and tuition and was seeing improving outcomes. The Meeting noted that the published data did not fully reflect the additional needs profile of some year groups.

A Formal Transcript of the aforementioned Report is attached and forms a part of these Minutes.

8. REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

(a) County Councillor Mrs Alison Cooper

Councillor Mrs Cooper delivered a comprehensive Report on County Council matters as follows:-

- *Hoping that everyone present was subscribed to the County Council Website which provided much interesting and useful information, including Newsletters and Press Releases*

- *School Crossing Patrol finally appointed and present in North Lane - Delighted that County Council was able to fill this post*

- *Several requests for Traffic Regulation Orders received and supported, but only a couple of successes over the past year - Will continue to monitor issues*

- *Adult and Social Care Department - Awarded a 'Good' CQC rating in August 2025 - welcome news, improvement plan well underway and in the right direction, building on a strength-based approach embedded in the core business and staff training, people and choice first*

- *Improvements continuing in Children's Services, with all Homes rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' - One Home received royal recognition as it had been rated as outstanding for three years in a row*

- *Demand for Special Educational Needs provision continues to escalate, despite additional Government funding - Currently being worked through to evaluate the impact and deliver the most effective improvements*

- *Highways - Investing in new technology - Repair wait time for potholes reduced to 12 days, with more being repaired in the past year than in previous years - Major resurfacing to be undertaken in Worthing Road (between Summerlea School and the Windmill Roundabout) in the near future*

- *Update on Devolution and Local Government Re-Organisation - Will result in significant structural change over the next two years, with Parish and Town Councils assuming the role of the 2nd Tier of Local Government*

- *Future of Zachary Merton Hospital and Land - Continued scrutiny being carried out by Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee and extreme concern regarding the lack of any engagement or consultation with the public in respect of the permanent closure of the Hospital and plans for the future - Need as many people as possible to register their interest for the Public Meeting.*

(b) County Councillor Dr James Walsh

Councillor Dr Walsh began his Report by thanking County Councillor Mrs Cooper for her Report, and said he served with her on the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee. He reminded those present that he was responsible for a small section of Rustington, namely the North West corner.

He then referred to the following issues in connection with the County Council:-

- *Future of Zachary Merton Hospital and Land - In his capacity as a member of the Health and Services Scrutiny Committee, he said that he was cynical and believed that the decision to close the Hospital and sell the Site had been made by the NHS a long time ago. He said that if the worst*

scenario were to happen, he was determined that formal assurances should continue to be sought from the NHS that all receipts from the sale of the facility would be invested in NHS facilities in the Eastern Arun area, either Littlehampton or Rustington

- *County Council's Financial Position - Budget £2.3 Billion - 5% Uplift in County Council portion of Council Tax in 2026/2027 - Two largest expenditures - Adult Social Care and Special Educational Needs (SEND) - Extremely overspent - Direct Schools Grant - Underfunded - Government has announced that it will write off 80% but County Council will still have to find 20% to repay in two years' time*

- *Local Government Reorganisation - Disaster from beginning to end with Government not agreeing to either of the two options put forward by County, District and Borough Councils in West Sussex - Expected to announce its decision in July.*

(c) District Councillor Shaun Gunner

Councillor Gunner then provided an overview on District Council and other Rustington associated matters as follows:-

- *Future of Zachary Merton Hospital and Land - Agreed with County Councillor Dr Walsh that NHS have already made their decision and would not be prepared to change it*

- *Local Government Re-organisation - Submission of proposals from West Sussex Councils to Government not liked by the Government - All efforts and hard work in this regard were a complete waste of time and money*

- *Littlehampton Seafront Scheme completed*

- *Premier Inn to be opening soon in Bognor Regis - Good news for the Town e.g. will attract visitors which will result in more money being spent across the board*

- *Large amount of expenditure on Climate Change to achieve 'net zero' - No success to date*

- *New Waste Collection - New bins to be issued but many old bins still not collected*

- *In August 2025 - Announcement that Arun District Council was one of the worst housing services' providers in the country - Many vulnerable people being failed - Complaints received in respect of the poor service provided.*

The above-mentioned County and District Councillors then responded to a number of questions from individuals in attendance.

The Chairman then conveyed his thanks and appreciation to Councillors Mrs Cooper, Dr Walsh and Gunner for taking the time to attend the Meeting and for addressing the issues raised by attendees.

9. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

(a) Condition of roads with increasing number of potholes, road markings, signage and lack of funding for highways - *Mike Warrington, Littlehampton District Lions Club, Rustington In-Bloom and Parishioner - County and Arun District Councillor Alison Cooper to report signs etc.*

(b) Excellent bus services in Rustington but recent changes to routes resulted in very limited service to Angmering Station - Request for reinstatement of Bus Stop on A259 in close proximity to footbridge - Stagecoach awaiting response from County Council - *Tony Dines, Parishioner - County Councillors Alison Cooper and Dr James Walsh to investigate appropriate Officers*

(c) Congratulations to Parish Council for its continuing efforts to save the Zachary Merton Hospital and Site - *Tony Dines, Parishioner*

(d) Thanks and appreciation to the Parish Council for its continued support of Arun Community Transport - 25% of total users continue to reside in Rustington - *Chris Fuller, Arun Community Transport*

(e) Thanks and appreciation to the Parish Council for its unceasing support of not only the Littlehampton District Lions Club but also the local community as a whole - *Steve Marsden, Littlehampton District Lions Club and Parishioner*

(f) Compliments to the Parish Council for its continued hard work and efforts - What can parishioners do to help the Council in connection with the fight to save the Zachary Merton Hospital and Land - Petitioning, Community pressure, etc. - *Philip Seear, Parishioner*

(g) Concern regarding camper vans and caravans parking on the public highway - Broadmark Lane - *Pauline Farr, Parishioner*

Before closing the Meeting, the Chairman encouraged residents to continue to report issues of concern, both to the appropriate Authorities and to the Parish Council. He also reiterated the importance of attending the Public Meeting on the future of the Zachary Merton Hospital and Land.

He also then thanked all the attendees, Councillors, Council Personnel, Community Groups and Organisations for their time and contributions. He reaffirmed that the Parish Council would continue to represent the Village strongly through the forthcoming period of Local Government Re-organisation and wider change.

The Meeting concluded at 8.30 pm.

Chairman: ..... **Date:** .....

RUSTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL
ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PARISH MEETING – 9 APRIL 2026
REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL
COUNCILLOR ANDY COOPER

Good evening and thank you for attending this Annual Assembly.

It is hard to believe it has been almost a year since my election as Chairman, having previously served in the role from 2011 to 2013. I hope I have served the Council and community well and have very much enjoyed the challenge of what is a varied and demanding role.

Before moving into the Report, I would like to thank those who support the Council's work.

My thanks go to Vice-Chairman Councillor Gary Lee for his continued support, and to all fellow Councillors for their voluntary work for the benefit of the community.

I also thank our District Councillors, particularly Councillor Shaun Gunner, for his regular updates and advocacy for Rustington, and County Councillor Alison Cooper, along with Councillors Roger Elkins and Dr James Walsh, for ensuring the Village is well represented at County level.

I would also like to recognise the many community groups, organisations and individuals who contribute so much to Village life.

Finally, my sincere thanks to the Council's staff team, led by our Clerk, Carole, supported by Rosie and Caroline, along with all team members across our services, including the Samuel Wickens Centre, Leisure and Amenities, and the Museum. Their professionalism and commitment are invaluable.

Council Activity and Projects

I will now provide a broad overview of the Council's work over the past year.

The first phase of The Woodlands Centre refurbishment, including improvements to the Village Memorial Hall, is due to commence at the end of September. There will be disruption to hirers, but these will be kept to a minimum and communicated clearly.

Our public toilets continue to achieve outstanding results in the Loo of the Year Awards, with multiple Platinum Plus awards. The renewed contract with Biffa is working well, with all facilities open daily and extended summer hours.

The Christmas lighting scheme remains a valued feature of the village, with ongoing enhancements.

A new PA system was installed in the Village Memorial Hall during 2025.

Events and Community Activity

The Council marked the 80th anniversary of VE Day with a free concert, lighting of the Lamps of Peace, and supporting events including a quiz, exhibition, and walks.

The Remembrance Sunday Parade and Annual Community Carol Concert were both successful Events.

The Windmill Mobile Cinema came to Rustington, as its first venue in the Arun District, in late 2025.

Following the decision not to renew the Agreement with Arun Youth Projects for the weekly Youth Club, the Youth Centre now hosts the Littlehampton Army Cadets and a Youth Table Tennis Club.

Committees

My thanks go to Councillor Jamie Bennett and members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee for their important work.

Thanks also to Councillor Alison Cooper and the Leisure and Amenities Committee, which oversees a wide range of services including public facilities, open spaces, centres, and Village infrastructure.

The Planning Committee, chaired by Councillor Maria Revell and supported by Councillor Peter Warren, continues to provide detailed and valuable input on planning applications.

I also thank Councillor Peggy Partridge and the Allotments Committee for maintaining high standards across all sites, and Councillor John Ceiriog-Hughes and the Emergency Planning Committee for ensuring preparedness and resilience.

The Council also continues its work through external bodies and working groups to improve how we operate.

Zachary Merton Hospital

Before concluding, I must address the permanent closure and proposed sale of Zachary Merton Hospital.

The Council has been actively engaging with NHS Bodies, Scrutiny Committees and Government to seek clarity, challenge decisions, and ensure the community has a voice in shaping future use of the site.

Although the Chief Executive of Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust was unable to attend this Meeting due to the pre-election period, assurance has been given that no decisions will be taken before the May elections.

Working with Alison Griffiths MP, a Public Meeting has now been arranged for Thursday 21 May 2026 from 6.00 - 7.30 pm in this Hall. Appropriate representatives from the NHS will be in attendance, and residents will be able to submit their questions, in advance. Further details will follow via Council communications shortly.

Thank you for listening.

After the Meeting, you are warmly invited to stay for refreshments and to speak with Councillors, if you so wish.

RUSTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL
ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PARISH MEETING - 9 APRIL 2026
ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE FINANCEAND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
COUNCILLOR JAMIE BENNETT

Thank you Chairman and Good Evening Everyone.

I can now present my first Annual Report in respect of the Council's finances for the last financial year that ended on 31 March 2026 and for the current financial year ending 31 March 2027.

I would like to start by thanking Caroline Harris, our Council's Finance Manager, with whom, as Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, I have a close working relationship. I would also like to extend my appreciation to all members of the Council's committed, extremely hard-working and most loyal Personnel Team.

Before moving on, I should advise you of the Council's recent decision to set its 2026/2027 Precept at £825,000.00. This decision, in respect of the annual Parish Council charge on a Band 'D' property in Rustington, represents an increase of approximately £6.91 on last year, and results in a total charge of £131.87. Over the 10-month payment period, this equates to 69p per household per month.

Moving on now, the Council is continuing to progress the major Project that has been 'in the making' since 2021 and will hopefully be reaching a successful conclusion in the coming year, or by the latest early in the next financial year. This is the first phase of the Refurbishment and Upgrading of The Woodlands Centre, covering the rear section, including the Entrance, John de Bohun Room, Roger Barwick Room, Roger Montgomeri Room, Kitchen, Toilets, Museum Storage Room. The construction of a new Table/Chair Store for the Village Memorial Hall, together with the refurbishment of the main Foyer, Kitchen, is also included.

The current budget is in the region of £770,000.00, which has been provided for by using some £220,000.00 from the Council's Capital Reserves, together with a Public Works Loan Board Loan of £550,000.00.

Significant expenditure items during the last financial year included the purchase and installation of a new PA System for the Village Memorial Hall, repairs to The Woodlands Centre roof, the purchase of several new PCs, Screens and other associated equipment for members of the Council's personnel team, the overseeding and top dressing of the football pitch, 50% of the cost of new fencing around the Jubilee Avenue Car Park (Sports and Social Club), replacement of batteries in all of the defibrillators throughout the Village, a new flagpole at the War Memorial, and again, a number of the Wooden Bus Shelters and Public Seats in the Village have been repaired and repainted.

As was reported last year, the Council has set up a Play Area Improvement Fund so that the equipment and safety surfacing can be replaced as soon as sufficient funding is available. £20,000.00 was set aside in the last financial year, and the same amount has been budgeted for this year.

The Council has also continued to provide many services for its community, including:-

- The management and maintenance of The Woodlands Centre, including the Council Offices, the Youth Centre and the Recreation Ground

- The management and maintenance of the Samuel Wickens Centre, incorporating the Village Information Centre and the Museum

- The management and maintenance of the Woodland Park Sportsfield

- The management and maintenance of the three Allotment Sites in the Village

During this financial year, the Council will continue to provide a wide range of local services, most of which I have already referred to. But, in addition to these, I would like to mention that the Council is also responsible for over 120 public seats, some 44 street lighting columns in private roads, and as I have already made reference to, the Beach Shelter and the Wooden Bus Shelters around the Village.

The Council provides the floral displays in the central shopping area and at various other locations around the Village, and in a 50/50 partnership with Store Property Investments Limited, funds up to £10,000.00 per year, for the always impressive Christmas Lighting Scheme. It also provides a total sum of £5,000.00 to be able to award grants to a number of local Clubs and Charitable Organisations, including Citizens' Advice and the Littlehampton District Lions Club.

A major project during this financial year will be the purchase and installation of a replacement War Memorial at a cost of £33,280.00. The existing Memorial is now deteriorating further year on year, and the most economical and longer lasting solution is to replace it.

And, a major expenditure item in the current year is the Loan Servicing cost which is likely to be in the region of £36,000.00, with the future annual costs being approximately £54,000.00.

Two projects and expenditure items which, it is anticipated, will be completed during the next 12 months will include:-

- Provision of new chairs and some tables in the Village Memorial Hall and John de Bohun Room, as well as other items of furniture required to compliment the Refurbishment/Reconfiguration of all affected rooms/areas

- Legal fees in connection with the new Lease for the Woodland Park Sportsfield, and the Sub-Lease for the Rustington Otters Youth Football Club Changing Rooms and Toilets Portable Building.

It should also be remembered, at this point, that to be able to operate effectively and efficiently, the Council has to provide a central organisation which requires major expenditure, including staffing, security and sufficient insurance cover for all of its assets.

I'm almost finished, but I would just like to convey my sincere thanks and appreciation to all of my fellow Councillors for their unceasing commitment to achieving and maintaining the objectives of, and services provided by, the Council, whilst always having the continuing financial constraints at the forefront of their minds.

The challenges for the Council will, of course, continue year on year, but I can assure you, as always, that it will meet, and strive to overcome, all of these for the benefit of its Parishioners.

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Head Teacher: Miss A Bowers

Report for Rustington Parish Council 9.2.26

It is a pleasure to update the Parish Council with events that have been happening at Georgian Gardens School this year. There is always something new and exciting happening and we are extremely proud of all that our pupils are achieving every day in every way.

S.T.E.A.M (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Maths)

We are delighted to report that the canopy area has now been installed in our Nebula STEAM zone. The children are enjoying using this diverse space to learn more about science and technology. The class sized sand pit is a considerable success and allows pupils to learn about the properties of materials alongside the physics of pulley systems. The sheltered area has also proved extremely helpful in the rainy weather as pupils have been able to access outdoor PE in all weathers!

We are incredibly grateful to all those who have helped significantly with our fundraising this year. Our brilliant PTA raised around £18K – the most successful year ever. This alongside generous donations from Store Property and the lions Club this has meant that we have been able to update 70 pupil laptops in school, aligning all of the features that we utilise for teaching updated technologies such as 3D printing.

Pictures from our popular fundraiser firework event in November.

Music Provision

It has been another fantastic year for our young musicians – Year 6 performed an amazing end of year show 'Matilda', and our choir had the opportunity once again to sing at the 02 in London. Our younger pupils joined other local schools to sing at the 'Little Big Sing.' With over 120 pupils having weekly music lessons, two bands each week and over thirty pupils in the music makers orchestra. In addition to this every pupil accesses termly music and dance days- there is always time for an exciting performance, and we are looking forward to the summer music show in May!

We are delighted to announce that we have been awarded the Music Mark or recognition for Ambition and Quality This is the highest accreditation under this scheme.

GDS Pathways

This year we have been working with education consultancy ABLE to focus on supporting our very able learners to achieve the best outcomes that they can (Greater Depth). We are so impressed by the quality that these pupils show in their work and their determination to always achieve more.

Young Governors

Every year a child from each class is nominated by their peers as the Young Governors representative for the class. Young Governors attend weekly meetings with our Headteacher, Miss Bowers, and get involved with all sorts of leadership activities. Just like the 'Grown up' Governors we have an agenda, clerk and minutes. The pupils are always excited to see the impact that they have. This year they have produced some great competitions in school, completed their own health and safety walks, and contributed ideas for our new OPAL project.

Fabulous Artwork

We hope that many of you have had the chance to enjoy the Artwork that is on display at the train station in Angmering. We have enjoyed experiences with visiting Artists this year.

Examples of pupil artwork – Remembrance Day and Arts Week

Community Links

St. Peter and St. Paul's Church continue to run a weekly food pantry at the school, and we are very appreciative of the support they offer to our families.

What's Next?

After the Easter holidays we will be launching OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning). Staff have been busy learning new ways to support play at break and lunchtimes, and we are so excited to be launching this initiative with the pupils. Play is the process through which children learn everything that they need to know that cannot be taught. Play wires the brain, builds capable bodies, and is the foundation of building relationships.

OPAL's programme enables schools to provide every child with rich opportunities to be creative, collaborative and active in their outdoor play.

Thank you!
We would like to thank our local community for their ongoing support and work with the school.
We currently have one space on our Governing Body. Governors are volunteers that support the Headteacher in making strategic decisions about the school. Please do contact us if you would like to find out more.

We have a large army of local volunteers who help with reading, gardening, running the library and a host of other things! If you are interested in volunteering, please contact our volunteer coordinator Mr Lockwood. All volunteer roles within school are subject to safeguarding checks, but we would love to hear from you if you think that you can support our work.

Miss Amie Bowers (Headteacher) & Mrs Gemma Elliott (Chair of Governors)