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Cuckfield  
West Sussex  
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**Minutes of the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Parish Council  
held at 7.30pm on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025**

**Present:** Mr A Burton (Chairman), Mr P Ceccherini, Mrs M Dormer, Mrs A King, Mr S Oversby-Powell, Mr A Podmore and Mr A Symonds

**In attendance:** Ms N Ripert (Clerk) & Mrs K West (Communications & Admin Officer)

**Public Question Time:** None

**FC001 To elect a Chairman and Vice Chairman**

Cllr Burton presided for this item. Nominations for the office of Chairman of the Council were called.

Cllr Symonds proposed and Cllr Dormer seconded that Cllr Andrew Burton be nominated as Chairman. There being no further nominations, Cllr Burton was elected as Chairman to the Parish Council for the Council year 2025-26.

Nominations for the office of Vice Chairman were called. Cllr King proposed and Cllr Ceccherini seconded that Cllr Martin Sheldon be nominated as Vice Chairman. There were no further nominations and Cllr Sheldon was duly elected as Vice Chairman to the Parish Council for the Council year 2025-26.

**FC002 To receive Declarations of Acceptance of Office of Chairman and Vice Chairman or, if permitted by Council, before or at a later date fixed by the Council**

Declarations of Acceptance of Office were signed in the presence of the Proper Officer at the meeting.

Cllr Burton then took the chair for the meeting and welcomed members to the fortieth annual meeting of Cuckfield Parish Council.

**FC003 To receive apologies for absence**

Cllrs Sheldon and White offered their apologies which were noted.

**FC004 To receive notification of updated Councillors Register of Interests**

Councillors advised there were no changes to their register of interests.

**FC005 To note the requirements of and resolve to adopt the Code of Conduct**

Requirements of the Code of Conduct were duly noted and adopted.

**FC006 To receive declarations of interest from Members in respect of any matter on the agenda. The disclosure must include the nature of the interest. If you become aware, during the meeting, of an interest that has not been disclosed under this item you must immediately disclose it**

None.

**FC007 To approve the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2025**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2025 were taken as read and confirmed as a true record.

**FC008 To receive a verbal report from the Chairman**

Cllr Burton opened by welcoming all Councillors to Cuckfield Parish Council for the upcoming year. Cllr Burton reminded the Council that long outstanding issues were still ongoing such as Cuckstye and Hanlye Lane and noted other actions where good progress had been made for example the development of the Angela Fox Nature Garden and the strategic plans for the use of Village Hall. Since the outcome of the Horsham district plan, Cllr Burton was keen to understand the strategy for the Mid Sussex District Plan and to know if Cuckstye was part of that strategy.

**FC009 To note the Full Council Action List**

The action items were noted.

**FC010 To approve Bank Reconciliation Statements for March 2025 for Unity Trust and CCLA**

The bank reconciliation statements were reviewed, approved and signed.

**FC011 To review the 2024-25 finances to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025**

Council reviewed the budget and noted the final income for 2024-25 was approx. £50k higher than the forecast income, which broadly reflected the variance underspend for the year.

**FC012 To review and (re)adopt Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.**

Council reviewed and resolved to re-adopt the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

**FC013 To consider a review of the standing committees for the Year 2025-26, appoint and review their terms of reference and delegation of functions, receive nominations for membership of committees and consider the appointment of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the committees:**

**a. Assets, Community & Environment**

Cllr Symonds was nominated by Cllr Steve OP and seconded by Cllr Podmore as Chairman.

Cllr Podmore was nominated by Cllr Symonds and seconded by Cllr Dormer as Vice Chairman.

Cllrs Ceccherini, Dormer, Symonds and White were additional members

**b. Community Buildings**

Cllr King was nominated by Cllr Dormer and seconded by Cllr Symonds as Chairman.

Cllr Symonds was nominated by Cllr King and seconded by Cllr Burton as Vice Chairman. Cllrs Oversby-Powell and White were additional members.

**c. Planning**

Cllr Oversby-Powell was nominated by Cllr Symonds and seconded by Cllr Podmore as Chairman.

Cllr Dormer was nominated by Cllr Steve OP and seconded by Cllr Burton as Vice Chairman.

Cllrs King, Podmore and White were additional members.

**d. Roads & Traffic**

Cllr White was nominated by Cllr Burton seconded by Cllr King as Chairman.

Cllr Ceccherini was nominated by Cllr Burton and seconded by Cllr Podmore as Vice Chairman.

Cllrs King and Oversby-Powell were additional members.

**e. Human Resources**

Cllr Burton was nominated by Cllr Ceccherini and seconded by Cllr King as Chairman.

Cllr Sheldon was nominated by Cllr Burton and seconded by Cllr King as Vice Chairman.

Cllrs King and Oversby-Powell were additional members.

**f. Finance & General Purposes**

Cllr Sheldon was nominated by Cllr Burton and seconded by Cllr Symonds as Chairman.

Cllr Symonds was nominated by Cllr Burton and seconded by Cllr Steve Oversby-Powell as Vice Chairman.

Cllrs King, Oversby-Powell and White were additional members.

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman were ex-officio members of all committees.

The Clerk would prepare and circulate a Committees list and the terms of reference to all Members.

**FC014 To consider the Working Groups required for 2025-26 and confirm membership:**

- a. **Cuckfield Village Hall Redevelopment**  
Cllrs King, Podmore, Sheldon, Symonds and White
- b. **Neighbourhood Plan**  
Cllrs Burton, Dormer, Oversby-Powell, Podmore, Sheldon, Symonds and White
- c. **Biodiversity Action Plan**  
Cllrs Podmore and Dormer

**FC015 To appoint representatives to and agree arrangements for reporting back from:**

- a. **West Sussex Association of Local Councils**  
Cllrs Burton & Sheldon
- b. **Cuckfield Museum Trust**  
Cllrs King & Symonds
- c. **Blunts Wood Steering Committee**  
Cllr Podmore
- d. **Emergency Planning Liaison Group**  
Cllr Symonds
- e. **Neighbourhood Watch**  
Cllr White
- f. **Mid Sussex Association of Local Councils**  
Cllr Sheldon
- g. **Town & Parish Strategic Liaison Group**  
Cllr Domer & Parish Clerk
- h. **Speedwatch**  
Cllr White
- i. **PCC check the meaning**  
Cllr Sheldon

**FC016 To review and agree authorised signatories on the Council's bank accounts (currently Cllrs Burton, King, Podmore, Sheldon and White)**

Council resolved to retain existing signatories.

**FC017 To reconfirm eligibility and approve the continued use of the General Power of Competence (GPC). The Criteria for the GPC as defined in S8 of the Localism Act 2011 (having an appropriately qualified Clerk and at least two thirds of the Council being elected) is met by the Council**

The Clerk confirmed that the Council still met the criteria for the GPC as defined in S8 of the Localism Act 2011 (having an appropriately qualified Clerk and at least two thirds of the Council being elected), and Council noted the continued adoption of the General Power of Competence.

**FC018 To approve the continuation of the following arrangements:**

- a. **current scheme of delegation to committees, staff and other local authorities in line with legislation, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation**
- b. **ongoing partnership (including legal arrangements) with other local authorities, not for profit bodies and businesses**
- c. **ongoing direct debits and annual continual contracts and agreements**

Council noted existing arrangements had not changed and resolved they should continue.

**FC019 To note the appointment of the Internal Auditor for 2025-26**

Council noted the instruction of Mulberry & Co for 2025-26 and that it was the final year of their

appointment. The Clerk was instructed to make a note of the date of the end of their contract and the Council would then be able to make a formal decision for the appointment of the next Internal Auditor for the year 2026-27 and thereafter.

**FC020 To review and confirm arrangements for the following items (copies available in the Parish Office):**

**a. Inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment**

**b. Insurance arrangements in respect of all insured risks**

Council reviewed and resolved to accept all arrangements in place for the above items. The Clerk advised that new purchases had been added to the fixed assets list, and old items decommissioned.

**FC021 To note and approve the effectiveness of the Audit Plan and the Council's Internal Audit and Internal Control Procedures**

Council noted and approved the effectiveness of the Audit Plan and the Council's Internal Audit and Internal Control Procedures.

**FC022 To consider organising a summer promotion for the hire of the Queen's Hall to boost and encourage wedding bookings**

Council resolved that a marketing plan should be considered to promote the Queen's Hall and Village Hall and agreed to have a one-page advert published in Cuckfield Life regularly and in other newsletters around the area. Council agreed to discuss the marketing strategy of both halls at the next Community Buildings meeting.

**FC023 To receive an update regarding the development of the Angela Fox Nature Garden in 2025**

Council agreed the garden was looking really good and noted all the progress made. 725 plants were being planted in the last two beds that were currently being worked on. Council agreed that once the planting was completed the garden was to be open to the public during the CPC office hours 10:00-15:00 Monday to Friday. This would be advertised on CPC website and social media. Council also noted that the garden should be complemented with the installation of a couple of new benches, a bird bath and insect hotels.

**FC024 To consider the replacement of the metal gate and fence at the village hall located nearer the building**

Council agreed to the replacement of the metal gate and fence at the village hall located nearer the building.

**FC025 Confidential Business: To consider whether to resolve to exclude the press, broadcast media and public (pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960) during +consideration of the following confidential business to be conducted.**

**a) Chapel Lease**

Council agreed to the proposed lease extension with the condition that a break clause was added to the terms of the lease and to include a rent review every two years.

**b) Staff matters**

Council agreed to the Clerk's salary increase.

**FC026 To note items arising after the preparation of this Agenda which the Chairman agrees to take as urgent. Such matters will be for noting only or deferral to a future meeting only**

The Clerk raised the matter of the ongoing claim with UK Bride and shared with Council the advice received from the solicitor. The solicitor was to be made aware of the numerous companies who were in the same situation and the cases that had won did so on the basis of misrepresentation. Council suggested to demonstrate that the leads received during the three-month trial were bogus leads.

Meeting closed at 9:14pm

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

**Future Meeting:** 12<sup>th</sup> June 2025