

GRAFFHAM PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2026 at 18:30

The Pavilion, Graffham Recreation Ground, Graffham

	ACTION
<u>PRESENT</u> Cllr Gillian Charlesworth, Cllr John Bracey, Cllr Colin Barker, Cllr Simon Longman, Cllr Hilary Major and Parish Clerk Amy Harte.	
<u>IN ATTENDANCE</u> Michael Blunt (Graffham Parish News)	
81/26 AGENDA ITEM 1: WELCOME Cllr Charlesworth welcomed all to the meeting.	
82/26 AGENDA ITEM 2: APOLOGIES To receive apologies for absence and approve reasons for absence. Cllr Tom Richardson (County Councillor WSCC) Cllr John Cross (District Councillor CDC)	
83/26 AGENDA ITEM 3: DECLARATION OF INTERESTS None	
84/26 AGENDA ITEM 4: MINUTES To approve as an accurate record the minutes of the Full Parish Council meeting held on 1 July, 21 July and 19 August 2026. (These minutes have been circulated to members prior to this Meeting.) The Council RESOLVED to accept the minutes of the meetings of 1 July, 21 July and 19 August as a true record. Action Points from the previous meeting: 1. East Lavington website changes made but domain still remains- Cllr Longman reported that the main domain name cannot be changed. It is not an issue for Graffham Parish Council but not worth setting up a new independent domain for East Lavington Parish Council considering the plans to merge.	Clerk to subscribe to Scribe accounts for the Parish Council accounting systems. Clerk to set up a schedule of regular payments Clerk & Cllr Charlesworth to formulate

2. Accounting systems report circulated – Clerk. The options were discussed and it was RESOLVED to subscribe to Scribe Accounts for the Parish Council and look at adding the Pavilion, Recreation Ground and Empire Hall perhaps for the next financial year, allowing for it to be budgeted and properly discussed with the respective committees. 3. Defibrillators – service checks completed – Clerk Cllr Bracey to send the Clerk the contact details for the company that co-ordinate the emergency services. 4. Annual Audit complete. CIL balance split but neither expire this or next year. 5. Schedule of regular payments TBC – Clerk will do this when the accounting system is set up. 6. Policies – still to complete- Clerk & Cllr Charlesworth (village resident participation in resilience planning requested and several responses received) Emergency plan discussed, Clerk & Cllr Charlesworth to put this together.	the Emergency and resilience plan.
85/26 AGENDA ITEM 5: VISITORS' QUESTIONS / PUBLIC PARTICIPATION None.	
86/26 AGENDA ITEM 6: CDC REPORT CLLR JOHN CROSS (not present) CDC Matters August 2026 In the Summer edition of the 'Initiatives', which all residents receive in the post, there are several really interesting articles. The first I want to highlight is the on pages 8 and 9 concerning the planning process. It's a useful oversight to the process and what the planning officers must consider with every application. In the coming months further change is on its way, as the government restrict what the elected Councillors and the by-partisan Planning Committee can do in the interest of their ward residents. The number of applications that will come to the committee will be severely reduce, members will not have the ability to request applications in their ward come to planning committee, these will now be dealt with by CDC planning officers according to the policy laid out in the article in 'Initiatives'. If I was being cynical the notion of 'devolution' is to pass more powers away from central government to local people, so they have a say on the things that effect their lives, this government impositions does the opposite. As the CDC cabinet member responsible for Culture and Sports, I was delighted to be part of the negotiations for the new provided of the leisure centres at Midhurst and Chichester. This new contract is both financially beneficial to the council and therefore us, but it also means the buildings are being improved and the facilities updated, this month both sites will have new gym equipment. There will also be an outreach programme 'Wellness on Wheels' which will travel around the district. I urge those that can not travel easily to get in touch with 'More Active' to make sure it comes to your village. When I was first appointed to the CDC cabinet position, one of the first things that I launched was the crowd funding to save the 'Stopham Mount'. The funding that saved the Saxon sword mount, found in Stopham, raised enough money not only	

to save the jewelled mount but also to have a purpose-built display case for it too. The 'mount' is now on display in the Novium Museum in Chichester. Finally, those small business, new and old, that are looking to innovate or diversify should look at the business grants that are available CDC, look on the website www.chichester.gov.uk search grants and concessions and you will find the different grants that are available (there are others, besides business grants). I am keen that our rural businesses should be looking at these grants, traditionally the bigger settlements have taken the larger portion of this funding, and I hope that can change. John Cross Fittleworth Ward District Councillor	
87/26 AGENDA ITEM 7: WSCC REPORT CLLR TOM RICHARDSON (not present) No report sent.	
88/26 AGENDA ITEM 8: DESIGN STATEMENT Due to national planning policy any new design statements will not carry and weight. Chris Major to be informed. Cllr Charlesworth to write to him.	Cllr Charlesworth to write to Chris Major.
89/26 AGENDA ITEM 9: PROJECTS i) Speed limit plan. Application for a Community Highways Scheme submitted on 31 July following successful petition (200 signatures). Several versions of the proposals in map form have been submitted following WSCC requests for clarification. Results of initial assessment awaited. Cllr Major brought up the issue of why it was so difficult considering 20mph limits are on major roads (going from 40mph): Graffham is an obvious candidate for such measures. ii) Closed Churchyard. Cllr Charlesworth has reviewed all GPC and Parish Meeting minutes from 1960s and 1970s and concludes it is clear GPC is responsible for the closed churchyard. Evidence attached. A discussion concluded that cost effective solutions should be found to repair the wall. iii) Recreation Ground Bookings & Finance. Recreation Ground transfer of land in progress. The Parish Council needs to find a conveyancing solicitor to handle this. Several local people suggested. The Council extends thanks to Neil McLean for his assistance with the preparation of the contract. iv) First Aid and bleed kits. To discuss whether there is a need for bleed kits as part of village first aid provision. As the council have little knowledge of the bleed kits no decision was made. The defibrillator courses at the Pavilion on Saturday 26 September are filling up.	Cllr Bracey to get a quote for the repair of the churchyard wall. Cllr Bracey to ask the individuals identified in the discussion to provide an estimate. Cllr Charlesworth to write to Neil McLean and thank him for his support.

					Cllr Charlesworth to investigate costs and features of and report back. bleed kits																																																												
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AGENDA ITEM 10: PROPOSED MERGER GRAFFHAM AND ELPC UPDATE. Cllrs Charlesworth and Longman (in his capacity as ELPC Chairman) attend the CDC Boundary Review Panel (BRP) meeting on 1 September. The panel approved the request for a Community Governance review which CDC will now put in hand. The timetable has slipped as the previous BRP was postponed but it is still hoped the matter will be settled and the Councils will have merged before 2027 elections.																																																																	
91/26					Clerk to investigate a new account for Graffham Recreation Ground Payments, submit a claim for 44 hours of overtime (from April to September) and inform payroll of the increase in Clerk salary backdated to 1 April. Also to claim Office allowance monthly.																																																												
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Cllr Barker questioned the Recreation Gound payments; this was discussed in relation to the VAT reclaim and the Annual Audit. It was suggested that along with the change in accounting system we open a new bank account for Graffham Recreation Ground transactions.																																																																	
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ii) Approve accounts to date. The Council RESOLVED to accept the accounts to date as circulated. iii) Clerk salary scale increase plus overtime and office allowance. It was RESOLVED to accept the Clerk overtime of 44 hours, salary increase backdated to 1st April and office allowance. iv) Car park extension grant dependent on planning application. Cllr Bracey contacting SDNP/CDC to discuss the scope of the proposals. The council discussed the original surface of the proposed area. vi) Re- tender the garden maintenance contract. The council had tried to create a scope of works some time ago. This needs to include: Closed Churchyard, War Memorial, Guillods Acer tree area and Pound Corner - mowing and strimming where required.	investigate the need for planning permission further. Clerk to begin the process to retender the maintenance contract.
92/26 AGENDA ITEM 12: PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND DECISIONS To consider the Council's observations on the SDNP planning applications made since last meeting: SDNP/25/03160/FUL The Lavington Stud , The Drive, East Lavington, West Sussex, GU28 0NQ (Amended Plans and Description) Restoration and regeneration of Lavington Stud and Estate with a new environmental farming and management regime supported by development proposals on two sites comprising: Home Farm: main stud stables area and office. Demolition of C20th stable ranges and barns and the construction of a new principal Estate dwelling with pool and tennis court; renovation and alteration and change of use of traditional courtyard buildings to form 7 no. self-contained holiday lets, offices and a multifunctional space for education, Estate meeting room, and ancillary residential and tourist visitor use; retention of other buildings as existing stables and storage; and Callows (alternative to implemented scheme SDNP/18/00938/FUL): Renovation and alteration of existing buildings to facilitate a change of use to form 7 no. dwellings; demolition of existing bungalow and replacement with two dwellings; renovation, alteration and change of use of existing equestrian buildings to enterprise units within Use Class E(g). Retention of the existing portal framed barn for agricultural storage. Comments already submitted to SDNP. Any further comments required by 15 September 2026. To note decisions made on planning applications decided since the last meeting: SDNP/25/01181/FUL Tangletrees, The Street, Graffham, West Sussex, GU28 0QA Replacement dwelling, ancillary building and associated landscaping including ha-ha and pond. Appeal on conditions imposed on the planning permission granted. Comments submitted on both the appeal and the discharge of conditions. SDNP/26/02777/HOUS Old Perrots House Perrott Lane Graffham West Sussex GU28 0NZ. Removal of existing glazed roof, infilling of affected roof and addition of a new rooflight. External alterations and changes to fenestration. Comments Submitted.	No new responses to submit.

SDNP/26/01543/HOUS Fairhurst, The Street, Graffham, West Sussex, GU28 0QA Replacement of existing conservatory with new single storey extension, and formation of new access and driveway. Application in progress. SDNP/25/04998/HOUS The Folly Graffham Common Road Graffham West Sussex GU28 0PT. Erection of garage with pitched dormer windows and conservation rooflights. Application in Progress. SDNP/26/00022/HOUS The Folly Graffham Common Road Graffham West Sussex GU28 0PT. Replacement of existing garage and erection of two storey extensions to dwelling. Application Approved SDNP/26/00943/HOUS Yew Cottage 1 The Street Graffham West Sussex GU28 0QA. Erection of single-storey extension. Comments required by 30 June. A no objection response was submitted. Application in progress. iii) All Parishes Planning training 14 & 15 October 2026 East Pallant House 1400.	
93/26 AGENDA ITEM 13: REPORTS Empire Hall. The Hall AGM has taken place and new trustees have been found to fill project, bookings and treasurer roles. ii) Environment a. Wildfire risks update. Several interactions with local bodies, including SDNP, WSCC (Tom Richardson), Leconfield Estate and Andrew Griffith MP. The picture was not terribly encouraging, with an evident lack of coordination between bodies – which was at least recognised and being addressed. It is clear this is an issue that needs to remain front of mind and be addressed in the village communications (on prevention) and resilience planning (response). Cllr Charlesworth report of Leconfield discussions attached as Annex A. Cllr Barker reported a few trees that had fallen. b. Sewage issue Pound Cottage. Miles Amin had reported sewage in his garden to Cllr Barker. The cause was a fat ball and wipes. There was concern about the effect on wildlife as well as residents. Cllr Barker feels that this problem may worsen with additional pressures on the elderly system caused by new developments. Suggested that the parish council communicate the importance of not putting fat and wipes down the drain and continue to point out the issue when planning applications were made. Cllrs met with Southern water (SW) about the leak at the war memorial. The SW engineer does not believe it is a leak and thinks it is a spring. They have however agreed to dig again to investigate. Dig to take place on 30 November, supervised by the engineer. iii) Highways, Byways & Footpaths a. Highway rangers pilot programme - Cllr Major has sent a list of highways issues to them. A few vegetation issues and dead overhanging branches have	PC to put a regular notice into the Parish Magazine regarding the importance of correct disposal of waste.

been addressed by Cllr Major. Logs on the verge near the church investigated by Cllr Major, as it is clear highways do not like them being placed. The logs have since been removed. Footpaths – Cllr Major is a footpath ranger and has been working on issues on Footpath 3429. iv) The Recreation Ground and Pavillion. The annual fete had been a great success, final tally shows a net profit of £6240. Thanks to the volunteers and the sponsorship from the Woodcote. Starting at 1300 worked well, food sales went very well. Discussion on the use of card payment systems which had again failed early in the event. v) Selham & Ambersham A representative from this area would be desirable.	
94/26 AGENDA ITEM 14: AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS Resilience/emergency policy Budget 2027-2028	Clerk to put items mentioned on the Agenda for November 4 2026
95/26 AGENDA ITEM 15: Dates of Forthcoming Meetings Wednesday 4th November 2026 Wednesday 6th January 2027 Wednesday 3rd March 2027 Wednesday 5th May 2027	

Meeting closed 2015

Annex A

Record of meeting with Leconfield Estate by Cllr Charlesworth

Four Councillors (Charlesworth, Bracey, Barker and Longman acting in his capacity as Chairman of East Lavington) met Neil Humphris and **Tom Bridge (Assistant Agent)** at the site of cleared rhododendrons along Duncton Common Road. We expressed village concerns about the enhanced risk of fire caused by the branches.

Neil made a number of points in response. He said that leaving branches following clearance is a widely adopted woodland management practice and is generally undertaken for various

environmental reasons. Over time, the material breaks down naturally, returning nutrients to the soil, providing habitat for wildlife and avoiding the environmental impacts associated with burning or removing large quantities of vegetation. It is also a much more efficient way of eradicating this non-native invasive plant because the roots are removed and only a small amount of regrowth occurs afterwards, which means only a very small amount of herbicide has to be used by comparison to cutting them.

He said that Leconfield Estate recognises that during prolonged periods of exceptional heat and drought, any woodland fuel load warrants careful consideration. With that particular woodland and soil structure there was already an identified fire risk, which the rhododendron clearance has not increased. He confirmed that Leconfield continually monitor conditions across the Estate and review their management practices in light of seasonal fire risk. Where necessary, they will assess whether any additional measures are appropriate in higher-risk locations.

During the conversation a number of possible avenues were explored such as chipping the dead branches, Neil confirmed that this was not realistic as the roots and soil/stones clinging to them would destroy any chipper. Removing the dead branches was also not feasible because of the vast quantity. It was agreed that pile heights could be reduced. (Post meeting note from Neil: I have researched this further and this is not feasible. If we tried to spread the piles as suggested, we would not be able to monitor and manually control the regrowth, never mind the cost. When we do some more, we will try to windrow the material and regularly track over with the digger to reduce the bulk of the material. This is untried, so we are not sure if it is feasible.)

Neil said that the Estate appreciates the parish councils bringing their concerns to their attention and remain committed to managing the Estate's woodlands responsibly, balancing public safety with good environmental stewardship.

We agreed to keep in touch on fire safety risks and thanked Neil and his colleague Tom for their time."