

**HAYWARDS HEATH TOWN COUNCIL
MEETING OF HAYWARDS HEATH TOWN COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Monday 29th September 2025

Councillors: Abdul Bashar
Mohtesem Billah
Nick Chapman
Anne-Marie Cooke
Sandy Ellis
Stephanie Inglesfield **
Anne-Marie Lucraft
Paul Lucraft
Allan Murray
Alison Rees **
Duncan Pascoe
Anthony Platts **
Kirsten Sutton
Sinead Walsh
Leila Wilson

Apologies Absent***

Also present: Town Clerk, RFO, Committee Clerk

37. A Moment of reflection

Members paused for a moment of reflection, which was led by Town Mayor Cllr Duncan Pascoe.

38. Apologies

Member	Reason
Cllr S Inglesfield	Work commitment
Cllr A Platts	Ill health
Cllr A Rees	Holiday

39. Public Forum

There was one member of the public present.

40. To confirm the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 28th July 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 28th July 2025 were taken as read, confirmed as a true record and duly signed by the Chair.

41. To receive Declarations of Interest from Members in respect to any matter on the agenda

There were none.

42. To dispose of any business outstanding from the last meeting and Town Clerk updates

The Town Clerk said that the Community Governance Response had been submitted and that this would be discussed further in Item 10. He said that a meeting had been requested with the Section 106 manager at Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) and a date for this was pending. He said the Town Council had now paid its annual membership fees to National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and West Sussex Association of Local Councils (WSALC). He said that the response to the Local Government

consultation had been submitted and the Town Council would now be awaiting the next consultation stage.

43. To note the Mayoral Engagements and any announcements

Town Mayor Cllr Pascoe spoke about events he had recently attended, highlighting;

- The Guiding and Scouts West Sussex Jamboree at the Ardingly Showground on 6th August, which brought Guides and Scouts together from around the world, and which he attended with the Deputy Mayor.
- The Town Hall Open Day and Museum on 9th August, which showed the history of the town and received great feedback. He extended his thanks to Publicity Officer Kelly Lewis and other Town Hall officers for the organisation of this and said that there is hope to repeat this event in future, with involvement from the Haywards Heath Community Arts and Culture Board.
- The 80th anniversary of the VJ event on 15th August and then the Battle of Britain 95th anniversary commemoration event, which had over 200 young people involved.
- A day he spent with John Bines of Good Neighbours CARE on 29th August, spending a day in the life of one of their volunteers, who help people in the community with things like transport to appointments and doing their shopping.
- Discussions he had had with two new Haywards Heath community magazines; Haywards Heath Handbook and Haywards Heath Life.
- The colourful Onam Festival held at the Princess Royal Hospital, which he had attended with the Deputy Mayor on 4th September.
- The Dame Vera Lynn Children's Charity Walk on 6th September, which he had completed alongside the Deputy Mayor. He thanked the Deputy Mayor for his efforts and said that overall, the walk had raised over £20,000.
- The Town Council's Town Day event on 13th September, which was very well attended despite the weather. He extended his thanks to Community Engagement Manager Imogen Wilson for organising the event and to Town Hall officers for their work on the day.
- Hosting a visit from the Twinning Association Germany Exchange Students from Oathall College on 19th September, alongside Cllr Sutton and the Deputy Mayor.

Deputy Mayor Cllr Bashar spoke about;

- Completing the Dame Vera Lynn Children's Charity walk on 6th September. He thanked Members for donating to his sponsoring and said that he had raised £800.
- Attending the South East Coast Ambulance Service's Annual Meeting at K2 in Crawley on 12th September, which highlighted the wonderful work done by staff behind the scenes, paramedics and the NHS in general.
- Visting Crossways Care Home to celebrate resident Dorothy Taylor's 100th birthday on Sept 18th.

The Town Clerk spoke about attending the St Peter and St James Hospice's 50th anniversary Tea Party on 11th Sept, due to unavailability of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. He said this event thanked all people and organisations who had kindly donated to the hospice over the years. He mentioned the Hospice's Shine Bright Walk which would be held on 4th October and encouraged Members to get involved.

Cllr Ellis thanked the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for attending so many events and asked the Town Clerk about the VE and VJ Day commemoration bench that the Town Council had ordered. The Town Clerk stated that the bench had arrived and placement of this would now be arranged.

44. To receive for noting the resolutions of the following Committees

(i) Planning Committee - **MINS. 34-64**

The reception and note of the resolutions of the Planning Committees, dated 4th August 2025 – **MINS. 34-42**, 26th August 2025 – **MINS. 43-54** and 15th September 2025 – **MINS. 55-64** were agreed without discussion.

(ii) Environment and General Purposes Committee

The reception and note of the resolution of the Environmental and General Purposes Committee dated 8th September 2025 – **MINS. 15-27** were agreed without discussion.

(iii) Policy and Finance Committee

The reception and note of the resolution of the Policy and Finance Committee dated 22nd September 2025 – **MINS. 17-31** were agreed without discussion.

45. To receive the Town Council's Financial Regulations

The RFO presented the revised Financial Regulations and highlighted the tracked changed and amendments which had been made following the Policy and Finance Committee's review of the Financial Regulations on 22nd September 2025.

The Town Clerk spoke briefly about the revised Financial Regulations and said that for audit purposes, the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) would now come through Full Council to approve and not the Policy and Finance Committee.

Action: RFO to circulate updated Financial Regulations document.

Without comment;

Members **RESOLVED** to **ADOPT** the Town Council's Financial Regulations.

46. To receive for consideration the draft recommendations of the Community Governance Review

The Town Clerk stated that there was a second chance for representation regarding the proposed boundary changes to the north and south of the town which would take effect at the 2027 elections. He said that the Town Council had canvassed both affected areas by hand-delivered letter before the first consultation stage closed and that MSDC had reviewed this feedback. He summarised the Town Council's response to the initial consultation which objected to losing the northern ward of Haywards Heath and supported the two Rocky Lane wards coming into the Haywards Heath Town parish, due to the coalescence of the town and the fact that all of these residents use services in Haywards Heath. He added that the Town Council had also commented on the democratic level of representation regarding councillor and electorate ratios, expressing particular concern regarding the ratio in the Ashenground ward. He said that MSDC had recommended to the Scrutiny Committee that the northern ward stay within Haywards Heath and the Rocky Lane North and Rocky Lane South stay with Ansty and Staplefield.

Cllr P Lucraft said that it was still open for the Town Council to try and change the recommendation for the Rocky Lane wards to stay in Ansty and Staplefield, especially as responses from the public were relatively evenly balanced. He said that the lower responses in the Rocky Lane words could have been because it was recommending that they become part of Haywards Heath, so people dismissed it because they didn't need to reply because they wanted to be in Haywards Heath. He said that the Town Council

would need to canvas opinion and encourage residents in the Rocky Lane wards to make their own representations, as well as the Town Council itself making further representations. He added that the Rocky Lane wards were in the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan and if they ended up not being in Haywards Heath then their voices would not be heard. Regarding councillor numbers, he said that there had been an error around how MSDC understood councillor numbers in the Ashenground ward, especially if the Rocky Lane wards were brought in, adding that the reason the Town Council had recommended increasing councillor numbers in the Franklands ward was due to the proposed Hurstwood Lane development. He said that the panel had listened to the recommendations from the public but had not considered good community governance and the competence of the various authorities to carry out the role, adding that the issues of a town environment and urban area, which the Rocky Lane wards were part of, were not compatible with those of a collection of small hamlets and villages.

Cllr Ellis said that she attended the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 3rd Sept where this was discussed, and there was concern about the precept that would be lost by Ansty and Staplefield if the Rocky Lane wards moved into the Haywards Heath parish and there were comments about the Town Council possibly making some contribution. She said it would be useful to have the minutes of this meeting. *[At this point the RFO emailed Members the minutes of this meeting.]*

Cllr P Lucraft said that the precept issue had been raised and the main concern from Ansty and Staplefield was the loss of revenue, but these boundary changes wouldn't take effect until May 2027. He said that the Town Council would be prepared to look at assets and investment from Ansty Staplefield and potentially taking it off them. He said that local government reorganization also needed to be considered, as this may have an impact on how parish councils function and work together.

Cllr Sutton and Cllr Bashar asked whether any boundary changes would impact the proposed development at Hurstwood Lane. The Town Clerk stated that this would remain unaffected. Cllr P Lucraft said that the Town Council provides services that Rocky Lane residents use, but they do not pay anything towards it. He added that residents living in the Rocky Lane wards would want to use the facilities at the new development, especially as Ansty and Staplefield do not provide allotments, but it would cost them extra to do so if they were not in the Haywards Heath Town parish.

Cllr Pascoe said that the Rocky Lane wards were in the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan and not in the Ansty and Staplefield Plan and that you could not access these wards without driving through Haywards Heath. He added that other authority levels, Mid Sussex District Council and West Sussex County Council, already considered both Rocky Lane wards as part of Haywards Heath, all of which justifies their inclusion into the Haywards Heath Town Council parish area.

Cllr Sutton said that the MSDC recommendations disregarded the residents in the northern ward who said that they wanted to be in Lindfield, but they had not disregarded the opinion of residents in the Rocky Lane wards, so this was not a consistent approach.

The Town Clerk stated that a response would be written up based on Members' comments to support keeping the Haywards Heath north boundary unchanged, to challenge the decision to not move the Rocky Lane wards into the Town parish and to challenge the proposed councillor numbers in the Ashenground and Franklands wards, which would be passed to the Chairs Working Group before being submitted.

Action:

- Town Clerk to draft the Town Council's response to the second Community Governance Review consultation and pass this to the Chair's Working Group for sign off before submission.
- Town Clerk to circulate the finalised response to members.

Members **RESOLVED** to **DELEGATE** to the Town Clerk to provide the Town Council's response to the Community Governance Review challenging Mid Sussex District Council's recommendations to a) keep the Rocky Lane North and Rocky Lane South wards in the Ansty and Staplefield Parish and b) to increase the number of councillors in the Franklands ward but not in the Ashenground ward.

47. To receive a report regarding the formalisation of ward surgeries run by the Town Council

The Town Clerk presented the report which aimed to standardise Members' consultation with residents, with the support of Town Hall officers. He said that this would be a fluid process and Members were free to join with other wards to hold surgeries or hold them on their own. He said that these were meant to be drop in sessions for residents to talk about issues they face in the town.

Cllr AM Lucraft said she would prefer surgeries to be held on a 3 monthly basis, adding that there was a lack of potential venues in the Franklands ward, besides the village hall. She said that they had always been huge fans of surgeries, they were a great idea and that Members should definitely be reaching out into the community. She added that having the Community Warden in attendance at these would provide peace of mind for security.

Cllr Ellis said that she strongly supported community engagement, that she had held ward surgeries as part of the Conservative Party and that she was happy to run a ward surgery in her own ward. She said she had no objections with wards joining together but that she would rather prefer to hold her own personal surgery, which she would like to organise on her own schedule to suit her needs. She added that she would like to hold these at the Town Hall, as in recent years Britain had seen two MPs murdered at these type of events, so risk assessment and security was a major concern.

Cllr Pascoe said that he was pleased to hear that Cllr Ellis had been holding her own surgeries. He said that he envisioned this to be a creation of guidelines to show new councillors that there was a recommendation that surgeries should be held every 2-3 months.

Cllr Ellis asked about how the reporting of issues would work, as the Town Council only had limited powers and many issues would require District or County involvement. Cllr Pascoe said having a regular surgery schedule would allow Town Hall officers to know who was holding them, when and where and a feedback system could be created.

Cllr P Lucraft said that in previous experience, a lot of issues raised by residents were about local issues that could be fed back to officers and escalated to the relevant authorities. He suggested that following each surgery Members could complete a feedback form showing how many people attended, what their issues were and how the Town Council could manage or escalate these issues. The Town Clerk said that officers often signposted residents to the relevant authorities, as well as offering to help them make this contact/referral if needed.

Cllr Ellis asked whether the website could include the facility for residents to enter their post codes and find out who their relevant councillors were as there was a lot of

confusion about this. The Town Clerk said that a ward map was currently embedded into the website, but a post code search system could be looked into.

Action:

- Town Clerk to contact Branding Box to access the possibility of a post code search system.
- Town Clerk to draw up guidelines for regular Ward Surgeries based on Members' comments, including possible feedback forms.

Members **RESOLVED** to **AUTHORISE** the introduction of Ward Surgeries in the Town, with the inclusion of a feedback form for each surgery.

48. To consider any urgent items the Mayor has received.

There Mayor reminded Members about his charity Quiz Night which would be held on Friday 17th October and encouraged Members to attend.

Meeting closed at 7.55pm