

**SHADOW COUNCIL FOR HORSHAM PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SHADOW HORSHAM PARISH COUNCIL
HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, ALBERY HOUSE, HORSHAM
ON TUESDAY 24TH FEBRUARY 2026 COMMENCING AT 6pm**

Present Members: District Councillors: M. Boffey, N. Emery, C. Franke, A. Frankland, J. Mercer, J. Olson (Chair) and D. Skipp

Cllr. T. Mitchell – Chair of Denne Neighbourhood Council, Cllr. D. Sumpter (Vice-chair)– Chair of Forest Neighbourhood Council and Cllr. M. Warrack – Chair of Trafalgar Neighbourhood Council.

In attendance: Gill Gray (Interim Clerk) and Melissa Stallard (Democratic Services Officer)

SC/01/02/26	Public Forum There were no members of the public in attendance.	
SC/02/02/26	Apologies for absence received and notification of substitute Members Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs. R. Fletcher – HDC meeting commitment, S. Raby – personal commitment and C. Trott – personal commitment. No apologies were received from Cllrs. C. Minto, C. Sweeney or from Mr. J. Steele.	
SC/03/02/26	Declarations of Interest Cllr. J. Olson declared an interest in Item 14 and confirmed he would take no part in the debate regarding the new Parish Council IT arrangements.	
SC/04/02/26	Minutes of the Shadow Council The Minutes of the Shadow Council meeting held on 26 th January 2026 were AGREED and were signed by the Chair and approved as a true record of the meeting. The Interim Clerk reported that the title for J. Steele and position were updated following feedback. It was RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Shadow Council meeting held on 26th January 2026 be signed and approved as a true record of the meeting.	
SC/05/02/26	Elections for Horsham Parish Council The Horsham Parish Council elections will take place on Thursday 7 th May 2026; all the details and information that relates to these elections can be found on the elections webpage on Horsham District Council - https://www.horsham.gov.uk/council-democracy-and-elections/elections/upcoming-elections . Members noted the information prepared by the Interim Clerk.	
SC/06/02/26	Interim Venue for Horsham Parish Council Members considered the report prepared by the Interim Clerk. Following a short debate, it was decided to proceed with Freedom Works Courtyard as the office space and using Park Barn for evening meetings for the new Parish Council. This was felt to be the most viable option after considering all three options; this is an interim option until the new Parish Council can consider more permanent solutions. Actions	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interim Clerk to proceed with arrangements for the signing of the Agreement for Freedom Works membership and to secure a five-desk space for the office space from 20th April 2026. • Interim Clerk to provisionally book Park Barn for one day a week starting from week commencing 18th May 2026. <p>It was moved by Cllr. D. Sumpter and seconded by Cllr. D. Skipp and RESOLVED: that a five-desk space in Freedom Works Courtyard be secured for office space and to hire Park Barn for evening meetings for the new Parish Council.</p>	
SC/07/02/26	<p>Draft Governance Documents</p> <p>Members considered the second draft of the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct. During the debate, the following comments were captured:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An alteration log will be maintained and shared with the new Parish Council to assist keeping track of any changes. • SO3i to be amended to remove the requirement to stand when speaking. • SO3b and SO3c to be combined with coloured dots for both Full Council and Committee meetings. • Minor grammatical updates made. • Financial Regulation 5.15 fifth bullet point updated to include “excluding VAT.” <p>Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interim Clerk to update documents and circulate revised versions. • Interim Clerk to prepare and maintain an alteration log. <p>It was moved by Cllr. J. Mercer and seconded by Cllr. D. Skipp and RESOLVED: that the draft Standing Orders be adopted for recommendation to Horsham Parish Council. Two Members abstained.</p> <p>It was moved by Cllr. N. Emery and seconded by Cllr. A. Frankland and RESOLVED: that the draft Financial Regulations be adopted for recommendation to Horsham Parish Council. Two Members abstained.</p> <p>It was moved by Cllr. N. Emery and seconded by Cllr. J. Mercer and RESOLVED: that the draft Code of Conduct be adopted for recommendation to Horsham Parish Council. One Member abstained.</p> <p>Members considered the first draft of the Committee structure for the new Parish Council and Terms of Reference including the Scheme of Delegations. During the debate, the following comments were captured:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Bi-monthly” clarified as “every two months with no August meeting.” • Meeting frequencies clarified for the Policy and Resources and Human Resources Committees. <p>Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interim Clerk to update documents and circulate following the meeting. • Alteration log to be maintained for consideration by the new Parish Council. <p>It was moved by Cllr. C. Franke and seconded by Cllr. M. Boffey</p>	

	<p>and RESOLVED: that the draft Committee structure be adopted for recommendation to Horsham Parish Council.</p> <p>It was moved by Cllr. N. Emery and seconded by Cllr. M. Warrack and RESOLVED: that the draft Terms of Reference including the Scheme of Delegations be adopted for recommendation to Horsham Parish Council.</p>	
<p>SC/08/02/26</p>	<p>Policies and Core Documents</p> <p>Members considered draft policies/documents; comments were invited with a view to recommendation of adoption by the new Parish Council. The following were debated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints Procedure • Data Protection Policy • Publication Scheme • Statement of Internal Control • Training and Development Policy <p>During the debate, the following comments were captured:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Query if the SLCC Code of Conduct can be referenced in the contract for the Clerk. • Query regarding the need for a Safeguarding Policy. • Noticeboard locations are being identified and are likely to be transferred to the new Parish Council for sharing information including Agendas for meetings. • Complaints Procedure to be amended to reflect the procedure that relates to a complaint raised about the Clerk. • The Publication Scheme has been updated in the section that relates to the Services to reflect using the term "Street Furniture" that replaces the item seating and noticeboards to be added to the list. • Statement of Internal Control has been updated to reflect the appointment of a Chair to take place annually by the Council. <p>Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interim Clerk to explore if the SLCC Code of Conduct can be referenced in the permanent contract for the Clerk. • Interim Clerk to draft a Safeguarding Policy and dependent on capacity this may be shared at the March meeting of the Shadow Council. • Interim Clerk to continue conversation with HDC and identify noticeboards that can be utilised for new Parish Council. • Interim Clerk to update the draft documents and share with Members after the meeting. <p>It was moved by Cllr. N. Emery and seconded by Cllr. J. Mercer and RESOLVED: that the draft Complaints Procedure be adopted for recommendation to Horsham Parish Council.</p> <p>It was moved by Cllr. J. Mercer and seconded by Cllr. M. Warrack and RESOLVED: that the draft Data Protection Policy be adopted for recommendation to Horsham Parish Council. One Member abstained.</p> <p>It was moved by Cllr. A. Frankland and seconded by Cllr. J. Mercer and RESOLVED that the draft Publication Scheme be adopted for recommendation to Horsham Parish Council.</p> <p>It was moved by Cllr. N. Emery and seconded by Cllr. C. Franke and RESOLVED that the draft Statement of Internal Control be</p>	

	<p>adopted for recommendation to Horsham Parish Council. One Member abstained.</p> <p>It was moved by Cllr. M. Warrack and seconded by Cllr. C. Franke and RESOLVED that the draft Training and Development Policy be adopted for recommendation to Horsham Parish Council.</p>	
SC/09/02/26	<p>External Auditor for Horsham Parish Council</p> <p>Members considered the report prepared by the Interim Clerk that detailed correspondence received from the Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments. The Interim Clerk explained that the SAAA have advised that the new authority will be subject to the Limited Assurance Review Scheme for 2025/2026. During the debate the following comments were captured:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An explanation will be shared with Members that details the two distinct functions of internal and external audit in Local Councils. • A query was raised by one Member that related to the advice from the SAAA that a Limited Assurance Review will be necessary for 2025/2026 for Horsham Parish Council; the Interim Clerk will seek clarification from the SAAA and appointed auditor as soon as possible. <p>Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interim Clerk to circulate an explanation for both functions of internal and external audit with Members. • Interim Clerk to seek clarification from SAAA and the appointed auditor regarding the review process for the Limited Assurance Review for 2025/2026. <p>It was moved by Cllr. N. Emery and seconded by Cllr. C. Franke and RESOLVED that Option One be adopted and Horsham Parish Council remain in the central scheme for SAAA for the appointment of an external auditor.</p>	
SC/10/02/26	<p>Horsham Parish Council Website</p> <p>Members considered the report prepared by the Interim Clerk that related to three quotes obtained from Local Council website providers. The new website needs to be WCAG compliant and will include a suitable .gov.uk domain name. During the debate the following comments were captured:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online mapping used by Neighbourhood Councils could be considered once the website is established. • Renewal costs for a .gov.uk domain name are higher than standard domains. <p>It was moved by Cllr. M. Warrack and seconded by Cllr. J. Mercer and RESOLVED: that the new Parish Council website will be built and facilitated by Aubergine 262 Limited. One Member abstained.</p>	
SC/11/02/26	<p>Insurance Policy for new Parish Council</p> <p>Members considered two insurance quotations and agreed to proceed with Zurich Municipal Insurance.</p> <p>It was moved by Cllr. J. Mercer and seconded by Cllr. C. Franke and RESOLVED that Zurich Municipal Insurance were the preferred insurance company with the policy to be in place from 1st April 2026 for Horsham Parish Council.</p>	
SC/12/02/26	<p>IT Arrangements for new Parish Council</p> <p>Members considered a report prepared by the Interim Clerk that detailed three quotations from IT providers that all provide services for</p>	

	<p>existing Local Councils. Following the decision to use a serviced office for the interim period it was the recommendation of the Interim Clerk to use Cloudy IT for the provision of IT services for Horsham Parish Council.</p> <p>It was moved by Cllr. M. Boffey and seconded by Cllr. J. Mercer and RESOLVED that Cloudy IT be appointed as IT provider for Horsham Parish Council. Two Members abstained.</p>	
SC/13/02/26	<p>Communication Protocol for Shadow Council</p> <p>Following the first Shadow Council meeting it was agreed that the Chair and Interim Clerk should prepare a Communication Protocol for the Shadow Council. This was initially shared with Members for comment.</p> <p>Members noted the information.</p>	
SC/14/02/26	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>Members were invited to report on any correspondence received in their area that relates to the new Parish Council.</p> <p>The following comments were captured during the debate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was noted that a revised draft budget will be prepared by the Interim Clerk following the expenditure decisions and shared at the March meeting of the Shadow Council. • The March meeting is the final scheduled meeting and Members were invited to forward any item suggestions for the March Agenda to the Interim Clerk no later than Friday 13th March 2026. • An item that clarifies the transitional arrangements for HPC will be included on the Agenda for the March meeting of the Shadow Council. • An item is hoped to be included for the March meeting that details a visit involving the Twinning Association; the Interim Clerk awaits further details from the Secretary of the Twinning Association. • An item that covers the Horsham Neighbourhood Plan to be included for the March meeting. • The Agenda for March to include an item that relates to co-option for the new Parish Council. 	
SC/15/02/26	<p>Date for next Shadow Council Meeting</p> <p>The Shadow Council is meeting on Monday 23rd March 2026 at 6pm; the meeting to take place in the Council Chamber, Alberty House, Horsham.</p> <p>Members noted the information.</p>	

The Chair closed the meeting at 7.18pm.

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Date 25 March 2026