



Minutes of the Annual General and May Meeting of Rottingdean Parish Council held on Monday 11 May 2026

Present: Cllr Nixon (Chair), Cllr Lawrence, Cllr Levins, Cllr Evans, Cllr Poole, Cllr Cherrie, Cllr Snow, Cllr Dawes and Cllr Course.

C Hayes, Parish Clerk (minutes)

Public Gallery: Ward Cllr Earthy, Ward Cllr Fishleigh, Bernard Turnbull and Caroline Lane.

Annual General Meeting

1. Apologies for absence

None

2. Declarations of Parish Councillors' interests in agenda items.

None

Elections

3. Election of the Chair. Cllr Nixon was proposed by **Cllr Levins**, seconded by **Cllr Snow**, and was duly elected Chair by unanimous vote.

4. Election of Vice Chair of Parish Council. Cllr Lawrence was proposed by **Cllr Cherrie**, seconded by **Cllr Levins**, and was duly elected Vice Chair by unanimous vote.

Appointments

5. To appoint the Deputy Responsible Finance Officer. **Cllr Nixon** proposed that Cllr Poole continue as Deputy Responsible Finance Officer. This was seconded by Cllr Lawrence and **agreed by unanimous vote.**

6. **To agree Advisory Group membership and lead Councillors for 2026/27.** No changes were made to the existing membership of the advisory groups. **Cllr Nixon** noted that the Strategy and Communications Advisory Group had agreed recommendations on the placement of the two new Councillors, which would be put forward later in the meeting.
7. **To agree Parish Council representatives on Working Groups for 2026/27.** No changes were proposed to the current membership at this time.

Financial Regulations

8. **Review of Financial Regulations.** The Clerk advised that the Parish Council Financial Regulations had been revised and adopted in 2025 in line with the latest model regulations produced by the National Association of Local Councils.
9. **Review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and the annual governance statement (AGAR 2025/26 – Section 1).** The Clerk advised that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) required the Parish Council to report on the governance arrangements in place to ensure the proper management of public funds and financial risks, and to submit an accounting return for income and expenditure in 2025/26. Both documents would be published on the Parish Council website. The Clerk said that the governance report would be considered at this meeting and the accounting return at the June Council meeting. The Clerk then took the meeting through the governance statement. The Clerk noted that an issue had been raised by the external auditor on 2024/25 AGAR. The asset register was set up in 2024/25 although some assets were purchased in 2023/24. These were retrospectively recorded in the 2023/24 AGAR as requested by the external auditor. Approval of the governance statement was proposed by Cllr Poole, seconded by Cllr Evans and **agreed by unanimous vote**. It was then signed by the Clerk and the Chair.

Parish Council Governance

10. **Review of register of members' interests.** The Clerk reported that to his knowledge all declarations were up to date and that Cllr Dawes was in the process of completing his declaration form.
11. **Review of the asset register and insurance arrangements.** The Clerk advised that an asset register had been drawn up and circulated. The Clerk also confirmed that Council insurance was in order.
12. **Review of standing orders and policies.** The Clerk advised that a number of Standing Orders and policies were currently under review:
 - a Risk Management – The Clerk and Cllr Levins were reviewing this.
 - b Managing Projects – The Clerk and Cllr Nixon had completed the review.

c Communications and Website – The Clerk and Cllr Cherrie had completed the review.

The Clerk said that the revised policies and standing orders would be presented to the June Council meeting for adoption.

Parish Council meetings for 2026/27.

13. **Dates of meetings.** The dates for Council meetings and the Annual Village Meeting for 2026/27 were agreed.

Cllr Nixon (Chair) closed the AGM.

Ordinary Meeting

Public Questions

Caroline Lane said that the chestnut post-and-rope fence around the wildflower meadow looked excellent, as did the meadow itself. She had counted 16 varieties of wildflower in bloom, with more to come. Caroline also noted that the rope linking the wooden posts had become taut during recent rain and might need monitoring. **Cllr Nixon** thanked Caroline for her comments and her continuing interest in the meadow. **Cllr Evans** said he would follow up on the condition of the rope with the field maintenance contractor.

Action: Cllr Evans to speak to the field maintenance contractor about the condition of the wildflower meadow fence rope.

Ward Cllr Earthy provided a number of updates:

- He had recently met with Cllrs Poole and Lawrence about recent planning decisions.
- BHCC were considering the equipment list proposed by the Pebble Dashers voluntary group to support undercliff clearance. **Cllr Nixon** said the group had done excellent work, but in some areas where the beach reaches the wall, pebbles are washed back onto the undercliff after storms. This meant BHCC would still need to provide heavy equipment, and Cllr Nixon had contacted the BHCC seafront manager about this.
- Southern Water had requested permission to undertake works on the High Street following the recent drainage survey.
- Cllr Earthy was investigating the condition of the ramp linking Chailey Avenue with the Scout Hut, which was now buried in mud and impassable.

- There were issues with repair work being carried out on cottages near the Duck Inn on the High Street, where work had been stopped because it did not comply with heritage requirements.
 - He and Ward Cllr Fishleigh were pressing BHCC on the rising cost estimate for safety measures on the undercliff. **Cllr Nixon** said that the Parish Council had set aside funds to assist with any measures proposed at Rottingdean.
 - Local police community safety officers (PCSOs) were gathering data on incidents involving bicycles, e-bikes and scooters on the undercliff and asked the public to report all such incidents.

1. **Apologies for absence**

None

2. **Declarations of interest**

None

3. **Agreement of the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 13th April.** The minutes were agreed as drafted and signed by the Chair as a true record of the meeting.

4. **Matters Arising.**

None

5. **Action Log.** The Clerk provided the following update.

- i. 0202. Cllr Evans to follow up progress on setting up a working group to consider measures to protect lark nesting on Beacon Hill. **Cllr Evans** said that the Friends of Beacon Hill had produced a sign asking dog owners to keep dogs on leads from March to July, as required by the new Countryside Code. The sign was currently being consulted on. Carried Forward.
- ii. 0403. **Cllr Lawrence** to seek further information on the grant application for the purchase of a maypole and advise the Council. **Cllr Lawrence** said she had received further information indicating that a local dance instructor wanted to form youth and adult maypole dancing groups that could hold events throughout the year. The cost of the maypole would be £550. With the agreement of the Chair, Bernard Turnbull indicated that the original maypole had now been found but would need refurbishment. **Cllr Nixon** suggested that the Council was not in a position to make a decision at this meeting and that further information, and potentially a new application, would be needed. Carried Forward.
- iii. 0104. Cllr Cherrie to follow up the gate security with the company that installed the LAP. **Cllr Cherrie** reported that he had contacted the company, provided full details and photographs, and was waiting to hear back. Carried Forward.

- iv. 0204. St Aubyns Working Group (SAWG) to consider how to deter children from playing in the soakaway and report back to the Council. **Cllr Evans** said there was no obvious way to prevent children entering the soakaway, and previous advice from the engineers was that a fence was not recommended as it could impede a rescue in an emergency. As this issue had arisen from an isolated incident, **Cllr Evans** suggested that SAWG monitor the situation and reconsider if it became a recurring problem. Closed.

6. Finance Update

- i. **Payments and invoices.** The Clerk sought authorisation for the following payments.

		VAT
HMRC May	£788.31	
C Hayes Salary May	£928.29	
Room Hire	£52.00	
Affordable Waste (DD)	£116.92	
Gary Steel	£100.00	
Gary Steel (Chapel door and fittings purchase)	£294.00	
Sam Cocks (Grass cutting)	£300	£60
Sam Cocks (Wildflower Fence)	£2800	£560
Sam Cocks (Lockable Post and Hedge Cutting)	£1930	£386
Cloud Space (Domain)	£20	£5
Service Master (Chapel and Pavilion Cleaning)	£360	£72
Survey Monkey	£396	
Chapel and Pavilion Building Insurance Premium	£1,481.52	
Rottingdean Village News (annual advert space)	£316.80	
Total	£9,883.84	

- ii. **Bank balances.** The Clerk advised that the total cash at the bank was £594,708.90 and that, after deduction of the St Aubyns maintenance fund, £184,126.05 remained available to the Council.

iii. **April 2026 Accounts.** The April accounts were presented and agreed.

Major Projects

7. **St Aubyns.** Working group members provided the following updates.

- **Cllr Evans** said that the wildflower meadow was looking good, the trees were doing well, and the general development of the Field was further forward than expected.
- **Cllr Lawrence** said that engagement with the community about the future use of the Chapel had begun, with two Sunday openings attracting 6 and 38 visitors respectively. She and Cllr Evans were getting advice from local experts about the care and development of the Field. The group was also considering how to engage local schools, potentially through a butterfly count.
- **Cllr Cherrie** said that the Chapel and Pavilion had now been cleaned, and he was following up with the surveyor, David Smith, after his initial inspection of the buildings.
- **The Clerk** advised that a project plan had been developed for the future use of the Field, which he would circulate.
- **Cllr Evans** said there were a number of safety issues for the group to consider where the level of risk would need to be determined: safety at the south-east Field entrance, the soakaway, and the gabions on the sweeps.

8. **High Street.** **Cllr Nixon** provided the following update.

- An upgrade plan had now been agreed with the BHCC Chief Executive to restore the paving, insert granite kerbs and upgrade the carriageway. BHCC were currently carrying out a traffic management survey to determine whether there were any feasible options to improve traffic flow, which remained a recurring concern for the village. A report was expected by the end of June. Detailed planning could then begin for implementation of the scheme, which the senior engineer estimated would start in spring 2027.

Planning

9. **Applications Received in April.** Cllr Poole discussed the following applications.

- BH2026/00604, 61 - 63 High Street Rottingdean Brighton BN2 7HE.** Installation of sauna and ancillary equipment including 2 ice baths and decking to the rear. No objection was made but any proposed signage would be monitored given the size and colour restrictions in the conservation area.
- BH2026/00761. 3 Dean Court Road Rottingdean Brighton BN2 7DE** Replacement of first floor Crittall, metal windows with slimline double glazed units replicating the existing leaded pattern. **No objection**

Advisory Group Meeting Updates

10. **Strategy and Communications.** Members of the group provided the following update.
- i. Risk Register. The Clerk took the meeting through the risk register **that was approved**. **Cllr Course** said he had some thoughts on the register that he would feed in at an appropriate time.
 - ii. Workplan for 2026/27. **Cllr Nixon** said the group had discussed the workplan and recommended that the Council agree to incur expenditure on a property ownership search of 57 High Street properties, beginning with the empty buildings. The aim was to be able to communicate with owners about planned works and better understand current and future plans for High Street premises. **Cllr Levins** proposed that the Council agree to incur expenditure of up to £400 for this purpose. This was seconded by **Cllr Course** and **agreed by unanimous vote**.
 - iii. Decarbonisation. **Cllr Lawrence** said that the not-for-profit company BestCo had undertaken a detailed survey of Ovingdean to assess opportunities for residents to generate and save energy. Similar work was now under way in Saltdean. Cllr Lawrence would gauge local interest in forming a decarbonisation group and inviting BestCo to conduct a survey in Rottingdean.
 - iv. Annual Village Meeting. **Cllr Nixon** said that the group had noted three actions arising from the Annual Village Meeting.
 - a For the St Aubyns Working Group (SAWG):
 - To consider measures to improve safety at the South West entrance to the Field.
 - To develop a clear Council position on play facilities in the village, enabling a consistent response to requests for swings for older children to be installed on St Aubyns Field.
 - To consider how to take forward the provision of more benches in the Field, including memorial benches.
 - b. For the Natural Environment Advisory Group (NEAG):
 - To follow up with the Beacon Hub on their plan to open the Beacon Hill car park.
 - To consider the cause of the decline in the number of ducks on the pond and how to preserve the duck population.

Cllr Evans agreed to add this to the work plans of SAWG and NEAG.

- v. Advisory Group Membership. Cllr Nixon said the group proposed the following changes to add support to a number of work areas.
- a Cllr Dawes to join NEAG to scope the Council's priorities on the seafront and return with proposals, and also to join VCAG.
 - b Cllr Course to join the Planning Consultative Group, work with Cllr Cherrie on communications, and scope work on business engagement, including the proposed survey on village retail needs.

The above changes were agreed.

11. **Village and Community**. Cllr Lawrence gave the following update.
- Cllr Lawrence had just received a grant application from Rottingdean Arts for £2,000 towards the costs of the Terraces summer concert programme. This would be circulated and brought forward for Council consideration at the June meeting.
 - Cllr Lawrence continued to liaise with BHCC on the release of the £9,500 Section 106 funding allocated to Kipling Gardens for improvements to the facilities, including a new stage and a children's seating area.
12. **Natural Environment**. Cllr Evans provided the following update.
- Cllr Evans had been informed of a scheme run by BHCC to plant trees on a number of urban sites around Brighton and Hove, including Rottingdean. The proposal was to plant trees on the grass slope between the existing woods on Beacon Hill and the recreation ground football pitches. BHCC considered that this piece of land could accommodate 300 trees. However, these would be memorial trees funded by the public at a cost of £700 each, so it was unlikely that the space would be filled soon.
 - The Friends of Beacon Hill had been involved in a Green Spaces forum facilitated by BHCC to discuss partnership working in maintaining open spaces in Brighton and Hove. Cllr Evans was to ensure that SAWG was represented at these meetings in future.
13. **Built Environment**. No update.

The meeting closed at 21.36. The next meeting will be held on Monday 1 June.

Chris Hayes, Parish Clerk

May 2026

Signed

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Date