ROTTINGDEAN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Rottingdean Parish Council on Monday the 5th of October 2026 at the Whiteway Centre

Present Cllr Nixon, Cllr Snow, Cllr Levins, Cllr Evans, Cllr Cherrie, Cllr Dawes.

Parish Clerk.

Public Gallery. Ward Cllr Fishleigh, Chris Grinsted, Clive Bonny, Phil Boucher, Melissa Carr, 20 members of the public.

Questions from the public. Cllr Nixon asked whether the public-question session could begin with questions relating to Beacon Hill so that, in answering them, he could provide a general update on the management plan.

Phil Boucher said he was involved in the Beacon Hill Action Group, which represented users of the reserve from Rottingdean, Saltdean and Ovingdean, many of whom had expertise in plants, wildlife and the environment. He asked whether the group could send a representative to the next meeting of the Beacon Hill Stewardship Group.

Clive Bonny thanked the Parish Council for its intervention in the plans for open grazing on the reserve and asked what the decision-making process was for the management plan within BHCC.

Chris Grinsted said the Parish Council (RPC) responses to recent questions about the Beacon Hill management plan had taken a neutral stance and asked what the position of RPC was on the plans for open grazing that had been proposed by City Parks.

Cllr Nixon said that volunteers to help the Stewardship Group were always welcome and that the group would consider the helpful suggestion. At the moment, the group urgently needed someone to provide an assessment of the birds on the hill for the Nature Report. In terms of the decision-making process, **Cllr Nixon** said he did not know how decisions were made within City Parks. He then provided a full statement on the Parish Council's position on the Beacon Hill management plan and the latest developments. The key points were as follows:

- Beacon Hill faced biodiversity pressures including invasive species, scrub encroachment and declining ground-nesting bird populations; a more systematic environmental assessment was proposed, although funding and volunteer monitoring expertise are limited.

- BHCC intended to continue sheep grazing as the preferred way to manage the rare chalk-grassland habitat; cutting was considered less suitable for nesting birds and more expensive because of contaminated waste.
- Grazing would be limited to **November–February**, but BHCC wanted to replace electric enclosures with a new boundary fence and open-grazing approach.
- RPC welcomed the revised grazing period and improved signs for dog walkers, but requested clearer communication, clarification of access implications and consultation with users before any new fencing was installed.
- Following strong public concern, RPC asked BHCC to halt work on a permanent fence and continue with electric fencing while alternatives are properly discussed and assessed based on evidence.
- The immediate priority was to complete grazing before the skylark nesting season. BHCC had now paused fence groundworks, confirm that for this year the site will be grazed with the sheep being removed before the ground nesting bird season and the Hill will NOT be free grazed as originally proposed while discussion continue.
- RPC can influence and escalate the issue if needed, as was done when the Library faced closure, but could not impose a solution because BHCC owns and manages the land. The full statement is at Appendix A.

Melissa Larocque-Strong said she currently rented BHCC-owned land between Hoggs Platt and the recreation ground, which she used to stable and graze her horses. She said BHCC had told her that the land was to be disposed of and that she had been given an opportunity to purchase it for £200,000. She asked whether the Parish Council could support her in saving the land, as she understood that it might be earmarked for development. A number of other residents supported this request. One resident said he was aware of rare and protected animal and bird species inhabiting the area, and another asked whether the Parish Council might be willing to purchase the land to save it from development.

Cllr Nixon said that RPC had become aware of the issue only within the previous few days. He said that RPC would urgently seek further information from BHCC about the disposal of the land so that Councillors could consider the matter and reach a view. He also stated that RPC understood that significant concern being expressed and would let Melissa know who RPC will approach this matter in the next few days.

Caroline Lane raised concerns about the poor visibility for young children crossing Steyning Rd to and from the Twitten and St Aubyns Field and asked RPC to investigate what can be done to improve their safety at this location. **Cllr Cherrie** explained that BHCC had previously stated that they would not put a zebra crossing at this point when St Aubyns Field was opened. However, given the apparent increase in the use of this crossing he would ask again.

1. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies received from Cllr Poole and Cllr Lawrence

2. **Declarations of interests**

Cllr Cherrie said that, as he was a member of Rottingdean Arts, he would recuse himself from any discussion of its proposal to refurbish the terraces, which was on the agenda.

3. **Agreement of the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on the 7th of September.** The minutes were agreed as draft and signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the proceedings

4. **Matters Arising.** None

5. **Action Log.** The Clerk took the meeting through the action log

   i. 0208. **Clerk/Cllr Lawrence** to write to BHCC proposing the process for managing Kipling Garden Section 106 expenditure. Cllr Lawrence had received notification that plans for a stage at the rear of Kipling Gardens would require listed planning permission and was considering the next steps. Carried forward
   ii. 0109. **Cllr Dawes** to consider the proposal for repairing the Terraces, making the slipway more accessible and provide advice to Councillors. An agenda Item – Closed
   iii. 0209. **Cllr Dawes** to attend the meeting with the new seafront manager and report back to the Council. An agenda item. Closed
   iv. 0309. **Clerk** to set up a meeting with Mr Boucher to discuss Beacon Hill stewardship. Meeting held on he 16th of September. Closed
   v. 0409. **Cllr Evans** and **Cllr Dawes** to organise a presentation on the pond for residents by Pete and explore if any improvements are possible to existing and future water sources. A meeting with Pete to be arranged. Carried forward
   vi. 0509. **Cllr Cherrie** to look at the condition of the posts on the Green and provide advice to the Council. Cllr Cherrie is to meet a local contractor this week. Carried forward
   vii. 0609. **Cllr Evans** to follow up the replacement of sorbus trees in St Aubyns Field. Thid will involve contacting the developer Fairfax who had provided a warranty for the trees. Carried forward.
   viii. 0709. **The Clerk** to respond to BHCC stating the Parish Council's support for the enforcement camera at West Street and requesting improved signage and advance notification to residents. Response sent 10/08/2026
   ix. 0809. **Cllrs Evans and Dawes** to contact Pete the Pond to discuss future pond maintenance and resilience. Carried forward see 0409 above.

6. **Finance Update**

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

		VAT
HMRC September	£840.42	

Signed Date

C Hayes Salary September	£984.37	
Affordable Waste (DD)	£154.04	
Gary Steel	£100.00	
Sam Cocks (Grass cutting)	£1850.00	£370
Clamp Boxall	£82.50	£16.50
Room Hire	£60.00	
E-on Energy up to (18/12/2025)	£14.75	
M Cherrie (Water Butts)	£169.95	
J Lawrence (Wildflower Rope)	£10.00	
Toolkit (IT Support)	£216.00	£43.20
Total	**£4482.03**	

Payment was proposed by Cllr Cherrie seconded by Cllr Levins and agreed by unanimous vote. The Clerk also Informed the Council that during September the following payments made under paragraph 5.15 of the financial regulations.

- Chapel door locks replacement - £314.40
- External Audit Fee - £1260.00
- An additional payment to Sam Cocks of for wildflower meadow cutting - £633.50
- Yellow Rattle seeds as agreed at the September Meeting - £320.00

In addition, £450 was transferred from the HSBC account to the Unity Trust account to prevent the account being closed because of a lack of transactions.

ii. Bank balances. The Clerk advised Councillors that, at the end of September, the bank balance stood at £606,690.16. After deducting the balance of the St Aubyns Maintenance Fund, £208,191.99 remained available.

iii. September Accounts. The accounts were presented and agreed. **Cllr Nixon** said he had checked the amounts shown in the accounts and confirmed that they reconciled with the bank statements. He therefore signed the reconciliation statement.

iv. Mid-Term Expenditure Report. The Clerk took the meeting through the circulated report. The key points were as follows:

- At the mid-term expenditure overall expenditure was below profile because of low expenditure on projects. Other budget lines also showed expenditure just below profile. Expenditure on St Aubyns maintenance overall remained just below profile but within this Field maintenance expenditure was well above the budget mainly driven by one -off field maintenance work
- For operations PAYE was the highest expenditure but remained on profile. The publicity spend was ahead of profile and would probably exceed the budget by the end of the financial year given the likely early publication of the Annual Newsletter because of the May elections. Meeting room hire was currently behind profile but in February the Council would pay for next year's hire of the Main Hall for monthly Council meetings.
- For projects the Council had yet to spend as planned mainly because of delays in the High Street Upgrade project which will be carried over to 2027/28.
- The Council began the year with an unallocated reserve of around £52,000 that the Clerk would expect to remain available (as a minimum) for the second half of the year.

Cllr Nixon asked the Clerk to separately identify one-off expenditure for St Aubyns in the future to enable the Council to be able to get a picture of likely future the running costs.

v. **Annual Governance and Accountability Return**. The external auditor had cleared the 2025/26 accounts without comment. A comment was made on the assurance form. I should have stated definitively that RPC was not a sole manager of a trust fund rather than stating that the question was not applicable. The audited accounts had now been published on the website for public inspection.

7. **Major Projects**

i. **St Aubyns**. Cllr Evans provided the following update.

- With the drought continuing the working group were monitoring the health of the trees.
- Additional planting of seeds and plugs in the wildflower meadow would soon get under way to develop it and help attract bees and insects.
- Shrubs were to be planted at the south west corner of the field to direct people away from entering at this point as the slope is slippery when wet.
- Rottingdean in Bloom had offered to plant bulbs at the Twitten entrance to the field, which should add a splash of spring colour.
- Two water butts were to be place at the pavilion
- The Hedge along Newlands Road had been reduced to around two meters in height to test the feasibility of reducing the hedges around the Field and help inform future hedge cutting plans.

- The group was waiting for the residents' association to form and was in discussion with residents about forming a Neighbourhood Watch group.
- The group aim to work out an annual maintenance budget for next year to better manage expenditure and inform the maintenance sum fund investment plans.
- A report of attempts to remove stones from the Sweeps gabions had been received. Cllr Evans was to organise the crimping of the wire securing the stones to prevent this.
- **Cllr Cherrie** said he had been in touch with Playdale the Local Area of Play (LAP) installers for a quote for annual safety inspection and maintenance. **Cllr Nixon** advised Cllr Cherrie to obtain quotes from different companies for the inspection and maintenance actives to separate the two activities.
- **Cllr Cherrie** advised that was in touch with David Smith, the Surveyor to ask him to provide an annual building condition survey inspection list.

ii. **High Street.**

- **Cllr Nixon** said that BHCC had advised that the upgrade work was planned for the 2026/27 financial year and would probably not begin until the autumn of next year. Two issues remained to be resolved before then: the timing of works to address poor drainage on the High Street to prevent further flooding, and the outcome of the Traffic Management Study (TMS). A meeting was being arranged in November to discuss the findings of the TMS and to meet the new Head of BHCC Transport Projects, who had succeeded Andrew Westwood.
- Cllr Course and the Clerk had circulated a summary of the High Street survey results for publication **which was approved by Councillors**.

Action. Clerk to publish the summary of the High Street survey findings

8. **Planning**

i. Applications received in September. One planning application had been considered.

BH2026/01419. 8 Dean Court Road, Rottingdean, Brighton BN2 7DH
Erection of a first-floor side extension above the existing garage, with a pitched roof to match angle of the main roof and connecting at the rear. Revised fenestration to front elevation and addition of patio doors leading to a balcony to the rear elevation, a small low level window to the rear gable end and a high level circular window to the side elevation. Installation of a new staircase providing access to the loft space. Alterations to roof to include a dormer window to rear elevation.

Following a site visit RPC considered that the size, height and siting of the proposed first-floor extension, and its close proximity to No 6, would have a material adverse impact on the residential amenity of that property. Because that

impact results from the size and position of the extension itself, RPC did not consider that it could be satisfactorily addressed by planning conditions. The additional overlooking and privacy concerns arising from the proposed balcony reinforce the objection. Rottingdean Parish Council therefore objected to the application and recommends that planning permission be refused.

9. **Advisory Group Meeting Updates**

i. **Strategy and Communications**

a. Risk Management Policy – **for adoption.** The Risk management policy was present and **adoption agreed by unanimous vote.**

b. Traders Event. **Cllr Course** said he had circulated proposals for a traders' event on 16 November. The event was intended to provide updates on:

- the Brighton & Hove City Council "Upgrade the High Street" project. .
- the main findings from the High Street resident survey; and
- some of the actions the Parish Council is considering or already taking in response.

Cllr Course said invitation would be handed to traders and followed up to gauge the numbers attending. **Councillors agreed to the event**

c. Pharmacy. **Cllr Course** said that the most significant request from people responding to the survey was for the return of a pharmacy. Brighton & Hove's 2025 city-wide Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) had concluded that, despite the loss of the pharmacy, there was no resulting gap in provision because residents remained able to reach another pharmacy within the stated travel-time criteria. However, similar analysis of need in Rottingdean's catchment area showed that residents could not reach a pharmacy within the stated travel times. He proposed presenting the analysis to the BHCC public health team to see whether it would accept the findings. The overall aim was to convince local pharmacy service providers of the need for their services in Rottingdean. Councillors agreed that the analysis should be presented to BHCC.

Action: Clerk to send the pharmacy-access analysis to the BHCC public health team.

d. Seafront Issues. **Cllr Dawes** provided the following update

- Cllr Dawes had attended a recent meeting on seafront with Ward Councillors, attended by Ed Sanson and Toni Manuel from BHCC, and Friends of Rottingdean Beach and Environment (FORCE) where a number of issues were discussed.

Signed Date

- A survey was to be undertaken during October to review all signage to ensure it's more accurate. This will include signs on the exclusion of dogs on certain beaches. There was also support for a community sign at Rottingdean beach about the local environment and sea life.
- BHCC will be asked to address dogs on beaches east of the marina and publish enforcement contact details on signs.
- Work is needed on shingle management, falling-rock monitoring, fence repairs, and beach-hut repairs.
- The Coastal Defence team are responsible for cliff safety and complete an annual safety survey. Cllr Dawes has requested a copy of their latest report.
- City Parks are responsible for the cliff top fence repair and have appointed contractors who are undertaking the work. BHCC are also to partially repaint the beach huts whilst issuing enforcement notices to beach hut lease holders about their obligation to keep huts in a good state of repair.
- The current proposals to slow down cyclists by the use of chicanes or rumble strips have been rejected as they lack Active Travel UK support. The situation will be monitored and signage improved.
- Litter remains a problem and more frequent bin emptying has been requested especially in the summer season

- Proposals to improve disabled access to the Undercliff are a longer term aim on long-term aspiration are under review.
- Rottingdean Arts (RA) proposals for repair of the terraces would involve replacing missing and broken coping stones, some wall repair and the removal of rotting wooden planks in the public seating area. The plan was also to improve the area to make it able to accommodate a wider range of activities for example pétanque. BHCC had advised that there were no funds available for the work, so RA were seeking funding from the organisers of the Village Fair and intend to approach RPC for grant funding.

In discussion there was a concern that some of the work amounted to routine maintenance for which BHCC were responsible. This would not preclude RPC from providing a contribution but could set a precedent. However, the concerts at the Terraces were a key attraction in the summer months so RPC would want to support its improvement. It was suggested that RA complete a grant application form emphasising the improvement elements of the work for RPC to consider

e. <u>Note on Keeping Rottingdean Maintained</u>. A resident had raised a number of issues, including litter, broken pavements and inconsiderate parking in the Eley Drive and Eley Crescent area. A visit by Cllrs Cherrie and Lawrence prompted the idea of preparing a note encouraging all residents to report such issues and to do what they could to keep Rottingdean well maintained. A note had been

prepared for the Clerk to publish on the RPC website and social media, which **was approved for publication.**

Action: Clerk to publish the note on keeping Rottingdean well maintained on the RPC website and social media.

ii. **Village and Community**. Cllr Lawrence had provided the following written update

- Section 106 project in Kipling Gardens - BHCC had advised that that planning permission is required for the creation of a stage at the rear of Kipling Gardens and the supply of electricity to the stage. Cllr Lawrence had asked BHCC to estimate the costs. The sum of money currently allocated to Kipling Gardens was £9,600 and current estimates for the stage, supply of electricity, children's seating, new plants etc exceed this sum.
- The croquet club had written to the RPC to ask whether the section 106 money could be used to supply electricity to the Croquet club. Cllr Lawrence had explained that the money allocated has been earmarked as above so Friends of Kipling Gardens do not have the funds to help towards the cost of an electricity supply to the croquet club.

iii. **Natural Environment.** No further update

iv. **Built Environment. Cllr Cherrie** provided the following update

- The duck warning sign had been restored at the entrance to the Village on Falmer road
- Cllrs Cherrie and Lawrence and the Clerk visited St Margaret's School at the request of the school head, who raised two safety issues:
  - The safety of children arriving at and leaving school because of the number of cars that park illegally and drive up and down Whiteways Lane during drop-off and pick-up. She asked whether we could ask BHCC to repaint the yellow lines and install more signs explaining the parking restrictions. Cllr Cherrie agreed to follow this up.
  - Insufficient street lighting near the entrance that compromised the safety of staff and children leaving the school during the winter where she would like to cite RPC's support in a proposal to install lighting connected to the school system that would operate during the winter at drop-off and pick-up times. **Councillors agreed to support this request.**

10. **Sale of grazing land at Hoggs Platt.** In discussion it was agreed that the Clerk would investigate the situation with BHCC and provide advice to Councillors**.**

11. **Communications. Key points to be communicated**

Signed Date

- The sale of grazing land at Hoggs Platt
- The latest position on Beacon Hill
- The publication of High Street survey results

The meeting closed at 22.18. The next meeting is on the 2nd of November.

Chris Hayes, Parish Clerk ***October 2026***

Signed Date

Appendix 1

Chair's full statement on Beacon Hill – 5th October 2026

Beacon Hill is classified as a nature reserve: It faces the same challenges on biodiversity decline as most other chalk grassland in the UK, including invasive species, scrub encroachment and decline of ground nesting birds.

Can the nature reserve be improved? Of course.

FOBH continue to tackle invasive species as best they can, and BHCC continue to try other techniques to manage scrub on the eastern side.

RPC and BHSG propose that a more systematic base assessment of the environmental status can help identify what more is needed. Today we have many suggestions and perceptions but little or no data.

BHCC have told us that they do not have resources to fund such an assessment so BHSG will explore the options, potential partnerships and costs for such an assessment for RPC to consider. Any suggestions are welcome.

Please also note that we are currently short of volunteer monitoring experts especially for birds so again any help would be appreciated in this area.

Many people have asked why we have sheep on the Hill and can the grass not just be cut instead.

In answer to this BHCC states that Sheep grazing has been used since 2010 to manage the reserve because it is widely recognised as the most effective way to manage this internationally rare habitat. The reserve receives annual Rural Payments Agency funding to support its management, and they do not intend to change this practice.

They add that the cut and collect alternative for such a large area does not provide the right habitat for ground nesting birds and is very expensive due to high disposal costs because of contamination from dog waste.

RPC has focussed on how best to manage the grazing for the 4 months permitted each year when there is high daily use by walkers with and without dogs.

BHCC has confirmed that they will limit grazing between the months of November and the end of February from now on, but they wish to move away from electric fences.

Please be assured that RPC wants a healthy, biodiverse Nature reserve and to retain an accessible amenity for the surrounding communities and visitors. Any proposal for significant change by BHCC will be viewed in that light.

Signed Date

RPC were asked for a view of a City Parks Beacon Hill draft management plan just prior to the BHSG AGM.

After consulting Councillors an RPC position was drafted:

The November-to-February grazing plan was welcomed as a positive step in line with many concerns raised by users earlier in the year.

The placement of information signs to clarify the revised Countryside code for dog walkers was also seen as a positive step. As Beacon Hill is a Nature Reserve and Open Access land, it is good for walkers to know the rules and liabilities especially for livestock and Ground nesting birds. However, clarification is needed still on the boundaries covered and impact on rights of way.

The surprise was the new fence and the open grazing plan. RPC could see the logic of the plan from the BHCC perspective after the feedback received about electric fences. However, RPC asked for a clear communication plan explaining the environmental benefits of their overall management approach and the expected impact on users.

RPC strongly requested consultation with users before implementation.

It was noted that BHCC wanted to implement the new boundary fence quickly before November 1st for this year's grazing, but RPC asked them not to do this until they communicated the plan and heard the feedback. BHCC provided a one page explanation for the changes, FAQs which was put on the RPC website and a public meeting was arranged for October 5th.

Given the scale of the reaction received against different aspects of the plan for a new fence and open grazing, RPC asked BHCC to revert to the enclosure approach of the previous year while their proposal or any other variations of this were properly discussed.

RPC Councillors will take a view on any proposal or variants, after discussion, through a structured and fact based approach incorporating the benefits versus the implications and including reference to comments and concerns raised.

Today we do not have enough information to do that, nor the time before Nov 1st to receive it, so our priority is to get the sheep on the hill, as planned, so they have finished before the Skylark nesting season. We do not want a repeat of this year where sheep were on the hill during peak Skylark nesting period. BHCC have stopped groundworks on the fence, and we are awaiting an answer to our request.

BHCC are fully aware of the public reaction and concerns, so we hope that the way forward will fairly consider the concerns raised by users of the Hill and any RPC position.

RPC has an important voice in this matter but as the land is owned and managed by BHCC we cannot impose a solution. However, there are routes we can take to escalate our view if needed as we did with the Library.

Signed Date