



HAILSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of Hailsham Town Council held at the Hailsham Civic Community Hall, Vicarage Lane on Wednesday 26th November 2025 at 7.00pm.

HTC/26/4 /162 **Present:** Councillors: A. Blake-Coggins, G. Blake-Coggins, C. Bryant (Chairman), B. Carpenter, D. Chapman, B. Holbrook, P. Holbrook, M. Laxton, C. Mitchell, K. Nicholls, A. M. Ricketts D. Rusu, K-M. Smith and G. White.

Officers in Attendance

163 Mr J. Harrison (Town Clerk), Mr. T. Lee (Operations Manager) Mrs K. Giddings and Mr D. Saxby.

Also in attendance: East Sussex County Councillors G. Fox and S. Murphy.

Public Question Time

164 A member of the public complained about the number of large vehicles using the town centre; as well as the wear and tear on the roads there was environmental and pollution issues. The Chairman thanked the member of the public and said that the issues he raised would be discussed by the Planning and Development Committee.

The Town Clerk read out some anonymous correspondence he had received about the Stand Proud event and what they considered improper use of public funds.

The Chairman said that there was an agenda item to deal with next year's and this would be discussed at that point.

Apologies for Absence

165 Apologies for absence had been received and accepted from Councillors A. Clarke and F. Clarke.

Declarations of Interest

166 The Chairman declared an interest in agenda item 12 – Costed Plan for Festivities and Events as he belonged to an organisation that was a potential beneficiary.

Confirmation of Minutes

167 Councillor Carpenter said that item 146.1 should read “Councillor Carpenter proposed...”

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Meeting of Hailsham Town Council held on 24th September 2025 as amended be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Chairman's Update

168 The Chairman reported on some of the engagements he had undertaken since the

last meeting. These were:

The Hailsham Bonfire event
Hailsham Heroes Awards
Hailsham Twinning Association – 25th Anniversary of the signing of the charter.
Lion's Charter Lunch.

The Deputy Chairman, Councillor Mitchell said he had attended the Hailsham Choral Society concert and the British Empire Medal Awards ceremony in the Fleur de Lys. He thanked officers for organising this.

169 **Town Clerk's Update**

The Town Clerk said that the Responsible Finance Officer had now resigned and the Council was continuing to work with the locum RFO.

Staff in the Post Office had done a great job working with the Banking Hub.

Staff Appraisals were taking place.

The recruitment of a Human Resources Manager was underway.

170 **East Sussex County Council Update**

Both county councillors had submitted written reports that had been circulated with the agenda.

Both County Councillors spoke about the latest position on local government reorganisation.

Councillor Smith asked about effect of pre-booking a time to use the ESCC tip. Councillor Fox said that in the long term this would make the process simpler.

RESOLVED to note the County Councillors' updates.

171 **Wealden District Council Update**

Councillor White updated the meeting on the migrant centre in Crowborough.

The Chairman said that he had written to Mrs N. Ghani MP about this issue.

172 **Standing Orders**

RESOLVED to adopt the Standing Orders that stood adjourned from the Council meeting held on 24th September 2025.

Councillors Bryant, Carpenter, Chapman, Crittenden, B. Holbrook, P. Holbrook, Laxton, Mitchell, Nicholls, Ricketts and Rusu voted in favour.

Councillor Smith voted against.

Councillors A. Blake-Coggins, G. Blake-Coggins and White abstained from voting.

Councillor Carpenter proposed the following motion to Council. It was seconded by Councillor Laxton.

The following is the current standing order 5. Committees and sub-committees

v. Shall appoint and determine the terms of office of the substitute members to a committee whose role is to replace the ordinary members at a meeting of a committee if the ordinary members of the committee confirm to the Town Clerk or the Deputy Town Clerk by mid-day on the day of the meeting that they are unable to attend

I would move to change the wording to Shall appoint and determine the terms of office of the substitute members to a committee who can replace the ordinary members at a meeting of a committee if the ordinary members are unable to attend.

Councillor Blake-Coggins said that he was against the proposal as it could lead to predetermination issues. Councillor Carpenter said that the that this would be no more of a problem than the current policy on substitutes for meetings.

Following debate, Councillor Carpenter said he would like to amend the motion to add the following to the end of the motion: “*before the commencement of the meeting.*” And to delete the words “*Deputy Town Clerk*” and insert “*proper officer*”.

RESOLVED that the motion as amended to amend Standing Orders stands adjourned until the next meeting.

Committee Recommendations to Council

173 Finance and Governance Committee – 22nd October 2025 - Banking Arrangements

The Finance and Governance Committee had unanimously resolved to recommend to council that the Housing Needs Survey and Assessment, the cost being £12,825, is funded from general reserves.

RESOLVED that the Housing Needs Survey and Assessment be funded at a cost of £12,825 from general reserves.

This resolution was carried unanimously.

174 Staffing Committee – 13th November 2025 - Review of the Staffing Review

Councillor Nicholls introduced this agenda item as this was a recommendation from the Staffing Committee.

The Town Clerk said that he had received an indicative quote to carry out the review of between £3,000 and £4,000.

RESOLVED to agree up to £5,000 for an external consultant to undertake the review and that as there was no budget allocated that it delegated to officers to find a budget to take the money for, and that the review be carried out as soon as practicable, but ideally by the end of the financial year.

This resolution was carried unanimously.

175 Assets Management Committee – 19th November 2025 - James West Sign

Mr Lee said that five people had complained about the sign at the James West

Centre, saying that it was out of keeping. The Assets Management Committee had recommended that a replacement sign be erected at a cost of £1,000.

Councillor Mitchell said that the sign should remain in place.

RESOLVED that a replacement sign for the James West Centre be funded at a cost of £1,000.

This resolution was carried by 11 votes to 3, with 1 abstention.

Councillors A. Blake-Coggins, G. Blake-Coggins, Bryant, Chapman, Crittenden, B. Holbrook, P. Holbrook, Laxton, Nicholls, Ricketts and Rusu voted in favour.

Councillors Mitchell, Smith and White voted against.

Councillor Carpenter abstained from voting.

Investment Strategy

176.1 A copy of the draft investment strategy was circulated with the agenda. This policy sets out the treasury management procedures for the monitoring of the cash flow and banking arrangements of Hailsham Town Council. It states which investments the Council may use for prudent management of its treasury balances during the financial year.

Councillors Mitchell and Smith spoke and said they were pleased to see this item on the agenda

176.2 **RESOLVED** to adopt the Investment Strategy as presented to Council and that an annual review is undertaken by Finance and Governance Committee or full Council.

This was carried by 13 votes to 0, with 2 abstentions. Councillors G. Blake-Coggins and Carpenter abstained from voting.

Councillors A. Blake-Coggins, Smith, Bryant, Chapman, Crittenden, B. Holbrook, P. Holbrook, Laxton, Mitchell, Nicholls, Ricketts, Rusu and White voted in favour.

Councillors G. Blake-Coggins and Carpenter abstained from voting.

176.3 **RESOLVED** to transfer £1,000,000 of CIL receipts money to a high interest account.

Costed Plan for Festivities and Events

177 Councillor Chapman, Laxton, Mitchell, and Nicholls declared an interest. Councillor Bryant had declared an interest earlier in the meeting.

Councillor Carpenter said that he disagreed with holding the Stand Proud event in private licensed premises that were outside the parish boundary.

Councillor Laxton said that although the premises used was marginally outside the parish, it was by far the best location for the event as there was plenty of room and car parking facilities.

Councillor G. Blake-Coggins said that it was important that the event continued.

RESOLVED to agree the costed plan for festivities and events for 2026.

The resolution was carried by 9 votes to 2.

Councillors A. Blake-Coggins, G. Blake-Coggins,, Chapman, Laxton, Mitchell, Nicholls, Ricketts, Rusu and White voted in favour.

Councillors Carpenter and Smith voted against.

Councillors Bryant, Crittenden, B. Holbrook and P. Holbrook abstained from voting.

Policy on Communication for Councillors Not Using Email

178 Copies of the draft Policy on Communication for councillors not using email had been circulated with the agenda.

RESOLVED that the Council will provide pigeonholes for councillors and will continue to hand deliver to non-email using councillors when it is not possible to put papers in the pigeonholes.

This was carried by 13 votes to 0, with 2 abstentions.

Councillors A. Blake-Coggins, G. Blake-Coggins, Smith, Bryant, Carpenter, Chapman, Crittenden, Laxton, Mitchell, Nicholls, Ricketts, Rusu and White voted in favour.

Councillors B. Holbrook and P. Holbrook abstained from voting.

Confidential Business

179 **RESOLVED** that the press and public are excluded during discussion on during the discussion on agenda items 14 and 15 as it concerns: the beginning of legal proceedings, terms and conditions of service or negotiations for contracts, (in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders No, 1E).

Confidential Recommendations to Council

180 Post Office Committee – 8th October 2025 – HR and Staffing Update

The Post Office Committee had noted that Post Office staff had not been given a pay rise at the end of the financial year as they were not on NJC scales.

RESOLVED that a 3.2% rise be given to Post Office clerks, to be back dated to 1st April to be paid in the November pay roll and, therefore, to Post Office clerks to be put on the nearest scale point which is NJC SCP 4 (£25,185).

This was carried unanimously.

181 Staffing Committee – 13th November 2025 – Finance Team

The Staffing Committee had made the following resolutions in respect of the finance team:

To offer locum RFO a fixed term, 25 hours, 18mth contract on PAYE terms.

To commission an external job evaluation and upgrade of the amended Finance Assistant job description, with any upgrade backdated appropriately.

To recruit a part-time Finance Assistant for 15 hours per week on a temporary six-month contract.

RESOLVED to note the resolutions above.

182 Assets Management Committee – 19th November 2025 – Welbury Land Sub-Group

The Assets Management Committee had resolved to recommend to council to fund the consultant to create consultation materials up to £3,750.00 from General Reserves.

RESOLVED to fund the consultant to create consultation materials up to £3,750 from General Reserves.

This resolution was carried unanimously.

183 Assets Management Committee – 19th November 2025 – Inglenook Bollards

The Assets Management Committee had resolved to recommend to council to fund the installation of two bollards on Market Street for £3321 from CIL receipts.

RESOLVED to fund the installation of two bollards on Market Street for £3321 from CIL receipts.

This resolution was carried unanimously.

184 Legal Case

Members considered the officer's report circulated with the agenda.

RESOLVED to proceed with the solicitor's advice and delegate the matter to the Town Clerk.

The vote on this was unanimous.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.57pm.

CHAIRMAN