

FULKING PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Fulking Parish Council held on Thursday 15th January 2026 at 7.30pm at the Village Hall, Fulking.

Present

Chairman: Cllr Mark Hind
Fulking Parish Council (FPC): Cllrs Lucy Mehta and Tom Kardos
Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) Cllr Geoff Zeidler
West Sussex County Council (WSCC) Cllr Joy Dennis

There were three members of the public present. The meeting opened at 7.30pm.

26/001/OM. Apologies for Absence.

Cllr Karen Healy who is away on holiday.

26/002/OM. Declaration of Members' Interests.

Cllr Mark Hind declared that he is a trustee of Fulking Village Hall Trust CIO.

26/003/OM. Approve the Minutes of Ordinary Council Meeting of 9th October 2025 and Planning Meeting 25th November 2025.

The minutes, subject to any amendments, to be approved and signed as a true record of the meeting.

Councillors read the minutes of the meeting which were approved unanimously.

26/004/OM. Reports from District and County Councillors.

Cllr Joy Dennis reported:

A decision is due to be made by the Government in March 2026 regarding the structure of the unitary authorities in Sussex with elections provisionally set for May 2027. The Mayoral elections have been deferred until May 2028.

WSCC have managed to balance the budget for this year despite rising demand for social care and SEND services.

Cllr Geoff Zeidler reported:

Last year's Deputy Chair of the Council has resigned from the Liberal Democrat Party and is now sitting as an Independent. The Council officers will provide a "political balance" report soon.

The Government has launched its consultation on the structure of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Consultation on Proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in East Sussex and Brighton and Hove and

West Sussex - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government - Citizen Space and include options including those from Brighton in which Mid Sussex is linked to a range of East Sussex Districts. Responses are due by 11th January 2026.

The MSDC consultation on Parking Charges for the villages is expected to be launched in the month before the scheme is implemented in April 2026.

Confirmation that Sussex Police are no longer supporting the removal of abandoned vehicles via Operation Crackdown; and so the Council are having to identify routes to complete HPI and other ownership checks prior to removal. This is slowing response times. The alternative approach should be clear in the Spring.

The new Local Plan Inspector will start his deliberations on 24th February 2026.

26/005/OM. Matters Arising & Outstanding Actions To clarify and report on actions brought forward from the last meeting

The abandoned car has now been removed.

The process to change councillor emails to @fulking-pc.gov.uk is complete.

There is a new fulking.net website. Our thanks go to those who completed the task, it looks excellent.

26/006/OM. Adoption of Policies:

Freedom of Information, IT Policy, Model Publication Scheme, Data Protection Policy

Councillors reviewed the policies and decided unanimously to adopt the new policies.

26/007/OM. North Town Field Lease

The North Town Field Charitable (“NTFCT”) Trust was set up in 1964 in order to provide, “in perpetuity”, the inhabitants of Fulking with an “open space” and “recreational facilities”. Following representations by Fulking Parish Council (“FPC”) in 2019 the South Downs National Park designated the North Town Field (“NTF”) a local green space (ref: LGS17-105) through the adoption of Policy SD47 (Local Green Spaces), in the South Downs Local Plan. This provides additional legal protection for the NTF under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) first published in 2012 and subsequently updated.

In 1994 a lease was agreed between NTFCT and FPC for part of the NTF which enabled a playground to be established by FPC in the field. Following expiry of the 1994 lease a new lease was agreed in 2011 between the NTFCT and FPC. The 2011 lease has now come to an end and councillors from FPC and the trustees of NTFCT have been discussing the terms of a new lease.

Previous lease agreements had stipulated that FPC provides public liability insurance for the whole of the NTF (not just the playground area which was being leased) however it was felt that this arrangement was open to possible challenge by FPC’s insurance company in the event of a claim.

FPC Councillors and NTFCT Trustees are all unpaid volunteers whose aim is to protect and effectively insure what may be considered the village green. It has been decided that a new 40 year lease for the whole of the NTF will be the best way to ensure that the public liability cover previously provided is effective going forwards. It will also make it easier for FPC to seek grant funding in the future to refurbish the playground.

As part of the due diligence process the Trustees arranged a valuation of NTF as required by the Charities Commission. With a long lease to the Council at peppercorn rent the report confirmed that the field had no value.

NTF Trustees provided the Council with their latest bank statement evidencing a balance of £1,250.73. It was agreed these funds would be used to cover maintenance costs before they apply for any grant funding from FPC.

Cllr Hind proposed and Councillors unanimously agreed that the new 40 year lease be signed by 1st February 2026.

26/008/OM. Adoption of 2026 – 2027 Budget

Following the agenda item 25/059/OM in October 2025 discussing the budget and precept of 2026 – 2027, Councillors voted unanimously to agree a budget of £20,000 for 2026 – 2027.

26/009/OM. Adoption of 2026 – 2027 Precept

The Clerk / RFO projects income of £1,250 from CIL, VAT and bank interest in the financial year 2026 – 2027 against spending of £20,000 therefore a precept of £18,750 is required to balance the accounts.

Councillors voted unanimously to approve the request for a precept of £18,750

Action: Clerk to write to Mid Sussex District Council for a precept of £18,750.

26/011/OM. Fulking Village Hall

Cllr Hind reported that the Trustees of Fulking Village Hall CIO had successfully raised around £100,000 sufficient to complete on the purchase of the Village Hall from the Diocese of Chichester. Trustees are now working with the solicitors to complete on the purchase as soon as possible.

26/012/OM. Red Phone Box

Notification has been received from BT Payphones that the phone connection is under review and it is likely the payphone will be removed. If this happens BT will remain responsible for maintenance and upkeep.

There is an “adopt a phonebox” scheme and the Council has registered its interest. We await the outcome of review before making any decisions.

26/013/OM. MSDC Waste Collections

Cllr Hind reported that the rollout of 1-2-3 had gone badly, the main issues are the collection dates are issued by MSDC and then changed at the last minute. Some bins were not emptied and MSDC are not responding effectively to residents complaints.

Cllr Zeidler (MSDC) reported that the 1-2-3 waste collection service has been rolled out but suffered issues including the Website going down; poor responses to enquiry issues; and establishment of the schedules. It is a shame that the print version of Mid Sussex Matters is no longer used as this would have helped keep residents informed. Many local Facebook pages are now sharing the collection schedules to try and assist. If any residents continue to have issues then he is happy to assist the Parish Councils in identifying and resolving issues.

A new MSDC app has been set up with information about collection dates.

26/014/OM. Correspondence. To discuss correspondence and respond to correspondence received.

The Clerk has received complaints about bin collections and has registered these with MSDC.

26/015/OM. Financial Matters. To receive a report on Council Finances and ratify payments made since the last meeting.

Fulking Parish Council Payments 1st October to 31st December 2025

15/10/2025	Trevor Cox	£100.00	Playground and NTF Inspection
22/10/2025	NPower	£128.06	Electricity
22/10/2025	Clerk Salary	£439.84	October
22/10/2025	HMRC & NIC	£129.70	
30/10/2025	Sigma	£34.10	Payroll Services
03/11/2025	Trevor Cox	£100.00	Playground and NTF Inspection
17/11/2025	Sigma	£34.10	Payroll Services
17/11/2025	Clerk Salary	£439.64	November
17/11/2025	HMRC & NIC	£129.90	
21/11/2025	Trevor Cox	£100.00	Playground and NTF Inspection
09/12/2025	Grit Bins x 2	£261.42	
15/12/2025	Sigma	£34.10	Payroll Services
16/12/2025	Clerk Salary	£439.64	December
16/12/2025	HMRC & NIC	£129.90	
16/12/2025	Village Hall Hire	£150.00	

Bank Balances as at 14/1/2026

Barclays Current Account	£ 1,142.36
Barclays Premium Account	£17,000.00

26/016/OM. To set a date of Annual General Meeting of the Council and Annual Parish Meeting:

AGM and APM set for Thursday 21st May 2026.

Dates 2026 Ordinary Parish Council Meetings:

Thursday 16th April 2026,

Thursday 9th July 2026

Thursday 8th October 2026