

# GRAFFHAM PARISH COUNCIL

## Draft Minutes of the Full Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 3 September 2025 in the Empire Hall, Graffham

### **Present:**

Councillors Gillian Charlesworth (Chair), John Bracey (Vice Chair), Colin Barker, Fiona Jacob and Rachel Gerrett.

### **In attendance:**

Amy Harte – Parish Clerk & RFO  
Michael Blunt

### **Welcome**

085/25 The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting.

### **Apologies for Absence**

085/25 Apologies received from John Cross and Tom Richardson.

### **Declarations of Interest**

086/25 None.

### **Minutes**

087/25 It was RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the Full Parish Council meeting held on 2nd July 2025 as an accurate record.

### **New Clerk & RFO Appointment**

088/25 The appointment of Amy Harte as Clerk & RFO to Graffham Parish Council was RESOLVED.

### **Public Participation**

089/25 No comments on anything other than the Planning Applications to be discussed.

### **Projects**

090/25

- i) **To consider a request to look into allotment provision.**  
The Council had received a request to look into allotments for Graffham. All Councillors were supportive of the idea, subject to finding suitable land and ensuring the allotments were well run, managed and properly funded.  
**ACTION Chair and Clerk** to investigate and bring back to a future meeting.
- ii) **To receive an update on the new website including costs.**  
Cllr Charlesworth and Michael Blunt, editor of Graffham Parish News, have been working on the new website for Graffham, it should be easier to use and well supported by the provider. Cllr Charlesworth thanked Michael for all the work he has put into this new website.

### **Proposed Merger Graffham & ELPC Update**

091/25 Cllr Charlesworth reported that John Cross was speaking with the monitoring officer in order to provide guidance into the mechanics of how the meeting between

Graffham and East Lavington Parishes should be run. The full guidance was not yet available but it was expected that all residents of Graffham and East Lavington will have the opportunity to vote. It will be held in the Empire Hall on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2025. Michael Blunt is planning to put a significant amount of information in the Parish Magazine in October to assist village residents to understand the implications of such a merger. The cases for and against will be given at the meeting. Electors of both parishes will be given the opportunity to speak with prior application.

### **Draft Village Plan**

192/25 In July at the last Parish Council meeting the content of a proposed Village Plan was discussed. The main reasons for developing a plan were to set out priorities, based on village needs, and to ensure village assets were well managed in the long-term. Cllr Charlesworth has circulated the draft village plan to councillors and asked for comments. The main comment related to funding and the need to provide a reasonable degree of certainty to the village on any increase in costs. The only cost identified so far was the cost of administering the Recreation Ground's finances and it was agreed this aspect of the plan should be expanded where possible.  
**ACTION Chair** to amend the draft plan and recirculate before wider publication.

### **Woodcote Fireworks Follow up.**

193/25 There were complaints regarding a firework display held at Woodcote. Cllr Charlesworth and Cllr Bracey met with representatives of the Woodcote. Cllr Charlesworth read the report from that meeting (attached as Annex A). Cllr Barker expressed concern that the outcome of the meeting wouldn't make the owners of the animals confident that there would be no repeat. Cllr Jacob said she was satisfied that the Council had acted within its remit. Cllr Charlesworth said the meeting had opened a channel of communication which the Council should maintain.

### **Accounts:**

194/25 (i) Payments made or received since last meeting  
The Clerk stated that payments had been made to the current and previous clerk and Norwood contractors. The cashbook would be updated and circulated in due course.  
(ii) Request for Foodbank donation  
The request was read to the councillors by the Clerk. The Councillors **RESOLVED** that a small donation could be made through the KMGF. **ACTION Clerk and Chair** to look at amounts due to all beneficiaries.

### **Planning Applications and Decisions**

195/25

- i) To consider the Council's observations on the SDNP planning applications made since last meeting:
  - (a) **SDNP/25/01181/FUL**  
Tangletrees, The Street, Graffham, West Sussex, GU28 0QA  
Replacement dwelling, ancillary building, and associated landscaping including ha-ha and pond.

Not within Graffham Parish but due to the proximity CDC Planning have included Graffham as a statutory consultee.

The applicant outlined the planning changes in response to comments from a previous application. SD30, the GIA has been reduced to nearer the 30% limit. The rotation requires the curtilage to be reorganised, they have worked with the planners to ensure this is clearly defined. They have looked at drainage proposals, harvesting rainwater to improve the drainage.

Cllr Jacob noted that all the statutory consultees are satisfied. There was a discussion about the reorientation of the planned dwelling and the need to swap agricultural land and residential land to achieve it; also that neighbours had expressed concern about being overlooked due to the design. The Council felt this swap of land use created an unwanted precedent but recognised it was a legal issue for Chichester to decide. The applicant stated that the neighbours would not be overlooked. The council RESOLVED to agree in principle to support the application with comments regarding the precedent of land swap. **ACTION Cllr Jacob** to formulate a response for circulation and submission to SDNP planning.

(b) **SDNP/25/03160/FUL**

The Lavington Stud The Drive East Lavington West Sussex GU28 0NQ  
Restoration and regeneration of Lavington Stud and Estate with a new environmental farming and management regime supported by development proposals on two sites comprising: Home Farm: main stud stables area and office. Demolition of C20th stable ranges and barns and the construction of a new principal Estate dwelling with pool and tennis court; renovation and alteration and change of use of traditional courtyard buildings to form 7 no. self-contained holiday lets, offices and a multifunctional space for education, Estate meeting room, and ancillary residential and tourist visitor use; retention of other buildings as existing stables and storage; and Calloways (alternative to implemented scheme SDNP/18/00938/FUL):  
Renovation and alteration of existing buildings to facilitate a change of use to form 5 no. dwellings; demolition of existing bungalow and replacement with one dwelling; renovation, alteration and change of use of existing equestrian buildings to enterprise units within Use Class E(g). Retention of the existing portal framed barn for agricultural storage.

Cllr Jacob outlined the application, noting that the Council is a statutory consultee, not the decision maker. Planning has already been granted on the Calloways part of the development, the part of the application located within Graffham parish. The new application contains changes to the Calloways development (from the previous 11 dwellings to 6 dwellings and 7 small units intended for artisanal use).

Members of the public expressed concerns about the additional traffic that this development would create on a narrow road with no pavements. Concerns were raised about the commercial units, opening a planning door for all types of use. Another member of the public asked if alternative access has been considered.

Cllr Jacob outlined the main issues raised by the proposals: uncertainty over future use of the proposed business units; whether all houses would be preferable for the Calloways development; the impact of construction traffic; and the uncertainty and risk of permanent further traffic, noise, lighting and signage if not controlled.

In discussion, it was suggested that Home Farm and ancillary buildings should be required to use the Seaford College route and perhaps Norwood Lane although there is a barrier there, recognising that the latter would not be suitable for construction traffic. It was agreed that if traffic was controlled, only allowing certain people to access routes, it may alleviate the issue. A Construction Management Plan should be requested. There should be limits on when units could be used and light pollution considered. When it came to traffic management, distinction should be made between construction phase and subsequent phase. The owner of the development spoke to allay fears of massive amounts of traffic and thanked the Village and Parish Council for their consideration of the proposals.

**ACTION Cllr Jacob** will put together the response to circulate to councillors prior to submission to SDNP Planning.

ii) To note decisions made on planning applications decided since the last meeting

(considered at Graffham Parish Council meeting on 11 June 2025):

196/25

(a) **SDNP/25/01269/FUL**

The Last Post, Graffham Common Road, Graffham, West Sussex, GU28 OPU  
Two storage building for private use associated with dwelling to provide equipment/workshop facilities in association with woodland management. **Refused**

(b) **SDNP/25/02199/LIS**

Rose Cottage, Graffham Street, Graffham, West Sussex GU28 ONL  
Replacement of existing windows with new timber casement windows and replace existing double glazing with thinner heritage double-glazed units. Underfloor heating to ground floor. Wall panelling in 2 no bedrooms. **Approved.**

**Reports:**

197/25

**Environment**

PROW – Cllr Barker is liaising with the access ranger, local footpaths were being inspected in August and there are some repairs required. Some have been cleared but there are many, particularly along the south downs, that still need to be cleared. He had received a report from people walking Footpath 959 that, as they were walking past the pub, a helicopter took off from the field during the Festival of Speed. Some discussion took place on the regulations regarding landing in fields next to footpaths. It was agreed that the ranger should be asked to contact the landowner regarding the proximity to the footpath. **ACTION Cllr Barker** to contact the ranger re this incident.

Cllr Barker is concerned about the cutting of hedges out of season. Cllr Charlesworth suggested contacting SDNP and CDC regarding the regulations. Hedgeline.org.uk was suggested as it encourages diversity

Cllr Charlesworth reported that she had made no further progress with Badger Copse (oil well).

There was concern about the ditch/culvert by the last post. It is on the list to be fixed. Once the culvert is fixed the hedge opposite was expected to be cut.

**Recreation Ground –**

198/25 Cllr Bracey reported that this year's was a very good Fete, should know a final figure next week, expected to be better than previous years. The fete Committee will have a debrief and could make improvements. The introduction of sponsors has been very good. The traditional village fete aspect is important to preserve.

**Empire Hall -**

199/25 Cllr Jacob reported that Sally Blunt has stepped down as Chair/Bookings Secretary and Gillian Charlesworth as Maintenance Officer and Karen Consalvi as Secretary, replaced by Ollie Robinson Boulton (Chair), Tom Richardson (maintenance), Jonathan Simons (secretary) and Anna Shawcross (bookings). The Council acknowledged Sally Blunt's long and dedicated service to the village on the Hall Committee.

**Playground –**

200/25 Cllr Gerrett reported. Playsafe have been paid the first instalment of the second phase. Date of closure will be given during September or October as it is ground conditions-dependant. Rural England Prosperity Fund reclaim is required. Cllr Gerrett was thanked for her work on this and in raising the funds to complete this project.

**Agenda Items for Future Meetings**

**Date of Next Meeting**

201/25

To note that the next Full Parish Council Meeting is scheduled to be held on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025. The Finance Committee will be held along with the Full Parish Council Meeting.

## ANNEX A

A report from the Chairman and Vice Chairman to the Parish Council for 3 September 2025

On 20 August, John Bracey and I met two representatives of The Woodcote, Jamie Lumsden and Will Morley. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss concerns the Parish Council had received from residents of the village after a firework display at The Woodcote in mid-June. The Parish Council felt it would be helpful to have an open discussion with The Woodcote so that concerns could be shared constructively. During the meeting, The Woodcote team made a number of points in response to the concerns we relayed. They explained that the firework display on 16 June was carried out by Flashpoint Fireworks, the same professional company that Seaford College uses each year and that other locals in the village have also used, and that everything was of the same F4 firework category that the other displays used, all of which are legally limited to a maximum noise level of 120 decibels. A pack of supporting documents were provided at the meeting from Flashpoint Fireworks, including a map that Flashpoint Fireworks produced detailing the locations of those local displays and the prevailing wind direction on the night, being from the southwest. It is for this latter reason that Jason Mayes, the Director of Flashpoint Fireworks, believes contributed to an impression of a louder display as the wind direction on the evening from the southwest was towards the village. The Woodcote emphasised that firework displays are expected to be very rare, with no further displays planned for the foreseeable future. They also confirmed that if any future displays were considered, they would explore options for lower-volume effects and provide advance notice to the community. During the discussion, we also talked about the unpleasant and sometimes personal comments made about The Woodcote and those associated with it. The Woodcote team expressed their disappointment at some of the personal or offensive comments made on social media and elsewhere but stressed that they welcome constructive feedback and want to build a positive relationship with the village. We all agreed that there is no place for rude and offensive comments, only for legitimately held views from all perspectives, and we undertook to play our part in ensuring a constructive atmosphere and dialogue. In this spirit, we mentioned the recent flier for a Woodcote barbecue on the same day as the annual Graffham Village fete. The Woodcote team explained that the intention of the flier (which was only sent locally) was simply to encourage local engagement, not to compete with village events. Nevertheless, The Woodcote team acknowledged that it would be mindful of village dates when planning promotions, while also needing to continue their own operations. Finally, we discussed numerous initiatives to continue to welcome residents of the village and they confirmed that they were working on ways in which to do this. We stated that John and I would be reporting back to the next Parish Council meeting, and this note has been agreed as a fair summary of the discussion.