



**MINUTES of the ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY of MILLAND**  
**Wednesday 09 April 2025 in Milland Memorial Hall 6pm.**

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**Present:** Parish Cllrs Mrs. L Myles (LM) (in the Chair), Mr. J Parker (JP), Mrs. S Hoar (SH), Mrs Gillian Morton (GM) Mr N Oldham (NO) Mr Mark Dumas (MD) Mr Johannes Wassenberg (JW) Cllr B Burkhart (District Councillor), Mrs R Denby (Clerk) & 24 Members of the Public and 1 Cat.

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**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Cllr Louise Myles welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for coming.

**2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly 9<sup>th</sup> April 2025.**

These have been on the Council website and displayed on the public notice board throughout the year. The Minutes were **Proposed JW** and **Seconded JP** - Agreed and signed.

**3. Apologies**

Cllr Mr A Farley

**4. Speaker – Andrew Griffith Member of Parliament for Arundel and South Downs**

Mr Griffith opened by thanking the Parish Councillors and all who support the community and reminded that his primary role was to represent and serve his constituents.

- Mr Griffith briefly summarised the three main roles of an MP and how he was fulfilling these roles with the needs of the constituents at the forefront of his contribution:
  - Legislation – doing his best to represent the needs of roughly 85,000 residents, voting on issues such as the budget, finance bill and assisted dying bill and how do we legislate on social media with appropriate restrictions and the impact of AI. Spends lots of time discussing although not voting on foreign policy.
  - Holding the Government to account - on all areas of public spending. Different govts have different formulas and policies. Adult and child social care and police allocation, fighting against different urban areas with differing characteristics and requirements, road spend and primary healthcare needs.
  - Convening - ability to help achieve results across the layers of local councils and public bodies. Celebrating the community we have, recognising and celebrating local efforts. Bringing people together across a wider area by not being affiliated to any one town parish or district.

**Local Government Reorganisation**

- He does not hold a fierce desire to reorganise local government. Initial desire from govt was to have a mayor of Sussex and is still the most likely to proceed, to encompass the police and crime commissioner, unlikely to be voting on this in 2026/27 but 2028 Mayoral election. Secondly, the idea that instead of district and county councils they are merged into a 'one stop shop' bringing pros and cons with it. This creates a bigger unitary authority losing localism and being more remote but are a single point of contact, consultation will follow local elections in May, asking 1. Chichester will merge into a new authority to combine with Horsham, Crawley, and Mid Sussex, (Milland), then a second unitary of Bognor, Littlehampton, Worthing and Shoreham, (inland and outland), this is govt preferred option but not his preference and would rather stick with the 'status quo' and focus on other matters. This is not over yet and other neighbouring areas are considering proposals and are already moving forward, we continue to raise reasons why we believe this doesn't work very well, Sussex is more complicated due to the proposed Brighton enlargement area. For further information please visit:

[Future of local government in Sussex - West Sussex County Council](#)



### **Questions from the Audience**

#### **Q. Why are government wanting to reorganise the area?**

**A.** Civil servants, top down, would find it easier to deal with mayors and fewer larger authorities rather than complicated local democracy. Has already happened locally with health and police. Trend seems to be to centralise and consolidate, but this removes local value services for many which needs highlighting.

#### **Q. Why did the Conservatives in West Sussex want to be in the fast lane for this process?**

**A.** Cllr Burkhart spoke to confirm she was very anti the idea and attends all meetings locally. Parties are loose federations but want to ensure if something is going to happen anyway you need to be part of the discussion to try and shape it better for local interests.

#### **Q. What does this mean for the Parish Council and their responsibilities – will they be more loaded?**

**A.** No immediate change in the legislation to affect the parishes but there has been temptation to add responsibilities to parishes, fears there could be adverse impacts to the parishes. Keener to offload liabilities instead of assets.

#### **Q. Do any political parties stand to gain or lose as things stand at the moment?**

**A.** Seems to be a Brighton (Labour) agenda leading the way on this.

#### **Q. Local land being used for hard standing and traveller / caravan encampments – what are the safeguarding's in place for this?**

**A.** Areas looking for advice and guidance on how to handle this and they have been successful in Lurgashall to move them on. The National Park status plays a part in this success, Alfold is in greenbelt not SDNP and overlooks a Grade 1 site. Irish travellers are considered a race under ECHR and have to be careful not to be accused to racism, use foundations in planning policy and a good legal team and officers to fight it. There is a two-tier planning system in place currently under ECHR, councils have to provide a level of need based sites within the district and this has become a criminal enterprise. Its an important job for councils, police and social services to displace it. Long term there is a need to change the law but parliament never discuss this. Cost to district council £100k in legal costs, but partial costs were awarded back, (not parish).

#### **Q. If you were to choose to move to Reform like colleagues would you feel honour bound to call a by election?**

**A.** I was elected under a Conservative banner and morally if I defected to any party I would need to be held to a by election and you can hold me to that but I have no intention of defecting. We do not elect individuals per se here.

#### **Q. Do Irish travellers not fall under category of immigrants?**

**A.** They are a protected characteristic, Gypsy Roma etc. Conservative policy is now that they would have the UK leave the ECHR. No one in the current government is advocating for change. He is not a supporter of top-down planning, locally we are building at 8 times the rate of Greater London.

#### **Q. There is a petition to renationalise the water companies – would you be tempted to sign?**

**A.** Emotionally tempted to kick the water companies but they are highly regulated in many areas. Should also address OFWAT for allowing this all and politicians for not increasing the cost of water treatment and supply. No, I don't think they should be nationalised its more a failure of regulation and honesty. Happy to give new water regulator chance to do a better job. There are now criminal consequences for breaking regulations.



Cllr. J Wassenberg left the meeting 7pm.

Andrew Griffith MP left the meeting 7pm.

#### **5. Overview of 2025-26 – Chair Cllr Louise Myles**

Following thanks to Mr Griffith and introducing the Parish Councillors present, Cllr Myles covered the following topics:

- Councillors/Clerk
  - MPC Currently have a vacancy for a Cllr position, with thanks and goodbye to Seb Hall and Julie Pilkington who left the council for family reasons and welcome to Mark Dumas who was very recently co-opted making this his first meeting. We also said goodbye to Viki Williams our clerk of five years and welcomed our new clerk, Rebecca Denby.
- No major issues in the parish, recent SID installation on Fernhurst road – thanks to Cllr Gillian Morton who also wishes to set up a community speed watch. 20mph limit implemented in Bordon Wood and TRO under consideration for Wardley lane with highways and lobbying for Harting Coombe crossroads.
- Milland Lane will be closed from May 18 2026 and Hollycombe temporary lights will be gone before that. Iping church yard road has had temporary work done while Highways make a decision on something more permanent.
- Annual Spring Clean ten days ago was a success but we need more volunteers.
- Durrants Pond has been an issue for some time and the property was in probate but has now been sold to Hollycombe and they plan to handle going forward.
- Defibrillator - MPC has responsibility and training and this has been used several times, can put on another course for training if requested.
- Hollycombe House
  - Info boards up in the hall for review and they are working hard to communicate with the village and mitigate disruption, liaison group meeting minutes are published on our website, they will also be publishing an info website of their own in the near future. They also attend meetups in the village so please come along to ask questions.
- Local Government Reorganisation – we do make people aware when there is a consultation and the parish council always responds as well as individually as Cllrs, so if you want to have your say please respond.
- Milland Meet Ups – every second month in the shop please join, dates on website.
- Welcome Pack and community cohesion – please contact us with any ideas you have for enhancing this, thanks to Cllr Jeremy Parker for the welcome packs.

#### **6. District Councillor's Report – Cllr Brett Burkhart**

Following an introduction to her role and responsibilities Cllr Burkhart covered the following points (full report attached):

- Playground upgrades across the district
- Car parking charges
- Food waste collection
- Local Elections – bring photo ID



## 7. Planning Report – Cllr Jeremy Parker – Chair of The Planning Committee

Fairly quiet year nothing particularly controversial with efficient planning application processing.

Modern looking 4 bed house proposal on the land next to Veralan, MPC objected on the grounds house not affordable or in line with the local plan and inappropriate design for Sussex and application was withdrawn.

Hollycombe have had two applications approved for solar installations at hatch farm of 960 panels to provide all power for the estate, and second for the creation of three ponds at hatch farm also to incorporate woodland planting and an orchard.

Park farm was refused an application for residential use of an outbuilding under appeal.

Land behind Bordon Wood village hall - was proposed to build a very modern property it was refused and appeal turned down.

Chapel Common application from horse field to a dog walking field, no MPC objection.

## 8. Finance Report – Full report

Precept for 2025-26: **£34,200**

Precept for 2026-27: **£35,550**

This reflected an increase of **£1350** and just less than **4%**

Total Gross Payments - **£49,921**

### **Expenses Summary**

- Village maintenance including extensive work to the ditches, hedging, mowing and general upkeep **£2,699**
- Welcome Fund **£94**
- Training **£223**
- Defibrillator **£522**
- Hall Hire **£196**
- Accountants, Internal and External Audit **£713**
- Milland Tennis Club Maintenance **£1333**
- Speed Indicator **£4673**

**Public Works Loans x 2 - Milland Stores balance - £ (total payment **£4,113**)**

### **Grants:**

- Recreation Field maintenance & renewals **£3,250**
- Cartersland Wildflower Group **£200**
- Churchyards **£1,000**
- Hollycombe School **£500**
- Milland Community Store – refurbishments and improvements **£16,300**

**Donations:**

- Air Ambulance **£250**

**Subscriptions:**

- West Sussex Association of Local Councils (WSALC) **£314**
- Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) **£47**

**Other:**

- Pension Costs **£309**
- IT support and Security **£354**
- Clerks Salary **£12,521**
- PAYE **£53**
- Insurance **£773**
- Payroll Processing **£312**

**Ringfenced funds:**

- Tennis courts resurfacing fund **£7,693**
- Defibrillator Fund **£2,064**
- King's Coronation Fund **£1,045**
- CIL **£5,419.09**
- Tree Surgery **£10,000**

**2025-26 VAT reclaim will be £1290**

**Receipts:**

As well as the precept the Parish Council received:

- Milland Tennis Club **£2,511**
- VAT refund of **£730**

Total Available Funds 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 **£37,477.82**

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**Recreation Field Summary**

- The difficult weather meant it has been a more difficult year for the field. Rob Findlay, despite the difficult conditions, did a fantastic job keeping it looking fantastic.

**Total Gross Payments: £5,869.32**

**Total Receipts: £3,250**

Summary of Payments:

- Maintenance **£5.632**
- Administration (bins, RoSPA Inspection, Moles) **£237**

Summary of Receipts:

- VAT Reclaim **£142**
- MPC Grants **£3,250**

**Closing Balance £7,335.36**

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**Overview of the year:**

- It has once again been a busy financial year.
- Councillors were particularly conscious of the ongoing economic uncertainty and worked hard to keep the increase to the precept to the bare minimum and ensuring the availability of funds for the necessary projects.
- We have once again seen a rise in the need for the Council to assist with miscellaneous hedging, ditching and verge maintenance particularly in view of another wet winter and ongoing issues with flooding and damage to the roads.
- Spend in line with precept amount, with the exception of additional grant to the Milland Shop of £16k from reserves.
- Higher clerk costs due to handover period to new clerk.

**Expression of Thanks:**

- To all Councillors, for their time, hard work and engagement.
  - To Rob Findlay for his management of the Recreation Field and ongoing maintenance of the Parish.
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**9. Looking ahead 2026/27**

**Community Speed watch** – Please get in touch if you would like to volunteer. This is an infrequent need for voluntary time with just a small group required and training by Sussex police will be provided.

**Two projects advised by WSALC**

**Business plan** – Parish is to provide a business plan to address what we currently do and are fit to do going forward, we will also look at community assets and council’s role in preserving the assets such as pub, playground, shop etc. We will be consulting widely on parish priorities to be published over the coming weeks.

**Emergency resilience plan** – SALC advises we need to consider impact of large-scale cyber-attacks, loss of utilities and identifying a village place of safety and supplies to be developed over the next year.

**10. Audience Questions**

- Fernhurst road speed concern raised – Cllr Gillan Morton to take after the meeting and Cllr Brett Burkhart advised highways is county issue
- Sports club not getting grants – why? They didn’t apply.

The chair closed the meeting by thanking everyone for coming. Meeting closed at 7:37pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....

*These Minutes are unconfirmed until signed by the Chairman*