

PARISH OF GODALMING

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

OF THE PARISH OF GODALMING HELD

ON THURSDAY, 14 MAY 2026

- * Town Mayor (Cllr Crooks)
- 0 Deputy Town Mayor (Cllr Kiehl)

0	Councillor Adam	*	Councillor Marshall
*	Councillor Crowe	*	Councillor Martin
0	Councillor C Downey	*	Councillor PMA Rivers
0	Councillor S Downey	*	Councillor PS Rivers
*	Councillor Duce	*	Councillor Steel
*	Councillor Follows	*	Councillor Thomson
0	Councillor Heagin	*	Councillor Weightman
*	Councillor Holliday	*	Councillor Williams

* Present # Absent & No Apology Received 0 Apology for Absence L Late

719. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 23 April 2026 were signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

720. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and recorded as above.

721. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Members made no declarations of interest in relation to any item on the agenda for this meeting, which is required to be disclosed by the Localism Act 2011 and the Godalming Members' Code of Conduct.

722. PETITIONS/STATEMENTS/QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No petitions/statements/questions had been received from members of the public in accordance with Standing Order No 5.

723. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

No questions from Councillors were submitted in accordance with Standing Order 6.

724. OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS, LETTERS, ETC

There were none.

725. COMMITTEE REPORTS

The reports of the following Committees setting out decisions taken pursuant to delegated powers were RECEIVED

Audit Committee

The Committee met on 5 February and 16 April 2026 and has continued to oversee the Council's governance, financial control and risk management arrangements.

Key matters considered during the period include:

- Internal Audit – The interim Internal Audit report was received with no recommendations, and the Committee recorded its satisfaction with the control environment. Arrangements are in place for the final audit with reporting to Council on 4 June.

The Committee has also recommended the re-appointment of Mulberry & Co Local Authority Services Ltd as the Council's Internal Auditor for the financial years 2026/27 to 2028/29, with a requirement for a change of auditor to maintain independence. This recommendation will be considered by Full Council at the Annual Council meeting on 20 May 2026.

- Financial Oversight & Controls – Regular bank reconciliations have been reviewed and signed. Following a previously identified CCLA reporting issue, the Committee approved strengthened reporting procedures to require supporting statements alongside financial reports, improving transparency and assurance.
- Risk Management – The Financial Risk Assessment has been reviewed and updated, including the addition of risks associated with Community Asset Transfer and insurance liabilities.
- Governance & Compliance – The Committee reviewed the Council's IT, Cyber Security & Acceptable Use Policy and recommended its adoption, alongside confirming compliance with AGAR Assertion 10 (Digital and Data Compliance).
- System of Internal Control – A formal review has been undertaken to support the Annual Governance Statement.
- Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) – Members have considered the Annual Governance Statement and agreed recommended responses. Draft Accounting Statements for 2025/26 have also been reviewed. Both documents will be presented to Full Council on 4 June 2026 following completion of the internal audit.
- Treasury & Investment Strategy – Reviewed with no amendments required and recommended for re-adoption at Annual Council.
- Debt Management – The Committee has considered an irrecoverable debt, the committee's recommendation was considered as a separate agenda item.

Environment & Planning

The Committee met on 19 February, 12 March and 9 April 2026 and has continued to discharge its statutory role as a consultee on planning applications, as well as overseeing a range of environmental and community infrastructure matters.

- Planning Applications – The Committee has considered planning applications referred to it, submitting detailed representations where appropriate, including formal objections

where proposals were considered to conflict with the Godalming & Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan or give rise to residential amenity concerns.

- Strategic Planning Matters – The Committee has engaged with significant development proposals, including land at Eashing Lane/Ock Way, ensuring that the Council's previously agreed objections are consistently applied across related applications.
- Environmental & Community Initiatives –
 - Godalming has been selected to represent the South-East region in the RHS Britain in Bloom UK 2026 Finals, a significant national achievement. The Committee has approved the necessary preparations to support participation.
 - The Committee has supported initiatives aligned with the Council's Climate Emergency commitments, including promotion of the National Emergency Briefing campaign.
- Infrastructure & Assets –
 - Progress has been made on proposals relating to Nightingale Cemetery, with Officers authorised to begin engagement with the Diocese regarding a faculty application.
 - Community infrastructure projects funded through CIL, including the Busbridge Junior School MUGA, have been reviewed, with Members noting positive outcomes.
- Monitoring & Reporting – Members received the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulation 59c monitoring report and the annual burial statistics, ensuring ongoing oversight of key service areas.

Policy & Management Committee

The Committee met on 19 February, 12 March and 23 April 2026 and has continued to oversee the Council's financial management, strategic direction and corporate governance.

- Financial Management & Oversight – The Committee has maintained regular oversight of accounts, payments and budget monitoring, with all expenditure confirmed as being in accordance with approved budgets. Strengthened reporting arrangements have been introduced, including the presentation of supporting bank and investment statements alongside financial reports to improve transparency and assurance.
- Governance & Committee Structure Review – Members have undertaken a comprehensive review of the Council's governance arrangements and have developed a revised Service Committee model, supported by a Scheme of Delegation, updated Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. The proposed structure has been designed to improve accountability, reduce duplication and strengthen Member oversight of service delivery. These proposals are recommended for formal adoption at Annual Council.
- Policy Review – The Committee has reviewed the Exercise of Employer's Discretions and, noting no amendments were required, has recommended its re-adoption by Full Council.
- Local Government Reorganisation & Community Asset Transfers – The Committee continued to oversee the Council's response to Local Government Reorganisation, including progress on Community Asset Transfers. Actions during the period include:
 - progressing Expressions of Interest for a number of community assets;
 - agreeing timelines for seeking completion of transfers; and
 - undertaking resident engagement through consultation and survey work.
- Strategic Projects & Community Leadership –

- The Committee has supported the submission of an Expression of Interest for Godalming to be considered as UK Town of Culture 2028, reflecting strong community backing.
- A decision has been taken to provide temporary accommodation support for the Kit4Kids charity, demonstrating the Council's direct role in responding to urgent community need.
- The Committee has undertaken a six-month review of the Ockford Ridge & Aaron's Hill Hub and continues to monitor its operation and community use.
- Grants & Community Support – The Committee has approved Service Level Agreement funding and grant aid in kind to a range of local organisations, ensuring continued support for key community services.

Staffing Committee

The Committee met on 16 April 2026 and has continued to oversee staffing matters, employment policies and organisational structure.

- Policy Review & Employment Compliance – The Committee has undertaken a review of key staffing policies to ensure compliance with recent legislative changes, including the Employment Rights Act 2025. A number of updated policies and procedures have been recommended to Full Council for formal adoption.
- Health & Safety – The Committee has reviewed the Council's Lone Working Risk Assessments and strengthened provisions to ensure staff safety, including additional requirements relating to personal medical equipment. These are recommended for adoption by Full Council.
- Staffing Structure & Workforce Planning – Members have considered the implications of Local Government Reorganisation and potential asset transfers on staffing capacity, noting that incremental growth may be required, with further detailed review to follow as proposals develop.
- Recruitment & HR Matters – The Committee has managed recruitment activity and ongoing staffing matters, including senior staff appraisal arrangements.

The Committee continues to ensure that the Council's staffing arrangements remain compliant, resilient and fit for purpose in supporting current services and future growth.

726. TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The reports of the following committees setting out decisions taken pursuant to delegated powers were RECEIVED:

	Meetings Dated
Audit Committee	5 February 2026
Environment & Planning	29 January 2026 19 February 2026 12 March 2026 9 April 2026
Policy & Management Committee	29 January 2026 19 February 2026 12 March 2026

727. POLICY DOCUMENT REVIEW – POLICY & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Full Council RESOLVED to agree to adopted the Exercise of Employer's Discretions (attached to the record Minutes) as reviewed and recommended by the Policy & Management Committee on 12 March 2026.

728. POLICY DOCUMENT REVIEW – STAFFING COMMITTEE

Full Council RESOLVED to agree to adopted the Staffing Policies listed below (and attached to the record Minutes) as reviewed and recommended by the Staffing Committee on 12 February and 16 April 2026.

Absence and Sick Pay Policy
Code of Conduct – Employee
Dignity at Work Policy
Disciplinary Procedure
Fire Safety Precautions & Emergency Procedures
Grievance Policy
Leave Policy
Social Media Policy
Training Statement of Intent
Whistleblowing Policy

729. REVIEW LONE WORKING RISK ASSESSMENTS

Full Council RESOLVED to agree to adopt the Lone Working Risk Assessments listed below (and attached to the record Minutes) as reviewed and recommended by the Staffing Committee on 16 April 2026.

Lone Working Risk Assessments - All Areas Risk Assessment
Lone Working Risk Assessments - Extra Controls for Broadwater Youth Centre
Lone Working Risk Assessments - Extra Controls for Cemeteries, community buildings and open spaces
Lone Working Risk Assessments - Extra Controls for Godalming Museum
Lone Working Risk Assessments - Extra Controls for GTC Head Office

730. POLITICAL BALANCE POLICY

Following advice on best practice that suggests that for clarity and transparency the Council should have a stand-alone policy document that sets out how political balance is applied to the committees of the Council, Full Council RESOLVED to agree to adopt the Political Balance Policy. (attached to the record minutes)

731. WHARF NURSERY SCHOOL – STRATEGIC ADVOCACY AND LAND ACQUISITION

Members considered the report of the Chief Executive Officer regarding strategic advocacy and potential land acquisition in support of Wharf Nursery School.

During discussion, Members acknowledged the importance of local early years and SEND provision and the need for a proactive approach to future capacity pressures.

Following debate, Members agreed the recommendations as set out in the agenda paper and it was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) Wharf Nursery School be recognised as a strategically critical provider of early years and SEND provision within Godalming and Waverley;
- b) the current situation, where demand materially exceeds capacity, be recognised as unsustainable and requiring intervention;
- c) Godalming Town Council act as a formal advocate to secure land required for expansion; Officers be authorised to:
 - i. open discussions with Waverley Borough Council regarding the lease or transfer of adjacent land; and
 - ii. engage with Surrey County Council and emerging Unitary structures to establish support in principle for expanded provision;
- e) options for Town Council involvement in land ownership or stewardship be explored where this would strengthen delivery; and
- f) a further report be submitted to Council once initial discussions have established whether land acquisition is achievable.

732. MANAGEMENT OF DEBT 2025/26

Members considered the recommendation of the Audit Committee regarding an outstanding debt owed by The White Rhino Gin Company. Members noted that the company had entered administration and that the cost of recovery would exceed the value of the debt.

RESOLVED that the debt of £40 owed by The White Rhino Gin Company be written off and that the RFO be authorised to make the necessary accounting adjustments.

733. AUTHORISATION OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The following resolution was passed nem con.

That the Chief Executive Officer be authorised to sign or where appropriate, to have sealed on behalf of the town council any orders, deeds or documents necessary to give effect to any of the matters contained in the reports received at this meeting or in any resolution passed by the town council.

734. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Full Council is scheduled to be held in the Council Chamber on WEDNESDAY 20 JUNE, 2026 at 7.00pm.

735. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor informed members that he had been at the welcome event for visitors from our Twin Town of Joigny and will be attending a friendship supper at the Wilfrid Noyce Centre on Saturday evening.

The Mayor informed Members of the dates of the screening of the People's Emergency Briefing at the Borough Hall on 12 June and the Wilfrid Noyce Centre on 26 June. Members will be sent the links for booking tickets for these screenings.

Members were informed that the Godalming Run scheduled for Sunday 17 May is a sell out with available race entries taken, meaning just over 700 runners will be taking part.