

PARISH OF GODALMING

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

OF THE PARISH OF GODALMING HELD

ON THURSDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2025

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

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

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

Prior to the formal commencement of business, the Revd Father Jonathan How of St Edmund's Church led the Council in prayer. Before doing so, on behalf of the catholic community of St Edmund's, he thanked the Council and its staff for the care and empathy shown to the bereaved who use Godalming's cemeteries, and for the high standard of care taken in maintaining these "beautiful cemeteries".

345. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 4 September 2025 were signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

346. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received and recorded as above.

347. **DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

Councillor Heagin declared an other registerable interest in Agenda Item 16 on the grounds that she is a volunteer with Citizens Advice and did not take part in the debate on that item.

348. **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.

349. **QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS**

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

350. **OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS, LETTERS, ETC**

There were none.

351. COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

Policy & Management Committee – Cllr Follows (Chair)

The Policy & Management Committee met three times since the last Full Council meeting, on 28 August, 18 September, and 30 October 2025.

The Committee continued its core oversight of the Council's financial and strategic management. Regular budget monitoring reports were reviewed, with no material variances to report. A particularly positive outcome was the successful revaluation of the Ockford & Aarons Hill Hub, where the Valuation Office Agency upheld the Council's challenge, reducing the rateable value from £32,000 to £1,775 – saving approximately £15,000 per annum.

Members received progress reports on the restoration of The Pepperpot, noting that the major structural elements have been completed and approving to recommend to Full Council an additional £100,000 from the Land & Property Reserve to enable completion of the tourelle reconstruction. The project is expected to conclude in early 2026.

The Committee also received detailed updates on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and Community Asset Transfers (CATs). While Government has confirmed that Godalming will fall within the proposed *West Surrey Unitary Authority*, work continues with Waverley Borough Council to complete Tranche 1–3 asset transfers, including ongoing partnership discussions around Holloway Hill Recreation Ground and associated Section 106 funding.

Members agreed to recommend a new combined Customer Complaints Policy & Procedure, replacing two outdated documents, and approved administrative updates to the Council's Safeguarding Policy.

Finally, Members resolved to support, in principle, a £2,000 budget provision in 2026/27 to assist the Joigny and Mayen Twinning Associations in their joint civic visit programme.

Environment & Planning Committee – Cllr Kiehl (Chair)

The Environment & Planning Committee met on 28 August, 18 September, 9 October, and 30 October 2025.

The Committee considered and commented on a range of planning applications, including strong objections to the proposed dwelling at Huxley Close and to the Thornbrook House redevelopment on Catteshall Lane, both deemed overdevelopments contrary to local and national planning policy. Conversely, the Committee supported the Marks & Spencer proposals for Woolsack Way, recognising the commercial benefits to the town while pressing for improved traffic management and parking measures.

Members noted progress by Surrey County Council on the Natalie Way public right of way investigation, to which Godalming Town Council continues to provide administrative support.

A revised and consolidated Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Policy, Guidance & Application Form was approved for recommendation to Full Council, alongside a temporary moratorium on new CIL awards until October 2026, with a £25,000 contingency for exceptional community projects.

E&P is pleased to report to Full Council further success in the 2025 South & South-East in Bloom competition, with Eashing and Nightingale Cemeteries each receiving Gold Awards and the Youth Service's Wellbeing Garden achieving a Gold on its first entry. Thanks were formally recorded to the Grounds & Facilities Team, Youth Service, and volunteers for their achievements.

Staffing Committee – Cllr Heagin (Chair)

The Staffing Committee met on 4 September 2025.

Members completed several significant recruitment exercises, confirming the appointment of the Finance Manager (commenced 20 October) and Deputy Chief Officer (commencing 1 December). The Committee also reviewed staff returning from maternity leave, long-term sickness, and sabbatical, and confirmed interim cover arrangements.

Policy housekeeping included withdrawal of the outdated *Lone & Flexible Working Policy* and *Guide to Term-Time Contracts*, and recommendation of a new Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy for adoption by Full Council.

Overall, staffing levels are stable, with positive progress on succession planning and team development.

Audit Committee – Cllr Thomson (Chair)

The Audit Committee met on 11 September 2025.

The Audit Committee received the Interim Internal Audit Report from Mulberry & Co. Full Council to note there were *no recommendations* contained in the report, confirming that the Council's internal controls remain robust. The Committee approved revised payroll control procedures following the outsourcing of payroll to an external provider and reaffirmed the Council's budgetary control arrangements.

The next interim audit is scheduled for 9 January 2026, with reporting to the February meeting. The Committee continues to provide assurance to Full Council on the adequacy of governance, financial management, and risk control frameworks.

352. 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	11 September 2025
Environment & Planning	28 August 2025 18 September 2025 9 October 2025
Policy & Management Committee	28 August 2025 18 September 2025
Staffing Committee	4 September 2025

353. THE PEPPERPOT RESTORATION PROJECT – ADDITIONAL FUNDING ALLOCATION

Council considered the recommendation from the Policy & Management Committee regarding the allocation of an additional £100,000 from the Land & Property Reserve to the Pepperpot Restoration Project.

Members noted that, through prudent management of the Council's finances, the unexpected additional costs arising from the restoration of The Pepperpot had been met without the need for borrowing and without any increase in the precept for this project, and that the additional costs were being funded through the proper and intended use of reserves.

Members recorded their thanks to staff for their work in ensuring that the works had been undertaken as speedily and efficiently as possible, and expressed appreciation to the Waverley Borough Council Historic Buildings' Officer for their support throughout the project.

Members resolved to agree:

That the allocation of an additional £100,000 from the Land & Property Reserve to the Pepperpot Restoration Project be approved.

354. CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE – CONSOLIDATION INTO A SINGLE DOCUMENT

Council considered the recommendation from the Policy & Management Committee to adopt the consolidated Customer Complaints Policy & Procedure and withdraw the existing “How to Make a Complaint” and “How to Handle a Complaint” documents.

Members resolved to agree:

- a. That the Customer Complaints Policy & Procedure be adopted as the Council’s single, authoritative complaints document.
- b. That the legacy documents “How to Make a Complaint” and “How to Handle a Complaint” be formally withdrawn.

355. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) – POLICY CONSOLIDATION AND TEMPORARY MORATORIUM ON NEIGHBOURHOOD CIL AWARDS

Council considered the recommendation from the Environment & Planning Committee regarding CIL policy consolidation, a temporary moratorium on Neighbourhood CIL awards and the associated application process.

Members resolved to agree:

- a. That the consolidated Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Policy, Guidance & Application Form be adopted.
- b. That a temporary moratorium on Neighbourhood CIL awards be implemented until after the October 2026 contribution from Waverley Borough Council is received.
- c. That a revised process be approved, allowing CIL submissions to be received and validated throughout the year, with validated applications to be considered collectively at the November 2026 meeting of the Environment & Planning Committee.
- d. That it be confirmed that:
 - planning applications and any other pre-commencement conditions associated with an award must be met in full before any CIL funds are released; and
 - applicants must provide proof of tenure, with the acceptable length and type to be determined by Members at the point of considering each application.
- e. That a contingency sum of £25,000 be set aside for potential allocation in exceptional cases of urgent community need, subject to all standard CIL eligibility criteria continuing to be met.

356. RECRUITMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS POLICY

Council considered the recommendation from the Staffing Committee to adopt the revised Recruitment of Ex-Offenders document, consolidating and replacing the existing policy and policy statement.

During debate, Cllr Crowe commended the Council for this policy as an exemplar of good practice.

Members resolved to agree:

- a. That the revised Recruitment of Ex-Offenders document be adopted.

- b. That the existing Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy and Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy Statement be withdrawn.

357. APPROVAL OF VARIABLE DIRECT DEBITS

Council considered the request to add British Gas, as the energy provider for the Ockford & Aarons Hill Hub, to the list of suppliers paid by variable direct debit.

Members resolved to agree:

That British Gas be added to the approved list of suppliers paid by variable direct debit and that the Responsible Finance Officer be authorised accordingly.

358. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

Council reviewed the draft Schedule of Meetings for the Local Government Year 2026/27.

Members resolved to agree:

That the Schedule of Meetings (attached to the record minutes) for 2026/27 be approved.

359. POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY OF COMMITTEES – INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS PENDING BY-ELECTION

Council considered a report on the current political composition of the Council and the implications for committee proportionality.

Members resolved to agree:

- a. That the current political composition of the Council following a change of political allegiance be noted.
- b. That the by-election to be held on 25 November 2025 be noted.
- c. That current committee memberships remain unchanged until the by-election result is known.
- d. That, following the by-election, the Chief Executive Officer be authorised to:
 - recalculate political proportionality.
 - invite Group Leaders to make nominations to committees reflecting the revised political balance; and
 - report the outcome to the next available meeting of Full Council for ratification.

360. CITIZENS ADVICE SOUTH-WEST SURREY – Q3 REPORT

Council received the Q3 report from Citizens Advice South-West Surrey, submitted in accordance with the existing SLA, and noted that Members may also wish to refer to the latest Annual Report available via the [Charity Commission's website](#)

Members resolved to agree:

That the Q3 report from Citizens Advice South-West Surrey be received and noted.

361. SEALING OF DOCUMENTS, ETC.

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.

362. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Full Council meeting is scheduled to be held in the Council Chamber on Thursday, 11 December 2025 at 6.30pm.

363. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members were reminded to respond to the email seeking support for the Christmas Lights Switch-On event to be held on 23 November 2025, and to confirm their availability to assist as requested.

IN PURSUANCE OF THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 S.1(2), THE COMMITTEE RESOLVED TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC AND PRESS FROM THE MEETING AT THIS POINT PRIOR TO CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA ITEM(S) 19 BY REASON OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED I.E STAFFING MATTERS.

364. STAFFING MATTERS

Council received a confidential report from the Chair of the Staffing Committee on a staffing matter.

Members resolved to agree:

- a. That funding of up to £16,000 be approved in relation to the staffing matter reported.
- b. That delegated authority be granted to the Staffing Committee to take the necessary actions to resolve the staffing matter within the approved budget.