

PARISH OF GODALMING

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

OF THE PARISH OF GODALMING HELD

ON THURSDAY, 11 DECEMBER 2025

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

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

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

413. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 13 November 2025 were signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

414. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received and recorded as above.

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

Cllr Follows declared an Other Registerable Interest in Agenda Item 16, insofar as it related to a proposed letter to be sent to him in his capacity as Leader of Waverley Borough Council (WBC).

Cllr Follows left the Chamber during consideration of that part of the item.

416. **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.

417. **QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS**

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

418. **OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS, LETTERS, ETC**

There were none.

419. COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

7.1 Environment & Planning Committee – Cllr Kiehl

The Environment & Planning Committee has met once since the last Full Council meeting, on 27 November 2025.

The Committee continued its core role in considering planning matters affecting the town. Members reviewed the full schedule of new planning applications, including a proposal for open-sided padel tennis courts and associated facilities.

Members received a presentation from the Broadwater Youth & Community Centre regarding proposals for biodiversity improvements on Town Council-owned land to the rear of the Centre. This early-stage concept work highlights opportunities to enhance local green space and youth engagement, and Members welcomed the initiative.

A Motion on Notice concerning the Peperharow Road allotment land was also considered. The Committee discussed the proposals to increase allotment provision, improve underused areas of the site, and pursue structured engagement with local residents and the Residents' Association. The motion reaffirms the importance of the site as a community asset and sets out a practical and collaborative path for its future use.

Members reviewed the Town Council's draft response to WBC's Local Plan Issues & Options Consultation, agreeing that the submission needed strengthening in some areas to reflect the town's environmental constraints, infrastructure pressures, and other concerns around, what the committee Members believe to be, an unrealistically high housing requirement figure. The amended response submitted to WBC is attached to record minutes.

Finally, the Committee considered a request from WBC for a letter of support for its Strategic CIL funding bid relating to improvements at Aarons Hill Recreation Ground. This includes a proposed new concrete skate and bike park, access improvements and wider landscaping enhancements. Members approved a letter to be sent to WBC.

7.2 Policy & Management Committee – Cllr Follows (Chair)

The Policy & Management Committee has met once since the last Full Council meeting, on 27 November 2025.

The Committee continued its routine oversight of the Council's financial and operational management. Members reviewed the schedule of payments and receipts for the period 28 October–26 November, with all expenditure confirmed as compliant with approved budgets or prior resolutions. Regular governance reviews were completed without issue.

Members considered the annual review of Fees & Charges for 2026/27, agreeing updated schedules for community buildings and cemetery services, and approving modest increases to allotment rents for both Godalming Town Council (GTC)-managed sites and the Farncombe & District Allotment Association.

The Committee reviewed the Revised Estimates and 2026/27 Draft Budget and associated financial planning; however, the resulting recommendations will be addressed under the separate budget item on this agenda. Members did agree an additional action: inviting the Godalming BID to present an update on its work since establishment.

A series of Community Grant applications were approved, supporting projects at Godalming Junior School (two residential trips), Godalming Town FC, St Mark's Community Centre, Roots for the Future, and St Edmund's Catholic Primary School PSA. Presentations were

received from two applicants, and Members expressed appreciation for the quality and community value of the projects brought forward.

Members also recorded their thanks to Council staff for their work in delivering recent civic and community events, including Remembrance, the Fireworks event, and the Christmas Lights Switch-On, and the Christmas Festival Market and Farncombe festive events.

Two items—Town Council Representation on External Bodies, and the update on Local Government Reorganisation & Community Asset Transfers—were deferred to Full Council for consideration at this meeting.

Members were also informed that the WBC Executive had agreed three Tranche 1 Community Asset Transfers to Godalming Town Council on 9 December 2025, subject to the completion of the necessary legal processes.

7.3 Staffing Committee – Cllr Heagin

The Staffing Committee has met once since the last Full Council meeting, on 13 November 2025, with an Extraordinary Meeting held on 4 December 2025 to consider urgent staffing matters.

At its November meeting, the Committee continued its routine oversight of staffing governance and reviewed progress against the Committee's Work Programme. Members agreed to incorporate a new workstream ensuring that the Council's staffing policies remain aligned with the requirements of the Employment Rights Bill as it is enacted.

The Committee undertook a scheduled review of annual leave and TOIL levels. Members also considered amendments to the Leave Policy, agreeing that a fuller update will be required once national legislation is finalised. In particular, the Committee resolved that the revised policy must clearly set out the differing entitlements under the NJC (Green Book) and JNC (Pink Book), reconcile any inconsistencies with the Particulars of Employment, and include comparison tables and a supporting procedural guide for managers.

The updated Statement of Staff Management, reflecting the change in title from Town Clerk to CEO and removing gender-specific language, was approved.

In exempt session, Members considered several staffing matters.

An Extraordinary Meeting of the Committee was held on 4 December 2025 to address further confidential staffing matters. The Chair of Staffing reported on that meeting in exempt session.

420. TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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

	Meetings Dated
Environment & Planning	30 October 2025
Policy & Management Committee	30 October 2025
Staffing Committee	13 November 2025

421. REVISED ESTIMATES 2025/26, DRAFT BUDGET 2026/27 AND ASSOCIATED VIREMENTS

Members considered the recommendations made by the Policy & Management Committee at its meeting of 27 November 2025 regarding the Revised Estimates for 2025/26 and the draft Budget for 2026/27.

Council RESOLVED to agree:

- to approve the Revised Estimates for 2025/26;
- to approve the draft budget for 2026/27 and set Precept of £1,357,554, representing a Band D equivalent of £132.09, an increase of £9.94 per annum (8.14%);
- to note and approve the 3-year forward projections for 2027/28–2029/30 as set out in the Statement of Variation;
- to determine that the forecast level of the General Reserve represents an appropriate percentage of the precept in accordance with the Council's Reserves Policy;
- to approve the purposes and levels of the Earmarked Reserves; and
- to approve the virements required to implement the Revised Estimates 2025/26, as set out on the virement schedule, in accordance with Financial Regulations.

The following documents are attached to the record minutes:

- Revised Estimates 2025/26 and Revenue Budget 2026/27
- 2026/27 Statement of Variation
- 2026/27 Reserves Balance.

422. POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY OF COMMITTEES – POST BY-ELECTION REVIEW

Members considered a report on the political proportionality of the Council and noted the political composition of the Council following the by-election.

Council RESOLVED to agree that the allocation of committee seats and authorised the Chief Executive Officer to invite Group Leaders to submit nominations to committees in accordance with the approved allocations. It was noted that these will be implemented at the next scheduled meetings for committees.

423. GODALMING AMATEUR SWIMMING CLUB (GASC) – UPDATE AND RELEASE OF CONTINGENCY GRANT

Cllr Follows informed Members that, following a meeting with Cllr Penny Rivers, himself and WBC Officers, an agreement had been reached with WBC which GASC had accepted for 2025/26. On 3 February 2026 WBC Officers will be meeting with GASC to discuss longer-term issues.

On the proposal by Cllr Follows, seconded by Cllr Penny Rivers:

Council RESOLVED to agree that the provision agreed under Min No. 650-24 was no longer required.

424. EASHING CEMETERY LODGE – DOOR REPLACEMENT

Council RESOLVED to agree to replace the front door at Eashing Cemetery Lodge, at a cost of up to £1,895.70, to be funded from budget code 301/4102 (Cemeteries Property Maintenance).

425. SURREY ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS – CONFERENCE REPORT

Cllr Heagin presented a comprehensive report on the Surrey Association of Local Councils Conference held on 13 November 2025, highlighting the positive message received from Cornwall Council regarding Unitary Authorities and local government reorganisation.

Members expressed particular interest in:

- the use of crowd funding by Cornwall Council, which Members felt was something that could be considered by GTC at a later date by the formation of a subsidiary charitable entity; and
- the Community Area Partnership model, noting that it had been operating successfully for the last two years following two earlier models that had not proved effective.

Cllr Heagin reminded Members of the invitation to attend a meeting organised by Surrey County Council on 3 February, to review the Neighbourhood Area Committee model currently being piloted for Unitary Authorities.

426. BANK MANDATE

Council RESOLVED to agree that Irena Hearfield be added to the Council's bank mandate to act as the Service Administrator of, and signatory for, the Council's electronic banking system and that the Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer be instructed to make arrangements to affect the resolution.

427. EVENTS CALENDAR 2026/27

Members noted the Events Calendar 2026/27 and once again thanked staff for the work they do to deliver a wide range of events for the community.

428. LGR & COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFERS – UPDATE

Cllr Heagin provided an update on the progress of Community Asset Transfers, advising that Heads of Terms had been received for:

- Canon Bowring Recreation Ground;
- Charterhouse Green; and
- Land adjacent to Meadow Allotments (Lamas Land).

On other matters, Cllr Heagin advised that the Council had been seeking engagement with WBC regarding the Borough Hall. To progress matters, the LGR Working Group recommended a direct approach to WBC leadership, with the proposed letter to be considered in exempt session as it related to potential Heads of Terms negotiations.

In relation to Holloway Hill, Members were informed that WBC Officers had approached GTC to explore a collaborative way forward to safeguard this valued community area. As a first step, WBC would undertake a full condition survey of the pavilion and share the report with GTC to enable informed decision-making.

Cllr Heagin further advised that the LGR Working Group was preparing a resident consultation leaflet, to be distributed to all households in the week commencing 16 March.

The purpose would be to:

- inform residents of work undertaken to date;
- explain the transfer of Tranche 1–3 assets;
- clarify why some assets were not included; and

- seek resident's views on progressing work on the Borough Hall and Holloway Hill, noting the potential impact on the parish precept.

Cllr Follows informed Members that the Structural Change Order for Surrey was expected in January 2026. He had been nominated as the WBC representative on the West Surrey Joint Steering Committee, with Cllr Townsend (Cranleigh) appointed as the Liberal Democrat representative from Surrey County Council.

429. 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.

430. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Full Council meeting (Extraordinary) to be held in the Council Chamber on Thursday, 8 January 2025 at 7.30pm or at the conclusion of the preceding Policy & Management Committee meeting, whichever is later.

431. ANNOUNCEMENTS

On invitation of the Mayor, Cllr Keihl read out a thank you card from Moss Lane School, for the funding provided for renovation of their playground. It read:

"Dear Godalming Town Councillors.

Thank you so much for your generous support in funding our new playground at Moss Lane School. Your commitment to our children and community has made a tremendous difference. The new space will give our pupils a safe, joyful place to play, learn and grow for many years to come.

We are truly grateful for your investment in their future.

With sincere appreciation,
Moss Lane School"

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) 20 BY REASON OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED I.E STAFFING MATTERS.

432. LGR & COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFERS

Cllr Follows left the council chamber.

Members considered the proposed letter referred to earlier in Min No. 428-25. Council RESOLVED that the letter be approved and sent (attached to record minutes).

Cllr Follows rejoined the meeting.

433. STAFFING MATTERS

The Chair of the Staffing Committee updated Members that a resolution had been agreed in relation to the matters discussed at Full Council on 13 November 2025 (Min No. 364-25 refers).

Members were also updated on maternity leave and post-maternity leave arrangements.