

PARISH OF GODALMING

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

OF THE PARISH OF GODALMING HELD

ON THURSDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2026

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

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

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

TRIBUTE: On the sad news of the sudden and unexpected death on 1 February 2026 of Mr Peter Harris, Godalming Town Council's Sergeant-at-Mace, the Mayor gave a tribute to Peter on behalf of the Council and its staff.

The loss of Peter Harris has come as a shock to us all.

Pete was not just our Sergeant-at-Mace; he was part of the fabric of this Council and of the town we serve. For many years, he was a familiar and reassuring presence at our meetings and civic occasions, carrying out his duties with quiet authority, dignity and pride.

The office of Sergeant-at-Mace is an ancient and honourable one, symbolising the continuity of the Council and the role of the Mayor. Having supported 13 Mayors, Pete understood the importance of that role instinctively. He gave it the gravitas it required, while never losing his warmth, his good humour, or his humanity.

Long before his appointment in 2014, Pete was already well known to Officers and Members alike. He was someone who belonged here, and when he took on the role, it felt entirely natural. Calm, dependable and unflappable, he was a steady presence, and it was always reassuring to know that when Pete was in attendance, things would run as they should.

Pete was especially associated with Remembrance Sunday, where he led the Council in the annual procession with solemnity and respect. Beyond his civic duties, he was deeply involved in the life of the town and was known to many different groups across the community, including through his long-standing involvement with the GoGodalming Youth Canoe Club.

Service was a constant thread throughout Pete's life — from the Royal Navy to the Fire Service, to the Police, and finally to his valued role with this Council. In every capacity, he served with commitment, professionalism and kindness.

Pete will be greatly missed by Members, Officers and by the wider community. We remember him with respect, gratitude and affection, and we extend our sincere condolences to his family at this very sad time.

521. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of the Council held on 8 January 2026 were signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

522. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and recorded as above.

523. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Councillor Heagin declared an other registerable interest in Agenda Item 16, Citizen Advice South West Surrey – Q3 2025/26 Report on the grounds that she is a volunteer with that organisation. Cllr Heagin remained in the Chamber when that item was noted.

524. 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.

525. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

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

526. OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS, LETTERS, ETC

There were none.

527. COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

Audit Committee – Cllr Thomson

The Audit Committee had met once since the last meeting of Full Council.

The Committee continued its role in providing assurance over the Council's governance, financial controls and risk management arrangements.

Members received the interim report from the Council's Internal Auditor, Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd, and were pleased to note a *clean* outcome with no recommendations or actions raised at this stage of the year.

Routine oversight was undertaken, including review of the current bank reconciliation, and Members approved the Council's Financial Risk Assessment as an accurate reflection of the Council's current position.

The Committee also considered the Council's arrangements in respect of AGAR Assertion 10 (Digital and Data Compliance) and agreed that the Council is well placed to provide a positive assurance response when approving the Annual Governance Statement.

Two recommendations from the meeting were presented later in the meeting: the updated IT Policy and the proposed re-appointment of the Internal Auditor.

Environment & Planning Committee – Cllr Kiehl

The Environment & Planning Committee had met twice since the last meeting of Full Council, on 8 January and 29 January 2026.

The Committee continued its core role in considering planning matters affecting the town. Members reviewed the full schedule of planning applications received from the Local Planning Authority and raised no formal observations on the applications considered.

Members also considered Waverley Borough Council's consultation on the Draft Godalming Navigations Conservation Area Appraisal, supporting the enhancement of the conservation area and agreeing the Town Council's response. Min No 486-25 delegated authority to the Deputy Chief Officer and the Committee Chair to agree the final wording of the committee's response for the Godalming Navigation Consultation Area Appraisal before submitting to WBC. The agreed response was provided for the information of Members.

Members also noted the forthcoming Surrey County Council engagement on local street improvements in Farncombe, with consultation events taking place during February.

Policy & Management Committee – Cllr Follows

As Leader of the Council, Cllr Follows wished to add his personal condolences to those of the Mayor and the Council to the family and friends of Pete Harris.

The Policy & Management Committee had met twice since the last meeting of Full Council, on 8 January and 29 January 2026.

The Committee continued its routine oversight of the Council's financial and operational management. Members reviewed the schedules of payments and receipts for the period, with all expenditure confirmed as in line with the agreed budget or prior resolutions.

Members considered a number of governance and compliance matters, including approval of key GDPR policy documents and agreement to commission an updated accessibility assessment of the Town Council's website.

The Committee also undertook financial planning work in relation to the May 2027 Town Council elections, noting the potential scale of costs and agreeing further review of reserves and correspondence with relevant authorities.

Members received updates on the Local Government Reorganisation and Community Asset Transfers, including progress on the first tranche of transfers currently in conveyancing, and agreed further steps to maintain momentum on key local assets.

Finally, the Committee continued its review of the Council's committee structure and governance arrangements, agreeing a set of principles and options to be developed for Member consideration.

Staffing Committee – Cllr Heagin

The Staffing Committee had met once since the last meeting of Full Council, at an Extraordinary Meeting held on 18 December 2025.

In exempt session, Members considered post-maternity leave staffing arrangements. The Committee approved a flexible working request, subject to the formal amendment of the employee's particulars of employment.

Members also agreed to the creation of a new part-time Education & Outreach Officer post.

Cllr Heagin informed the Mayor that there are no staffing matters to be brought forward in exempt session for this meeting.

528. 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	27 November 2025 11 December 2025 8 January 2026
Policy & Management Committee	27 November 2025 8 January 2026

529. IT, CYBER SECURITY & ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Members considered the recommendation of the Audit Committee following its meeting of 5 February 2026 (Min No. 516 refers), regarding the adoption of the updated IT, Cyber Security & Acceptable Use Policy.

Members noted that the Policy had been drafted in line with the Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP) Practitioners' Guide 2025, using the recommended Parish Council IT Policy template as a basis for good practice and audit compliance. Additionally, Members noted that the policy supports the Council's internal control framework and is required to meet the expectations of Assertion 10 – Digital and Data Compliance within the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

Council **RESOLVED** to adopt the updated IT, Cyber Security & Acceptable Use Policy, as reviewed and recommended by the Audit Committee.

530. APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

Members considered the recommendation of the Audit Committee following its meeting of 5 February 2026 (Min No. 518 refers), regarding the re-appointment of Mulberry & Co Local Authority Services Ltd as the Council's Internal Auditor.

Council **RESOLVED** to:

- re-appoint Mulberry & Co Local Authority Services Ltd as the Council's Internal Auditor for the financial years 2026/27 to 2028/29 inclusive;
- authorise the Chief Executive Officer to issue a new Letter of Engagement; and
- instruct that, as a condition of engagement, Mulberry & Co Local Authority Services Ltd allocate a different auditor than that nominated under the previous Letter of Engagement.

531. POLICY DOCUMENT REVIEW

Members considered the recommendation of the Policy & Management Committee following its meeting of 8 January 2026, regarding adoption of the updated GDPR policy documents.

Council **RESOLVED** to adopt the following policies:

[GDPR-Removable Media Policy](#)
[GDPR-Subject Access Policy](#)

[GDPR-Privacy Notice – General](#)
[GDPR-Privacy Notice – Staff, Councillors & Volunteers](#)
[GDPR-Document Retention Policy](#)
[GDPR-Information Data Protection Policy](#)

532. YOUTH SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

Members received the Youth Service Annual Report for the period January–December 2025. Members warmly welcomed the report and expressed their thanks to the Head of Youth Service for presenting a document which struck the right balance—clear, accessible and informative without being overly technical. It was felt that the report reflected both the professionalism and the outward-looking ethos of the Service.

Council noted with particular satisfaction the consistency of attendance and the continued growth of the Service as it deepens its roots within the community, evidenced by a total of 10,094 attendances recorded across all youth service programmes during the year.

Members were unanimous in their view that the success of the Youth Service is very much the sum of its parts, recognising the contribution of every member of the youth team in delivering a high-quality, trusted and responsive service to young people in the town.

Of particular note was the comment from a parent describing Godalming Youth Service as “an essential community asset”, a sentiment with which all Members present wholeheartedly agreed.

The report was **RECEIVED** and **NOTED**.

533. UK TOWN OF CULTURE 2028 – EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Members considered a report regarding the UK Town of Culture 2028 competition and the draft Expression of Interest (EOI) prepared for Godalming.

In discussion, Members expressed their wholehearted support for the recommendations and placed on record their sincere thanks to the Chief Executive Officer and all those involved in preparing the draft submission. Members considered the EOI to be ambitious yet grounded, reflecting both the heritage and forward-looking character of the town.

Council was of the clear view that the bid aligns strongly with Godalming’s civic identity; an historic market town with a proud cultural tradition, active voluntary sector and growing creative ambition. Members welcomed the vision of culture as civic infrastructure—strengthening community ties, supporting local livelihoods and broadening participation—while protecting what already works well within the town’s established cultural ecology.

Particular support was expressed for:

- the emphasis on community-led governance and shared delivery through the proposed “Godalming 28” partnership model;
- the commitment to youth engagement, inclusion and accessibility;
- the balance between celebrating heritage and embracing innovation, including creative-technology strands; and
- the clear intention to ensure legacy, sustainability and measurable community benefit.

Members agreed that the opportunity to position Godalming on a national stage, attract investment, and further deepen civic pride made submission of the EOI both timely and strategically sound.

Accordingly, Council **RESOLVED** to:

- note the launch of the UK Town of Culture 2028 competition;
- proceed with submission of an Expression of Interest on behalf of Godalming;
- authorise the Chief Executive Officer to remove the confidential designation and share the draft EOI with local groups and organisations to determine the level of community support; and
- delegate authority to the Policy & Management Committee to determine whether to submit the final EOI by 31 March 2026, following consideration of engagement feedback.

Members concluded that pursuing UK Town of Culture status represents a confident and positive step for the town and reflects the Council's commitment to long-term cultural, social and economic vitality.

534. LGR & COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFERS – UPDATE

The Mayor invited Cllr Heagin, Chair of the LGR Working Group, to introduce the item and provide an update on progress regarding Community Asset Transfers (CAT) from Waverley Borough Council (WBC) to Godalming Town Council (GTC).

Cllr Heagin presented the draft residents' leaflet on Local Government Reorganisation, acknowledging the constructive feedback received at the previous meeting of the Policy & Management Committee, which had been incorporated into the final design.

Through the Chair, Cllr Heagin, seconded by Cllr Thomson, proposed that the leaflet be approved for printing and distribution to all households within the parish.

Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Local Government Reorganisation residents' leaflet for printing and distribution.

Cllr Heagin further informed Members that, at its meeting on 10 February 2026, the Waverley Borough Council Executive had approved the following assets for freehold transfer to GTC:

- Wilfrid Noyce Centre;
- Crown Court Public Toilets;
- Farncombe Public Toilets;
- The Burys Scout & Guide Headquarters; and
- Ockford Ridge Scout & Guide Headquarters.
- The Burys Field.

Members were advised that detailed Heads of Terms would be considered at the Extraordinary Meeting of Full Council scheduled for 19 February 2026.

Cllr Heagin reported that the Band Room and Rangers' Station did not meet the current CAT policy criteria, as the Rangers' Station remains an operational WBC facility. Likewise, the Community Store, due to its location within an operational WBC building, did not satisfy the policy requirements.

Members agreed that it would be appropriate to resubmit an Expression of Interest in respect of the Band Room as a standalone asset. A discussion also took place regarding how best to support the Community Store. The LGR Working Group will consider the views expressed and bring forward recommendations to Members in due course.

Council placed on record its appreciation of the considerable work undertaken by WBC officers in progressing Community Asset Transfer requests, recognising that applications have been received from across the Borough and that the volume and complexity of negotiations have been significant.

The Leader of the Council indicated that he would wish the LGR Working Group to continue reviewing assets of community value across the town and, where appropriate, bring forward further recommendations for Member consideration.

Finally, Cllr Heagin highlighted the forthcoming community engagement opportunity at the Farncombe Market, noting that it would provide a useful indication of public support for GTC taking on additional assets in the future.

The update was **NOTED**.

535. MOTION ON NOTICE

Members considered the Motion on Notice proposed by Cllr Weightman and seconded by Cllr PMA Rivers concerning councillor numbers following Local Government Reorganisation. In presenting the Motion, the proposer set out the background and reasoning. Council was reminded that, upon vesting of the new West Surrey Unitary Authority in May 2027, overall elected representation across all tiers of local government within the parish of Godalming will reduce. In parallel, Godalming Town Council is likely to assume responsibility for an increased number of community assets and associated functions.

It was argued that these combined factors would increase the workload and civic responsibilities of Town Councillors and that the current number of councillors may, in due course, prove insufficient to meet the needs of residents effectively.

With the agreement of the proposer and seconder, the wording of the Motion was amended to read as follows:

The Motion:

Accordingly, Godalming Town Council:

- considers that, after vesting in 2027, the number of councillors across the wards of Godalming Town Council will no longer be sufficient to serve the needs of residents; and
- instructs the Chief Executive Officer, no later than 30 June 2026, to ask Waverley Borough Council to initiate a Community Governance Review to consider increasing the number of councillors representing each of the individual wards on GTC.

During debate, Members indicated that the precise timing of any such request should be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer, with a general view expressed that it would be prudent to wait until after the ordinary elections scheduled for 7 May 2026 before formally approaching Waverley Borough Council.

On being put to the vote, Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Motion as amended, with delegated authority to the Chief Executive Officer to determine the appropriate timing of the request to Waverley Borough Council, having regard to the May 2026 elections.

536. CITIZENS ADVICE SOUTH-WEST SURREY – Q3 2025/26 REPORT

Members received the Q3 2025/26 report from Citizens Advice South-West Surrey, submitted in accordance with the Service Level Agreement.

The report was **NOTED**.

The Leader of the Council informed Members that concerns have been raised regarding the future funding model for Citizens Advice and the way in which services may be delivered going forward. In response, a meeting of Town and Parish Councils across both Waverley

and Guildford has been convened for 25 March 2026 to discuss the position and consider a coordinated approach.

Through the Chair, Cllr Follows sought nominations for a Member to attend the meeting alongside the Chief Executive Officer to represent Godalming Town Council.

On the proposal of Cllr Follows, seconded by Cllr Marshall, it was **RESOLVED** that Cllr PMA Rivers attend the meeting on 25 March 2026, together with the Chief Executive Officer, to represent Godalming Town Council.

537. 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.

538. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Full Council will be the Extraordinary meeting to be held in the Council Chamber on Thursday, 19 February 2026 at 7.30pm.

539. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

540. STAFFING MATTERS

As there were no staffing matters to be considered in exempt session, this item was struck from the agenda.