

COLDWALTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD

ON TUESDAY 10th MARCH 2026 7.30PM

ST JAMES SCHOOL, CHURCH LANE, COLDWALTHAM

Those Present:	Cllr G Nelson	Chairman
	Cllr J Evans	Vice-Chairman
	Cllr C Dennis	
	Cllr K Coughtrey	
	Cllr J Stevens	
	Cllr I Dreger	
	Cllr A Davies	
	C Cllr C Kenyon	County Councillor
	D Cllr P Clarke	District Councillor
	Mrs LD Sherlock-Fuidge	Clerk
Parishioners:	Mrs R Glithero	

Cllr Nelson welcomed everyone to the meeting. He explained that Mrs Glithero was speaking words written by Mrs Berry. The council had no facility to accept this but would listen out of courtesy to Mrs Glithero.

Mrs Glithero spoke regarding the appointment of a trustee member to the Sandham Hall Committee and circulated copies of her presentation.

Cllr Nelson thanked Mrs Glithero.

25 / 49.00 TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Dudman, and D Cllrs Ellis Brown and Campbell.

25 / 50.00 TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS, AND ANY CHANGES SINCE THEIR LAST DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No new declarations were received.

25 / 51.00 TO APPROVE AND SIGN MINUTES

Minutes for the Parish Council meeting held on 13th January 2026 were accepted and signed by the Chairman.

Cllr Nelson thanked C Cllr Kenyon for her time as our county councillor.

25 / 52.00 2025-26 YEAR END ACCOUNTS

The Clerk advised that she wished to use Jen Smith of Smithe and Co as the Internal Auditor again for the current year's accounts.

Timetable: the year ends on 31st March 2026 and the Internal Auditor's report is required by the council meeting in May, so that the account statements can be signed. This year the Parish Council accounts are above the £25K threshold for both income and expenditure, so there will need to be an external audit, but it will be at a lower cost, £210, this year.

RESOLVED: Members confirmed the appointment of Jen Smithe of Smithe and Co for the 2025-26 Year End Internal Audit.

25 / 53.00 **FINANCE**

25 / 53.01 **Account Summary:** The Clerk distributed the accounts for Parish Council and Alban Head Playing Fields Committee to members prior to the meeting. These are attached as Appendix A & B respectively.

25 / 53.02 **Standing Orders for 2026/27:**

The Clerk advised that the clerk's salary had had two changes in both February and March salaries following a tax code change by the HMRC, for March the figure will be £403.45. From the April salary, this will change to £419.18 until either the end of the financial year or any tax code change.

The Clerk suggested that the monthly amount paid to the Alban Head Playing Field is reduced from £300 to £150, as currently the AHPF needs to return £3000 which is almost that which has been paid to the AHPF in standing orders.

RESOLVED **Members agreed the new clerk salary of £419.18, and the reduced AHPF monthly amount of £150.00.**

25 / 53.03 **Ionos Business Mail:** The clerk advised that she had worked on setting up the new email account to bring it in line with the council website address, ahead of Assertion 10. Following discussions with Graham at Ice Media (our web site host), it seemed best to use Ionos, who provides the website domain name. There will be an ongoing cost for this of £6 + VAT per month.

We also looked at Microsoft 365 as the PC have an existing licence, however the cost of adding email would have been an additional £11 a month.

The Clerk advise members that each person should be using a designated email for council business under the council control. Currently members are using their own email addresses. C Cllr Kenyon and D Cllr Clarke confirmed that they use a county and district email address respectively. This is best advice especially should there be any FOI requests, then councillors' whole email would not be open to scrutiny. Members accepted this, and would change the clerk's email for the time being.

RESOLVED **Members agreed the email hosting fee with Ionos.**

25 / 53.04 **Payments:** payments were authorised for:

Consentino Outreach	Post Office Salaries (January)	£180.00
Consentino Outreach	Post Office Salaries (February)	£240.00
Mrs LD Sherlock Fuidge	Travel & Expenses	£68.64
Society of Local Council Clerks	Annual Subscription	£116.00
St James CE School	Meeting Fee	£25.00

As C Cllr Kenyon needed to leave early to attend another Parish Council meeting Cllr Nelson asked her to update members here.

25 / 56.00 **ITEMS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL / PARISH CLERK**

25 / 56.01 C Cllr Kenyon advised that she made the decision not to stand again for the county council elections this year, although she would make herself available. The last county council meeting is on 27th March, and the election process commences on 30th March.

- Currently surveying the state of the rural road network, as there has been major deterioration of unclassified roads, which run through many rural parishes.
- WSCC Council Tax will be increased by nearly 5%, if the council didn't raise it by this, the maximum amount permissible, it would not be able to apply for extra grants.
- The Government has postponed its decision on which unitary authority option to choose.
- C Cllr Kenyon is still here for the time being to help with any issues, as council business continues.

C Cllr Kenyon left the meeting.

25 / 54.00 **CHAIRMANS REPORT**

25 / 54.01 The ground at the Alban Head remains very wet still. This is likely to mean that the football fixtures will run into late April. The carpark fencing has been much admired.

25 / 54.02 Cllr Dudman has distributed a letter to residents in Brookview and Brookland Way encouraging residents to become involved in the management for the play area. If there aren't enough people to volunteer, it may not be feasible. The clerk has had three responses already

25 / 54.03 **Statement of Parish Council Priorities** – Cllr Nelson asked for comments please regarding the draft distributed recently.

Cllr Nelson reiterated that this is not a plan, but focuses on three clear priorities, which are reasonable and possible for council to work on.

Cllr Dreger suggested that the organisations with which the council links should be better highlighted. Als, whilst the Parish Council acts as the voice of the community, we should consider how we provide opportunities for our community to communicate with the Parish Council.

Cllr Dreger challenged the third priority language believing our community has a right to expect us to be an effective parish council - it should be a given rather than be listed as a priority. Cllr Nelson argued that this comes from councillors being volunteers and therefore bring different skills to council but agreed, if this can be re-worded.

25 / 55.00 **A29 TRAFFIC – VILLAGE GATEWAYS**

Cllr Dreger circulated a proposal to members (before the meeting) for the purchase of two pairs of village gateways – one pair for Coldwaltham and one pair for Watersfield, using some of the the CIL Funds. The initial cost is projected to be approximately £4500 +VAT.

The Coldwaltham gateways would be sited either side of the road south of the railway bridge to be seen by vehicles travelling south. WSCC Highways were happy with the position of these gateways.

The Watersfield gateways would be sited entering Watersfield after the Bury Gate corner to be seen by vehicles travelling north. WSCC Highways were happy with the position during a site visit and advised that the size of the nearside verge was sufficient to accommodate a regular size gateway (rather than the narrower option originally envisaged).

Also, WSCC Highways advised that the gateways would not need to include speed limit roundels, as WSCC Highways would place speed limit repeater roundels immediately behind the gateways. This will simplify gateways sign design and should reduce the cost for the gateways, possibly to approximately £4200+VAT.

Cllr Dreger noted that studies have shown that average vehicle speeds drop by 4 to 5 mph when gateways are present, especially when used in conjunction with other traffic calming measures. Also, lower speeds mean lower noise levels. The gateways will also provide a more welcoming entrance to the villages and could have planting around them if the community wanted.

If gateways can be bought in time for the proposed Community Highways Scheme implementation, WSCC would cover the cost of installation and the necessary licences, which would be of benefit to the community. Cllr Dreger would, with councils' agreement, place the order following confirmation by WSCC of the go-ahead of the Community Highways Scheme.

Cllr Davies suggested that there should also be gateways situated on the approach to Hardham travelling south. This would reinforce the proposed new 40mph speed zone on this stretch too, especially as the gateways would be in view of road users along the straight from Pulborough. Cllr Dreger would investigate the options.

Cllr Dregar advised after the meeting that the Hardham Site had been investigated and a proposal submitted to WSCC Highways.

Annual Parish Meeting: is on Tuesday 21st April 2026 at 7.30pm. The clerk asked if members were happy with this venue, as the Sandham Hall would only be available after 7.15pm, members agreed.

Clerk Note: After the meeting, members thought that the Sandham Hall would be a better venue for a larger meeting. The Clerk will change the booking.

Next meeting of Council is the Annual Parish Council Meeting on Tuesday 12th May 2026, at 7.30pm, at St James.

Meeting closed at 8.40 pm.

Chairman:..... **Date:**.....

Distributed to those present and Cllrs Dudman and Lane, and D Cllrs Campbell and Ellis Brown.

DRAFT MINUTES - Not confirmed until the next council meeting