



**Minutes of the Annual Meeting held in the
Council Chamber, Unit 2 Saxton, Parklands, Railton Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 9JX
at 7.30pm on Thursday 22 May 2025**

2025-157 - Present

Councillors:

Cllr B Ahier, Cllr N Crampin, Cllr S Ellahi, Cllr B McShee, Cllr N Mitchell (Chairman), Cllr B Nagle, Cllr M Price, Cllr J Snowball, and Cllr T Wright.

Officers of the Council:

Mrs G White - Clerk to the Council
Victoria Fear - Assistant Clerk

Members of the public:

Borough Councillor Cllr Bill Akhtar was present for part of the meeting.

2025-158 - Appointment of the Chairman for the municipal year 2025/2026

It was proposed by Cllr M Price, seconded by Cllr B McShee that Cllr N Mitchell be appointed as Chairman. No other nominations being received, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** that Cllr N Mitchell be elected as Chairman of the Parish Council for the municipal year 2025/2026.

2025-159 - Chairman to sign Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Cllr N Mitchell duly signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

2025-160 - Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman gave the H&S announcements and referred to the Council's Standing Orders.

2025-161 - To accept apologies and reason for absence in accordance with the LGA 1972, Sch 1, para 40

Apologies and reason for absence were received from:

Cllr D Bird, Cllr M Fance, and Cllr C Riley.

The apologies and reason for absence were approved.

Apologies were also received from Borough Councillors Cllr H Brooker, Cllr P Brooker, and County Councillor Cllr K Witham.

2025-162 - Appointment of Vice-Chairman for the municipal year 2025/2026

It was proposed by Cllr B Nagle, seconded by Cllr B Ahier, that Cllr M Price be elected as the Vice-Chairman. No other nominations being received, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** Cllr M Price was elected as Vice-Chairman for the municipal year 2025/2026.

2025-163 - Public Participation

No members of the public were present.

2025-164 - Blackwell Farm solar farm planning application no: 24/P/00441

Karen Stevens had provided the following report for the Parish Council's consideration:

The University of Surrey and Scottish and Southern Electricity have proposed a largescale solar facility on existing fields on the northern slopes of the Hog's Back, on high-grade farmland within the parishes of Worplesdon and Compton. The scheme comprising panels, transformers and ancillary buildings covers over twenty hectares and new access roads to the facility criss-cross the adjacent farmland from the University's Manor Farm campus to the east.

Compton Parish Council is not against renewable energy, but it is opposed to this solar application for the following reasons:

- 1) The landowner has vast areas of surface level car parking across its estate and over one hundred flat-roofed buildings which could be used instead.
- 2) The proposed site for the solar farm warrants protection because it is:
 - a) In the setting of the National Landscape (previously called AONB).
 - b) On high-grade farmland and sandwiched between belts of ancient woodland and a Site of Nature Conservation Importance
 - c) In the Green Belt
 - d) On land that is home to protected species
 - e) On land that has been earmarked for inclusion within the new National Landscape boundary. Building here would have grave consequences for the protection of this land and the neighbouring landscape if the solar farm goes ahead. This land has been assessed by three separate landscape architects as meriting National Landscape status.

Despite Compton Parish Council's opposition to the scheme, alongside one hundred other groups and individuals who raised additional arguments against the proposals (including the issue of flooding), the scheme was approved by Guildford Borough Council's planning committee. The developer had convinced the planning committee (including our own ward councillors) of the merits of the scheme, despite obvious flaws that had been pointed out in the developers' arguments. The alternative sites document, for example, dismissed any brownfield alternatives because of:

- The potential loss of a handful of parking bays across the estate (NB. The University has promised to reduce car usage across its estate so this should not be a problem)
- The disruption during construction, (NB. All development causes disruption during construction) and
- The argument that they could only consider a contiguous site of twenty-one hectares despite the solar panels only covering an area less than 6 hectares. (They also did not consider placing the solar panels on disparate sites.)

Compton Parish Council had asked Guildford Borough Council to commission an independent and more robust 'Alternative Sites' document, but this was declined.

Compton Parish Council did not give up following the approval of the scheme by the planning committee. Firstly, it requested that the scheme should be called-in by the Secretary of State and considered at a national level; and secondly it challenged the scheme at a Judicial Review (JR), in which we were successful. The grounds of our challenge were that:

- i) No sequential flood assessment has taken place, which is required by planning law where the development is on an area at high risk of ground-water flooding; and
- ii) The Council had not considered the duty to protect and enhance the setting to the National Landscape.

Guildford Borough Council has conceded that it acted illegally on both these grounds and has agreed to quash the planning approval. A third reason put forward by Compton Parish Council had not been accepted by Guildford Borough Council.

Unfortunately, this is unlikely to be the end of the story, as it is highly likely that the developers will regroup, undertake a sequential flood assessment, and resubmit the application, which it seems that Guildford Borough Council is minded to push through. This is likely due to the existence of the Council's ransom strip on the west of Guildford running from the A31 to the railway line, which means that Guildford Borough Council benefits financially from any development spreading to the west.

What is Compton Parish Council planning to do in response to a future proposal?

1. In the first instance, Compton Parish Council will ask Guildford Borough Council to commission a genuinely independent sequential Flood Risk Assessment. It would be great if Worplesdon Parish Council would support Compton Parish Council with this request.
2. If Guildford Borough Council refuses to do this, Compton Parish Council will consider commissioning its own independent flood risk assessment. In this case, we would also wish to ask Worplesdon Parish Council whether it is willing to contribute to the cost of this study.

Compton Parish Council has also been in communication with the Surrey Hills National Landscape Board's Planning Advisor. He has proposed asking Guildford and Waverley's Head of Planning (Claire Upton-Brown) that the southernmost field is removed from any future planning application as it is very harmful to views from the National Landscape and solar panels here cannot be screened.

In the 1950s, Compton Parish Council had requested that the northern slopes of the Hog's Back to the west of Guildford should be included in the new AONB designation being introduced at the time. It was not included because Surrey County Council felt the Green Belt offered the necessary protection. Sixty years later, Natural England is poised to include this area in the new National Landscape, and it would be a great shame if the designation is blocked by this development being pushed through when brownfield land is available.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr N Mitchell, seconded by Cllr J Snowball and unanimously **RESOLVED** that Worplesdon Parish Council would support Compton Parish Council's request for an independent sequential Flood Risk Assessment and would be happy to provide detailed information about the flooding experienced within the Parish, which worsened in 2024. Any decision regarding further financial support to be deferred until Guildford Borough Council's response is known. This would be subject to a meeting with Karen Stevens.

The Clerk to arrange a suitable date/time for an online meeting between the members and Karen Stevens as soon as practicable.

2025-165 - Declaration of Non-pecuniary Interests

Cllr B McShee and Cllr N Crampin declared non-pecuniary interests in items 26 and 27 of the agenda.

2025-166 - Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) - by councillors in accordance with the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012 No 1464)

No declarations were made.

2025-167 - To receive and consider written requests for new DPI dispensations, if any

No requests were received.

2025-168 - Amendments to the Register of Interests

No declarations were made.

2025-169 - Declaration of gifts or hospitality over £50

No declarations were made.

2025-170 - Borough Councillor's report

Cllr Bill Akhtar gave the following report:

- a) **Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Fraud** - The July 2025 meeting of Guildford Borough Council is to include an update on the ongoing investigation into the HRA fraud, as well as progress on the Council's Improvement Plan, which addresses the findings of the SOLACE reviews.
- b) **Devolution programme** - Guildford Borough Council submitted a bid for three unitary authorities. Surrey County Council submitted a proposal for two unitary authorities. The majority of the borough councils supported a three unitary authority strategy. The Government's decision is likely to be announced in the Autumn. The Government is proposing to establish Community Boards as part of the devolution programme; however, Guildford Borough Council is supporting (as is the Surrey Association of Local Councils) a proposal to expand Town and Parish Councils across all unparished areas to ensure there is sufficient community governance representation across the County.
- c) **Merrist Wood Golf Club** - The Golf Club is under offer.
- d) **Wood Street Knoll** - I have spoken with Claire Upton-Brown who advises the landowners have not 100% agreed to the S106, which is creating a stumbling block. I am trying to persuade Guildford Borough Council to buy the land. The sellers are asking for a considerable amount of money. I am pushing for further negotiations to take place.
- e) **Guildford Flood Alleviation Scheme** - Guildford Borough Council, in partnership with the Environment Agency (EA) and Surrey County Council, is actively progressing the Guildford Flood Alleviation Scheme. This initiative aims to mitigate flood risks in Guildford town centre, particularly from the River Wey, which has historically caused significant flooding events. Cllr H Brooker asked that this scheme be expanded to include Worplesdon given the impacts of flooding within the Parish in 2024. The lead member couldn't commit to this request at the present time.
- f) **Mayor and Deputy Mayor for 2025/2026** - Councillor Howard Smith has been appointed as the Mayor of Guildford. Councillor Jane Tyson has been appointed as the Deputy Mayor of Guildford.
- g) **Changes to Guildford Borough Council's Planning Committee** - As of 1 July, Parish Councils will automatically be invited to speak to any application (within the relevant Parish boundary) that is being considered by the Planning Committee. If a planning application straddles a parish boundary, both parish councils will be invited to speak at the Planning Committee.

- h) **Blackwell Farm** - Guildford Borough Council accepted two out of three of Compton Parish Council's High Court challenges in respect of the approval of planning application no: 24/P/00441. The result is awaited.
- i) **Road Traffic Accident outside Fairlands** - On Wednesday, 14 May 2025, a serious road traffic collision occurred on the A323 Aldershot Road near the junction with Fairlands Avenue in Guildford. A car struck two pedestrians who sustained serious injuries as a result. I have emailed Cllr Matt Furniss asking for a long-term resolution to this problem, including the potential installation of a speed camera. It should be noted that the cause of the accident is currently under investigation by Surrey Police.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Bill Akhtar for his report.

A short Q&A session then took place during which the status of the Guildford Borough Council owned barn in Clay Lane was raised. Locals are asking whether this barn is to be demolished. Cllr Akhtar advised he would enquire and let the Parish Council know.

2025-171 - County Councillor's report

Cllr K Witham had provided a written report, which had been circulated to all Members via email on 27 April 2025.

The report covered the following topics:

- Supporting The Therapy Garden Charity (Normandy)
- Spring in Surrey
- Traffic speeds campaign
- Additional cleaner, greener buses for Surrey
- Supporting Surrey Fire and Rescue crews
- 89,000 new low energy streetlights for Surrey
- Utilities roadworks
- My "Which Council does what" guide

[Cllr Bill Akhtar left the meeting at 19:53.](#)

2025-172 - Devolution - The abolition of both Surrey County Council and Guildford Borough Council and the creation of a new single unitary authority with an elected Mayor

Community Boards are a key component of Surrey County Council's devolution and local government reorganisation (LGR) initiative, aimed at enhancing local engagement and decision-making. These boards are designed to bring together various stakeholders, including health partners, Surrey Police, voluntary groups, councillors, council staff, local Town and Parish Councils, and Residents Associations, to collaboratively address local issues and improve service delivery.

While Community Boards will play a significant role in local governance and community engagement, they will not possess independent tax-raising powers. Any financial resources they require would need to be sourced through partnerships with existing precepting authorities or through grants and other funding mechanisms.

The establishment of Community Boards is part of Surrey County Council's broader plan to reorganise Surrey's local government structure, transitioning from the current two-tier system of twelve councils to two new unitary authorities: East and West Surrey. The reorganisation aims to simplify governance, enhance efficiency, and unlock further devolution opportunities, including the potential election of a Mayor for Surrey.

The Community Boards are expected to be locally determined, with pilot programs planned to gather resident input on their setup and operation. This initiative reflects Surrey County Council's commitment to strengthening local democracy by involving communities directly in decisions that affect them.

More detailed information is available via Surrey County Council's Final Plan for Local Government Reorganisation. <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/lgr>

As part of Surrey's devolution programme, the introduction of a Shadow Cabinet and a Strategic Mayor is planned through a phased approach:

Shadow Authorities and Elections (May 2026)

Elections for new 'shadow' unitary councils are scheduled for May 2026. These councils will operate alongside existing local authorities to prepare for the transition. During this period, shadow governance arrangements, including the formation of a Shadow Cabinet, will be established to oversee the setup of the new unitary authorities.

Vesting Day (April 2027)

The official 'vesting day' is anticipated in April 2027. On this date, the newly formed unitary councils will assume full responsibilities, and the existing county, district, and borough councils will be dissolved.

Establishment of Mayoral Strategic Authority (2027 or 2028)

Following the establishment of unitary councils, the creation of a Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA) is planned for 2027 or 2028. This authority, led by a directly elected Strategic Mayor, will receive devolved powers and funding from the government. The exact timing is subject to confirmation and will depend on the progression of the reorganisation process.

These timelines are subject to change based on government decisions and the outcomes of ongoing consultations.

Victoria Fear, Assistant Clerk, advised that she had attended a branch meeting of the Society of Local Council Clerks. Farnham Town Council and Godalming Town Council are both advising parish councils to 'think outside the box' and to commence any requests to take on borough or county assets as soon as practicable, as to do so will be easier with the current administrations rather than with the new administration/s.

The Clerk presented an Excel spreadsheet to the Members setting out various discretionary services which a new Unitary Authority may not wish to take on e.g. (but not limited to) litter bins, play areas, allotments, SANG, Village Greens/manorial waste, streetlighting, commons etc. Unfortunately, none of these services generate any form of income. Parish Councils are being urged to start preparing for the devolution of services by increasing their general reserves, though this would be difficult to justify without a preliminary indication of the cost of running these services. The Clerk stated that if the Parish Council were to seek ownership of the Village Greens, community car park, and Wood Street Village Cricket Club it would save money moving forward as the legal costs associated with the current lease arrangement would no longer be payable.

The Clerk recommended it is an appropriate time to ask residents which services they would be happy for the Parish Council to take on, as this would guide the 2026/2027 budget setting process, however, the Members felt it was premature to ask those sort of questions without an understanding of the costs involved.

It was agreed that as part of the 2026/2027 budget setting process, the Parish Council's Business Plan will need to be thoroughly scrutinised.

2025-173 - Minutes of the previous meetings:

It was proposed by Cllr N Crampin, seconded by Cllr T Wright, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held 10 April 2025 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

It was proposed by Cllr B Nagle, seconded by Cllr T Wright, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Planning/General Purposes and Finance Committee Meeting held 15 May 2025 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

2025-174 - Election of the Planning/General Purposes and Finance Committee

The following Members were appointed to the Planning/General Purposes and Finance Committee for the municipal year 2025/2026:

Table 1: Members of the Planning/General Purposes and Finance Committee 2025/2026

Ward	Member
Fairlands	Cllr N Mitchell (Ex-officio)
Jacobs Well	Cllr M Price (Ex-officio)
Perry Hill	Cllr B Nagle
Fairlands	Cllr B Ahier
Wood Street Village	Cllr D Bird
Wood Street Village	Cllr N Crampin
Wood Street Village	Cllr T Wright

Cllr J Snowball and Cllr B McShee were appointed as substitute members.

2025-175 - Election of the Staffing Committee

The following Members were appointed to the Staffing Committee for the municipal year 2025/2026:

Table 2: Members of the Staffing Committee 2025/2026

Ward	Member
Jacobs Well	Cllr M Price (Ex-officio)
Jacobs Well	Cllr J Snowball
Fairlands	Cllr S Ellahi
Wood Street Village	Cllr C Riley
Perry Hill	Cllr M Fance

Cllr N Crampin and Cllr B McShee were appointed as substitute members.

2025-176 - Planning Applications for consideration

Planning Application No: [25/P/00452](#) - 5 Ecob Close, Guildford, GU3 3HP - The erection of a single storey rear extension and front porch.

It was **RESOLVED**: leave to planners.

Planning Application No: 25/P/00543 - 1 Penny Drive, Wood Street Village, Guildford, GU3 3DJ - Single storey rear extension.

It was **RESOLVED**: leave to planners.

Planning Application No: 25/P/00550 - 2 Frog Grove Lane, Guildford, GU3 3EX - Single storey rear extension.

It was **RESOLVED** the Parish Council would comment as follows:

The description of the proposed works does not reference the proposed porch. The description should, therefore, be corrected.

Planning Application No: 25/P/00599 - Crown Cottage, Perry Hill, Worplesdon, Guildford, GU3 3RD - Erection of a part single storey, part two storey rear and side extension with changes to fenestration, hard landscaping, external and internal alterations and repairs, following demolition of existing single storey rear extension and dormer window.

and

Planning Application No: 25/P/00600 - Crown Cottage, Perry Hill, Worplesdon, Guildford, GU3 3RD - Listed Building Consent - Erection of a part single storey, part two storey rear and side extension with changes to fenestration, hard landscaping, external and internal alterations and repairs, following demolition of existing single storey rear extension and dormer window.

It was **RESOLVED**: There are inconsistencies between the proposed elevations and the proposed plans. Clarification is, therefore, required regarding the roof design, which alters on the various plans from pitched roof to flat roof.

Planning Application No: 25/P/00369 - 63 Applegarth Avenue, Guildford, GU2 8LX - Change of use from a dwellinghouse (C3 use class) to a large House in Multiple Occupation (C4 use class) (part retrospective).

It was **RESOLVED**: leave to planners.

2025-177 - Land at Hazel Farm, Oregano Way – Virtual Exhibition 19th May – 9th June 2025
hazelfarm.onlineconsultation.co.uk. To consider the Parish Council's feedback to this proposal.

It was agreed that the Parish Council respond as follows:

1. This proposal will result in 368 students being displaced. Where will these students live moving forward?
2. Students at this location help to support the No. 2 bus service. What impact would a change of tenure create in terms of the local bus service/s.
3. There are already four specialist care homes within ¼ of a square mile of this site. The proposal for yet another Care Home represents over provision of this specialist form of housing. There are insufficient staff and GP resources to be able to cope with even more residents with very high dependency medical needs.
4. Given this site is located within the 400m buffer zone of Whitmoor Common SPA, SSSI the provision of non-student accommodation is likely to encourage pet ownership contrary to Guildford Borough Council's Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) policy.

2025-178 - Finance:

- a) **Change of bank signatories following the passing of Cllr G Adam** - Replacement signatory required for the following accounts: Co-op, Metro, Unity Trust, Skipton, Nationwide, and Cambridge Building Society.

Table 3: Replacement bank signatories

Bank Building Society	Replacement signatory
Co-op	Cllr S Ellahi
Metro	Cllr M Price
Unity Trust	Cllr B Nagle
Skipton	Cllr B Ahier
Nationwide	Cllr B Ahier
Cambridge Building Society	Cllr B Nagle

- b) **Proposed list of payments to be tabled at the meeting for approval**

The payment list was presented to the meeting. It was proposed by Cllr M Price, seconded by Cllr N Crampin and unanimously **RESOLVED** that payments to the value of £8,305.39 be approved. The payment list was duly signed by the Chairman, Cllr N Mitchell, during the meeting.

Table 4: Proposed list of payments 22 May 2025

Code	Date	Description	Supplier	Net	VAT	Total
Bank Interest/Charges	30/04/2025	Bank charges - March 2025	Unity Trust Bank	6.00	0.00	6.00
Parish Office	01/05/2025	Business rates - Parish Office	Guildford Borough Council	1,073.00	0.00	1,073.00
Professional Advice	01/05/2025	Recharge for challenge to Solar Farm	Compton Parish Council	400.00	0.00	400.00
Revenue Costs Works Vehicle	01/05/2025	Fuel for works van	Waitrose Shell	28.76	5.75	34.51
Grass Cutting	01/05/2025	Grass cutting - Month 1 2025	GCB Gardens	27.25	5.45	32.70
Land Management	01/05/2025	Work on path at Perry Hill Green	Stephen Gunner	200.00	0.00	200.00
Parish Office	01/05/2025	External window cleaning	Trevor Porter Window Cleaning Service	21.00	4.20	25.20
Grass cutting	01/05/2025	Grass cutting - Month 1 2025	GCB Gardens	2,430.00	486.00	2,916.00
Establishment Charges	01/05/2025	PPE for Groundsman	Cluskeys CCP Ltd	34.50	6.90	41.40
Community Car Park	01/05/2025	Business rates - Community Car Park	Guildford Borough Council	101.00	0.00	101.00
Revenue Costs Works Vehicle	01/05/2025	Service plan - 16th instalment of 45	PlanMyService LLP	27.08	5.42	32.50
Revenue Costs Works Vehicle	01/05/2025	MOT Service plan - 16th instalment of 45	PlanMyService LLP	3.78	0.00	3.78
Establishment Charges	03/05/2025	Special Delivery - Deed of Dedication to SCC	Post Office Ltd	2.80	0.00	2.80
Establishment Charges	03/05/2025	Greetings cards	Cards Direct Retail Ltd	16.34	0.00	16.34
Establishment Charges	06/05/2025	PPE for Groundsman	Cluskeys CCP Ltd	24.50	4.90	29.40
Parish Newsletter	06/05/2025	Composite plank for newsletter holders	A W Champion Ltd	56.27	11.26	67.53
Land Management	07/05/2025	Multipurpose Ladder	Lansford Access Ltd	159.00	31.80	190.80
ER Christmas Illuminations	07/05/2025	GRP Electric Meter Box Green	Emiter Ltd	560.40	0.00	560.40
Land Management	07/05/2025	Titanium Drill Bits	Toolstation	3.70	0.74	4.44
IT budget	08/05/2025	External back-up - April 2025	RISC IT	42.00	8.40	50.40

Code	Date	Description	Supplier	Net	VAT	Total
Land Management	08/05/2025	Emptying - Dumpy Bin - WSV Community Car Park	Chambers Waste Management	34.48	6.90	41.38
Land Management	08/05/2025	Stihl Battery Pressure Washer	Honey Bros Ltd	185.98	37.20	223.18
Establishment Charges	09/05/2025	Office materials	Link Wholesalers Ltd (Amazon)	7.45	1.49	8.94
Establishment Charges	09/05/2025	Office materials	Banner Group Limited (Amazon)	8.71	1.74	10.45
Establishment Charges	09/05/2025	Office materials	Amazon EU S.a.r.L.	4.64	0.93	5.57
Establishment Charges	11/05/2025	Office materials	Amazon EU S.a.r.L.	81.14	16.23	97.37
Donations	13/05/2025	Grant 2025/26	Citizens Advice Bureau	182.00	0.00	182.00
Land Management	13/05/2025	Various tools and materials	Tradepoint	39.61	7.92	47.53
Land Management	14/05/2025	Tools for Groundstaff	Selco Builders Warehouse	93.49	18.70	112.19
Parish Office	14/05/2025	Gas & Electricity - Unit 2 Saxton - 01.04.25 - 30.04.25	Octopus Energy Limited	109.35	5.47	114.82
Establishment Charges	14/05/2025	PPE for Groundstaff	Mrs G F White - Sainburys	9.00	0.00	9.00
Land Management	14/05/2025	Hazardous Substance Storage Cabinets	Safety Buyer (UK) Ltd	375.94	75.19	451.13
Establishment Charges	15/05/2025	Branding of Hi Vis Jacket	Guildford Signs	15.00	3.00	18.00
PC Grant Aid to Wards	15/05/2025	Grant - Worplesdon PCC - VE Day 2025	Worplesdon Parish Council	500.00	0.00	500.00
Professional Advice	15/05/2025	Internal audit 2024-25	Mulberry Local Authority Services Limited	134.20	26.84	161.04
Land Management	15/05/2025	Pruning Saw and Universal Cleaner	Honey Bros Ltd	69.98	14.00	83.98
Land Management	15/05/2025	Hire of storage container MW - April 2025	Activate Learning	87.00	0.00	87.00
IT budget	19/05/2025	Subscription - 17.05.25 - 16.06.25	Adobe	16.64	3.33	19.97
Revenue Costs Works Vehicle	20/05/2025	Fuel for works van	Asda Store Ltd	42.54	8.51	51.05
IT budget	21/05/2025	OnePhone - phone charges - including mobile data	BT PLC	226.16	45.23	271.39
Parish Office	21/05/2025	Water and sewerage charge - Unit 2 Saxton - 01.04.25 - 30.04.25	Castle Water	21.20	0.00	21.20
Total				7,461.89	843.50	8,305.39

c) Bank reconciliation for April 2025

The Finance Officer (FO) had prepared the bank reconciliation for April 2025 in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, a copy of which had been issued to all Members via email in advance of the meeting. It was proposed by Cllr T Wright, seconded by Cllr B Nagle, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the bank reconciliation be approved and signed by the Chairman, Cllr N Mitchell, during the meeting.

Appendix 1 April 2025: Bank Reconciliation

d) Monthly budget reports for April 2025

The FO had prepared the budget reports for April 2025 in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, copies of which had been issued to all Members via email in advance of the meeting. It was proposed by Cllr T Wright, seconded by Cllr B Nagle, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the budget reports be approved and signed by the Chairman, Cllr N Mitchell, during the meeting.

Appendices 2 and 3 April 2025: Summary Budget Report, Net Position Report

- e) **Appointment of a councillor (and a reserve) to undertake the quarterly financial inspections -** March, June, September, and December.

It was proposed by Cllr B McShee, seconded by Cllr S Ellahi, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that Cllr M Price be appointed as the councillor to undertake the quarterly financial checks for 2025/2026. Cllr N Crampin was appointed as the reserve member, to be trained up by Cllr M Price for business continuity purposes.

Cllr M Price was thanked for his assistance with this task for the financial year 2024/2025.

- f) **Internal Audit carried out 14 May 2025**

The internal audit was undertaken on 14 May 2025 by Mark Mulberry of Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd.

A copy of the audit report is provided below:

Executive summary

This report contains details of the additional testing conducted at the year-end and should be considered alongside any interim audit reports issued. The audits were conducted in accordance with current practices and guidelines, and testing was risk based. Whilst we have not tested all transactions, our samples have, where appropriate, covered the entire year to date.

Our report is presented in the same order as the assertions on the internal auditor report within the published AGAR. The start of each section details the nature of the assertion to be verified. Testing requirements follow those detailed in the audit plan previously sent to the council, a copy of this is available on request. The report concludes with an opinion as to whether each assertion has been met or not. Where appropriate, **recommendations for action are shown in bold text and are summarised in the table at the end of the report.**

Our sample testing did not uncover any errors or misstatements that require reporting to the external auditor at this time, nor did we identify any significant weaknesses in the internal controls such that public money would be put at risk.

It is clear the council takes governance, policies and procedures seriously and I am pleased to report that overall, the systems and procedures you have in place are fit for purpose and in fact are and remain a model of good practice.

It is therefore our opinion that the systems and internal procedures at Worplesdon Parish Council are well established and followed.

Regulations

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require smaller authorities, each financial year, to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and prepare an annual governance statement in accordance with proper practices in relation to accounts. In addition to this, a smaller authority is required by Regulation 5(1) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 to “undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance.”

Internal auditing is an independent, objective assurance activity designed to improve an organisation’s operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined

approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes. The purpose of internal audit is to review and report to the authority on whether its systems of financial and other internal controls over its activities and operating procedures are effective.

Internal audit's function is to test and report to the authority on whether its specific system of internal control is adequate and working satisfactorily. The internal audit reports should therefore be made available to all Members to support and inform them when they considering the authority's approval of the annual governance statement.

Independence and competence

Your audit was conducted by Mark Mulberry of Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd, who has over 30 years' experience in the financial sector with the last 13 years specialising in local government.

Your auditor is independent from the management of the financial controls and procedures of the council and has no conflicts of interest with the audit client, nor do they provide any management or financial assistance to the client.

Engagement Letter

An engagement letter was previously issued to the council covering the 2024/25 internal audit assignment. Copies of this document are available on request.

Planning and inherent risk assessment

The scope and plan of works including fee structure was issued to the council under separate cover. Copies of this document are available on request. In summary, our work will address each of the internal control objectives as stated on the Annual Internal Audit Report of the AGAR.

It is our opinion that the inherent risk of error or misstatement is low, and the controls of the council can be relied upon and as such substantive testing of individual transactions is not required. Testing to be carried out will be "walk through testing" on sample data to encompass the period of the council year under review.

Year-End Audit

The year-end audit was conducted on site. Information was requested from the council in advance of the audit taking place, and this was reviewed along with other information published on the council's website www.worplesdon-pc.gov.uk

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Interim Audit - Points Carried Forward

Audit Point	Audit Findings	Council comments
	None.	

B. FINANCE REGULATIONS, GOVERNANCE AND PAYMENTS

Internal audit requirement

This authority complied with its Finance Regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved, and VAT was appropriately accounted for.

Audit findings

Further to the testing conducted at the interim audit, I checked a sample of invoices and payments made towards the end of the financial year. I was able to confirm amounts processed matched the amounts paid on the bank statements, were consistent with the associated invoice and had been approved in accordance with the council's adopted Financial Regulations.

I am satisfied the requirements of this control objective were met for 2024/25.

C. RISK MANAGEMENT AND INSURANCE

Internal audit requirement

This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.

Audit findings

I asked if assertion 8 of the annual governance statement had any impact on the council. There is no impact.

"We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements."

The Clerk confirmed that they were not aware of any event having a financial impact that was not included in the accounting statements.

I am satisfied the requirements of this control objective were met for 2024/25.

D. BUDGET, PRECEPT AND RESERVES

Internal audit requirement

The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.

Analysis of the council's year-end income and expenditure report shows total income for the year was £20,335 in excess of that budgeted. This is due to bank interest, grant and S.106 receipts. This is not indicative of an incorrect budget and is acceptable.

The council spent £346,027 compared to a budget of £351,648 – this is only a minor variance of £5.6k across a number of lines, again not indicative of any budget errors.

At the end of the financial year, the council held circa £144,105 in earmarked reserves (EMR) and a further £148,441 in the general reserve. The earmarked reserves are listed and appear to be for bonafide ongoing projects.

The Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP) formally JPAG Practitioner's guide states '*the generally accepted recommendation with regard to the appropriate minimum level of a smaller authority's general reserve is that this should be maintained at between three and twelve months of net revenue expenditure*' (para 5.33).

I estimate the net revenue expenditure to be in the region of £300k, this gives a general reserve balance of circa £75k-£300k. The general reserve balance is within the recommended range.

I am satisfied the requirements of this control objective were met for 2024/25.

Audit findings

G. PAYROLL

Internal audit requirement

Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.

I reviewed the total figure being included within box 4 (staff costs) on the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and was able to confirm this includes only salary payments, HMRC payments and pension contributions.

I am satisfied the requirements of this control objective were met for 2024/25.

Audit findings

H. ASSETS AND INVESTMENTS

Internal audit requirement

Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.

Audit findings

I confirmed the very detailed asset register total matches that included in box 9 (total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets) on the AGAR and was able to trace the changes to the previous year's total against the asset register. I confirmed by sample testing of the invoices that items added during the year has been accurately recorded as the original net purchase price.

The council uses Excel to record the assets and inventory of that of the council with detailed location, descriptions and photographic evidence. This is very much best practice.

I am satisfied the requirements of this control objective were met for 2024/25.

I. BANK AND CASH

Internal audit requirement

Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.

Audit findings

I reviewed the March 2025 bank reconciliation for all accounts and was able to confirm the balances to the bank statements and cashbooks and found no errors. The balances agreed to the end of year AGAR. The council benefits in part from the £85,000 protection limit offered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS). The council also has an adopted investment strategy on its website.

I am satisfied the requirements of this control objective were met for 2024/25.

J. YEAR END ACCOUNTS

Internal audit requirement

Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.

Audit findings

The council, at its meeting to sign off the year-end accounts, must discuss Section 1 of the AGAR (Annual Governance Statement) and record this activity in the minutes of the meeting. **COUNCIL IS REMINDED THAT THIS MUST BE A SEPARATE AGENDA ITEM PRIOR TO THE SIGNING OF SECTION 2 OF THE AGAR (ANNUAL ACCOUNTS).**

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement

Based on the internal audit finding I recommend using the table below as the basis for that discussion.

	Annual Governance Statement	'Yes', means that this authority	Suggested response based on evidence
1	We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>	YES – accounts follow latest Accounts and Audit Regulations and practitioners' guide recommendations.
2	We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>	YES – there is regular reporting of financial transactions and accounting summaries, offering the opportunity for scrutiny.
3	We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>	YES – the Clerk advises the council in respect of its legal powers.
4	We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>	YES – the requirements and timescales for 2023/24 year-end were met

	Annual Governance Statement	<i>'Yes', means that this authority</i>	Suggested response based on evidence
5	We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>	YES – the council has a risk management scheme and appropriate external insurance.
6	We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>	YES – the council has appointed an independent and competent internal auditor.
7	We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>	YES – matters raised in internal and external audit reports have been addressed.
8	We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and. Where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year-end if relevant.</i>	YES – no matters were raised during the internal audit visits.
9	Trust funds including charitable – In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/asset(s), including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	<i>has met all its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>	N/A – the council has no obligations

Section 2 – Accounting Statements

AGAR box number		2023/2024	2024/25	Internal Auditor notes
1	Balances brought forward	246,378	266,591	Agrees to 2023/24 carry forward (box 7)
2	Precept or rates and levies	304,325	339,900	Figure confirmed to central precept record
3	Total other receipts	26,214	32,083	Agrees to underlying accounting records
4	Staff costs	149,079	167,690	Agrees to underlying accounting records. Includes only expenditure allowed as staff costs (see section G)
5	Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Confirmed to PWLB documents
6	All other payments	161,247	178,338	Agrees to underlying accounting records
7	Balances carried forward	266,591	292,546	Casts correctly and agrees to balance sheet
8	Total value of cash and short-term investments	251,397	281,859	Agrees to bank reconciliation for all accounts

AGAR box number		2023/2024	2024/25	Internal Auditor notes
9	Total fixed assets plus long-term investments and assets	623,085	619,213	Matches asset register total and changes from previous year have been traced
10	Total borrowings	0	0	Confirmed to PWLB documents

For Local Councils Only		Yes	No	N/A	
11a	Disclosure note re Trust Funds (including charitable)		✓		<i>The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.</i>
11b	Disclosure note re Trust Funds (including charitable)			✓	<i>The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.</i>

Audit findings

The year-end accounts have been correctly prepared on an income and expenditure basis with a box 7 and 8 reconciliation properly completed. I was able to verify to underlying schedules, invoices and after date bank statements. There were no errors.

The AGAR correctly casts and cross casts and last year's comparatives match the figures submitted for 2023/24 and published on the council website.

The variance analysis has been completed to explain the variances where required.

I am satisfied the requirements of this control objective were met for 2024/25.

K. ASSURANCE REVIEW

Internal audit requirement

If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2022/23, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2022/23 AGAR tick "not covered")

Audit findings

The council did not certify itself exempt in 2023/24 due to exceeding the income and expenditure limits and this test does not apply.

L: PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION

Internal audit requirement

The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.

Audit findings

We have considered the requirements of Statutory Instruments 2015/480 The Local Government (Transparency Requirements) Regulations 2015

[<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/480/made/data.pdf>] and, 2015/494 The Smaller Authorities (Transparency Requirements).

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/494/pdfs/uksem_20150494_en.pdf

In addition to this, we have considered the additional publication requirements as set out in the ICO Model Publication Scheme for Parish Councils. <https://ico.org.uk/media/for->

[organisations/documents/1153/model-publication-scheme.pdf](https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1153/model-publication-scheme.pdf) & https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1266/parish_council_information_guide.doc

All councils are required to follow The Accounts and Audit Regulations which include the following requirements:

- 13(1)** An authority must publish (which must include publication on that authority's website)
- (a) the Statement of Accounts together with any certificate or opinion entered by the local auditor in accordance with section 20(2) of the Act; and
 - (b) the Annual Governance Statement approved in accordance with regulation 6(3).
- 13(2)** Where documents are published under paragraph (1), the authority must
- (a) keep copies of those documents for purchase by any person on payment of a reasonable sum; and
 - (b) ensure that those documents remain available for public access for a period of not less than five years beginning with the date on which those documents were first published in accordance with that paragraph.

The council has income & expenditure greater than £200k and is following as best practice the requirements of the Local Government Transparency Code 2015.

I reviewed the model publication scheme requirements and can confirm the council has a dedicated web page in place to cover the requirements.

I was able to confirm that pages 4 (Annual Governance Statement), 5 (Accounting Statements) and 6 (External Auditor's Report and Certificate) of the AGAR are available for review on the council website for financial years 2018/19 to 2024/25 inclusive.

I am satisfied the requirements of this control objective were met for 2024/25.

M: EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS - INSPECTION OF ACCOUNTS

Internal audit requirement

The authority has demonstrated that during summer 2023 it correctly provided for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

Audit findings

Inspection – key dates	2023/24	2024/25 Proposed
Date AGAR signed by council	16 th May	22 nd May
Date inspection notice issued	31 st May	30 th May
Inspection period begins	3 rd June 2024	3 rd June
Inspection period ends	12 th July 2024	14 th July
Correct length (30 working days)	Yes	Yes
Common period included (first 10 working days of July)	Yes	Yes

I am satisfied the requirements of this control objective were met for 2023/24, and assertion 4 on the Annual Governance Statement can therefore be signed off by the council.

I was able to confirm that the proposed dates for 2024/25 meet the statutory requirements.

I am satisfied the requirements of this control objective were met for 2024/25.

Achievement of control assertions at year-end audit date

Based on the tests conducted during the year-end audit, our conclusions on the achievement of the internal control objectives are summarised in the table below and are reflected in the completion of the Annual Internal Audit Report within the AGAR.

	INTERNAL CONTROL OBJECTIVE	YES	NO	NOT COVERED
A	Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year	✓		
B	This authority complied with its Finance Regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved, and VAT was appropriately accounted for	✓		
C	This authority assesses the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these	✓		
D	The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E	Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded, and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for	✓		
F	Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved, and VAT appropriately accounted for			✓
G	Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H	Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I	Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J	Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K	If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2022/23, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2022/23 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓ N/a
L	The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation	✓		
M	The authority, during the previous year (2022/23) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (evidenced by the notice published on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N	The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2022/23 AGAR.	✓		
O	Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

It was proposed by Cllr S Ellahi, seconded by Cllr N Crampin, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Internal Audit report be approved and accepted.

A vote of thanks was proposed to the RFO and FO for the work that they carried out to ensure that the Internal Audit was both successful and carried out in a short period.

g) To review the Council's insurance policy

The Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer recommended removing a number of items from the Insurance Schedule, including all benches with a value of less than £500. A number of other items – such as litter bins and all assets worth less than £300 are not worth insuring given the policy excess is £250.

It was agreed that a revised schedule would be issued to all Members for their consideration prior to the next Full Council meeting.

h) To review the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal controls

Regulation 5(1) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 imposes a duty on local councils to 'undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal audit standards or guidance'. For parish and town councils, this guidance is set out in the NALC publication "Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England".

The purpose of internal audit is to review and report to the Council whether its systems of financial and other internal controls over its activities and operating procedures are effective.

The year-end audit was carried out by Mark Mulberry on 14 May 2025. A copy of Mr Mulberry's comprehensive report was issued to all Members, via email, on 15 May 2025.

On 22 May 2025 Members undertook a review of the effectiveness of the Internal Audit as follows:

Scope of Internal Audit – Terms of Reference issued 30 August 2023 and approved by the Council at the Full Council Meeting held 21 September 2023 - Minute number 348-2023(f) refers. Terms of reference define audit responsibilities in relation to fraud. The internal audit takes into account risk management processes and wider internal control. Internal audit covers:

- Books of Account
- Financial regulations, governance, and payments
- Risk management and insurance (including disaster recovery plans)
- The budget and budget process, precept, and reserves
- Income/VAT
- Petty cash (not operated)
- Payroll (Third Party Provider – Mulberry & Co)
- Assets and investments
- Bank reconciliations and cash-in-hand
- Year-end accounts (income and expenditure basis)
- Limited assurance review
- Transparency
- Exercise of public rights – inspection of accounts
- Publication requirements (Transparency Act 2015)
- Trusteeship (not applicable).

Responsibility for the Council's internal controls (safeguarding systems in place for the prevention and detection of fraud, error, and non-compliance) remains, however, with the Council.

Independence – Internal Auditor has direct access to those charged with governance. Auditing is carried out by Mark Mulberry of Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd with written reports presented to the Council. Auditors do not have any other role within the Council.

Competence – The internal auditors are qualified chartered accountants trained to a high standard who are familiar with the local government sector. Their work is carried out ethically, with integrity and objectivity.

Relationships – Responsible Financial Officer and all councillors consulted on the Internal Audit Plan, issued annually, which details the scope of each audit. Evidence is on audit files. Responsibilities for officers and internal audit are defined in relation to internal control, risk management and fraud and corruption matters.

The responsibilities of the council Members are understood, and the training of Members is carried out as necessary. Members are appointed on an annual basis to carry out the quarterly financial checks.

Audit Planning and reporting – The Audit Plan properly takes account of corporate risk. The Audit Plan has been approved by the Council. Internal Audit is reported in accordance with the approved Audit Plan.

Internal audit work is planned and is based on risk assessment and designed to meet the Council's governance assurance needs.

Understanding the whole organisation, its needs, and objectives – The Annual Audit Plan demonstrates how audit work will provide assurance in relation to the Council's governance risk assessment.

Catalyst for change – The Internal Auditor offers a supportive role of audit for corporate developments such as corporate governance review, risk management and ethics.

Add value and assist the organisation in achieving its objectives – Demonstrated through positive management responses to recommendations and follow up action, where called for.

Forward looking – Identifying risks and formulating the annual Audit Plan. Internal audit maintains awareness of new developments in the services, risk management and corporate governance.

Challenging – Internal audit focuses on risk and encourages members to develop their own responses to risks.

Correct resources available – Full documentation is provided to enable the internal auditor to complete the audit. Internal auditor understands the body and the legal and corporate framework in which it operates.

It was proposed Cllr B Nagle, seconded by Cllr S Ellahi, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the review of the effectiveness of the Council's internal control including management of risk be approved.

i) To review and approve the earmarked reserves for 2024/2025

Details of the year-end earmarked reserves, amounting to £144,105.45, had been issued to all Members, via email, 14 days in advance of the meeting. These figures were included in the Balance Sheet for the financial year 2024/2025.

It was proposed by Cllr M Price, seconded by Cllr T Wright, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the earmarked reserves for 2024/2025, as per the Balance Sheet, be approved.

j) To review and approve the general reserves for 2024/2025

General reserves may be used throughout the year for contingency/emergency purposes. Unexpected projects invariably arise during the year.

As per the Balance Sheet, the general reserves for 2024/2025 amounted to £148,440.61.

It was proposed by Cllr B McShee, seconded by Cllr N Crampin, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the general reserves for 2024/2025, as per the Balance Sheet, be approved.

k) To receive and approve the Asset Register for the financial year ended 31.3.2025

A copy of the Asset Register for 31 March 2025, showing assets of £619,212.68, had been circulated to all Members, via email, 14 days in advance of the meeting. It was proposed by Cllr B Ahier, seconded by Cllr J Snowball and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Asset Register for 31.3.2025 be approved.

l) To receive and approve the Annual Accounts 2024/2025

The accounts had been emailed to all members 14 days in advance of the meeting. The accounts had been checked, and verified as accurate, by the Internal Auditor, during the internal audit held 14 May 2025. It was proposed by Cllr N Mitchell, seconded by Cllr T Wright, and **RESOLVED** that the 2024/2025 accounts be approved.

m) To receive and approve the Annual Governance Statements (AGAR) for the year ended 31 March 2025 (Section 1)

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) had had been circulated to all members via email 14 days prior to the meeting.

The Clerk read out the governance statements to the meeting. Members responses to the governance statements were as follows:

Table 2 Section 1 of the AGAR (Annual Governance Statement)

Ref	Question	Response
1	We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	Yes
2	We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	Yes
3	We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	Yes
4	We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	Yes
5	We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	Yes

Ref	Question	Response
6	We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	Yes
7	We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	Yes
8	We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events, or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	Yes
9	Trust funds including charitable – In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/asset(s), including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	N/A

It was proposed by Cllr M Price, seconded by Cllr S Ellahi, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that ‘Section 1 - The Annual Governance Statement for 2024/2025’ (AGAR) be approved.

The Chairman and Responsible Financial Officer then signed Section 1 of the AGAR.

n) To receive and approve the Annual Accounting Statements (AGAR) for the year ended 31 March 2025 (Section 2)

It was proposed by Cllr B Nagle, seconded by Cllr J Snowball, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that ‘Section 2 of the AGAR – The Accounting Statements for 2024/2025’ be approved. This section had been signed by the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) in advance of the meeting. The Chairman then countersigned Section 2 of the AGAR.

Appendix 9 – Section 2 of the AGAR for 2024/2025

o) VAT return 1.1.25 – 31.3.25

A VAT refund of £5,442.38 had been received on 15 April 2025 from HMRC (His Majesty’s Revenue and Customs).

p) 1st instalment precept 2025/2026

An online payment of £193,562.50 was received from Guildford Borough Council on 10 April 2025.

A Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTSS) grant of £2,212 was also received.

q) Drainage works required – Coombe Lane

Three companies had been approached for a quotation. One company had not responded. Minimum cost £2,500 & VAT – Maximum cost £5,520 & VAT.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr N Mitchell, seconded by Cllr N Crampin and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the quotation from RFM Pipeline Services be approved but that a budget of £3,000 & VAT be granted to allow for any contingency works that may result from the CCTV survey work.

2025-179 - Parish Representatives – Annual reports

Fairwood Helpers – Cllr B Ahier

I have continued to attend the majority of Fairwood Helpers committee meetings over the past year. There is a strong and dedicated committee, ably led by Mike Ryan and the organisation continues to provide a valuable service to residents. The following details have been provided by Mike Ryan:

1. In August 2024 we reduced our phone line hours from 10am - 12pm over 5 days Mon - Fri to 10am - 12pm on three days Mon, Wed and Fri. This was necessary due to a lack of volunteers to staff the phones. That said, Clients and Volunteers have adapted well, and we continue to deliver a high-quality service. We also moved to a WhatsApp system (as opposed to Duty Officers individually phoning Volunteers to do Jobs) and this too is working well.
2. We currently have 45 Volunteers, 34 of whom are Drivers. We are in particular need of Duty Officers to staff the phone lines as this role is continually being performed by a small cadre of people. I'd point out that you do not have to be a Driver to be a Fairwood Helpers Volunteer! On that point, you don't have to be a Duty Officer either and if Councillors know of anyone seeking low demand voluntary work who have Financial, IT or Admin skills please point them in my direction as I'd like to build up resilience in these areas.
3. We have 86 Clients with some being regular (weekly) users and others being quite infrequent.
4. We are completing between 30 - 35 Jobs per month.
5. Our relationship with Surrey Community Action (Justine Aldous) is excellent.
6. Working with Justine we are exploring the possibility of expansion into Jacob's Well. We cannot do this without local JW people coming forward as Volunteers and we would welcome Parish Council support / guidance in that regard. We are not seeking to expand into Normandy (there is no scheme there).
6. Financially we are in good stead and having donated £2,000 to charitable causes last year we may not donate any money this year. However, if any Councillor is aware of any local worthy cause in need please do let me know and we will consider it.
7. Finally, we were very disappointed with the recent decision by the RSCH to withdraw recognition of our parking exemption badges (which we have held for many years) as they introduced their new ANPR system. They did so in a very blunt way, ignoring all appeals from SCA, Jeremy Hunt and others for understanding and accommodation. This unfortunate and totally unnecessary 'attitude problem' by RSCH management will undoubtedly make the lives of our wonderful volunteers just that little bit more difficult and I do hope it will not deter people from performing this vital service for our Clients and the hospital. It saddens me to say it, but it really does say something about morality and social conscience when a major hospital treats local volunteers with such disdain.

Fairlands, Liddington Hall and Gravetts Lane Community Association – Cllr N Mitchell

Regular meetings with the FLGCA Management Committee continue a two monthly rotation.

I attended meetings as reported in the Chairman's Reports dated August, September, and December 2024 and February, April, and May 2025.

Surrey Association of Local Councils (SALC) – Cllr N Mitchell

As reported in the Chairman's Report dated 12 December 2024.

The AGM is to be held on 13 November 2025 at 10:30am the venue being Silvermere Golf Course (Inn on the Lake).

Wood Street Village Association – Cllr B McShee

The Wood Street Village Association committee generally meets once a month to discuss matters affecting the village and organising events.

The main event organised by the committee, in conjunction with the Horticultural Society, is the summer show in July, which includes the charity jazz festival. Other events arranged are the Mayday celebrations including the Maypole dancing, and in December the singing of Christmas carols on the Village Green.

Also this year the 80th anniversary of VE Day was commemorated on the village Green where villagers joined in singing and enjoyed a fish and chip supper.

Worplesdon Flood Forum – Cllr N Mitchell

As discussed, and agreed at our meeting in February 2025, Worplesdon Parish Council has decided to take a hiatus from facilitating the Worplesdon Flood Forum.

Community Speed Watch – Cllr N Mitchell

Deployments continue throughout the parish and my thanks to Cllrs Ahier, Ellahi, Price, and Wright for their assistance. Special thanks to residents Gill Ibbs and Rupert Baker for volunteering at deployments.

There have been fourteen deployments this year so far, but unfortunately due to the weather there have been three cancelled deployments.

The percentage of offences are increasing from 1.4% to 2.5% due to one location where the offences have increased from 4.1% to 15.2%. Hopefully, through the remainder of the year these figures will reduce.

Worplesdon Parish Council's good working relationship with Surrey Police has been demonstrated by the Casualty Reduction Officer attending a deployment earlier in the year.

Speed Data Recorder – Cllr N Mitchell

Deployments by Surrey Safer Camera Partnership continue with equipment supplied by WPC (batteries) across the parish.

Results are circulated to all councillors.

The latest data issued last week indicates a disturbing disregard for the speed limit with 94.6% of vehicles exceeding the speed limit, and the V85 indicating an average speed of 44mph in a 40mph zone.

Unauthorised Encampment (UEs) – Annual Inspection Review – Cllr N Mitchell

Throughout the year, I have visited all the sites that we own or lease and noted the protection in place against unauthorised encampments and have conducted a desktop study a copy of which has been distributed to all Members via email.

The following sites were assessed:

- Coombe Lane
- Fairlands Playground
- Harry's Meadow
- Jacobs Well Playground
- Jacobs Well Recreation Ground
- Nevins Copse
- Perry Hill Green
- Pitch Place Green
- Wood Street Community Car Park

2025-180 - Appointment of Parish Representatives (2025/2026)

It was proposed by Cllr M Price, seconded by Cllr J Snowball, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the following members be appointed to represent a variety of organisations across the parish. See the table below:

Table 5: Appointed representatives 2025/2026

Organisation	Appointed representative
Fairwood Helpers	Cllr B Ahier
FLGCA - Fairlands, Liddington Hall and Gravetts Lane Community Association	Cllr N Mitchell (Substitute Cllr S Ellahi)
SALC - Surrey Association of Local Councils	Cllr N Mitchell
WSVA - Wood Street Village Association	Cllr B McShee

2025-181 - To fix the dates and times of the Full Council and Committee Meetings 2026

The dates for the council meetings scheduled for 2026 had been drafted and circulated to all members in advance of the meeting.

It was proposed by Cllr S Ellahi, seconded by Cllr J Snowball, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the schedule of meetings be approved and adopted. The date for the Annual Parish Meeting to be confirmed in due course.

The Mayor of Guildford, Councillor Howard Smith to be invited to attend one of the full council meetings.

2025-182 - Wood Street Village Association (WSVA) – Application for the Right to Buy a Community Asset (White Hart Pub, White Hart Lane, Wood Street Village)

Cllr T Wright set out the Village Association's reasons for nominating this building as a Community Asset.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr B Ahier, seconded by Cllr N Crampin and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council would support the WSVA's application for the Right to Buy the White Hart Pub, should it either come up for sale, or be proposed for a change of use at any time in the future.

2025-183 - Challengers - Jazz Festival – 20 July 2025

The risk assessment had been returned to Challengers as no reference had been made to Martyn's Law [Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025].

No response had been received. This was followed up by the Clerk. An automated response stated that Emily Tompkins has left Challengers. The Clerk to revert to Challengers ASAP.

This item is to be placed on the agenda of the next Planning/General Purposes and Finance Committee meeting.

**2025-184 - The Hive – Request to use Wood Street Village Green for a community event 20 June 2025
3pm – 5pm**

An event application, and supporting risk assessment, had been received from The Hive (Guildford Borough Council) for permission to hold a community event on Wood Street Village Green on 20 June 2025.

The Play Rangers are planning to provide giant games, such as giant connect 4, Jenga and snakes and ladders, alongside arts and crafts, and possibly an intergenerational activity for members of the community to join them, with picnics.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr B McShee, seconded by Cllr B Ahier and unanimously **RESOLVED** that permission be granted. As this is a community event no fees would be payable.

2025-185 - Clerk's Report

- a) **Surrey County Council – Final opportunity to take part in Surrey County Council's Countryside Visitor Survey** - Deadline for responses 30 May 2025:
www.surreycc.gov.uk/countrysidevisitorsurvey
- b) **VE commemorations** - Both events were a tremendous success and both the WSV and St Mary's Church have expressed their gratitude to the Parish Council's for their respective grants.

2025-186 - Chairman's Report

This report covers the six-week period since the last full council on 10 April 2025.

Gordon Adam

The unexpected death of Vice-Chairman Gordon Adam on 27 April 2025 was a total shock. The loss of his enthusiasm for the Parish Council will be noticed in many ways, too many to record.

Community Speed Watch

Deployments are continuing across the Parish, and the current results indicate that across the Parish offences are in line with previous years, except for one location where the recorded level of offences in a similar period last year was 2.8%, whilst this year it stands at 15.2%. The next highest is 3.3%.

Speed Data Recorder

The latest figures that have been circulated to all Councillors indicate that there is a disturbing increase in speeding in certain areas of the Parish.

10 April

I chaired the Full Council Meeting and as usual I want to thank councillors for their attendance, points of debate, and assistance in prompt conclusion of the meeting.

11 April

At Peter Trevena's retirement function I gave a speech about Peter's work over the last 15 years and wished him well in his retirement.

15 April

In accordance with the Parish Council's financial regulations, Cllr Saffina Ellahi and I signed the Grass Cutting Contract, which was countersigned by the Parish Clerk, Gaynor White.

16 April

The Parish Clerk and I completed two online Guildford Borough Council surveys about devolution.

23 April

I logged onto SALC Councillor Zoom Forum about devolution. I noted that Cllrs Nuala Crampin and Mike Price also attended the Forum. There was a total of thirty-nine attendees at the Forum.

At the time of the Forum there was little to update as the final submission by Surrey County Council was due on 9 May, and the White Paper on Community Issues is expected in the Autumn.

Other points of interest were:

- i. Training is required for the Planning and Infrastructure Bill.
- ii. The average Band D precept increased by 7.4% to £92.22, but this is meaningless as no two Parish Councils are the same.
- iii. NALC and SALC have issued Model Financial Regulations and Model Standing Orders.
- iv. The Community White Paper might propose that future meetings could be Hybrid Meetings.
- v. AGAR to be completed and signed off at the next Full Council Meeting.
- vi. Martyn's Law applies to functions and meetings with more than two hundred attendees and up to 799. Above this level there has always been the need for risk assessments to be conducted, and security provided.
- vii. Operation Bridge is constantly being reviewed by the Establishment.

1 May

As a result of Gordon's death I chaired the General Purposes Meeting.

A two-minute silence for Gordon was held at the start of the meeting as a mark of respect and is recorded in the minutes.

In accordance with the Parish Council's financial regulations Cllr Mike Price and I signed the Christmas Lights Contract, which was countersigned by the Parish Clerk, Gaynor White.

8 May VE Day 80

I attended the celebrations at both Wood Street Village Green and St Mary's Church on behalf of the Parish Council.

For those who don't know (and I include myself in that group), the Laudamas Chamber Choir was formed in 1993, as an off shoot of the parish choir of St Paul's Addlestone and has grown from 8 singers to a current 21 enthusiastic and friendly singers.

At the end of the St Mary's celebration John McLean stood in the pulpit and thanked WPC for the grant to put the event on. You will all have seen the letter that the Church sent to WPC thanking us following the event.

14 May

I attended the Internal Audit conducted by Mark Mulberry of Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd. I can report that the audit was successfully concluded because of the preparatory work carried out by the Parish Clerk, Gaynor White, and the Finance Officer, Helen Lawrence.

A copy of the report from Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd has been circulated to all councillors ahead of the Full Council on 22 May, at which it will be signed off by the council members.

The next internal review will be on 19 November at 9am.

19 May

The Parish Clerk, Gaynor White and I attended the two monthly liaison meeting with Merrist Wood College.

Points of interest were:

- I. There will be a Surrey Fayre within the grounds of the college on 20 and 21 June. This is a joint function with Surrey Hills who are producing the advertising paraphernalia for the function.
- II. There was discussion on Merrist Wood Golf Course, as the new owner may have been advised of their successful bid last week.
- III. Surrey Fire and Rescue held a day long exercise within the college grounds.
- IV. UKPN will be installing the new substation during June.
- V. The students at the college will be planting the planters at Perry Hill Green on 23 May.
- VI. When the new college buildings are completed there will be a formal opening ceremony, which WPC will be invited to attend.

The next liaison meeting is scheduled for 7 July.

In the evening, I attended the FLGCA Management Meeting and delivered the report from WPC, the contents of which included items on:

- Gordon Adam
- Community Speed Watch
- Speed Data Recorder
- Merrist Wood Golf Course
- Ground staff
- Devolution
- White Hart Public House
- Annual Parish Meeting

Other points that were delivered to FLGCA Management Meeting by SCC, GBC and the Worplesdon Churches included:

- Howard Smith is the new Mayor of Guildford for the Municipal Year 2025/26.
- Devolution and parish or town councils for Guildford.
- The submission to the Government by SCC on their preferred devolved authorities.
- GBC's and other local councils preferred options for devolution.
 - We await to see what the Government decides.
- Dawn Lucas-Brown has been appointed the new Rector for St Mary's - Worplesdon and St Alban's - Wood Street Village and will start her new post shortly.
- The Double Flush project is going out to tender.

There was some discussion relating to the Fairlands Road Traffic Collision (RTC) on 14 May, but no updates were known. We await the Police findings on the matter. Questions were raised if rumble strips, or average speed cameras could be installed. Cllr Witham pointed out that this would have to be considered with other projects across Surrey. The timescale for review, scheme proposals, approval and installation would be years and after Devolution.

FLGCA asked if yellow cross hatching could be painted on the road outside the entrance to the community centre.

Next FLGCA Management meeting with Councillors 21 July.

2025-187 - Items for inclusion on future agendas

- Accident at the entrance to Fairlands – What can be done to prevent motorists from carrying out an illegal right turn out of the estate?
- Fairwood Helpers/Parish Council councillor vacancies – Action required to raise awareness of volunteering opportunities across the Parish.

2025-188 - Date of next meeting – Full Council Meeting Thursday 3 July 2025 - 19:30.

Meeting closed 22:05

Signed:

Chairman of the Council

Date: 3 July 2025