

Burwash Parish Council
Parish Priorities Working Party
1st meeting, 27 April 2026
MINUTES

Present: Helga Castle (HC); Cllr. Lesley Elmslie (LE); Lindsay Green (LG); Cllr. Terry Johns (TJ); Halina Keep (HK); Cllr. Julian Kenny (JK); Cllr. Keith Lloyd (KL); Cllr. Anne Newson (AN); Cllr. Crawford Patterson (CP); Jacqui Bird (JB)

1. Apologies for absence

a. David Axford (DA)

KL confirmed that all others who had responded to the invitation from the parish clerk were present.

2. Chair of the Working Party

KL was elected unanimously.

3. Terms of reference

The WP discussed each section of the terms of reference with which they had been presented. A number of changes were proposed by various members and agreed in discussion. Revised terms of reference are attached to these minutes (PPWP 26/2 (revised)). KL noted that these will need to be approved by full council in May.

4. Confirmation of requirements and scope

Members of the WP noted the following potential infrastructure projects of which they were collectively aware. Important: the list is not in any particular order, and it is without prejudice to any particular method of implementation:

- (a) Facilities for the parish council, its working parties and external groups (eg. the internet café) to meet.
- (b) Facilities for the parish clerk to work.
- (c) Public toilets.
- (d) Maintenance of the number of car parking spaces at least at its current level.
- (e) Provision of allotments.
- (f) Provision of better play facilities for children.

JK and AN reminded members of the community meetings that had taken place on 13 and 16 November 2025 asking for views on what parish priorities for investment in infrastructure should be. JK agreed to circulate this to WP members for consideration at a future meeting.

It was agreed that, as a point of principle, new facilities should not be developed where this is likely to be detrimental to the viability (financial or otherwise) of existing facilities, including the village hall, the Swan Meadow pavilion and the Burwash Common pavilion.

It was agreed that the WP should gather evidence on: (i) how the parish room, the village hall, the Swan meadow pavilion, and the Burwash Common pavilion have been used over the last 6 months; and (ii) whether any of these venues has turned away potential bookings and, if so, for what reason.

In answer to a question from CP, no member of the WP was able to identify any instances of proposed new initiatives which had failed because of inadequate infrastructure.

LG noted that the assessment and development of local infrastructure is a key element of the new Neighbourhood Plan currently being worked up by the Neighbourhood Development Plan Working Party. The two WPs will need to work closely together to ensure consistency and lack of duplication.

JB noted that, out of 105 parishes in East Sussex, only 4 have a separate, designated parish office.

TJ suggested that the parish council should preserve assets in order to be able to borrow against them, if that became necessary. AN noted that the current condition of the assets and the lack of an income stream meant that their value for the purposes of borrowing was very low.

LG asked whether the village hall is considered by its owners (whoever they are) to be an asset or a liability. Is the longer-term financial viability of the village hall an issue? Should the parish council be exploring whether the village hall could be acquired for a peppercorn and used, with modifications, as a centre of operations for the future? TJ said that there were difficulties with the village hall because of its charitable status. It is possible to use CIL money for improvements or alterations to the village hall. However working party members need to be aware that any alterations must not limit or restrict the existing use. The building and any additions or alterations remains the property of the Charity and the Parish Council has no rights of ownership regardless of how it is funded.

If the Parish council wished to use any part of the village hall normal rental fees would apply. as the charity has a duty to. Maximise income”. TJ also highlighted the issue of ‘Lone Working’ should the WP consider recommending the clerk working in the Village Hall.

JB said these may not be insurmountable. KL agreed to circulate copies of the current deeds (c. 1962) to members of the WP but pointed out that the parish council is in the process of getting these updated.

CP asked whether there were further steps that could be taken in relation to traffic calming in the high street. KL said that this had been resisted by East Sussex Highways over many years and is no longer being actively pursued.

KL pointed out that the existing parish room was the subject of a recent conditions survey. The estimated cost of renovation at the time the survey was done was £70,000, with the caveat that it could be significantly more if structural faults were uncovered once work had started.

5. CIL availability and timeline

KL noted that the parish council has £151,743.30 CIL money in hand, with a further £51,414 due in October 2026. None of this money is committed. KL agreed to provide further information on the deadlines before which this money must be spent.

In addition to CIL money, the council has earmarked reserves (EMR) set aside as follows: £30,000 for refurbishment of the public toilets in the car parks; and £22,353 for ongoing maintenance of the parish building.

6. Community engagement

Members noted the importance of timely and effective engagement with the public. They agreed that they would welcome additional members of the WP from the wider community.

7. Next steps and recommendations to full council

The parish council should be asked at its May meeting to resolve to approve the revised terms of reference for the WP.

The WP will:

- Continue to identify current and future infrastructure requirements;
- Review options and estimated costs for the delivery of new infrastructure.
- Work up plans for appropriate and timely community engagement.

8. Any other business

None.

9. Date of next meeting

Tuesday, 26 May 2026 at 18:30 in the parish room.