

## MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL ON MONDAY 8<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2025

### Present

Councillor	Mr Mike Huskinson	Chair
Councillor	Mr Mike Simpson	Vice Chairman
Councillor	Mr Andrew Medcalf	
Councillor	Rvd Peter Hughes	Tree warden
	<i>joined the meeting at item 11</i>	
Councillor	Mr David Fellows	
Councillor	Mrs Ann Johnson	
Councillor	Mrs Mel Newport	
County and District Councillor	Mr Tom Wells	
	<i>joined the meeting at item 11</i>	
Clerk and RFO	Mrs Gill Hollick	
Chair of Madresfield PC	Councillor Mike Johnson	
Clerk to Madresfield PC	Mr David Sharp	

### 1. Apologies

District Councillor	Mrs Kathy Wells
WCC Footpath Officer	Mr David Furlong
Chairman of Guarlford Village Hall	Mr Phil Thomas

### 2. Public Question and Answer

Councillor Mike Johnson and Mr David Sharp had attended the meeting to discuss the proposed merger of Madresfield and Guarlford Parish Councils. It was agreed that they would be invited to address the meeting at item 11

### 3. Code of Conduct and Declarations of Interest

Prior to the meeting, Parish Councillors had been reminded that, as required by the Parish Council Code of Conduct Order 2001, revised 2020, they should notify the MHDC Monitoring Officer of any changes to their Register of Interests or the receipt of any unrecorded gifts or hospitality. They should also declare any personal or prejudicial interests in any of the items of this meeting.

There were no declarations of personal or prejudicial interest.

### 4. The Race Relations and Crime and Disorder Acts

Prior to the meeting, Parish Councillors had been reminded that all the business carried out and decisions made at this meeting must observe the requirements of the above Acts.

### 5. Acceptance of the Previous Minutes

The minutes of the previous meetings, the Parish Council meeting, held on 8<sup>th</sup> September, The Extraordinary meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> October and the Planning meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2025 had all been circulated and read prior to this meeting.

All sets of minutes were accepted as a true record of the meetings  
There were no other matters arising not already on the agenda of this meeting and it was agreed that the minutes should be signed by the Chairman.

**6. Report from District and County Councillors**

The Clerk had circulated this to Councillors prior to the meeting. There were no matters arising.

**7. Report on local footpath issues**

The Clerk had circulated this to Councillors prior to the meeting. There were no matters arising.

**8. Report from Tree Warden Cllr Rvd Peter Hughes.**

The Clerk had circulated this to Councillors prior to the meeting. There were no matters arising.

**9. Report from Guarlford Village Hall**

The Clerk had circulated this to Councillors prior to the meeting.

**Report from Phil Thomas, Chairman, Guarlford Village Hall.**

*“Since my last report to the Parish Council, Guarlford Village Hall has been successful in their application to the Community Facilities grant fund and that together with some well supported fund-raising events held in the hall, we have finally reached the target of £23,000. I am delighted to report that work can now begin on the Peter Mayner room with a target completion date of March 2026.*

*The ongoing support of the Parish Council and the very active community of Guarlford has also enabled the committee to install infra-red heating panels in the main hall with sufficient funds ring fenced to install pro-sound acoustic panels on the walls. This will reduce the sound wave vibration in the hall making it more comfortable acoustically and easier for visitors with hearing impairments. It is planned to fit a dado rail around the walls of the main room to provide a buffer for chair backs and protect the plaster. Once this is fitted the acoustic panels will sit directly above this rail*

*The hall is now used regularly by a local band for practice sessions, Dancefit, tai chi and table tennis although the yoga group are currently taking a winter break. Joe Maggs, our newest Trustee, appointed in October has set up a village table tennis group which is open to everyone as the previously existing group is privately run by civil service employees and retirees. Joe’s new group has had its first 2 meetings and it is heartening to see a wide mix of ages attending including some of our younger residents.*

*November / December is one of the main fund-raising periods for the village hall and the money generated by the various festive events will not only go towards further*

*improvements at the hall but will help towards the increasing costs of insurance and electricity.*

*Together with the rest of the Trustees I would like to thank Councillors for their continued support of our village hall and I look forward to another interesting year of working together for the benefit of the local community and take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy Christmas.*

Phil Thomas,  
Chairman  
Guarlford Village Hall

There were no matters arising.

#### **10. Report from Church Warden Cllr Fellows**

The Clerk had circulated this to Councillors prior to the meeting. There were no matters arising.

#### **11. Discussion with Councillor Mike Johnson, Chair of Madresfield PC re possible merger**

Councillor Mike Johnson of Madresfield Parish Council told the meeting that for the past 3 – 4 years, Madresfield Parish Council had found it hard to recruit councillors and he himself had recently moved house although he was still living within the qualifying 3 mile boundary. In addition, the Parish Clerk, Mr David Sharp had indicated his wish to retire in the near future. Currently, Madresfield Parish Council is comprised of 3 councillors which includes District Councillor Kathy Wells, who stood in to keep the Parish Council viable, and has indicated that due to her other duties, she would step down if an alternative councillor could be recruited.

Madresfield currently has 126 electors. Councillor Mike Johnson explained that the Parish Council enjoyed a positive relationship with the Madresfield estate, who had in the past, part-funded white highway gates and had also been approached for funding towards traffic speed signs. A proportion of the funds raised at the Madresfield fetes have also been offered to the Parish Council. Some of these funds have been used to maintain the village pond and green, which is in the centre of the village but on land owned by Madresfield estate. As most of the land in the Madresfield parish is owned by the Estate, Councillor Mike Johnson said that there are very few planning issues outside the Court. Madresfield Parish Council owns the telephone kiosk which is currently used as a book exchange, similar to that in Guarlford. Currently the main issue in Madresfield is car parking by the school. Although yellow parking restriction lines have been extended there are still pinch points immediately outside the school. Mr Sharp provided a copy of the last set of year end accounts which showed that the precept had been set at £1,950 and the current balance in all accounts totalled £1,165.26

Councillor Mike Simpson thanked both Councillor Mike Johnson and Mr Sharp for their contribution to the meeting and agreed to give this further consideration

Councillor Tom Wells declared an interest in that he was the husband of District Councillor Kathy Wells who was also a member of Madresfield Parish Council. However, he explained that both he and Councillor Ann Johnson of Guarlford would not benefit financially or any other way from any decision reached on a merger so it was acceptable for them to express their opinions on this matter once their connections had been declared. Councillor Tom Wells told the meeting that there had been discussions on a possible merger between Guarlford, Madresfield and Newland 20 years previously but the decision then had been to remain as individual Parish Councils. However, since then issues have changed particularly in respect of likely planning applications. Councillor Tom Wells reminded Councillors that their role was to provide a voice for local residents and should Madresfield be left without a Parish Council, the area could become vulnerable which would also inevitably affect neighbouring Guarlford. If both Parish Councils joined together, they would have greater strength to withstand any pressure against any development sprawl from Malvern. Councillor Tom Wells also reminded Councillors that the forthcoming local authority re-organisation with the loss of the District Council will mean that the role of the Parish Council will become more important to represent the local community in local events and planning issues. Councillor Tom Wells suggested that Councillors may wish to engage with the local community to find out their views on a merger between councils.

Councillor David Fellows proposed holding a second meeting to discuss further a possible merger. This was seconded by Councillor Mike Huskinson and agreed unanimously. The Clerk was asked to book the village hall for Monday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2026 for 6pm

## **12. Update on Parliamentary Bill submitted by MHT**

The Clerk had nothing further to report on this other than the date for Petitions to be heard would be from 20<sup>th</sup> January to the end of February on Tuesdays to Thursdays.

## **13. Parish Environment**

**13.1 Bus shelter project** The Clerk confirmed that she had been in contact with Building Control at MHDC who confirmed that Building regulations would not be required. The Clerk had also written to Tanya Crake at WCC highways to inform them of the Parish Council's intentions to replace the bus shelter. A letter had been received from Deborah Fox CEO at MHT, to say that the plans for the bus shelter must be submitted to her so that they can be placed before the MHT board for consideration next March 2026, before commencement on any replacement structure. Deborah Fox suggested that the current shelter should be removed as soon as possible and that she would wish to send a representative when this took place to ensure that Trust land was protected. Councillor Peter Hughes told the meeting that he did not think it was advisable to remove the current shelter until the new one was ready to be installed. This was because it would leave an exposed concrete plinth with a considerable drop to the rear which could be a greater hazard than a potential wooden

shingle falling from the roof of the shelter. Councillors asked the Clerk to send the drawings for the proposed new shelter to Deborah Fox and explain why they did not intend to remove the current shelter for the time being.

The Clerk told the meeting that in her letter, Deborah Fox had also said that they - intended to remove the waste bin from the lay-by opposite the bus shelter as this was regularly overflowing and used by passing motor homes and others to leave offensive waste. Also, Deborah Fox had noted that the condition of Captain Chester's bench in the same location had become unsafe with rotting wooden slats, and requested that the Parish Council attend to this. Councillor Peter Hughes agreed to visit and assess the bench.

**13.2 Lengthsman** The Clerk had asked the Lengthsman to clear the gully grips in Clevelode lane as requested by Councillor Mel Newport. A blocked drain in Clevelode lane had been reported to WCC and is booked to be cleared in the next 4 weeks.

**13.3 VAS update** The Clerk told the meeting that the VAS had now been purchased and was waiting for WCC to erect the post for its installation. The Clerk had discussed this with the lengthsman who had agreed to install the equipment.

## 14. Planning

### 14.1 Application M/25/00561/PIP Permission in principle for development of land bordering Rectory Lane

This is still undergoing the appeal process

Councillor Mike Huskinson informed the meeting that he had responded through the appeal process in a personal capacity, not as a Parish Councillor. He had informed the planning officer that the entire plot in question is outside the settlement boundary and not partially within the boundary as incorrectly stated. Councillor Mike Huskinson had provided evidence for this to the planning officer.

### 14.2 M/25/00600/PIP Permission in principle for erection of 9 houses on land between Chance Lane and Hall Green

This was still 'pending'

### 14.3 M/25/01219/SCR Proposal to build 180 houses on land off Mill Lane.

This was still 'pending'

## 15. Finance

### 15.1 Account balances

Current :-	£9028.25
Deposit:-	£ 697.39
Charity:-	£ 111.75
<b>Total Worth:-</b>	<b>£9837.39</b>

Money ring fenced for bus shelter £1054.19 (grant from The Grapevine)

Awaiting credit from Lengthsman scheme £160.00

**15.2 Approval of payments since last meeting**

Date	Authorised by	Payee	Amount
16.9.25		Bank charges	4.25
22.9.25	Mike Huskinson	G Hollick Clerks wages Sept 25	267.30
22.9.25	Mike Huskinson	HMRC PAYE on Clerks wages June 25	66.80
22.9.25	Mike Huskinson	Newsquest Media Group	162.36
23.9.25	Mike Simpson	Lengthsman Sept 25	160.00
15.10.25	Mike Simpson	G Hollick Clerks wages October 25	267.30
15.10.25	Mike Simpson	HMRC PAYE on Clerks wages October 25	66.80
20.10.25		Bank charges	4.25
28.10.25	Mike Huskinson	Lengthsman October 25	160.00
14.11.25	Mike Simpson	G Hollick Clerks wages November 25	267.30
14.11.25	Mike Simpson	HMRC PAYE on Clerks wages November 25	66.80
18.11.25	Mike Simpson	Elan City (VAS) -( funded)	3,000.00
18.11.25		Bank charges	4.25

**Payments awaiting payment**

2.12.25	Mike Simpson	Lengthsman November	160.00
8.12.25	Mike Simpson	G Hollick Clerks wages December 25	267.30
8.12.25	Mike Simpson	HMRC PAYE on Clerks wages December 25	66.80
8.12.25	Mike Simpson	Village hall upkeep	600.00

The Clerk asked Councillors for approval of payments 16<sup>th</sup> September 2025– 8<sup>th</sup> December 2025. This was proposed by Councillor Mike Huskinson, seconded by Councillor Mike Fellows and agreed unanimously

**15.3 Approval of Budget for 2026/27** This had been circulated prior to the meeting. The precept is to remain the same for the next financial year. Although the budget showed a small loss over the year, the Clerk stated that the accounts were currently in a healthy position and would be able to withstand this deficit without detrimental consequences.

The budget was proposed by Councillor Mike Huskinson, seconded by Councillor David Fellows and agreed unanimously

**15.4 Charity account – consideration of closing this account and sending funds as a charitable donation to CAB** This item had been carried forward from the previous two meetings. A letter had been received from the CAB on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2025 requesting a donation and stating that they had identified residents in the Guarlford Parish who were being supported by their services. Councillors had

previously agreed that the money standing in the charity account, now standing at £111.75 should be donated to the CAB, thereby closing the account. Following discussion, Councillor Mel Newport proposed that this money should be sent without further delay to the CAB. This was seconded by Councillor Johnson and agreed unanimously.

**16. Other administration and liaison with other bodies.**

Correspondence had been received from Deborah Fox and already discussed at item 16.1. Councillors asked the Clerk to write to Deborah Fox and ask if it would be possible to have either a larger bin or for the bin to be emptied more frequently as this would be preferable to having the bin removed.

16.2 The Clerk had received a report from Andy Pearce MHT Conservation Officer outlining the condition of the pools in the Parish, all of which were in good condition for a range of native wildlife species. The main concern is the repeat occurrences of Azolla water fern, which is non-native and invasive. This is being treated by weevils to eat it, to stop it spreading throughout the area. This report had been send to Councillors prior to the meeting and copied to Mr Tom Vivian of Blakes Lane.

**17. Items for the next meeting**

Discussion on possible merger of Guarlford with Madresfield Parish Council

**18. Dates of Next Meetings**

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2026 Extraordinary meeting

Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026 Annual Parish Meeting and Parish Council Annual Meeting

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2026

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2026

**Signed** ..... **Date**.....

**Cllr Michael Huskinson            Chairman**