

# SLAUGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

## Extraordinary Meeting MINUTES



Meeting held on **Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at 6.30pm at MacNaughton Hall, Finches Field, Old Brighton Road South, Pease Pottage**

**Press and Public are welcome to attend** – *The Parish Council is an open and transparent local authority and encourages public attendance at meetings.*

Sally Mclean – Parish Clerk [clerk@slaugham-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@slaugham-pc.gov.uk) Website: <http://www.slaughampc.co.uk> Tel: 01403 733881

---

**Present:** Cllrs Eric Prescott, David Dunn, Lesley Read, Jane MacNaughton, Julia Elliott, Gary Marsh

Others Present: 108 Members of public

- 1. Apologies for absence:** To receive and accept apologies for absence. Cllr James Keating
- 2. Declaration of interest from members in respect of any items on the agenda:** To record any declarations of interest
  - a) To declare any personal interests in items on the agenda and their nature.*
  - b) To declare any prejudicial interests in items on the agenda and their nature. Members with a prejudicial interest must leave the room for the relevant item and take no part in the discussion.*
  - c) Members must also declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) under this item; those with a DPI are required to leave the room for the relevant item.*

Cllr Ken Boyle Site 603 [Site 603 – Land west of Woodhurst Farm, Old Brighton Road South, Pease Pottage – 700 dwellings](#)

Cllr Julia Elliott Site 181 [Site 181 – Land west of Truggers, Handcross – 105 dwellings](#)

Cllr Lesley Read Site 181 [Site 181 – Land west of Truggers, Handcross – 105 dwellings](#)

### 3. Purpose of the Meeting

The purpose of the meeting is to consider the District Plan Post Hearings Update published on 15th May 2026, including the proposed site allocations currently identified for further testing within Slaugham Parish. The intention is to advise the community of the current position and to gather information and feedback from local residents on these allocations. Your views will help inform the Council in determining its position and next steps ahead of the public consultation later this year, should these sites complete their final testing. This meeting does not form part of the formal consultation process and does not indicate any support for, or opposition to, the proposed allocations. It is an opportunity to share information and prepare for the statutory stages to come.

### 4. District Plan Review – Post-Hearings Update (Published 15 May 2026)

To receive and consider the District Plan Post-Hearings Update issued by Mid Sussex District Council, including the sites identified for further testing within Slaugham Parish. *We recommended that you read through the various documents ahead of this meeting* <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/mid-sussex-district-plan/district-plan-review-examination/> :

The Council noted that the Planning Inspector, as part of the ongoing District Plan Examination, has required Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) to undertake further in-combination testing of four additional sites within Slaugham Parish. This direction forms part of the Inspector's assessment of whether the District Plan can meet the increased district-wide housing requirement, including the unmet housing need arising from Crawley and Brighton. The Inspector has required Mid Sussex to accommodate 50% of Crawley's unmet housing need and 1,500 dwellings from Brighton's unmet need, contributing to an overall uplift of approximately 4,000 additional homes to be planned for across the district.

Within Slaugham Parish, the four sites identified for further testing comprise: Site 1188 (196 dwellings), Site 818 (41 dwellings), Site 181 (105 dwellings) and Site 603 (700 dwellings), giving a combined potential yield of 1,042 dwellings. When added to the 65 existing planned dwellings in Handcross, this results in a total of 1,107 dwellings, which equates to approximately 25% of the Inspector-driven uplift of c.4,000 homes and around 4.6% of the district-wide housing requirement for 2021–2040. These figures are indicative only and apply solely if all four sites pass the in-combination testing required by the Planning Inspector, and if Mid Sussex District Council agrees to take them forward. The outcome will depend on the Inspector's assessment, the results of the technical testing, and decisions made across the wider district as part of the ongoing examination process.

The Parish Council emphasised that these sites are not confirmed allocations, do not have planning permission, and remain subject to further technical testing by MSDC and the Planning Inspector. A formal six-week public consultation will take place later in 2026 once MSDC confirms which sites, if any, are proposed to be included in the modified District Plan.

The sites are as listed:

- [Site 1188 – Land at Pease Field, Pease Pottage – 196 dwellings](#)
- [Site 818 – Land north of the Former Golf House, Horsham Road, Pease Pottage – 41 dwellings](#)
- [Site 181 – Land west of Truggers, Handcross – 105 dwellings](#)
- [Site 603 – Land west of Woodhurst Farm, Old Brighton Road South, Pease Pottage – 700 dwellings](#)

The Parish Council noted that MSDC has not published the detailed methodology or scope of the further in-combination testing required by the Planning Inspector. As such, the Council is not yet aware of the specific assessments being undertaken.

The Council gathers that in-combination testing will cover issues such as transport, landscape, infrastructure, environmental constraints and deliverability. It should consider the newly-proposed sites alongside the current allocations. MSDC has not confirmed what is included in its current testing, and we continue to request clarity and will share information as it becomes available.

- 5. Planning Application (20<sup>th</sup> May 2026) - [DM/26/1228 – Land West of London Road, Handcross \(DPA19\)](#)** Outline planning application for the erection of up to 55 dwellings, including affordable homes, together with green and blue infrastructure, vehicular access from London Road, pedestrian/cycle access from London Road, the provision of utility services structures and the demolition of an existing agricultural building on land forming part of the District Plan allocation DPA19. This site, is currently allocated in the plan for C2 Older Persons' Accommodation, not C3 general housing. This application therefore represents a material departure from the adopted allocation in terms of use class, scale, and form of development. **The application is currently open for consultation, with comments due by 10 June 2026.**

The Council noted that the application represents a material departure from the adopted District Plan allocation for this site, which is designated for C2 Older Persons' Accommodation rather than C3 general housing. The application has been submitted ahead of the conclusion of the District Plan examination review and the outcome of the Inspector's testing of the wider site allocation strategy. The Council encouraged residents to review the application documents and submit representations directly to Mid Sussex District Council before the consultation deadline.

- 6. Open Forum - Public Participation (Standing Order 3e)** To receive representations from members of the public on items on the agenda. *This session is not a decision-making forum. Speaking time is limited in accordance with Standing Order 3e and may be varied at the Chair's discretion.*

The Open Forum formed the core of the Extraordinary Meeting, providing residents with an opportunity to express their views on the four potential District Plan sites and the wider implications of development in Slaugham Parish. The Chair opened the session by reiterating that the purpose of the meeting was **information-sharing and listening, not decision-making**, and that none of the sites had planning permission or confirmed allocation status. The Council emphasised that the Inspector's request for further testing did not mean any site would necessarily proceed. It was also noted that the minutes of this meeting are not verbatim that this was an information gathering session to help inform the Council and the next stages. Below are a summary of the comments :

#### **1. District Plan Process**

The Council began by explaining the national and district-level context. Local authorities must maintain a five-year housing land supply, and if they cannot, developers gain significant leverage to bring forward speculative applications, examples were shared alongside item 5.

A District Plan provides a structured approach to identifying the most suitable sites, based on infrastructure, environmental constraints, and deliverability. The Council stressed that the Planning Inspector, not the Parish or District Council, determines which sites require further testing.

The four sites were then presented with maps and orientation. The Council clarified that the maps are available on the District Councils website, the links were also included on the notice and within the meeting agenda.

#### **2. Resident Concerns**

Residents expressed strong concerns about the scale of the developments, particularly in Pease Pottage, which has already experienced significant growth over the past 20–25 years. Several residents described the cumulative effect of previous developments, Squires, Hemsteys, the Black Swan site, the golf course redevelopment, and Woodgate and argued that further large-scale allocations would fundamentally alter the character of the village. They challenged the fairness of this, noting that Crawley's constraints particularly the airport should not justify shifting the burden onto rural villages. A recurring theme was that Pease Pottage and Handcross are "at the end of the line", geographically and politically, making them vulnerable to absorbing unmet housing need, and questioned why development pressure was concentrated on the edge of Mid Sussex rather than closer to Crawley, where the need originates.

The Council explained that the Planning Inspector had required Mid Sussex to take 50% of Crawley's unmet housing need and 1,500 homes from Brighton, in line with national planning policy and the requirement in the NPPF for effective cross-boundary cooperation. These decisions were driven by central government policy and the Inspector's examination of the District Plan, not by local choice. The Council advised that the Planning Inspector does not override the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); rather, the Inspector is responsible for applying and interpreting national policy during the examination of the District Plan. The Inspector's interpretation of the NPPF is binding on the District Council and enables the Inspector to require additional sites to be tested or to direct that Mid Sussex accommodates unmet housing need from neighbouring authorities.

### **3. Unmet Need and the Role of the Planning Inspector**

Residents challenged the fairness of this, arguing that Crawley's constraints particularly the airport should not justify shifting the burden onto rural villages. The Council explained that the Inspector had required Mid Sussex to take 50% of Crawley's unmet housing need and 1,500 homes from Brighton, and that the Parishes were informed that these should be as close geographically to those in need. The Council reiterated that these decisions were central government-driven, not local choices.

### **4. Infrastructure: Roads, Schools, Health and Utilities**

Infrastructure capacity was one of the strongest concerns raised. Residents highlighted:

- Road safety and congestion, particularly on Old Brighton Road South, Grouse Lane, and the A23 junctions.
- School capacity.
- GP and dental provision, which are already overstretched.
- Water supply, with references to water constraints.
- Emergency services and utilities, which residents felt were not keeping pace with growth.

Residents stated that development should not proceed until infrastructure is secured, referencing the long delays in delivering promised facilities at Woodgate. The Council agreed with the concerns but explained that infrastructure decisions are made by district and county alongside other statutory consultees which includes the Parish Council, these would form part of the ongoing testing and statutory consultation stages.

### **5. Environmental and Wildlife Impacts**

Several residents raised environmental concerns, including:

- Loss of countryside and greenfield land
- Impact on wildlife corridors
- The landscape and impacts on the High Weald AONB
- Specific local habitats, including a wildlife sanctuary
- Water voles, deer, and other species at risk

One resident described personally restoring a meadow and expressed distress that development could destroy years of conservation work. The Council acknowledged the importance of these issues and encouraged residents to submit detailed evidence during the formal consultation.

### **6. Community Identity and Quality of Life**

Residents spoke passionately about the erosion of village identity. Many felt that Pease Pottage and Handcross risked becoming extensions of Crawley rather than distinct rural communities. Concerns included:

- Loss of rural character
- Increased traffic and noise
- Pressure on community facilities
- Fear that the villages would "merge" with neighbouring settlements

The Council emphasised that these views were exactly what they needed to capture and feed back into the District Council's process and consultation stages and encouraged residents to do the same when responding to the consultation.

### **7. Access, Highways and Site-Specific Issues**

Residents raised detailed questions about access and traffic arrangements for all four sites. There was particular uncertainty regarding Site 603, including whether access would be taken from Old Brighton Road South or Grouse Road. Residents also questioned the feasibility of new junctions, the impact on existing bottlenecks, and the potential for rat running through residential roads. The Council advised that it had not seen any formal design layout, but noted that previous developer concept material had indicated a preference for access from Grouse Road rather than Old Brighton Road South due to known constraints. Concerns were raised in relation to Sites 1188 and 818, particularly regarding access onto Horsham Road, Pease Pottage; residents noted that any access from Grouse Road would also ultimately emerge onto Horsham Road. Residents expressed that, should some or all of these sites come forward, the cumulative effect would severely compound local traffic pressures and vehicle movements, as well as cause disruption during construction phases.

Residents also raised detailed concerns about Site 181, Truggers/Warren Cottage Fields, Horsham Road, Handcross. The promoter's early concept material, which suggested that the Parish Hall and bowling green could be re-provided within the development. It was noted that such re-provision could, in principle, enable the release of the existing Parish Hall site on the High Street, given the long-standing title and lease restrictions that require the hall and green to be re-provided before any redevelopment can occur. Concerns were also raised about potential access arrangements, including whether access would be taken from Truggers, via Horsham Road. The Council noted that it is acutely aware of the traffic concerns on Horsham Road and the impacts that will have on the High Street, which can become heavily congested at peak times, particularly during school drop-off and pick-up. These are well documented concerns that will be raised during the consultation stages and assessed during the in-combination testing.

## 8. Process, Consultation and Next Steps

The Council reiterated several key points:

- The meeting was not minuted verbatim and was for raising awareness, promote discussion, with initial observations captured.
- The Parish Council will hold further public meetings, including open days with boards and indicative layouts.
- A formal six-week consultation will take place later in the year.
- Residents will be guided on how and where to submit representations.
- The Parish Council will consider whether to instruct a planning consultation to assist them in preparing a coordinated response.

Residents were encouraged to stay positively engaged, join the Parish Council if able, inform themselves by reading through the links and literature provided and contribute evidence during the consultation.

## 9. Conclusion

The discussion was passionate and, at times, heated. Several residents expressed frustration with national planning policy, the Inspector's decisions, and the perceived lack of local control. Some of this frustration was directed towards the Parish Council, despite the Council having no involvement in the District Plan decision-making process and no authority over site selection or allocation. The Chair intervened periodically to maintain order and to ensure all residents had an opportunity to speak. Despite the tension, the Council reiterated its commitment to representing the community's views and ensuring residents are fully informed and prepared throughout this process in readiness for the consultation. It is the Council's intention to hold further meetings and village surgeries ahead of the consultation stages, once more information becomes available.

7. **Important Note:** Mid Sussex District Council advises that inclusion on this list in the post hearing update forms part of the ongoing examination process and does not mean that any site will be taken forward into the final District Plan, nor does it grant planning permission.

All modifications, including any of the additional sites and policy amendments should they be brought forward, will be subject to a six-week public consultation later this year.

Residents are advised **not** to write to Mid Sussex District Council ahead of the formal consultation, as the sites listed above are not confirmed as deliverable and remain subject to further testing as stated

8. **Date of Next Meeting** - To note the date of the next scheduled meeting of the Parish Council. 28<sup>th</sup> May 2026