MARESFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

REPRESENTING THE VILLAGES OF MARESFIELD, NUTLEY AND FAIRWARP

Draft Minutes of the Maresfield Parish Council Meeting held at Maresfield Village Hall on Tuesday 20th October 2026 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr Mrs. L. Reeves (Vice Chair), Cllr Mrs. S. Cumming, Cllr Mr. R. Hunter, Cllr Mr. A. Koeppen, Cllr Mr. T. Lewin, Cllr Mr. J. Polhill, Cllr Mr. H. Rai, Cllr Dr. B. Smith, Cllr Mrs. L. Stevens-Smith, Cllr Mr. P. Taylor, CCllr Mrs. C. Coleman, DCllr Mr. I. Tysh and Mrs. N. O'Hanlon (Clerk)

A. Public session. Mr Les Wilcox addressed Council giving an update on the campaign to get significant capital investment for Uckfield Leisure Centre to renew current facilities and create additional ones. Councillors are very supportive of the campaign as the Uckfield Leisure Centre is a very important facility for many parish residents. Mr Wilcox advised Councillors of the campaign website where they could see the full proposition and keep abreast of any updates: https://sites.google.com/view/uckfieldleisurecentrecampaign

4508. To approve apologies for absence and to note other non-attendance.

Apologies were received from: Cllr Mr M. Craddock and Cllr Dr. P. Handley.

4509. Declarations of Interest. In relation to item 4514.1.iii. the following Councillors Declared Interests:
Cllr Smith declared that she is a Governor of Nutley C of E Primary School,
She takes the minutes at the Nutley Memorial Trust CIO meetings and is on the Fords Green Committee.
Cllr Hunter declared he is on the Committee of the Buxted Cricket Club.
Cllr Stevens-Smith declared she is on the Maresfield Lunch Club Committee and Maresfield Village Hall Committee.

4510. To receive written requests for new DPI dispensations . None.

4511. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 15th September 2026: -

1. For adoption. The minutes as circulated with the meeting papers were **Agreed** to be a true and accurate record. The Chairman proposed Adoption, this was seconded and **Agreed** unanimously.

2. Matters arising from these minutes not elsewhere on the agenda. Councillors were advised that for the moment the proposed development of Oakwood Park, which was the subject of the public session presentation at the September meeting, is unlikely to be progressed now as the site has been rejected for development in the Wealden Local Plan.

4512. Reports by and questions to: -

1. County Councillors. CCllr Coleman submitted a report which had been circulated with the meeting papers and also updated Councillors as follows:

   A meeting was held with representatives of Fords Green Management Committee, Ashdown Forest Conservators and East Sussex County Council and hopefully headway has been made on getting the Fords Green lease extended.

   Some useful SLR meetings have been taking place with various Parish Council's although currently the ESCC Road Safety Officer is unable to attend these meetings.

   There is a scheme trying to get off the ground whereby Parish Council's commit to employing a person from the NEATS sector part time to enable them to get involved in environmental projects. More information on this will be forthcoming.

   The share offering is now open for the Danehill Coach and Horses which is to become a community owned venture.

   As we head into autumn and winter please load any potholes onto the ESCC portal.

   The long awaited chemical report for the undeveloped part of the Ashdown Business Park, where there is reportedly contamination from the adjacent Fire Brigade site, has still not been published.

   Cllr Coleman was asked if she could look into the reason why Highways reversed the requirement for the 30mph speed limit along the Straight Half Mile in Maresfield, to be extended northwards, and the speed awareness sign to be similarly moved, as part of the Brookworth Homes development requirements. Neither the Parish Council or the District Councillor were advised of this change. **Action:** Clerk to send Cllr Coleman and DCllr Tysh the relevant information so that they can look into it.

2. District Councillors. DCllr Tysh submitted a report which had been circulated with the meeting papers and also updated Councillors as follows:

   From the end of October there will no longer be the ability to call for planning applications to be decided by Committee. Central Government has made it law that Planning applications will be divided into two schedules, schedule 1 applications will always be decided by officers, schedule 2 applications could be decided by Committee, as long as they satisfy certain criteria.

   There is still £4500 of ward budget available for any qualifying local groups or organisations.

4513. Parish Wards – issues, needs and Councillors' reports: -

1. Fairwarp Ward. None.

2. Maresfield Ward. The grit bin located at the entrance to Parklands has been knocked over again, when it is righted please could it also be moved further onto the grass verge so that it is less likely to be struck by turning vehicles.

3. Nutley Ward. Further concerns have been raised regarding a car that is regularly parked at the A22/Nether Lane junction. The vehicle's position, including the impact on visibility at an already hazardous junction and the potential damage to the grassed area and the spring bulbs planted there, which is already becoming evident now we are moving into autumn with increased rainfall.

After discussion Councillors **Agreed** unanimously that the Clerk should investigate the possibility of getting bollards installed to prevent parking on that area of grass. **Action:** Clerk to contact ESCC.

The new rubber bonded play surface has been installed at Fords Green Play Area and is a great success.

The two new benches have been installed, to replace the old, dilapidated ones, in Nutley High Street.

A local individual has been a cause of concern to parents and local residents in the vicinity of the Memorial Hall. The Police have been involved.

The drive to get additional masts to improve internet and mobile phone signal has reached an impasse. The companies involved, City Fibre for Nutley and Fairwarp and Open Reach for Maresfield, advise that they are ready to roll out the necessary infrastructure but no government funding has been forthcoming.

4514. Council bodies - To receive minutes and decisions, followed by reports from Chairmen and any questions: -

1. Finance & Administration Committee

i. Draft minutes from the meeting held on 13th October 2026. Noted.

ii. To review Month 6 2026/27 accounts. Noted.

iii. Consider and Approve proposed 2027/28 Grant awards. Councillors considered the proposed grant awards recommended by the Finance and Administration committee, as per the schedule circulated with papers. It was proposed that the proposed grants to the value of £18,073 be approved. This was seconded and **Agreed** unanimously.

iv. Consider and Approve 2027/28 Budget and Precept. Councillors considered the proposed 2027/28 budget of £126,473 and precept of £118,374 recommended by the F&A Committee, as per the spreadsheets circulated with papers. This precept figure represents a 3.3% increase on the 2026/27 precept. Councillors were happy with the proposed precept figure and level of reserves and it was proposed the 2027/28 budget of £126,473 and precept amount of £118,374 be approved; this was seconded and **Agreed** unanimously, with the proviso that if unexpected costs are made known to us, the figures may be amended and re-presented to Council, not later than the December 2026 Council meeting.

v. To Note: April Skies has been appointed to carry out the Council's internal audits for 2026/27. April Skies is completely independent from the Council and have provided very thorough and robust internal audits and reporting in previous years. Noted.

vi. To note: New contract signed with EDF for street lighting electricity as no realistic alternative available for unmetered supply. Noted.

vii. Park Farm Lane – Maintenance Contribution

In January 2024, Council agreed to contribute £2,000 towards the maintenance of Park Farm Lane, which the landowner had advised all users was urgently required.

Of the agreed contribution, £547.20 (12% of the maintenance costs) has been paid under the Deed of Easement, with the remaining £1,452.80 payable upon satisfactory completion of the

works. However, to date, no maintenance works have been carried out. Council has requested the return of the £547.20 already paid, but has received no response from the landowner.

Discuss and Approve the formal withdrawal of the offer to contribute £2,000 towards the maintenance works and to request again the return of the £547.20 paid.

After much discussion it was proposed that the Clerk writes to the land owner stating that if the works have not been completed by the end of March 2027, the Council's financial year end, the offer to contribute £2,000 towards the maintenance works will be withdrawn and that we would require the return of the £547.20 already paid. This proposal was **Agreed** by a majority vote, (6 votes for, 2 votes against). **Action:** Clerk to write to John Clare.

viii. Update from Chairman. None.

2. Planning Committee.

i. Minutes from the meeting held on 14th September 2026 and draft minutes from the meeting held on 5th October 2026. Noted.

ii. Street Naming Consultation for land off Straight Half Mile, Maresfield. Nobody had strong feelings about this but will give it more thought and email the Clerk in the next couple of days with any preferences.

iii. Update from Chairman. The Mill House Farm planning application (WD/2025/2826/MAO) will be considered by the Wealden DC Majors Planning Committee on 22nd October. Cllr Taylor, as Chair of the Planning Committee, will be speaking against the application at the meeting as will a representative of Maresfield Conservation Group and DCllr Ian Tysh, as Ward DC.

It was agreed at the last Planning meeting that Council would not send in any representation with in relation to Wealden's Regulation 19 Local Plan and to be consistent will not be joining Wadhurst PC in their commissioning of a Planning Consultant to scrutinise the housing numbers and growth assumptions underpinning the Wealden Regulation 19 Local Plan.

3. Environment Committee.

i. Consider quotations for new fencing at Fords Green Play Area. The replacement of the fence surrounding the Fords Green Play Area has become urgent as the recent ground works have destabilised further some of the already degraded posts. A great deal of work was carried out looking into the merits of like for like post and rail fence replacement against composite plastic fencing of some kind that will not rot. All of the options and the costing spreadsheet were circulated with the meeting papers. After in depths discussion on the merits of each option it was felt that to replace like for like would be the best solution, because of its suitability aesthetically in the surroundings, the existing fence has been very long lasting and the fact that this design is already considered appropriate by both the Ashdown Forest Conservators and the Fords Green Management Committee so not further consultations would be necessary.
It was proposed that the Council accept the quotation from Garden Force of £5,950 plus the cost of the gates which the Council would purchase for Garden Force to install, of £3,000. This was seconded and **Agreed** by all. These costs would be paid for from CIL monies.

ii. Update from Chairman. None.

4. Maresfield Recreation Ground Committee.

i. Update from Chairman. The proposed 1st aid course, planned for 26th October has been postponed until the 15th February 2027.

The recreation ground is in a poor state after the very dry summer with a high proportion of weeds and bare patches. Because there has been a saving on the Recreation Ground maintenance budget, due to fewer grass cuts being required, it was proposed that money is spent on getting the weeds treated and the grounds drill seeded whilst there is still warmth in the ground. This proposal was seconded and **Agreed** by all. **Action:** Clerk to organise with Barcombe Landscapes who had provided the most competitive pricing for these works and it would be done within the current budget.

4515. Outside bodies matters. Cllr Smith reported on the following outside bodies:

Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee: From November the normal timetable will resume with no more need for replacement buses or reduced services.

Fords Green Management Committee: The Committee is very grateful for CCllr Colemans help with trying to get the Fords Green lease extended.

St Wilfred's Hospice: Cllr Smith had a very interesting visit to St Wilfred's Hospice and was very impressed with their facilities and the wonderful services they offer. Amongst other things they organise outreach events whereby they give talks to local groups about how to live well. Cllr Stevens-Smith believes this would be interesting to the Maresfield Lunch Club group and the two Councillors will work together to try and organise one of these talks for early next year and Cllr Reeves will bring these talks to the attention of the Fairwarp Community Society to gauge interest there.

4516. To receive a report from, and put questions to, the Chairman. None.

4517. To receive a report from, and put questions to, the Clerk. None.

4518. Matters arising from the meeting for public communication. None.

4519. Date of next meeting – Monday 23rd November 2026 (Nutley Church Hall)

The Parish Council Meeting will close and reconvene as Trustee of Maresfield Recreation Ground

IN VIEW OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF SOME ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA, THE PRESS AND PUBLIC MAY BE EXCLUDED UNDER THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

Matters relating to Council as Trustee of Maresfield Recreation Ground (MRG).

None.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.10pm