



# HORLEY TOWN COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Horley Town Council held on Tuesday 9 December 2025 at 7.30pm

<b>Present</b>	<b>Cllrs</b>	Hannah Avery	Victoria Chester	Robert Marr
		Jante Baird	Lynnette Easterbrook (Chair)	Samantha Marshall
		James Baker *	Emma Fagan (Vice Chair)	Sam Mearing
		Jordan Beech	Mike George	Martin Saunders
		Michael Blacker	Jerry Hudson	Tom Turner
		Lynne Burnham	Cecilia Hughes	Steve Wotton
<b>* Absent</b>				
<b>In Attendance</b>		J Walsh (Chief Executive Officer) (CEO)		
		S Adeniji (Assistant Chief Executive Officer and RFO)		
		J Stay (Planning and Support Officer)		

The meeting was preceded by a minute's silence in memory of NALC Chair Cllr Keith Stevens, who sadly passed away recently.

**C 6230**      **Apologies and Reasons for Absence**  
**RESOLVED: No apologies were received. Cllr Baker was absent.**

**C 6231**      **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Non-Pecuniary Interests**  
RBBC Councillors Avery, Chester, Hudson and Wotton declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 12iv RBBC Consultation on the Borough Council's Budget Proposals 2026/27.

**RESOLVED: noted.**

**C 6232**      **Public Forum**

Members of the Horley Bowling Club gave a presentation on the site improvement plans to request the Town Council's consent for the club to proceed with Stage 1 building works.

The club proposes to refurbish the ageing infrastructure, improve mobility access and expand the clubhouse to accommodate youth and senior teams. It intends to create a designated spectator area by moving storage units and repairing and replacing the green surrounds. It has a small financial reserve but would require external funding to complete the works. The club has applied for funding through Sport England, Surrey Mobility Fund and Your Fund Surrey. They will reapply for RBBC CIL funding. The club would like to extend its lease, which currently has 18 years remaining. The CEO has clarified that this term is sufficient to pursue the relevant grant funding opportunities. The works would take place from October 2026 and be completed by April 2027 for the start of the outdoor bowling season and would be carried out by professionals and volunteers. Cllr George recommended that the Horley Bowling Club contacts RBBC Planning Department regarding any planning application requirements.

**RESOLVED: that Standing Orders be suspended to move agenda item 17 Horley Bowling Club: Stage 1 Internal Refurbishment and Accessibility Improvements to Green Surrounds, to the Public Forum part of the meeting.**

**RESOLVED: that the Town Council's consent for Horley Bowling Club to proceed with Stage 1 building works, as agreed with the club, be approved.**

**C 6233**      **Minutes**

**RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on [28 October 2025](#), be approved.**

**C 6234 Full Council Updates**

**C 6228/6229 RBBC Ad Hoc Strategic CIL Projects – Outdoor Gym Equipment at Court Lodge and Michael Crescent Centenary Park**

The CEO gave a detailed update on the project. The contractors had been notified that once the Spending Agreements had been signed and funding received from RBBC, the works may commence.

**C 6152 Innes Sports Pavilion Replacement Windows and Landscaping Project**

It was noted that the project had been part-completed with the windows installed and to a very good standard. The landscaping will be done early in the new year to complete the project.

**RESOLVED: noted.**

**C 6235 Committee Reports**

**RESOLVED: that the unapproved minutes of the Planning and Development Committee held on [18 November 2025](#), be received.**

**C 6236 Council Chair's Report**

The Chair's Report, which was previously circulated to the Members for information, was received.

**RESOLVED: noted.**

**Surrey Association of Local Councils (SALC) and National Association of Local Councils (NALC)**

**C 6237** Cllr George gave the following updates from SALC:

- The AGM took place on 13 November 2025 and will be at the same venue for 2026, Silvermere Golf Club.
- The next board meeting will be on 11 December 2025.

Cllr George was congratulated on his new appointment as the SALC Representative at the NALC National Assembly.

**RESOLVED: noted.**

**C 6238** Cllr George gave the following update from NALC:

- Cllr Iain Hamilton has been elected as the new Chair of NALC.
- It was recommended that all Members sign up to the NALC website as a source of information and guidance across a whole range of subjects.
- Members were encouraged to sign up for respect and civility.
- Future assembly meetings will continue to three virtual and one in person.
- LGR intercounty working is highly recommended between those who have been working with a unitary authority and those who are moving to one.
- Reference was made to the upcoming Assertion 10.
- A report was received on the feedback from a study around resilience plans and support. Whilst it was agreed that when a major event was underway and being managed by the upper tiers of LAs and the emergency services, it was felt that the value of local councils was supporting residents/business post the event. This was the experience of the member representing Cumbria who has and continues to experience many issues from flooding and storm damage.

**RESOLVED: noted.**

## Borough, County Council and Other Updates

### C 6239 SCC/RBBC/HTC Joint Council Meeting

The CEO advised that the notes from 1 December 2025 meeting had been circulated to Members, for information. The next meeting will take place on 19 January 2026 and the CEO requested items for the agenda to be sent to the office.

**RESOLVED: noted.**

### C 6240 RBBC/HTC Liaison Meetings

The CEO advised that the notes from 20 November 2025 meeting had been circulated to Members, for information. The next meeting will take place on 5 February 2026.

**RESOLVED: noted.**

### Internal Audit Matters

**C 6241** The Assistant CEO/RFO advised that the first internal audit for 2025/26 was very positive and noted a strong commitment by HTC to financial management overall and robust governance procedures. The report noted that the Council has demonstrated that it has taken robust steps towards compliance with Assertion 10 and recommended a GDPR data audit is carried out to summarise the data points. As such, steps are being taken to carry out a data audit. The Finance Lead, Cllr Saunders thanked the officers for their work in completing the audit.

**RESOLVED: noted.**

**C 6242** The Assistant CEO/RFO presented Councillors' Audit Certificates for July, August and September 2025 as well as the financial reports, including bank reconciliations and a summary of receipts and payments up to 30 September 2025.

**RESOLVED: that the Councillors' Audit Certificates for July, August, and September 2025, be received**

**C 6243** **RESOLVED: that the financial reports, including bank reconciliations and a summary of receipts and payments, up to 30 September 2025, be approved.**

**C 6244** **RESOLVED: that the Information Technology (IT) Policy, be approved.**

### C 6245 Horley Town Council Precept for the Financial Year 2026/27

The Finance Lead Member, Cllr Saunders gave a detailed introduction to Council, advising that the budgets had been carefully scrutinised at both the Leisure Committee meeting and at the previous Council meeting held on 28 October 2025. The Finance Working Group since met to scrutinise the outcome of those meetings and to consider the Council's needs and commitments as well as planning for some future projects identified in the Town Plan.

The budgets had been prepared with the following key considerations:

- The CPI inflation rate of 3.8%;
- A beneficial rise of 0.36% in the Council Tax Base from 11286.6 to 11327.1;
- RBBC would continue to honour the previous double taxation agreement, capped at a 4% rise, giving an anticipated income of £49,615 for 26/27; and
- A predicted underspend of £60k (made from the staffing budget and bank interest). £31,300 of this amount had been used to offset the 2026/27 expenditure and the remaining £28,700 will be added to General Reserves.

The Finance Working Group has considered the following key challenges for 2026/27:

- A benchmark increase of 3.8% was applied to most costs, based on September's CPI.

**C 6245)**

- The Office Expansion and Sustainability project is currently nearing completion. Members recognised that, in the event of any cost overruns or unexpected contingencies, it would be prudent for the Council to earmark an additional £10,000 in its 2026/27 budget to ensure the project can be completed without disruption.
- Establishing a new Earmarked Fund to begin building financial capacity to support any new services acquired through the Community Assets Transfer scheme. A sum of £60,000 is to be earmarked in the 2026/27 budget for this earmarked reserve.
- The Parks and Playgrounds EMF is earmarked for the refurbishment of Horley Recreation Ground over three years (£20,000 per year). Some of the EMF is expected to be spent in 2025/26 to engage a Parks Consultant to evaluate the Recreation Ground and recommend improvements. To ensure sufficient funds are available, it is proposed that the sum of £10,000 be transferred into the Parks and Playgrounds EMF.
- Following the completion of the Office Expansion and Sustainability project, refurbishment will be required for areas of the Albert Rooms and Edmonds Hall not affected by the works, including repainting the hallway, repairing the fascia and purchasing new office furniture. It is therefore proposed that up to £20,000 be transferred to the Edmonds Hall Earmarked Fund. Members also noted that, given the age and condition of the building, ongoing maintenance will be essential, and a regular annual contribution should be included in future budgets to support repairs and upkeep.
- An Elections Contingency EMF of £15,000 has been included in the budget to allow for a by-election. Any unspent balance in 2026/27 would be transferred to the Elections EMF to support the May 2027 elections.
- The Project Match Funding Earmarked Fund should be increased by £10,000, bringing the total balance to £20,000. Strengthening this reserve will ensure the Council is well positioned to apply for external grants that require match funding, enabling it to take advantage of funding opportunities and deliver key community projects.

Cllr Saunders presented two possible scenarios in regard to the Annual Budget and Precept 2026/27 for Members' consideration. Scenario A with an increase of 3.8% and Scenario B with an increase of 4.6%. He recommended Scenario A with an increase of 3.8% which he considered to be a realistic scenario given the Council's needs and commitments. This would result in an annual increase in parish council tax of £2.10 per Band D household or 0.04p per week.

A recorded vote was requested by Cllr Beech. The result of the recorded vote for the Precept Scenario A was as follows:

**In Favour:** Cllr Avery, Cllr Baird, Cllr Beech, Cllr Blacker, Cllr Easterbrook, Cllr Fagan, Cllr George, Cllr Hudson, Cllr Hughes, Cllr Marr, Cllr Marshall, Cllr Mearing, Cllr Saunders, Cllr Turner, Cllr Wooton.

**Against:** 0

**Abstain:** Cllr Burnham, Cllr Chester

Scenario A was agreed by an overwhelming majority with 15 votes. Cllr Beech proposed and Cllr Avery seconded that the Precept be set at £649,146 (Scenario A), as the most sensible way forward, allowing the Council to invest in the future whilst maintaining prudent financial management.

***RESOLVED: that a Precept of £649,146 be set for the Financial Year 2026/27, representing £57.31 per Band D household, an annual increase of £2.10 (+ 3.8% increase) and Reigate and Banstead Borough Council to be informed accordingly as the Council Tax Authority.***

**C 6246**

Cllr Saunders recited the draft Budget Statement (copy appended) and this was agreed. He concluded his address by thanking officers for their hard work throughout the year in preparing for the draft Annual Budget and Precept setting and to the Finance Working Group for their participation.

***RESOLVED: that the draft Budget Statement 2026/27 be approved and published.***

## C 6247 Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution

Cllr George, the Chair of the LGR and Devolution Working Group, gave an update on the meeting held on 17 November 2025. It was confirmed that RBBC and other Borough and District Councils will be shadowing the new unitary councils until the formal handover in April 2027. The Expressions of Interest have been slow in progress however this is mainly due to the financial and legal aspects. It was recommended to consider the impact on current and future staffing when taking on community assets.

**RESOLVED: noted.**

C 6248 The CEO gave a detailed update on the **RBBC Community Asset Transfer and Support Programme (CATSP)** on Expressions of Interest on asset transfers made by HTC, including for Yattendon Recreation Ground and Play Area, Bay Close, Riverside Garden Park and Riverside Walk. Thanks were noted to Alan Jones, Consultant, for his assistance. A separate application has been made for renovating the Innes Sports Pavilion. RBBC will advise successful organisations of the outcome of the Expressions of Interest w/c 19 January 2026 and request a Business Case for each application to be submitted by 22 February 2026. Final decisions will be made by 20 March 2026.

**RESOLVED: noted.**

C 6249 **RBBC Community Governance Review: Stage 2 Consultation:** The Draft Recommendations by RBBC and the Town Council's response were discussed. For the Horley Parish wards, it was proposed to increase the number of councillors from 18 to 19 and amend the wards from 5 to 7 to improve local representation. Cllr Turner was commended on his outstanding work on the Draft Ward Boundary Proposal, submitted by HTC at the first stage of the consultation.

Additionally, the Draft Recommendations proposed to expand Salfords & Sidlow PC to include South Earlswood and Whitebushes and new parishes are being considered in the north of the borough to include Banstead and surrounding villages, Redhill and Reigate.

HTC is also of the view that creating new local councils is vital to ensure that community assets and services can be secured and managed locally, particularly if the principal authorities decide to divest themselves of these responsibilities.

Cllr Avery proposed and Cllr Baird seconded that the response to the Draft Recommendations concerning the be approved.

**RESOLVED: that the Town Council's response to the Community Governance Review Draft Recommendations (Stage 2) by Reigate & Banstead BC, be approved.**

C 6250 **RBBC Consultation on the Borough Council's Budget Proposals 2026/27**

**RESOLVED: that the Town Council's response to RBBC Consultation on the Borough Council's Budget Proposals 2026/27, be approved.**

### Operational Matters

C 6251 **HTC By-Election held on 5 June 2025**

**RESOLVED: that the payment of £23,774.36, be ratified.**

C 6252 **Gatwick Greenspace Partnership (GGP)**

**RESOLVED: that the annual subscription charge to Gatwick Greenspace Partnership (GGP) for 2025/26, in the total sum of £2,420, be ratified.**

**C 6253 Michael Crescent Centenary Park – Air Quality Monitoring Station Lease**

The CEO gave a detailed update on negotiations with RBBC Property Services for the Heads of Terms and these were agreed by the Committee. The draft Lease Agreement will be prepared by HTC's solicitor, with reasonable costs to be covered by RBBC as the Lessee.

**RESOLVED: that the Heads of Terms for the Lease Agreement by HTC (Lessor) and Reigate and Banstead Borough Council (RBBC), be approved.**

**C 6254 CIL SIP (2) 18 - HTC Office Expansion and Sustainability Project**

The Assistant CEO/RFO gave an update on the project with reference to weekly reports received with photos of the works to date. The programme of works is on target, subject to the 5-week overrun due to the planning approval issue, taking the anticipated Practical Completion date to the end of April as it currently stands. A new steel beam had to be installed in the office which was unexpected. Use of the Albert Rooms as a polling station for the May 2026 Local Elections had been withdrawn for next year due to the closeness of the anticipated project finish date. The Annual Town Public Forum in May had also been booked at Horley Baptist Church as part of the contingency plan.

**RESOLVED: noted.**

**Outside Bodies**

**C 6255 Horley Community Partnership**

No update was reported.

**RESOLVED: noted.**

**C 6256 Royal British Legion**

Cllr Marshall reported that minutes from the recent meeting on 25 November had been circulated. Cllr Marshall has been re-elected on the committee. The CEO recited a letter from the Horley RBL branch, thanking HTC for its help and support with the Horley Remembrance commemorative events for another year.

**RESOLVED: noted.**

**C 6257 Environment Working Group (EWG)**

Cllr Avery gave an update on the meeting held on 2 December 2025, the notes of which are to be circulated.

**RESOLVED: noted.**

**C 6258 Communications Received**

A letter of thanks has been received from Stripey Stork for the grant for £1000 towards the Santa Stork Campaign.

**RESOLVED: noted.**

**C 6259 Diary Dates**

Saturday 13 December 2025:	Christmas Fair and Councillor Hospitality
Tuesday 16 December 2025, 7.30pm:	Interim Planning Meeting
Tuesday 23 December 2025, 12.00pm:	HTC office closure until Friday 2 January 2026
Tuesday 6 January 2026, 6.30pm:	Communications Working Group (remote)
Monday 19 January 2026, 5.00pm:	SCC/RBBC/HTC Joint Council Meeting (remote)
Tuesday 20 January 2026, 7.30pm:	Leisure Meeting

**RESOLVED: noted.**

**C 6260 Items for Future Consideration**

Cllr Hughes requested that the White Ribbon Campaign, to end violence against women and girls by engaging men and boys to be part of the solution, be added to the next agenda to discuss what HTC can do to support the charity next year. The CEO added that the initiative had been previously championed by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).

**RESOLVED: noted.**

**C 6261 Press Release**

**RESOLVED: that the Town Council's approved Precept 2025/26 and Budget Statement be published on the HTC website and in the newsletter.**

**C 6262 Exclusion of Public and Press**

**"In view of the special or confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be excluded and that they be instructed to withdraw."**

**C 6263 Confidential Minutes**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**RESOLVED: that the Confidential Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 28 October 2025, be approved.**

**Meeting closed at 9.11pm**

**Date of next meeting: 27 January 2026**

**Please Note: Until further notice, future meetings of Horley Town Council will be held at Horley Baptist Church (Ramsey Room, Ground Floor), 289 Court Lodge Road, Horley RH6 8RG until completion of the building works at the Town Council offices which are now underway. Further information is available on our [website](#).**



## **Precept 2026/27: Budget Statement from Horley Town Council**

### **December 2025**

Horley Town Council has unanimously approved its Council Tax precept for the new financial year at its Full Council meeting. The Precept for 2026/27 has been set at a total net figure of £649,146. This means that the Town element of Council Tax will be an average annual amount of £57.31 per household, representing an annual increase of £2.10 per Band D property 3.8%.

The approval of our 2026/27 budget represents a continuation of our commitment to delivering high-quality services and meaningful improvements across our valued public parks, play areas, recreational facilities, and wider portfolio of community assets that matter so much to Horley residents.

### **A Responsible Approach to Your Council Tax**

A central focus of this budget is ensuring that Horley Town Council maintains stable general reserves through prudent financial planning whilst remaining in a sound position to seize new opportunities that directly benefit our community.

The budget has been carefully constructed to keep increases to a minimum, reflecting our commitment to fiscal responsibility at a time when many residents face financial pressures. This measured approach supports the long-term sustainability of the community amenities and services that make Horley such a special place to live.

### **Building on Our Success**

It has been another phenomenal year for Horley Town Council, and I am immensely proud of what we have collectively achieved with our proven track record of delivering projects on time, to budget and at high quality. Multiple capital projects have either been successfully delivered or are progressing well, and we continue to pursue grant opportunities for future initiatives. In 2025/26, the Council secured approximately £109k of external funding, representing 12.5% of our total expenditure in this financial year.

This success in securing external funding reflects the meticulous preparation and dedication of our Town Plan Working Group and our outstanding officers. I firmly believe that well-run councils like ours, with qualified staff and elected members, should be entrusted with more grants to deliver for residents, especially now with such significant changes on the horizon.

This year's capital projects have been made possible through generous funding from Surrey County Council's Your Fund Surrey schemes and successful bids through the RBBC CIL SIP 2 Ad Hoc Allocation Fund. These partnerships have enabled us to deliver essential improvements and infrastructure works at our community buildings, including the Innes Sports Pavilion, Court Lodge and Horley Recreation Ground, together with new outdoor gym equipment at these sites and Michael Crescent Centenary Park. These improvements help to address the outdoor sports provision deficit in Horley and demonstrate our commitment to strengthening local infrastructure and the wellness of our community.

### **Looking Ahead to 2026/27**

The budget provides for the strategic acquisition of new assets that deliver lasting benefits whilst ensuring the long-term sustainability of community assets, safeguarding them for future generations.

Our capital project for the expansion and sustainable improvements at the Council Offices (Albert Rooms) is progressing well, and we anticipate reaching Practical Completion by spring. Funded through the RBBC Strategic CIL SIP 2 Scheme, this project will help us achieve lower operational costs through improved energy efficiency, reduce the building's environmental impact by lowering carbon emissions, and create social value by building resilience and demonstrating leadership in tackling the effects of climate change.

## **Strengthening Our Democracy**

The Council is committed to positioning itself to respond effectively to the significant local government changes ahead during the transition to East Surrey Unitary Council and beyond. This includes investing in people, skills, innovation, and new business opportunities, whilst ensuring residents continue to be well represented through robust local governance and effective democracy, measured by our performance in delivering directly to those we serve.

The Council is expected to increase in size following the Community Governance Review, which seeks to strengthen local representation and ensure a more equitable balance of councillors to electors across the Horley parish wards. To minimise the financial impact on residents, we have set aside earmarked funds to cover election costs anticipated in May 2027.

## **Supporting Our Community**

We remain fully committed to supporting St Bartholomew's Church, recognising its vital role in our community, by providing a generous grant to help maintain its facilities and sustain its activities for the benefit of all parishioners.

The Town Council extends heartfelt thanks to County Councillors Jordan Beech and Andy Lynch for their ongoing support through Surrey County Council's Your Fund Surrey schemes, which have made a real difference to our town. Thanks to this funding, we have been able to deliver projects that touch daily lives - from improving local amenities and enhancing play areas to increasing the number of community defibrillators to help save lives. This collective dedication highlights how collaboration can build a safer, stronger and more vibrant community that everyone can enjoy and take pride in.

The Council also expresses sincere thanks to the many local groups and businesses whose continued sponsorship and support are essential to enhancing the vibrancy and resilience of Horley. Their contributions reinforce community connections and help sustain and enrich local projects and services, creating a thriving environment for all residents. We are equally grateful to the many volunteer groups and individuals who generously give their time and energy in numerous ways, helping Horley flourish and become more resilient. Your spirit and engagement are the lifeblood of our town.

## **Conclusion**

Full budget details will be made available on our website for anyone wishing to review them and printed copies can be provided on request.

I would like to wish all our residents, members, staff and volunteers a very joyful and relaxing Christmas. I encourage everyone to take advantage of Horley's many excellent restaurants, pubs and shops during this festive period – your support for our local businesses helps them thrive throughout the year.

On a final note, on behalf of our Members, I would like to invite all Horley residents to sign up to our free monthly Newsletter from the home page of our website or follow us on X (Twitter) or Facebook to be kept regularly informed about Horley Town Council's business and other activities.

Thank you.

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**Cllr Martin Saunders, HTC Finance Lead Member**

**December 2025**