SARRATT PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF SARRATT PARISH IN SARRATT VILLAGE HALL, THE GREEN, SARRATT, WD3 6AS 13TH OCTOBER 2026 7.30pm

Councillors Present
Cllr Lee Farman – Chair and Planning Lead
Cllr Angela Coakley – Vice Chair
Cllr David Zerny – Highways
Cllr James Alder – Planning
Cllr Michael Lowry – Policy and Resources
Cllr Fraser Johnson – Environment and Finance

In Attendance: District Cllr Ciaran Reed and members of the public
Note: *These minutes have been prepared from contemporaneous notes and the recorded transcript.*

26/1083 APOLOGIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Apologies from Cllr Sparks, Cllr Mitchell, Cllr Diggins and the Clerk

26/1084 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

Cllr Fraser declared his interest as the resident who raised an issue concerning a tree that will be covered later under the Environment report.

26/1085 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 SEPTEMBER 2026

Resolved: The minutes were approved as a correct record. It was noted that approved minutes would then be published on the Council website; draft minutes remain unofficial until approval.

26/1086 MATTERS ARISING

No matters were raised that were not already covered by the agenda.

26/1087 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No additional matters were raised. A member of the public, Andy Skees of Church Lane, introduced himself and confirmed that he was attending generally rather than about a specific agenda item.

26/1088 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS ATTENDING MEETINGS ON BEHALF OF SPC

The Chair and John Shannon reported on a meeting with senior Three Rivers District Council planning officers. Discussion covered the cumulative effect of planning applications in Sarratt, sustainability, schools, highways and the Council's wish for applications to be considered in their wider context rather than in isolation.

Three Rivers had commissioned external work on sustainability and related issues; any useful report might be published. Officers were described as receptive but under significant workload pressure. The meeting reinforced SPC's evidence-led approach and kept communication channels open.

Action: Monitor the commissioned work, expected highways information and Three Rivers' developing position.

26/1089 OUTLINE APPROACH FOR THE NEW APPEAL — LAND AT DAWES LANE, 25/2215/OUT, PINS 6016467

The Council had received notice of an appeal following a non-determination decision for the applications of up to 44 homes at Winfield Farm beside Dawes Lane. Three Rivers was expected to indicate at its 19 November Planning Committee what decision it would have made. The inquiry was considered unlikely to commence the hearings before January 2027.

The Council discussed applying for Rule 6 status. This would permit formal participation, evidence, witnesses and cross-examination, but carried a limited risk of an adverse costs award if the Council acted unreasonably or obstructively.

Planning consultant Carl Thomas had been commissioned to prepare the Rule 6 application and an initial assessment of the case and evidence required. Indicative professional costs for the whole process were approximately £30,000 without counsel and potentially up to £60,000 with barrister representation, depending on the inquiry's length and scope.

The fighting fund stood at approximately £32,000 including the Council's match funding, with about £5,000 already spent. The Council had committed to match donations up to £25,000 in total. Further fundraising might be required.

Resolved: To proceed with the initial Rule 6 work and use a staged approach, taking further expenditure decisions when advice and Three Rivers' position were clearer.

Actions:

- Carl Thomas to submit the Rule 6 application and initial case assessment.
- Explore suitable and cost-effective barrister contacts.
- Coordinate with Three Rivers to avoid unnecessary duplication while retaining the ability to pursue issues SPC considers material.
- Communicate the appeal approach and potential need for further fundraising to residents.

26/1090 ACTIVE SIGNIFICANT PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Council noted that three developments had permission and a further six remained pending. Priority attention would remain on the applications with the greatest potential effect on residents, highways and village infrastructure.

26/1091 NEW APPLICATIONS, DECISIONS AND APPEALS

26/1493/FUL — Land adjacent to Ashwood and Trackside, Bucks Hill

The proposal repeated a previously refused and dismissed scheme for a detached dwelling and carport, with an affordable-housing contribution now offered. **Agreed:** Maintain the previous objection, including Green Belt, openness and overdevelopment grounds.

26/1491/FUL — Popes Croft, Chandlers Lane

A revised two-storey proposal relied on an approved Class AA scheme as a fallback. **Agreed:** Maintain the Council's previous objection and Green Belt concerns.

26/1490/FUL — Micklefield Hall Farm

The proposed deer-processing unit was small, centrally located within the wider site and distant from homes. Members expressed mixed views about further development at the site. **Agreed:** Submit a summary response and leave regulatory and technical assessment to Three Rivers.

26/1193/PDA — Great Sarratt Hall Farm

The prior-approval proposal sought conversion of an agricultural building to two dwellings. Members questioned whether the structure was capable of conversion within Class Q and noted the unsustainable location and disputed agricultural use. **Agreed:** Repeat the Council's previous objection.

Recent decisions and appeals

- The proposed tractor-store buildings at Red Hall, Chandlers Cross, had been refused as inappropriate Green Belt development without very special circumstances.
- The inspector had recommended approval of the cycle-route order connected with the Burlington development. Concerns remained about urbanisation and low-level bollard lighting.
- The appeal concerning 20 homes at Clover Court, Church Lane, had been allowed, resulting in full permission for ten market and ten affordable homes. A legal challenge would be possible only on a procedural or legal error and was considered unlikely to be viable.

Members discussed wastewater capacity, construction traffic and the need to coordinate management plans where several developments proceed close together. The development was not expected to begin immediately and had until 12 October 2029 to commence.

Actions: Engage early with developers and contractors; press Three Rivers for coordinated construction, traffic and environmental management; establish clear community liaison and delivery arrangements; and monitor compliance to minimise impacts on residents and the school.

26/1092 COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

The Council had moved to a new website and email system. Further work remained, but the transition was progressing satisfactorily. Thank you to Cllr Mitchell for the work he has done on this project.

26/1093 CLERK'S REPORT

No report was available because the Clerk was unwell. Any non-urgent matters would be carried forward to the next meeting.

26/1094 HIGHWAYS

No substantive progress had been received from Hertfordshire Highways despite repeated correspondence about potholes, flooding, road safety and incomplete or misdirected repairs. Examples included flooding at Bucks Hill, vehicle safety concerns at Dimmocks Lane and repair issues at Bucks Hill.

Cllr Louise Price had chased officers without receiving a timely response. Members discussed escalation routes, including senior councillors, the MP and freedom-of-information material already obtained about reported defects, contractors and response times.

Actions: Continue escalation; review the freedom-of-information material for evidence of systemic or contractual failings; circulate relevant records to the highways lead; and invite residents with useful senior contacts or evidence to contact the Council.

26/1095 ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

A tree-risk assessment had identified priority work, including high-priority trees requiring action within three months. Work would be prioritised at KGV and then across the wider woodland, beginning with non-protected trees. The transfer of community assets from Three Rivers remained pending.

A resident had offered to fund removal of a heavily pollarded sycamore close to buildings and its replacement with a suitable native tree in a better location. The tree was on Council land and was not protected.

Resolved: Accept the resident's proposal, subject to an established replacement tree being planted in a suitable location and replaced if it failed during the two-year establishment period.

Action: Cllr Fraser Johnson to follow up with Cllr Philip Mitchell on dates and procurement for the priority tree works.

26/1096 POLICY AND RESOURCES

The Council reviewed the financial position and the preliminary assumptions for 2027–28.

26/1097 BANK RECONCILIATION AND SUPPLIER PAYMENTS

The reconciliation included exceptional pavilion expenditure. Reported monthly payments totalled approximately £109,603.55 and receipts approximately £98,920.10, giving a net monthly outflow of about £10,683. The current-account balance at the end of September was approximately £23,180.

Other funds included £10,000 in a separate account, approximately £90,549 in instant-access reserves and £25,000 invested in a low-risk CCLA public-sector fund. The Council continued to maintain the required general reserve of approximately £56,000. Crowdfunding receipts for the planning fighting fund were approximately £15,772 by the end of September. The first VAT refund of £10,605.82 had been received.

Resolved: The bank reconciliation and supplier payments were approved.

26/1098 KGV PAVILION REPORT

The main building works were substantially complete on 6 October, only a few days beyond the planned programme. Improvements included new changing facilities, an upgraded kitchen and replacement windows.

The overall budget was reported at approximately £337,402 including VAT. A final contractor invoice of approximately £133,756 was expected. Funding included £200,000 from Three Rivers, of which a balance of approximately £96,000 remained due, and an anticipated £50,000 Football Foundation grant. VAT recovery was also material to short-term cash flow.

The project was considered fully funded overall, but the timing of receipts created a temporary cash-flow challenge. Reserves were available in the worst case.

Action: Discuss staged payment of the final contractor invoice, paying available Three Rivers funding first and the balance when the Football Foundation grant is received.

26/1099 PRELIMINARY BUDGET NOTES 2027–2028

A first working assumption of a 2.5% increase was proposed, consistent with the five-year plan. The budget would also need to consider grant applications, tree works, legal costs and a suitable contingency for planning matters.

Action: Cllrs Michael Lowry and Fraser Johnson to prepare a more detailed draft budget for a future meeting.

26/1100 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

The Council noted continuing uncertainty over local government reorganisation and awaited a ministerial statement.

Three Rivers was conducting a community governance review. A further consultation was expected for unparished areas. The proposed transfer to Croxley Green of the field north of Little Green Lane was considered sensible if development proceeded, because the new community would relate more closely to Croxley. The Council did not support extending the boundary change beyond that field without clear evidence and consultation with affected residents.

National changes to planning delegation meant parish councils could request, but no longer require, applications to be referred to committee. The Head of Planning had indicated a willingness to consider reasonable requests. Applications of 150 homes or more would also be subject to additional national scrutiny where refusal was proposed.

Action: Monitor the governance-review consultation and respond if the proposed boundary goes beyond the agreed field.

26/1101 CORRESPONDENCE

No additional correspondence requiring a decision was recorded.

26/1102 ITEMS FOR PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

Agreed: Public communications should include the Dawes Lane appeal, the proposed Rule 6 approach and the potential need for further fighting-fund contributions. Other key matters would be drawn from the approved minutes for the Council's newsletter and public channels.

26/1103 COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Cllr Simon Diggins had resigned with effect from the November meeting. John Shannon had offered to join the Council and had relevant construction, planning, community-liaison and compliance experience.

Resolved: Appoint John Shannon as an adviser in the interim, enabling him to assist with urgent planning and construction matters alongside Carl Thomas. Formal co-option would be considered in November after the required process had been completed.

A post-meeting point was raised about arrangements for Remembrance events following changes in responsibilities. **Action:** Confirm local plans and respond to the district council's request for information.

26/1104 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The agenda date was corrected. The next meeting will be held on **Tuesday 10 November 2026**.

The meeting concluded at 9.30pm.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____