



## Minutes of the meeting on Monday 09 February 2026 at Pippbrook

The Meeting was conducted by Cllr Margaret Cooksey – with 12 attendees, who were; Cllr Nick Wright, Cllr Stephen Cooksey, Cllr Rosemary Hobbs, Cllr Paula Keay, Cllr Elsie Rosam, Cllr Hazel Watson, Rev Anthony Rustell, Andrew Fuller, Pat Smith, Andy Tanner, and Pierre Tartari.

**(1) APOLOGIES for ABSENCE;** Cllr David Draper, Margaret Brett, Basil Doha, David Tobitt.

### **(2) MINUTES of JANUARY Meeting, and MATTERS ARISING:**

The Minutes were accepted as a true record and signed, with 3 matters arising; **(a) Room-hire costs** at Pippbrook = Nick confirmed to Andy, Pat and all, that the Council having agreed to now widen the status for discount to all charitable and community groups, are setting the criteria and level; **(b)** on 'LFR' police operation = our question, unanswered as yet, is whether the public would be pre-advised; **(c) Parking non-enforcement** query to SCC H/W = not yet clarified in any of the detail discussed.

**(3) POLICE UPDATE;** *No pre-meet response and no attendee.*

**(4) UNITARY DEVOLUTION;** Stephen started by advising **(a)** the new 'Joint Committee' have met and will until May when the newly-elected 'Shadow' Council would take over for the last interim stage; **(b)** the 'Phase 2' Community Review seeking public opinion/voting on 'Do you want a PC' - based on mass mail-out - would conclude on 20 February. Pat immediately intervened suggesting total negativity by most she had spoken to about the cluttered and confusing format/text of the mail-out – with which Nick concurred and added criticism of layout and the map; Margaret advised that Councillors had suggested design/texts that had not been used. Rosemary hoped that her and others' revisions on social media could help, and all were urged to add whatever they could to make the positive case. Anthony said he had had little comment but wondered what would happen if the vote was 'No'? – on which Stephen advised that the vote was not binding, and there would probably be a secondary opportunity in the year, to which Margaret agreed and advised that the process would come to the Extraordinary General Council meeting on 09 March.

**(5) BID update;** Andrew highlighted; that **(a)** this afternoon, in the 'National BID Awards' (Leonardo Hotel, London City) **Dorking BID had won 2 awards** ('Event' category for 'VE Day' and 'Community Project' for 'Walking Festival'); but **(b)** the bad news was the **general increase in Business Rates** - some up 30% - linked to reduction/ending of 'relief' discounts that had started in COVID; on **(c) retail**, good activity with Monte Rosa pizza doing well, 2 new cafes each end of High, new carpet shop in West, and kitchen shop at Pump, and the probability of the Banking Hub transferring to old NatWest; and **(d)** application had been made for CIL grant for S/SGardens project; and he **(e)** announced events as 'Festival of Light' on 20 Feb with big demand for the workshops and lantern kits, and a 'Vintage Day' on 09 May; and **(f)** on security, new cameras seemed to be being sited to enhance the **DISC** reporting system – which they hoped would be here by summer, after the needed training; and he ended by highlighting the very bad **potholes** on the A24 – and added a list of sinking **manholes** – much to be done, though some had been worked on in the last few days.

**(6) TOWN Report;** Paula started by; advising **(a)** that the **M&S move** to the Wickes site was in review (on part-remaining 'non-food' covenant in Vincent Lane); and **(b)** on the **Business Rates increase**, they were also anxious and concerned that though they cannot halt increases, they can – are – working towards countering them with relief/discounts, and would conclude this exercise by end-Feb/early-March.

**(7) TRAFFIC ISSUES;** As John was not present, Margaret commented on rumours that N/Rail might be being hesitant on **Deepdene** refurbishment and might be requiring a feasibility study – which could not be



# Dorking Town Forum

Representing community, business groups and local organisations based in and around Dorking

financed from the CIL grant, and MVDC had no budget – which prompted comments on the Gatwick enlargement requiring a higher percentage of public transport access and the probability that most of this would be by rail this ensuring, hopefully, N/Rail's positive endeavour.

## (8) MEMBER GROUPS' UPDATES;

**Dorking Society/Museum;** Pierre advised of their current **Dinosaur Exhibition** – especially highlighting the *Baryonyx*, a 'new' species found in a local clay-pit in the 1980s; and for the Society Community Team, working to forge a voluntary '**graffiti clean-up**' squad drawn from 'Friends of Deepdene', MVDC enviro, and other community groups, and liaising with local Police team.

**Dorking Mental Caring;** Elsie said all was good.

**Pixham Residents;** Pat urged all to view the '**Community Dorking**' web pages and lift any texts, designs or icons in order to convey the positive aspects of the governance review – and reminded us of her campaign to have a 40% refund on the applied business rate for their temporary usage of the shop on the HighSt.

**Churches Together;** Anthony outlined their refurbishment plans for both St Mary's, Pixham – which, originally was planned to be a shared church/community space and will be re-defined as such, and also at St Martin's where as part of their universal appeal, an 'Institute for Open Discussion' has been created... details to follow.

**Circular Dorking;** Andy delightedly told of how busy they were with the excellent demand for free energy-surveys; and advised of two 'energy-aligned' events; the 'Home Energy Showcase' (Pippbrook - 8 March) and a Quiz night (Java Cafe - 23 March).

**Bandstand;** Nick was happy to report that though there seemed little activity on site, the bandstand itself was being put together in Wigan – and the excellent 'Cockerel' from the Museum was being used as the template for a gold-coloured aluminium facsimile to match the previous original which topped the 1920s version; further, he announced that the free Sunday afternoon concerts should be 'live' from mid-May, and put out the invitation to all to sponsor their favourite music or performers.

**Town-Twinning;** Margaret advised that their **AGM** would be at Lyons Court on 14 March; and their developing relationship with **Duxbury** would be aided by a Zoom session soon, and also by the excellent and active inter-school project.

**Dorking Men's Shed;** No report

**West Street traders;** No report

**Friends of Dorking/Food Float;** No report

**Mid-Surrey Community Fridges;** No report

## (9) OTHER ITEMS;

(a) Andrew asked whether the A24 consultation on anti-social activity and noise levels now completed, would be soon public; Hazel said that it would be after MVDC Scrutiny Comm had viewed and assessed it.

(b) Pierre mentioned a request that as Members might wish to email each other on our circulations, this would be easier using 'open' copy circulation rather than 'blind'... and asked if OK... and, no objections.

## **DATE OF NEXT MEETING - Monday 16 MARCH 2026 - Please note change of date from 9th**

The meeting started at 17:30 and concluded at 19:10

PJTfeb26