



Minutes of the meeting on Monday 05 January 2026 at Pippbrook

The Meeting was conducted by Cllr Margaret Cooksey – with 15 attendees, who were; Cllr Nick Wright, Cllr Stephen Cooksey, Cllr Paula Keay, Cllr Elsie Rosam, Cllr Hazel Watson, Rev Anthony Rustell, Margaret Brett, Basil Doha, Andrew Fuller, Chris Heaps, Andy Tanner, David Tobbit, Tony White (MA alt), and Pierre Tartari.

(1) APOLOGIES for ABSENCE; Cllr David Draper, Rev Nelson Porter, Pat Smith, John Meudell, Rob Stevens, Insp James Green, Jacqui Marsden.

(2) MINUTES of NOVEMBER Meeting and MATTERS ARISING:

The Minutes were accepted as a true record and signed, with no matters arising.

(3) POLICE UPDATE; Not being able to attend, Insp James Green had submitted a report which Pierre summarised; **(a)** The '**Keeping Town Centres Safe**' initiative had operated well in Dorking through the summer (now Leatherhead for the winter); **(b)** on **retail crime**, MV had the highest solve-rate record aided by close co-operation with the BID, and the prospect of the DISC system being live this year; but **(c)** no luck though yet with the **graffiti** taggers; and **(d)** the **Christmas Festival and holiday period** had seen no problems. His final item was 'LFR' (**Live Facial Recognition**) which was being used in some areas in the County – nearest being Redhill (with an instant success) - and would be trialled in Dorking this year, with a single manned control unit and not static cameras – and after discussion, Pierre to write to ask what public notification was planned prior to being it becoming active.

(3) UNITARY DEVOLUTION; Stephen started by advising **(a)** the new '**Joint Committee**' (1 rep from each council + 5 from County) would meet next week and function until May when the newly-elected members would then take over for the last interim stage; **(b)** in MV, the Council would meet next week to discuss/ assess the responses from the public survey and to gauge which localities wished to **progress to 'PC's** – including a request for a 'Dorking PC' – with all suggestions being the first decision for the Unitary Authority. Hazel then continued; reporting on the '**NAC**', saying they had agreed that '**deprivation**' in all forms was their primary concern for action. MargaretB asked again what **funding** was going to be available for these secondary levels... to which Stephen replied that there was still no detail but that each authorised unit would have the ability to set a precept to cover their needs. Chris similarly queried how authorities could decide their priorities without knowing their income... to which Stephen said a guide figure precept of >£80household had been used in their provisional data.

(5) BID update; Andrew highlighted; **(a)** the Christmas **Festival** had been excellent and very successful – as had been their Christmas Trail; **(b)** the new **Christmas lights** were even better by being brighter; and on **(c) Retail**, though Holland&Barrett had gone, new bed and new carpet units would be opening, and the Pump Corner units were being worked on, but the Queens Head managers had surrendered their lease; **(d)** the **BID** had been nominated for 2 awards ('VE Day' and 'Walking Festival'); but **(e)** his main concern was the **lack of parking enforcement** during the peak day periods with enforcement visible only in early evenings around KFC – this all echoed by Basil – resulting in a request that NSL should be asked why – and Hazel/ Stephen agreed to contact the officers concerned (with questions on staffing levels and incentives).

(6) TOWN Report; Paula started by; advising **(a)** of the '**MV Business Seminar**' on tue27jan, with an open invite; **(b)** the news was very public that **M&S were moving** their food to a 'Market' style offer in Wickes, and their concern for the **future of St Martin's** was to be discussed next week with the owners, Evolve; and there is now **(c)** a revised Parking Plan covering all 22 units which has been adopted, including an e-charge price decrease (55>49p/pkWh; and **(d) Dorking West** was to benefit from £447k (ex SCIL) for up-grading – which prompted questions about 'how', with the responses from Paula and Nick suggesting the parking (north-side by car-breakers) would become 'organised'. Paula ended by advising that **(e)** a '**BID**' in **Leatherhead** had now been established.



Dorking Town Forum

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

Nick then talked on 2 items... that **(f)** the planned works on **Pippbrook House** had been completed, and the building was fully available; there were now regular users in 3 or 4 of the smaller rooms, and a programme of events was being established; and **(g)** a significant tranche from the SCIL fund (£3.9m) had been earmarked for projects covering **Parks/Playgrounds**, including improving Meadowbank's play zones. Andy asked how rates were set for Pippbrook usage... as they (U3A) had been denied the 'discretionary' discount – on which Nick expressed his and Paula's frustrations with officers interpreting local users' status – and invited U3A to comment to him. Chris then asked about the progress of the **Deepdene refurbishment** in light of the confirmation from MVDC that funds were available – and Paula re-assured him that the process was positive and now needing the application/plan from NetRail to MV so the latter could confirm and release the funds.

(7) TRAFFIC ISSUES; Chris opened with **(a)** a summary of the 'depressingly' high **rail ticket price increases** – and he gave an example (day o/pkrt £8.45 now £29.20) – and wondered why TFL was being so negative at a time when all were being encouraged to return to offices and use rail.

Margaret then invited him to comment on his note to her (sun9nov, circulated to all), and he repeated his disappointment at not being consulted about rail matters given his significant relationships, and his annoyance that MVDC had adopted a minority view (of c490 residents) on through-traffic flow contrary to the community view expressed by the proposals in the MasterPlan?

(8) MEMBERS GROUPS' UPDATES;

Circular Dorking; Andy delightedly told of their excellent presence in St Martin's for Christmas Festival day, and the increase in public awareness meant there was now a waiting-list for free energy-surveys.

Friends of Dorking/Food Float; MargaretB said the Christmas lights were better, brighter, and publicly acknowledged. And for the Food Float... the continued absence of scaffolders outside Barclays was good.

Mid-Surrey Community Fridges; Tony (in Michaela's absence) said they continued to match needs throughout MV, though Christian Centre had been closed for a short time due to unsavoury behaviour of certain customers – other than which, all was good.

Mens' Shed; David highlighted their very busy Christmas (including C/Day lunch for 47 raising £1,000), and talked of the production line of... sleighs... and memorial bench... and picnic tables – and in response to a question of location, confirmed the Training Room (by Pippbrook tennis court) was a very tight squeeze but because demand was so good, it was tolerable.

Churches Together; Anthony had been delighted at the very good attendances over Christmas.

Dorking Mental Caring; Elsie said visits were being made, and all was good.

West Street traders; Basil... all was good.

Dorking Society/Museum; Pierre also added all was good.

Town-Twinning; Margaret reported that a schedule of events/visits was being organised with Duxbury.

(9) OTHER ITEMS; **(a)** Nick advised that the Community Orchard **annual 'Wassail'** was this Saturday (10th) from 15:00 until late... and all were welcome.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING - Monday 9 FEBRUARY 2026

The meeting started at 17:30 and concluded at 19:05

(PJTjan26)