Winchelsea Residents Association

Annual General Members' Meeting

7 November 2026

11.30 -13.00 at New Hall

Minutes

1. Introduction

1.1 Brian Leonard (BL) opened the meeting and welcomed all members. He commented that it had been a bumpy year, reflected in changes in committee but still with an important agenda of issues. The meeting is to complete formal business, receive Chairman's Report and provide three guest speakers – Adam Hart, Jenner Sands, Clerk of IPC and Helena Dollimore MP. Cllr Dan Bradley, the local Rother district and East Sussex councillor, was also kindly present.

2. Minutes of the AGM 18 October 2025

The minutes were approved.

3. Finance

3.1 In the absence of Linda Bass (Treasurer) Julie Gurr presented the accounts for FY 2025/26. Expenditure over the past year had been modest, including public liability insurance, printing, Winchelsea Corporation website fee and agreed cost of revised traffic plan design. The current bank balance was £1270 and the committee will consider extending no membership fee for the next financial year. This depends partly on the progress of the traffic plan. If an annual membership fee is reintroduced, it will not exceed £10 per member.

4. **Committee Members**

4.1 The Chairman noted the committee members willing to continue to serve and expressed the hope that more members would put themselves forward, including for the chairmanship. Jane Taylor, Richard Plumb, Julie Gurr, Sarah Andrews, Linda Bass, Julie Bartlett, David Eley were approved as committee members.

4. Reports and Review of Progress

Committee membership : Jane Taylor reported that the committee had been through changes during the year. Glenn Marks, David Dickson, Georgia Benn and Ian Menzies had stood down in the last year and we welcomed the return of Linda Bass and two new members, Julie Bartlett and David Eley, with strong local connections and business expertise. Their input and continuing support is greatly appreciated.

Partnerships : WRA has focused on establishing and strengthening local partnerships, supporting the further development of Neighbourhood Watch, linking into local cycling and walking initiatives through Sussex Greenways and building a positive relationship with IPC and ESCC councillors. WRA will also provide a platform for progress and results from the planned Speedwatch initiative.

Road safety : Road safety remains a priority. WRA continue to support the NLT/NRT plan as the single measure to minimise the use of an unsafe junction and volume of non stopping traffic and which is affordable. The recent ESCC proposal for a parish wide vote is unwelcome and unrealistic. We are working with our MP, IPC and ESCC councillor to reject the proposal and allow the agreed nlt/nrt plan to progress. There can be no road safety improvements in Winchelsea until this is settled.
WRA is also prioritising road safety on the adjacent A259, including Ferry Hill and the crossing to the New Hall. We have compiled and sent a briefing note to our MP pressing for a safety review of these sites which are the responsibility of National Highways and the Department of Transport.

Road closure information : National Highways information on local A road closures is not good enough. WRA has offered to help improve its mailing list.

Local charity : WRA hosted a stall at this year's fete. Julie Gurr's splendid knitted animals were popular prizes and we collected £100 for RSPCA Mallydeens rescue centre.

Future issues : Brian Leonard presented a a summary of relevant developments proposals by government and public bodies. Most recently, this included the East Sussex draft strategy for Flood Risk Management. As we already knew the area between Camber, Rye, Rye Harbour, Winchelsea Beach, and Winchelsea falls into the highest risk categories within the county. However, priority for planning and deployment of resources is to be mainly focused on other areas of high risk where the impact of any flooding would be greater and this would place greater emphasis on measures able to be taken by local communities and individual house and business owners. The Rother Local Plan had also been scrutinised. This had few implications for Winchelsea, however. The introduction in 2028 of a new unitary council for East Sussex would bring decisions on development and other policy issues under much greater influence by councillors from the main urban areas of Hastings and Eastbourne and it will be important to track how this affects Winchelsea interests.

5. Speakers
Jane Taylor introduced and welcomed:

Adam Hart, Neighbourhood Watch
Adam explained the recent launch of his WhatsApp NW group in Winchelsea, initially set up to take advantage of discounted home insurance with other potential savings. Adam recommended its members to take up national NW membership, giving a direct link to national and local advice. The first meeting with new PCSO, Daryl Holter, will be in the New Hall 9am Saturday 28 November. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Jenner Sands, Clerk, Icklesham Parish Council
Jenner was known to many members with her excellent reputation for her professionalism and accessibility. She talked about her role as the Icklesham Parish Council Clerk, which exceptionally covers four distinct communities of Rye Harbour, Winchelsea Beach, Winchelsea Town and Icklesham. Her role includes management of wide variety of community assets and facilities such as allotments, play areas and car parks. She described her responsibilities for the proper conduct of parish council business and finances. She is always ready to provide information about the work of the council and hear about local concerns, in support of the Chair and local parish councillors. Residents are welcome to attend IPC meetings, noting that matters requiring Council decision could only be considered if advance notice is given and thus included on the agenda.

Helena Dollimore MP
The Committee were grateful that, yet again, our local MP Helena Dollimore had found time to attend and talk to the WRA members meeting.
On the issue of traffic calming she reported that National Highways had agreed her request for a meeting to discuss local traffic plans and the recent proposal that a parish wide vote for this and any other traffic plan is now required. East Sussex Highways (ESCC) has refused to attend. She will be considering alternative ways to get them to engage.
She also reported separately that NH have agreed to review of the A259 which she will ensure considers the several sub-standard and sometimes dangerous aspects of the trunk road at Winchelsea. More immediately, she was taking up the problems caused by inadequate notice of and clarity about closure of the trunk road for maintenance works.
On the concerns raised about damage to the sea defences at Winchelsea beach she said that the Environment Council have confirmed to her that remedial works are programmed to take place shortly.
On the broad risks of climate change, she outlined how her local experience informs her role as a member of the House of Commons Select Committee on the Environment. A lot of work was being done at national level to prepare for risks, notably of flooding and drought, and she had led the campaign against closure of the fire station at Hastings Ridge. She reported that government was planning for resilience linked to cyber security and commented that recent messages from Ministers on the need to prepare for potential interruptions to supplies of water and food were sensible advice.
More locally she had helped in ensuring a positive response from Southern Water on low water pressure in parts of Winchelsea and was pleased that these had been resolved.

6. High Street Traffic Video
David Eley introduced the video of short excerpts from his security cameras taken at various times and dates over recent months and showing incidents close to his home and business in the High Street. They highlighted high volumes of traffic, anti social behaviour and difficulties of navigating through Strand Arch. David commented that on first moving to Winchelsea he lived in a quiet side street and had little idea of how bad the driving and anti-social behaviour of the drivers short cutting through the town could be,

7. Questions and Comments

A member asked whether the incidents of bad driving and behaviour had been reported to the police. David Eley responded that for the serious incident near the Strand Gate had been reported but because the registration of the driver who was the object of the incident was not visible and they had made no report to the police a conviction could not be considered. However, the police had issued a warning to the other driver.

A member asked whether a temporary obstruction on the A259 could explain the filmed congestion at Strand Gate. There were no reports of any problems nearby.

Sue McGeown asked that every effort should be made to explore an alternative scheme of a 20mph limit, which she understood to have been deployed in other parts of East Sussex, for example at Alfriston. Jane Taylor advised that WRA had previously considered all possible options, including 20 mph, and would not be revisiting the extensive work already completed. If there is a workable measure that had not scrutinised previously, and is reported to be viable, WRA would encourage the detail to be published

Brian Leonard said that all the studies and work done over previous 7 years had shown very few traffic calming options that worked, would get political approval and could be afforded. These had been set out in the GTA consultancy report, which confirmed that 20mph zones could not be introduced except as a part of a scheme involving other major measures. WRA had assessed the progress of the very few 20mph zones introduced in East Sussex and noted that many petitions had been taken to the council but failed to get approval. WRA had been following the progress of the Alfriston scheme which involved a range of measures at a reported cost of over £200,000. A scheme in Sedlescombe had been in development for 9 years. This 'community match' scheme involved a single stretch of 20mph with gateway build-out. The costs were met partly by £70,000 from the Rother Community Infrastructure Levy, generated by a new local housing development in the village. Winchelsea has no new housing developments and would not be eligible for a similar financial contribution.

There were no further questions. Jane Taylor thanked the speakers, committee and residents for their attendance and support. The meeting concluded at 1pm.

16 November 2026