Horsham Blueprint Neighbourhood Forum Extraordinary General Meeting 2026
Held on Thursday 23rd July 2026 at 7.30pm at Park Barn, North Street, Horsham.
Chaired by John Steele.

1. Welcome

1.1 - John Steele introduced himself as Chair of Blueprint and thanked everyone for attending the 2026 Blueprint Extraordinary General Meeting. John Steele recorded that the meeting was not quorate as there were not the required number of 21 members. All present agreed the meeting should proceed as set out in the proposed agenda.

1.2 - Apologies were received from Morag Warrack, John White, Graham Sitton.

2. Approval of Minutes of AGM held on 11th December 2025.

2.1 - The minutes of the last Blueprint AGM were proposed by Nigel Friswell and seconded by Diane Sumpter. There were no objections so the minutes were accepted as approved. There were no matters arising raised and actions taken forward are covered in the proposed agenda.

3. Chair's Review

3.1 - John Steele thanked everyone in the Steering Group for their continued involvement since the Forum was launched in Autumn 2013 with the inaugural general meeting in March 2014, which is an impressive story of ideals and perseverance.

3.2 - John Steele said that it is evident much work was already underway under Frances Haigh's leadership. Among those early members were a core who stuck to the task until the very end - Andrew Cooke, Diane Sumpter and Trudie Mitchell. Many others played important roles over a long period including Ron Bates, Ruth Fletcher and Martin Boffey. Without these stalwarts' perseverance there would never have been a Neighbourhood Plan.

3.3 - It is easy to forget the challenge of creating a neighbourhood plan without the resources and backing of an established parish council. It was uncharted territory, the bureaucracy intimidating and in the early days there was little by way of informed guidance.

3.4 - The initial application to HDC to designate the Neighbourhood Forum met a setback which resulted in it being rechristened a Business Neighbourhood Forum.

3.5 - Looking back at the records, the amount of work undertaken by the Forum in reaching out to the community, amassing evidence, drafting and testing policies was impressive with an interim report published in August 2016.

3.6 - The completed Neighbourhood Plan went to public consultation in Spring 2020, then to HDC for further consultation, followed by assessment by an Independent Assessor.

3.7 - In October 2022 referendums confirmed the Plan with 84% of residents and 90% of businesses voted in favour. The Plan was finally made by HDC in December 2022. Almost ten years in the making.

3.8 - The Plan being achieved, on the planning policy side, the Neighbourhood Plan is regularly referenced by planning officers in their assessment of planning applications.

3.9 - The Plan formally designated 23 of the green spaces as Local Green Spaces and the importance of this has been underlined by a proposed main modification to the Local Plan which makes clear that special protection only extends to designated Local Green Spaces.

3.10 - The Neighbourhood Forum with a made Plan opened an opportunity to influence how CIL receipts are allocated to projects within the unparished area. Worked closely with HDC on its CIL Panel, and established a robust process for encouraging local groups to apply for funding and assessing applications and awarding grants. This role now lies with the new Horsham Town Council which inherits our Neighbourhood Plan.

3.11 - One of the key recommendations in the Neighbourhood Plan was to investigate the opportunity to form a town council. Blueprint, as a Neighbourhood Forum, with a made Plan was able to trigger a local governance review by HDC which led to Horsham Town Council from 1st April 2026, upon which our designation lapsed and our work was done.

3.12 - John Steele expressed thanks to everyone who contributed their time and enthusiasm over the years, Everyone involved should be proud of what you have achieved.

3.13 - Diane Sumpter asked if an article could go in the West Sussex County Times. John Steele agreed to review the previous article by Andrew Cooke and come back to everyone with a view.

3.14 - Martin Boffey had been in contact with Frances Haigh who sent her good wishes and said well done for what had been achieved.

4. Finance Report

4.1 - Diane Sumpter said the Bank balance at 31st March 2026 was £1422.56.

4.2 - Diane Sumpter confirmed that John White has arranged for the Blueprint domain name and website to remain operational to November 2027. There is a cost of £90 + VAT due this year to keep the website live until November 2027.

4.3 - Following discussion it was agreed to close the Blueprint website as at November 2027. John Steele will contact John White to arrange a posting on the Blueprint website directing any communications should go to the new Horsham Town Council.

4.4 - Discussion took place about the residual bank balance, once all costs have been paid, which is due to be transferred back to HDC. It was agreed that John Steele would email HDC and ask if the closing Blueprint bank balance could be transferred directly to Horsham Town Community Partnership for use in their works in Horsham.

5. Archive

5.1 - John Steele reported he was working off the information on a memory stick originally

collated by Andrew Cooke to prepare the Blueprint Archive memory stick. John Steele confirmed that the West Sussex Records Office has agreed to archive the Blueprint information with a copy also being given to HDC. John Steele confirmed that the memory stick has already been purchased and paid.

5.2 - John Steele said that a Data Protection notice had been placed on Blueprint MailChimp to all members, but to date there have been no replies.

6. Motion to dissolve the Neighbourhood Forum

6.1 - John Steele read out the motion to dissolve Blueprint -

‘’Following the establishment of Horsham Town Council and the ending of Blueprint’s designation as a Neighbourhood Forum it is resolved to dissolve Blueprint in accordance with Section 10 of the constitution and to close the Blueprint bank account at an appropriate time.’’

The motion was proposed by Andrew Cooke and seconded by Diane Sumpter. The members present voted unanimously in favour of the motion. Blueprint is dissolved.

6.2 - Martin Boffey said that the Neighbourhood Plan review will need to take place by the new Horsham Town Council in due course.

7 - Close

7.1 - There being no other business John Steele thanked everyone for attending the Blueprint EGM and wished everyone a safe journey home.
The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Attendees (13)
Trudie Mitchell, Peter Beckley, Andrew Cooke, Ron Bates, John Steele, Francis Vernon, Malcolm Gilbert, Martin Boffey, Colin Bush, Diane Sumpter, Alison Napley , Nigel Friswell, Ruth Fletcher.