

**Polegate Town Council, Council Office, 49 High Street,
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Minutes of Meeting of the **Communities and Tourism Meeting** held on **12th September 2025 in Council Chamber, 49 High Street, Polegate, BN26 6AL at 10:00am.**

PRESENT: Councillors D Murray, S Shing, M Cunningham, C Berry, J Keen (5)

NOT PRESENT: Councillors D Watts, M Piper, A Wood, A O’Kane, D Dunbar(5)

13870 Item 1: Opportunity for Public Comment for items on the agenda

None

13871 Item 2: Apologies for absence

Apologies from Cllr D Watts, A Wood, M Piper, A O’Kane, D Dunbar

No other apologies received

13872 Item 3: Declarations of interest

None

13873 Item 4: To decide on a theme for the Summer Festival 2026

Summer Festival 2026 Planning Discussion

There was a long discussion about options for the Summer Festival 2026, with members exploring a wide range of activities, attractions, and community involvement opportunities. The aim is to create a vibrant, inclusive event that showcases local talent, encourages civic engagement, and provides entertainment for all ages.

Activities & Attractions

A variety of interactive and performance-based activities were proposed, including:

- Scouts-led sticky archery, soft axe throwing, and potential BMX track involvement.

- Teepee making and paracord bracelet crafting.
- A drama group performance themed around Polegate.
- Dance, cheerleading, gymnastics, and fitness demonstrations (e.g. Shan Fitness).
- Climbing wall with live demonstrations.
- Dog show and dog agility events.
- Traditional games such as egg & spoon races (under 20s, under 30s) with vouchers for winners, book races, and other heritage-style activities.
- “Beat the Goalie” football challenge (Grasshoppers).
- Model railway rides.
- Picnic areas with haybale seating, inspired by Herstmonceux medieval festival.
- Low-cost food vans and charity-run stalls (e.g. squash, cakes).
- Scouts BBQ or beer tent.
- Marquee and gazebos for logistics and shelter.
- Town Centre square to be cordoned off for performances, surrounded by stalls.

Community & Group Involvement

It was agreed that local groups should be invited to participate through stalls, performances, and activities. These include:

- Scouts, Cubs, Beavers, Brownies, Boys Brigade.
- Polegate-based dance clubs, sports clubs, charities, and wellbeing groups.
- British Legion, art club, rambling club, Jubilee Nature Reserve Friends.
- Flower clubs, gardening groups, historic societies, and the Twinning Association.
- WRAS (Mayor’s charity) promotional stall.
- South Downs National Park representatives.
- Local schools: Polegate School and Willingdon Senior School.
- Police cadets, fire service, ambulance service, and a possible police demonstration.

Council & Civic Engagement

The festival will also serve as a platform to promote the Town Council's work and local initiatives:

- A Polegate Town Council stall manned by councillors with leaflets.
- Information on the Cuckoo Line and Polegate's history.
- Invitations to civic heads and mayors from surrounding areas.
- Request for Wealden District Council to speak on the medical centre and Knights Farm Sports Hub.
- ESCC stall to showcase their work in Polegate.
- Information on devolution and its potential impact on residents.

Promotion & Sponsorship

Suggestions for promoting the event and securing sponsorship included:

- Event banners and promotional materials for schools, youth groups, and local organisations.
- Sponsorship opportunities with local businesses such as RAM, MCD Home & Castle, Southern Railway, and supermarkets (ALDI, Lidl, Co-op, One Stop, Asda, Tesco).
- A sponsored map of Polegate showing stall locations.
- Leaflets and pamphlets covering:
 - Brightling Road development.
 - History of Polegate.
 - "What's Coming" pamphlet (Brightling Road).
- Town Crier (potentially borrowed from Uckfield) to announce events.

Digital & Web Presence

To support the event digitally:

- An event page will be created on the Town Council website.
- A Brightling Road development page will be added.
- Ensure the Youth page is published.
- Include a map of Polegate with stall locations and legend.
- Explore augmented reality options.

- Provide directions to Jubilee Nature Reserve.

Logistics & Operations

Operational considerations included:

- Coordination with Brightling Road works to avoid disruption.
- Recruitment of volunteers for marshalling, setup, and takedown.
- Hire of tables for charities and groups.
- First aid provision.
- Involvement of Hailsham FM.
- Toilets and sanitation facilities.
- Forecasting expected attendance.
- Charity lottery: stallholders raise money, with a winner drawn from a hat.

It was resolved to look into the ideas made above and come back to council with further decisions to make. VOTE all in favour.

The meeting closed at 11:13am

Signed Chair of Meeting _____ Date _____