NEIGHBOURHOOD
Area Committee
Dorking and Villages

MAKE IT HAPPEN

Dorking and the Villages Neighbourhood Area Committee (NAC)

11 November 2025 – 14:00 – 16:00 - Meeting Notes



Dorking and Villages Neighbourhood Area Committee - 11 November 2025 Meeting Notes

Time: 14:00 – 16:00.
Address: Betchworth Village War Memorial Hall (Geoffrey Browne Room), Station Road, Betchworth, RH3 7DF

Chair: H.W – County Councillor, Surrey County Council

Vice Chair: S.D – Chief Officer, Central Surrey Voluntary Action

Attendees:

- H.C – County Councillor
- P.S – Pixham Residents Association
- J.M – Wescott Village Hub
- M.A – Mid Surrey Community Fridge
- H.W – County & District Councillor
- S.C – County & District Councillor
- B.N – District Councillor
- S.D – Central Surrey Voluntary Action
- W.S – Circular Dorking
- J.G – Police Borough Commander
- D.P – Parish Councillor
- P.B – Surrey Fire and Rescue Service
- D.J – Parish Councillor
- H.G – Healthwatch Surrey
- J.M – Business/BID
- A.B – Citizens Advice Mole Valley
- W.D – Parish Councillor
- G.M – Mary Francis Trust
- J.B – YMCA
- R.G – GP Health
- P.W – Mary Francis Trust
- E.C – NHS
- K.H – District Councillor

Additional Attendees:

- U.D – Surrey County Council
- R.O – Mole Valley District Council
- J.P – Surrey County Council
- M.B – Surrey County Council
- R.Z – Surrey County Council
- K.D – Surrey County Council
- A.C – Surrey County Council
- H.I – Surrey County Council
- O.M – Surrey County Council

Apologies:

- S.H – Age Concern
- M.A – Dorking Health Care
- C.J – Surrey County Council
- J.H – Clarion Futures Housing
- N.P – Churches Together
- C.A – Clarion Futures Housing
- K.B – Executive Assistant to Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team on behalf of C.P, Head Teacher and S.K, Senior Pastoral Manager
- A.M – District Councillor
- S.C – Mount Green Housing Association

Agenda & Timings

The following list details the meeting agenda and the timings of each item on the agenda.

- Item 1 – Welcome – Recap session aims and key outcomes (14:00 – 14:05)
- Item 2 – Updates – Engagement (14:05 – 14:15)
- Item 3 – Workshop session – Priority area deep dive: presentations and discussion (14:15 – 15:10)
- Break (15:10 – 15:20)
- Item 4 – Workshop session – Refining priorities: group discussion (15:20 – 15:55)
- Item 5 – Next steps and meeting close (15:50 – 16:00)

Agenda Item 1 – Neighbourhood Area Committees Recap and Progress Update

The second Dorking and Villages Neighbourhood Area Committee met on 11 November 2025 at the Betchworth Village War Memorial Hall, gathering community partners, councillors, voluntary sector representatives, and local service leads for an afternoon of collaboration and discussion. The meeting brought together a wide cross-section of people working across Dorking and its surrounding villages. The focus of the session was to reconnect the group, revisit previous outcomes and set clear expectations for the work ahead.

Agenda Item 2 – Engagement Update

Attendees received an update on community engagement, including the use of the Commonplace digital platform for gathering resident feedback. Concerns were raised around accessibility for residents who are not online, reinforcing the importance of offering offline engagement opportunities. Members were invited to indicate if they preferred not to be named on the platform.

Agenda Item 3 – Workshop discussion – Priority Area Deep-Dive Presentation and Discussion

Three experts shared insights into the key issues affecting residents experiencing deprivation. Citizens Advice highlighted the complex mix of financial and housing pressures facing clients, while noting that their data represents only those who actively seek support. Mid Surrey Community Fridges emphasised the role of fridges as community hubs, and Surrey County Council provided perspective on rural fuel poverty and the challenges of reaching Gypsy and Traveller families. Across all speakers, the central theme was clear: tackling deprivation requires collaboration across organisations, rooted in shared responsibility and joint action.

Agenda Item 4 – Refining Priorities Group Discussion

The workshop session focused on refining priorities by examining both immediate and long-term actions. Participants explored a range of challenges linked to deprivation, including high unemployment, rising living costs, and significant housing pressures resulting from limited availability and affordability. Child poverty emerged as a key concern, with attendees highlighting the importance of breaking cycles of disadvantage by supporting families early and consistently. Mental health issues were recognised as interconnected with deprivation, often worsened by isolation and difficulties navigating services. Rural transport barriers were repeatedly cited, as

many residents struggle to access essential services in Dorking town from outlying villages.

The group discussed a number of immediate actions that could be implemented using existing resources. Suggestions included developing Warm Welcome-style spaces for families around school drop-off and pick-up times, enabling schools and GP surgeries to serve as trusted hubs for sharing information, and improving the distribution of service information through magazines, noticeboards, and letterbox drops. The importance of providing non-digital communication options was emphasised to support residents experiencing digital exclusion. Promoting community hubs was seen as a key opportunity for improving social connection and reducing isolation.

Long-term actions were also examined, including exploring future options for Men's Shed in the NAC area to deliver its wellbeing and social benefits. Improving transport links—such as establishing a Connect bus stop for Westcott Hub—was identified as essential for enabling residents to access services. Participants also discussed challenges associated with high rents and the complexities of repurposing vacant buildings, alongside opportunities to reduce red tape when developing community assets. Schools and community organisations were encouraged to consider joint Warm Hub models to support families.

Key enablers included stronger collaboration between organisations, resource-sharing opportunities, and raising awareness of the broader support offered by Surrey Fire and Rescue Service. Attendees also noted that local churches, parish councils, and charities such as the Henry Smith Foundation play an important role in community cohesion. Effective information sharing was identified as critical, with suggestions to create a standardised guide to local services and to leverage trusted communication channels such as village magazines, parish newsletters, noticeboards, and word of mouth. Attendees agreed that continued collaboration and clear communication across sectors would be vital to improving outcomes for residents.

Agenda Item 5 Next Steps and Session Close - Next Steps

The next NAC meeting was scheduled for 8 December at the Dorking Christian Centre.

At this meeting, the session would be based around agreeing recommendations and the evaluation. Attendees requested improvements to future documentation, including clearer titles, fewer acronyms, and more accessible data displays. The meeting closed with a shared commitment to continue building collaborative solutions that support the wellbeing of residents across Dorking and its villages.

Final Points

- Upcoming Resident Engagement Events: Westcott Village Hub (14 Nov), Box Hill (27 Nov), Chartdown Sports and Social Club (28 Nov).
- Upcoming NAC meeting: Small hall at Dorking Christian Centre, Church Street, Dorking RH4 1DW (08 December 24 - 14:00 – 16:00).