

WOODCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES 236

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on Thursday 27th February 2025

The meeting started at 7.00 pm.

In attendance:

Cllrs Lucy Quinn (Chair), Wade Nash (Vice Chair), Rob Woods, Wendy Hookey, Neil McKay, Gina McKay, Roger Knight, and Peter Ruddick.

Also in attendance were Ian Philo the Parish Manager, Neighbourhood Watch Representative Peter New, and 1 member of the public.

1. Apologies for Absence

County Councillor David Robey, Ashford Borough Councillors David Ledger and Aline Hicks also sent their apologies.

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None.

2.2. Other Significant Interests

None

2.3. Other Interests

Councillor Gina McKay expressed interest in agenda items 4.2 and 4.3.

Councillor Neil McKay expressed interest in agenda item 4.2.

3. Acceptance of Minutes.

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on the 23rd January 2025 were agreed as a true record.

Proposed by Councillor Peter Ruddick and seconded by Councillor Rob Woods.

The council voted 8-0 in favour.

Meeting adjourned for public participation 7.03 pm..

County Councillor David Robey sent his report which was circulated to Councillors:

On 5th February, we heard that we were not going to be allowed onto the Devolution Priority Programme (DPP), leaving us as the only County Council in the South East not on it. As a result of this, the KCC Elections in May 2025 will go ahead and we are preparing accordingly. The Government is still looking for outline proposals to split Kent geographically into three or four Unitary Councils, and wants these by 21st March 2025. They are hoping for a consensus on this from KCC, Medway and the 12 Kent District Councils. Final proposals are required by 28th November 2025. The Government has made it clear that they wish to go down this route, and will mandate it if there is no agreement.

On 13th February, we had the KCC Full Council Budget Meeting, which was a stormy affair. We have a Balanced Budget, remain solvent and under good financial control, and in a much better position than many other Councils. However, the pressures due to

Social Services remain a factor, and impact all aspects of what KCC does, especially in areas like potholes, and Highways generally. We have been given about £10m by the Government for potholes and will be restarting the Pothole Blitz, once the weather improves. We are looking for another £10m and I put our chance of getting this as 50:50. The Government has set up a Transport Select Committee on Roadworks and KCC has made a Submission to this Select Committee, the Submission makes some radical suggestions on how the current unacceptable situation can be improved. We have also written to all the Kent MPs about it, as I believe that our proposals could command cross party support.

We managed to save the Route 2A Bus Service for a year, using Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) Funding, and also the Kent Travel Saver, which provides a heavily discounted bus pass, to allow children to get to school on the bus. What happens at the end of the year depends on the stance the Government take on BSIP.

Neighbourhood Watch Officer, Peter New, warned that theft from cars was of concern and advised everyone to apply the 5 second rule, whereby take 5 seconds before walking away from a car, take 5 seconds to see what is visible to thieves. Organised gangs had been targeting vehicles in Bilsington and Ham Street.

Drugs continue to be an issue, and increasing certainty that dealers are carrying weapons, e.g. recent drug stop found a machete in the car boot alongside cash and drugs.

Peter would like to see more police attendance at parish council meetings. Several parish councils have written to the police commissioner to request more attendance.

Meeting reconvened at 7:30 pm.

4. Planning applications

4.1. PA/2025/0111

Stonebridgelands, Front Road, Woodchurch, TN26 3SL.

Lawful development certificate - existing - change of use of land to residential.

The Parish Council voted 8-0 to support this planning application.

Proposed by Councillor Rob Woods and seconded by Councillor Wade Nash.

4.2. PA/2025/0012

Oak Tree Cottage, Redbrook Street, Woodchurch, TN26 3QR.

Timber-frame outbuilding.

The Council agreed that this was better than the existing structure.

The Council voted 6-0 to support this planning application.

Proposed by Councillor Rob Woods and seconded by Councillor Wade Nash

4.3. NOT/2025/0251

5, Lower Road, Woodchurch, TN26 3SQ

T2 Crack Willow - crown and limb reduction by approximately 8m because of large cavities in both limbs which are a potential safety issue. Have been advised by tree surgeons to reduce to about 4m in height. T3 Crack Willow - crown and trunk

reduction by approximately 9m because of large cavity which is a potential safety issue. Have been advised by tree surgeons to reduce to about 4m in height. The Council noted this application.

4.4. PA/2025/0063

The Council noted that this application had already been supported at the January 23rd Meeting, and the Parish Manager noted that this was on the agenda in error.

4.5. OTH/2025/0252

15, Henden Place, The Green, Woodchurch, TN26 3PF

Details submitted pursuant to discharge condition 3(a) (Survey drawings- Brick flooring) 3(b) (Plans & sections - infilling) and 3 (c) (Floor plan - Relocation of door) of Listed building consent PA/2023/0809.

The Council voted 8-0 to support this application.

Proposed by Councillor Rob Woods and seconded by Councillor Neil McKay.

4.6. OTH/2025/0219

Land off Front Road, Woodchurch, Kent, TN26 3SA

Details submitted pursuant to condition 18 of appeal APP/E2205/W/21/3289039 (bus stop improvements) of planning permission 21/01284/AS.

The Council agreed that the planned southbound bus stop on Front Road appeared to be in the wrong location for safety reasons, and lacked the bus shelter. It was agreed to recommend that the planned bus stop be situated further down the road to location of the original, along with the planned bus shelter.

The Council voted 8-0 in favour of this action.

Proposed by Councillor Lucy Quinn and seconded by Councillor Rob Woods.

4.7. OTH/2025/0211

Land off Front Road, Woodchurch, Kent, TN26 3SA

Non material amendment to application NOT/2023/2160 for "Reserved matters application for the approval of appearance, landscaping, layout, and scale for the erection of 40 dwellings (including affordable housing and 2 custom-build units), structural planting and landscaping, public open space with ecological enhancements, children's play area, surface water flood mitigation, vehicular access point, and associated ancillary works and infrastructure pursuant to outline planning permission 21/01284/AS". To regularise approved plans within Condition 1.

The Council agreed they wouldn't want to make any comment until the traffic safety concerns in OTH/2025/0219 were resolved.

4.8. OTH/2025/0184

Land between, 82-120 Front Road, Woodchurch

Details submitted pursuant to part discharge condition 13 (Archaeology - Part II only) of planning permission 21/01284/AS

The Council agreed they wouldn't want to make any comment until the traffic safety concerns in OTH/2025/0219 were resolved.

4.9. OTH/2025/0169

Land between, 82-120 Front Road, Woodchurch, TN26 3SA

Details submitted pursuant to condition 2 (External Materials) for planning permission NOT/2023/2160

The Council agreed they wouldn't want to make any comment until the traffic safety concerns in OTH/2025/0219 were resolved.

4.10. NOT/2025/0105

Little Robhurst Farm, Susans Hill, Woodchurch, TN26 3TB.

Prior Approval for the change of use of an agricultural building and land within its curtilage to a single-storey dwelling house and associated operational development including demolition of an existing structure.

It was decided to object to this application, whereas there was unlikely to be an impact on the area, it doesn't comply in all respects with HOU5.

The Council voted 8-0 in favour of this action.

Proposed by Councillor Rob Woods and seconded by Councillor Neil McKay.

5. Village Plan

The Parish Council agreed to accept the aims and objectives along with the time line of the Village Plan for 2025-2026. The Council also agreed to the items to be deleted from the 2024-2025 version. Councillor Lucy Quinn agreed for the introduction for the 2025-2026 version.

The Parish Council voted 8-0 in support of these actions.

Proposed by Councillor Lucy Quinn and seconded by Councillor Rob Woods.

6. 30 mph Roundels

The Parish Council reviewed the proposals from East Kent Highways for 30 mph roundels on Bethersden Road and Front Road. It was agreed that the one along Bethersden was fine, but to inform East Kent Highways that a roundel might be better positioned on the road closer to 82 Front Road.

The Parish Council voted 8-0 in favour of this action.

Proposed by Councillor Wade Nash and seconded by Councillor Peter Ruddick.

7. Playground Inspection

The Parish Council agreed to accept The Playground Inspection quote of £94.95 to carry out a playground inspection.

It was agreed to wait for quotes for the surface repair surrounding the "sprung animals" seesaw. Before it can be decided what action can be taken. Councillor Wade Nash suggested that the surface was not urgent just yet.

The Parish Council voted 8-0 in support of these actions.

Proposed by Councillor Rob Woods and seconded by Councillor Neil McKay.

8. Decommissioning Cast Iron Waste Wins

The Parish Manager presented a quote from one of the contractors listed on the agenda which included installation of the new bins at £548. It was agreed to accept this quote from Stephen Brignell as it included installing the new bins.

The Parish Council voted 8-0 in support of all these recommendations.

Proposed by Councillor Rob Woods and seconded by Councillor Wade Nash.

9. Flagpole Inspection

It was unanimously agreed to accept The Flagpole Company quote to carry out the flagpole inspection, at £475 plus VAT.

Proposed Councillor by Lucy Quinn and seconded by Councillor Neil McKay.

10. Woodchurch Housing Needs Survey

It was unanimously agreed to send the results of the 2023 village survey to Ashford Borough Council as the response to Housing Needs Survey enquiry received from Rural and Community Housing Enabling (RACE).

Proposed by Councillor Wade Nash and seconded by Councillor Neil McKay.

11. CALA Homes Street Names

The Parish Council agreed to forward the residents suggestions regarding possible street names for the upcoming development along Front Road on to CALA Homes.

The Parish Council voted 8-0 in support of this action.

Proposed by Councillor Lucy Quinn and seconded by Councillor Roger Knight.

12. Finances

It was noted that the Parish Manager had kept the Councillors informed of spending on the power upgrade to the Hub, village green and toilet refurbishment. The original budgets of £20,000 and £8,000 were insufficient and therefore all three projects were combined in order to secure the £11,000 grant received from Ashford Borough Council, increasing the overall budget available for these projects to £39,000 plus VAT.

The Parish Council unanimously agreed to the revised final spend of £12,720 on the toilet refurbishment.

The Parish Council unanimously agreed to the revised spend £22,330 plus VAT to the upgrade of power to the Hub and supplying electricity to the village green.

12.1. Items for Payment

The Parish Council unanimously agreed to the February 2025 items for payment and to transfer £11,000 from the deposit account to the current account.

The Parish Manager highlighted that following the February items for payment this would leave around £51,900 in the bank account, with a predicted year end balance of £46,300.

After deducting £19,100 unspent earmarked and £20,000 general reserve there is an anticipated £7,100 unspent reserves to carry over to the next year, and also to note at least £5,000 VAT to recover from HMRC.

Items For Payment February 2025					
Payments Made since the last Meeting					
			Amount	Vat	
Direct Debit	EDF	Pavilion Electricity	£ 66.00	£	-
BACS	Castle Water	Pavilion Water	£ -	£	-
BACS	AHES	WC Refurb	£ 5,822.00	£	-
BACS			£ -	£	-
			£ -	£	-
Subtotal			£ 5,888.00	£	-
Items for Approval					
New Beneficiary					
Payment Method		Payee	Description	Total payable	VAT
Bacs		Salaries (TBC)	Salaries Including Backpay	£ 1,615.31	£ -
Bacs		I Philo	Petrol	£ 32.40	£ -
Bacs		HMRC (TBC)	PAYE	£ 282.10	£ -
Bacs		Memorial Hall	Meetings for 2025	£ 124.00	£ -
Bacs		Landscape Services	Gang Mow	£ 61.27	£ 10.21
Bacs		G Bugden	Vill Green Ext. Hedge Cut	£ 150.00	£ 25.00
Bacs		FGS Pilcher	Car Park Trenchwork	£ 6,732.00	£ 1,122.00
Bacs		Noticeboard Company	Noticeboard opposite surgery	£ 1,498.68	£ 249.78
Bacs				£ -	£ -
Bacs				£ -	£ -
Bacs				£ -	£ -
Subtotal			£ 10,495.76		
Total			£ 16,383.76	£	1,406.99

12.2. January 2025 Bank Reconciliation

The Parish Council unanimously agreed the January 2025 bank reconciliation.

January 2025 Bank Reconciliation

Cash Book Opening Balace		4850.06
	Receipts	Payments
Precept	£0.00	£0.00
Transfer	£6,000.00	£0.00
VAT Refund	£0.00	£0.00
Salary Including HMRC	£0.00	£1,277.77
Grants and Donations	£0.00	£0.00
Projects	£0.00	£3,240.00
VGC Maintenance Agreement	£0.00	£382.73
Running Costs	£0.00	£2,995.01
Income	£6,000.00	
Expenditure		£7,895.51
Cashbook Balance (A)	£6,000.00	£2,954.55
Bank Statement Balance		£4,850.06
Transfer		£6,000.00
Income		£0.00
Expenditure		£7,895.51
Bank Closing Balance (B)		£2,954.55
Difference (A - B)		£0.00
Deposit Account		£71,289.62
Interest		£61.92
Transfer		-£6,000.00
Total		£65,351.54
Total Funds		£68,306.09

13. Correspondence.

Possible wrong location of bus stop on Front road has been referred to KCC and the "Bus Stop Team" is investigating.

Erecting gates on the approaches to Woodchurch is something that Highways could look into, they have requested we add it to the HIP.

Noticeboard to replace the one opposite the surgery has been ordered.

Siggi Nepp will hold a Teams meeting to outline the process of drawing up a Neighbourhood Plan with Woodchurch Parish Council on 7th March 2025 at 5pm. Residents emailed stating they heard that the 2A bus service was discontinuing. KCC has confirmed that the service will be running for another year..

There had been some complaints that the road closure signs commenced in Shadoxhurst when Lower Road was closed for work. These signs could have been situated closer to Woodchurch thereby avoiding the excessive diversion many had taken when a shorter diversion was available.

There have been complaints regarding contractors' vehicles parking on the pavement along Front Road opposite the CALA Homes development, obstructing pedestrian and mobility scooter access by. The Parish Manager has reported this to the Police and to planning enforcement.

14. Items for Information or Agenda for Next Meeting.

Councillor Rob Woods had contacted Ashford Borough Council regarding a potential £50m funding pot to ascertain if this could be possible source of funding for the Woodchurch Windmill. It was also noted that there was potential to apply to a £4.75m Heritage Fund too.

Whereas the comments regarding the refurbishment of the public toilet have been positive, one Councillor felt that the end product is what had been paid for, despite the quote being the cheapest the council should have spent more on something that would last even longer, and some remedial work may be required. For example the heater was for domestic use and not a frost heater, the new urinal was too small.

Councillor Peter Ruddick had completed the theory training for Speed Watch and I waiting for the practical.

15. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held at 7pm on Thursday the 27th March 2025 in the Memorial Hall Annexe.

The Meeting concluded at 8:30 pm.

Signed _____
Chair

Dated _____