

WOODCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES 237

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

The meeting started at 7.05 pm.

In attendance:

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

Also in attendance were Ian Philo the Parish Manager, Neighbourhood Watch Representative Peter New, Ashford Borough Councillor Aline Hicks and 24 members of the public.

1. Apologies for Absence

County Councillor David Robey sent his apologies.

Councillor Wendy Hookey had resigned as a Councillor.

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None.

2.2. Other Significant Interests

None

2.3. Other Interests

Councillor Rob Woods as a resident of Kirkwood Avenue had sent an email to the Parish Manager requesting dispensation to speak if necessary on the item of correspondence relating to Kirkwood Avenue housing.

There were no other declarations of interest therefore confirming no

Councillors were associated nor acquainted to the developer involved with the land to the North of 14 and 15 Kirkwood Avenue.

3. Acceptance of Minutes.

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on the 27th February 2025 were agreed as a true record.

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

The council voted 7-0 in favour.

Meeting adjourned for public participation 7.11 pm..

Neighbourhood Watch Officer, Peter New gave a brief update, there has been a push to defeat doorstep crime. Everyone was advised to never agree to a doorstep quote for work, as it inevitably ends up costing a lot more. An area of concern was the use of catapults, and a petition had been signed by around 17,000 so far, with the aim of reaching 100,000 to have it presented to Parliament for debate.

Ashford Borough Councillor Aline Hicks attended The Kent Mill Managers meeting relating to the windmill, the possibility of a Community Asset Transfer was discussed. The Parish Manager would look into this.

Kent County Councillor David Robey had sent his report:

KCC are now in the pre-election period, so although regular work goes on, KCC Councillors were not allowed to take actions that might be seen to be directly influencing the Election on 1st May. Whatever the outcome of the election, local government finance will be a critical issue and limit what KCC can spend on many services that most residents want, such as Highways. KCC has done well to balance the books so far.

C.S. Developments expressed an interest in working with the Parish Council to achieve his development aims on Land to the North of 14 and 15 Kirkwood Avenue. The developer considered that any additional properties would be hidden, and by scaling down the bungalow sizes, would meet the housing needs highlighted in the 2023 Village Survey. The Chair explained that the Parish Council could not be used as a sounding board and was unable to comment on any development plans unless it was in response to a planning application submitted to Ashford Borough Council's planning department. It was suggested that the developer hold a public drop-in session similar to the one held by CALA Homes in 2023.

This was followed by lively discussions on the subject.

The key takeaways were:

Residents were unhappy that the developer had not shared the plans with them.

The land is in a conservation area, the reasons for dismissal at the last appeal were explained, and that the inspector considered that the harm to the Conservation area exceeded the benefits of the new homes.

Any application should at least address the considerations made by the Planning Inspector at the last appeal on the site.

There was concern about the added demand on the sewers and infrastructure.

Had alternative uses for the site been considered.

There were some concerns voiced over the impacts from the possible solar farm at Pond Wood. The Chair explained that the Parish Council was unable to comment until there was a formal planning application. A member of Kenardington Parish Council pointed out that Pegasus would be at their parish meeting on 1st April and also hosting a drop-in session on 24th April for the public to leave comments.

One resident expressed anger at the hedge being removed along Front Road as part of the CALA Homes development and that the removal was carried out after the end of February. This was noted and would be reported to Ashford Borough Council.

Meeting reconvened at 7:40 pm.

4. Planning applications

4.1. ENF/2025/0043

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

Alleged Breach: Alleged out of hours working and site operatives parking on road.

The Council noted the enforcement officer had conducted a site visit on 17 March 2025, and would discuss the findings with their manager before deciding what action to take.

4.2. There were no other planning applications

5. Village Plan

The Parish Council reviewed and agreed the Village Plan for 2025-2026.

The Parish Council voted 7-0 in support of these actions.

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

6. The Hub Power Upgrade

The Parish Council noted that the upgrade of the power to the Hub had now been complete, and that there was an outstanding invoice from FGS Pilcher for the internal cabling work and connection for £2,100 which will have to be settled in 2025-2026 financial year.

7. Litter Bins

The Parish Council noted that the 8 new plastic litter bins had now replaced 8 of the cast iron ones, the contractor had already been paid for his work (£548 as agreed). It was also noted that 5 of the cast iron bins had been taken by residents and their donations had been collected by the Hub and that this money would be credited to the Parish Council bank account.

The "Best Kept Village" plaque from the bin close to the butcher shop had been retained and would be fixed to the village sign pole.

8. Water Pump Renovation

The Parish Council noted that the work on the water pump would commence at the end of March and that Black Forge would be collecting some sections for removal to their workshop on Monday 31st March. Other work would be carried out onsite.

9. Pond Wood Solar Farm

It noted that the correspondence from Pegasus was in relation to up to 10% community ownership in the project. It was agreed that whereas the Parish Council was unable to comment on the proposed solar farm until a formal planning application had been made. The Parish Council agreed to decline the offer of community ownership.

Councillors Rob Woods and Neil McKay would attend the Kenardington Parish Council Meeting on 1st April 2025 where representatives from Pegasus would be there to make a presentation on their proposal. They would also host a drop-in public session at Kenardington Village Hall on 24th April 2025.

The Parish Council voted 7-0 in favour of this action.

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

10. New Financial Regulations

The Parish Council had reviewed the draft new Financial Regulations and agreed to adopt them.

The Parish Council voted 7-0 in support of this action.

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

11. Memorial Hall Change of Pricing Structure

The Parish Council noted the new pricing structure for room hire, and that whereas there was an increase in pricing the new rates would include heating from 1st June

2025.

12. Memorial Bench Request

It was noted that the requested location had been taken, but that the Village Green Charity was considering a position lower down on the green.

13. Playground Surface Repair

The Parish Council voted 7-0 to agree to instruct Aspire to carry out the surface repair in the play area at £268.00 plus VAT.

Proposed by Councillor Wade Nash seconded by Councillor Peter Ruddick.

14. Finances

The Parish Council noted that there was additional outstanding item for payment to NALC for Councillor Training in January 2025 for payment of £39.22 and Lloyds Bank Charges of

The Parish Manager noted that the additional income of £129.00 in February was a refund from the Planning Portal.

Funds in the bank account at month end after allowing for March items for payment and bank charges will be around £52,760. There was an outstanding payment of £2,520 for Hub internal electric cable work which will have to be paid in 2025-2026 when invoice has been received. This leaves a balance of around £50,240.

After deducting general reserve (£20,000), unspent earmarked funds (£19,100) and completion of Village Pump restoration work not yet invoiced (£2,100) this leaves a real balance carried forward of around £9,040.

There is also around £7,000 VAT to recover.

14.1. Items for Payment

The Parish Council unanimously agreed to the March 2025 items for payment.

Items For Payment March 2025					
Payments Made since the last Meeting					
			Amount	Vat	
Direct Debit	EDF	Pavilion Electricity (Current Balance £172.34 due)	£ 66.00	£	-
BACS	Castle Water	Pavilion Water	£ 9.64	£	-
BACS	✓ Stephen Brignall	Waste Bin Removal & Repalcement	£ 548.00	£	-
			£ -	£	-
			£ -	£	-
Subtotal			£ 623.64	£	-
New Items for Approval Beneficiary					
Payment Method		Payee	Description	Total payable	VAT
Bacs		Salaries (TBC)	Salaries Incuding Backpay	£ 1,476.29	£ -
Bacs		I Philo	Petrol	£ 32.40	£ -
Bacs		HMRC (TBC)	PAYE	£ 132.37	£ -
Bacs		Maiden Accountancy	PAYE Services (Jan-March 2025)	£ 36.00	£ 6.00
Bacs		NALC (Eventbrite)	Cllr. Training (Navigating Rural Affairs)	£ 39.22	£ 6.54
Bacs				£ -	£ -
Bacs				£ -	£ -
Bacs				£ -	£ -
Bacs				£ -	£ -
Bacs				£ -	£ -
Bacs				£ -	£ -
Subtotal			£ 1,716.28		
Total			£ 2,339.92	£	12.54

14.2. January 2025 Bank Reconciliation

The Parish Council unanimously agreed the January 2025 bank reconciliation.

February 2025 Bank Reconciliation

Cash Book Opening Balace		2954.55
	Receipts	Payments
Precept	£0.00	£0.00
Transfer	£13,000.00	£0.00
VAT Refund	£0.00	£0.00
Salary Including HMRC	£0.00	£1,897.41
Grants and Donations	£0.00	£0.00
Projects	£0.00	£9,554.00
VGC Maintenace Agreement	£0.00	£137.64
Running Costs	£129.00	£1,805.08
Income	£13,129.00	
Expenditure		£13,394.13
Cashbook Balance (A)	£13,129.00	£2,689.42
Bank Statement Balance		£2,954.55
Transfer		£13,000.00
Income		£129.00
Expenditure		£13,394.13
Bank Closing Balance (B)		£2,689.42
Difference (A - B)		£0.00
Deposit Account		£65,351.54
Interest		£60.36
Transfer		-£13,000.00
Total		£52,411.90
Total Funds		£55,101.32

14.3. February Receipts and Payments

The Parish Council unanimously agreed the receipts and payments for February 2025.

Receipts and Payments February 2025				
Receipts			Amount	Vat
Bacs	Planning Portal	Refund	£ 129.00	£ -
			£ -	£ -
Bacs	Lloyds	Interest	£ 60.36	£ -
			£ -	£ -
			£ -	£ -
Total			£ 189.36	£ -
Payments				
	Payee	Description	Total payable	VAT
Bacs	Salaries	Salaries	£ 1,615.31	£ -
Bacs	I Philo	Travel	£ 32.40	£ -
Bacs	HMRC	PAYE	£ 282.10	£ -
D Debit	EDF	Pavilion Electricity	£ 66.00	£ -
Bacs	ASEH	WC Refurb Final Payment	£ 2,822.00	£ -
D Debit	Castle Water	Pavilion Water	£ 10.37	£ -
Bacs	Commercial Services	Gang Mow	£ 61.27	£ -
Bacs	FGS Pilcher	Trench and Cabling Prep	£ 6,732.00	£ -
Bacs	G Bugden	VG Extension Hedge Cut	£ 150.00	£ -
Bacs	Noticeboard Company	Noticeboard	£ 1,498.68	£ -
Bacs	Memorial Hall	Hall Hire to Dec 2025	£ 124.00	£ -
Bacs			£ -	£ -
Bacs			£ -	£ -
Total			£ 13,394.13	
Transfers				
	From	To		
Bacs	Deposit A/C	Current A/C	£ 2,000.00	
Bacs	Deposit A/C	Current A/C	£ 11,000.00	
Total			£ 13,000.00	

15. Correspondence.

The Parish Manager has received correspondence showing interest in the Parish Council vacancy.

There was an email from East Kent Highways stating that speed roundels on the road surface have to be adjacent to a corresponding speed limit signpost. The Parish Manager would inform the department to consider a sign and roundel around 82 Front Road.

The Parish Manager has not had a response from Ashford Borough Council relating

to suppling the Parish Council with litter bin sacks. It must therefore be assumed that Ashford Borough Council will be ceasing supply and that the Parish Council will have to buy them going forward.

Kent County Council has responded to request to the costing of a community warden, this would be £9,000 plus VAT for the 2025-2026 year.

16. Items for Information or Agenda for Next Meeting.

To consider entering into an agreement with Kent County Council for a Community Warden.

Councillors Neil McKay and Gina Mckay sent their apologies for the April meeting.

17. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held at 7pm on Thursday the 24th April 2025 in the Memorial Hall Annexe.

The Meeting concluded at 8:15 pm.

Signed _____
Chair

Dated _____