



4/25

Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 15 April 2025 at 7.30pm at Ightham Village Hall

MINUTES

Present: Cllr Willingham (Chair), Cllr Holden (Vice Chair), Cllr Burgham, Cllr Clark, Cllr Emmett, Cllr Hall, Cllr Mitchem, The Parish Clerk, County Cllr Rayner and 1 member of the public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Cllr Hogarth and Borough Cllr Betts

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS - Cllr Clark declared an interest in planning application 25/00546/PA

3. VACANCY FOR NEW COUNCILLOR - Discussed in Part 2

4. PUBLIC A member of public asked what was happening with Old Lane and raised a concern that if the whole lane was tarmacked it would alter the character of the lane. The Clerk said that Old Lane is officially classed as a highway and Councillor Willingham said that the Parish Council has been trying to “declassify” the lane so that it could be maintained and made safe for walkers as it is in such a poor state. The Clerk said that we had been in contact with Kent Highways who won’t maintain it to highways standard due to cost. They have sent us details to apply for a “stopping up order”, however, this doesn't appear to be what we want as we do not want to make Old Lane private or for the current land owners and residents to have responsibility for maintenance. What we would like to achieve is for the lane to be maintained, not tarmacked, and for the residents on Old Lane to have access to their properties. For the sections of the Lane between Redwell and Woodford, we would like, to install bollards to stop traffic so that pedestrians and horse riders can use the lane safely. Councillor Rayner said that he couldn't help us now due to the upcoming elections, however, if re-elected he would be happy to bring this up with highways and organise a meeting either on site or at County Hall to discuss what we can do. He suggested that we passed a resolution to engage him to do this. The resident said that there is an issue with the water flowing down Old Lane during heavy rainfall and any repairs with loose stone would wash down to the end of old lane blocking the drains. She has passed some video footage to the Parish Clerk showing this.

5. MINUTES - The Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 18 March 2025 were approved and signed as a true record,

6. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND BOROUGH COUNCILLOR - Councillor Rayner reported that TMBC had joined with the Parish Alliance in appointing a barrister for a Judicial Review of the recent MOTO appeal decision. Councillor Rayner was hopeful that the appeal would be overturned.

Councillor Rayner reported that unaccompanied asylum-seeking children had increased by a third this year due to the weather. All Kent facilities are now full.

Local government reorganisation was mentioned at the recent KALC meeting. Four out of 14 councils in Kent have put forward a workable plan for unitaries. In West Kent, Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge, Sevenoaks and Maidstone have applied to form a West Kent unitary. We are expecting a response from the Minister on May 2nd after the local elections. It is anticipated that there will be no Borough elections in spring of 2027 but instead there would be an election for a West Kent authority which would sit as a shadow authority until 2028/9.

Councillor Rayner reported that there were issues with the planning enforcement team at TMBC and he has raised this with Borough Councillor Taylor. He said there is currently only one Enforcement Officer and TMBC are working to address this.

Councillor Rayner reported that five candidates were up for county elections; Labour, the Liberal Democrats, Green Party, Conservatives and Reform. Councillor Reyner is standing as the

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Conservative candidate and made the point that he had attended every parish meeting in his ward. Other candidates have not attended parish meetings.

Councillor Willingham reported that he attended TMBC Offices to make some administrative changes and was told that everything had to be done online. He thought that this was unfair for residents that didn't have access to a computer or for older residents that weren't computer literate. Cllr Rayner suggested making a formal complaint.

Cllr Hall asked whether we should pass a resolution for Cllr Rayner to be involved in all elements of our Highways Improvement Plan. Cllr Rayner said that a resolution would be required for him to bring information to the Environment and Transport Agenda, assuming he is re-elected.

The Clerk asked whether Cllr Rayner would be attending our Annual Parish meeting to give a report and he said yes.

7. MATTERS ARISING

Highways & PROW Matters –Oldbury Lane 20mph consultation – Feedback – The Clerk said that she had received 45 responses, 44 agreeing with the proposal and 1 disagreeing. The deadline is Friday 25th April and the Clerk will have some surveys available for people to complete at our annual parish meeting on 24th April. We have yet to hear from the school, and The Clerk will chase them up. The Clerk will pass the results to our Highways Officer in the first week of May. **Update on Bates Hill traffic calming and reduction of speeds at Ightham Common** - This is currently with Kent Highways. **Old Lane declassification – Stopping Up Order update** – The Clerk reported that she had gone back to Highways to say that the Stopping Order wasn't what we were looking for and has been referred to another department. It was **Resolved** that we would write to Cllr Rayner if he is re-elected, to help us progress this. **Signage at Ightham Rec** – Cllr Mitchem reported that she had spoken to the Tennis Club and Scouts about putting up a large sign on posts near to the car park entrance. The sign will be 2m x 1m, in aluminium and will cost £1,400. The sign will have the Scout HQ, Tennis Club and car park on it. It will cost £40 to do mock-ups with artwork, this was agreed. A question was raised about planning permission and the Clerk will find out. Cllr Mitchem has additionally requested a smaller recreation ground and parking sign from Kent Highways and this has been added to our HIP. **Highways quote from Velocity** – we have received a quote from Velocity to assist us in continuing to seek agreement for a 20mph speed limit on The Street. We have been quoted £2,000 for an initial stage including a site visit to assess the current geometry and characteristics of The Street, request collision data and look at anecdotal evidence. They would review in detail whether the guidance has been properly applied by KCC. It was **unanimously agreed** that we should engage them to do this as we believe that there should be a 20mph limit at this location. Assuming the above allows scope for design considerations, there would be a further 2 stages including designs and engagement with Kent Highways, costing a further £6,000. It was agreed that we will decide on this after stage 1 has been completed. Cllr Hall asked what had happened since to our highways request at the JTB? Cllr Rayner and Cllr Mitchem reported that our request had been referred back to the Highways Authority who made a reassessment and decided that the scheme was unworkable. Cllr Rayner suggested that we should pass a resolution to say that we would be pressing our KCC elected member to take forward as much of our HIP as possible. A question was raised about whether this could include the downgrading of A227? Cllr Rayner said that was out of the remit of the KCC manifesto. Cllr Rayner left at 8.30pm.

Request for mirrors on Back Lane junction – A member of public wrote to the Clerk requesting mirrors at the junction of Back Lane as the sight lines are very poor. It was agreed that this would be a good idea and the Clerk will look into costs and options. The Clerk also mentioned that the bus stop at Back Lane was in a very poor state and in need of cleaning/refurbishment. Cllr Mitchem reminded Councillors that she has looked into a replacement a few years ago. It was agreed that we should revisit this. **Coach Road** – Cllr Willingham reported that a resident has complained about speeding

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along Coach Road, Cllr Mitchem reported that Kent Highways had recently carried out speed surveys along Coach Road and concluded that it was not suitable for a speed reduction.

Allotments – Update – The Clerk reported that all rent had been paid for the year. Treeability has some outstanding work to do and Cllr Emmett has already completed some of the recommended work, he will liaise with Treeability.

Recreation Ground – Updates. **Quote car park repairs** – we have received a quote to fill the potholes for £4,858, this was approved. We have also received a quote for total resurfacing for £75,000. It was agreed that this wasn't necessary yet although, but we should start to reserve funding for this in the future. Cllr Willingham reminded Councillors that we had received a quote for tarmac in 2021 for £49k. TMBC originally said that we couldn't have tarmac because of drainage issues and potential damage to the Lime Trees. Councillor Willingham thought that this could be addressed if we decided in future to have tarmac. **Quote for fence repairs** - we have received a quote for £455 to repair the sleepers and replace the timbers near to the seating area, this was approved. The Clerk reported that the latch on one of the gates is broken and the recently repaired wetpour has started to come away and will go back to the contractors.

Village Hall - Update - Solar Panels – Cllr Holden reported that he now had the gas bills and would get a quote for the next meeting. **Feasibility Study** –the initial feedback is that the most economical option would be to keep the hall on the existing site. We are awaiting the results of the feasibility study. It was confirmed that our purpose was to provide improved facilities and increase hires and it was felt that it is important to have a community hall/meeting place. It was agreed that Cllrs Holden and Willingham would set up a meeting with the owner of Ightham Club, next door to discuss the project. Cllr Holden will give an update of the project to parishioners at the annual parish meeting. We will be seeking input from residents once we know what the options are and what the cost will be. We have been reserving for a new building for many years.

Flooding – Busty Stream. Drainage mapping - Nothing to report.

Oldbury Annexe – We have received correspondence from KCC to ask to terminate the lease now in advance of the break clause on 31st August as they have no use for the building but thought that the new academy trust is using the building. The Clerk and Cllr Willingham will speak to the school to see what the current arrangements are. The rent is paid up to the end August. An inspection will need to be arranged. The Clerk was asked to write back to KCC to advise that they correspond directly with the school and trust.

Annual Parish Meeting Thursday 24th April – Arrangements – The Clerk will buy wine and order glasses from Majestic. We have received reports from school and church and Tom Tugendhat has given apologies.

Defibrillator – Quote for replacement £850 plus VAT, this was approved.

Litter/Recycling - Update from litter pick - Cllr Mitchem reported that 4 people had attended the litter pick and collected 10 bags of rubbish. Cllr Mitchem had been in contact with Cllr Betts to find out how the annual litter budget at TMBC had been spent but didn't get a satisfactory response.

Archive - It was agreed that we should advertise for replacement archivist in the Parish magazine.

8. FINANCE & POLICY

8.1 The following accounts were submitted for payment, proposed by Cllr Clark and seconded by Cllr Mitchem – both initialled the invoices:

Clerks Salary & Expenses	£984.75
Gel Creative - (Standing Order)	£50.00
EDF – Electricity Pavilion (Direct Debit)*	£172.42
Zen Internet – Broadband at the Pavilion	£54.61
Anthony Edwards* -Parish and Churchyard maintenance	£1,058.52
James Hayward - trees and hedges	£624.00
Scribe – Set up Fee	£574.80

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Scribe – New Finance Package New Direct Debit	£62.40
nPower - unmetered supply recreation ground	£140.44
Ightham Village Hall – Rental	£262.50
Rialtas – Close down Year End Accounts	£723.60
Business Stream - Water rates for pavilion Direct Debit	£28.00

* Hourly rate increasing to £20ph

Income

Precept - £66,075.50

Balances 31.3.25 Current accounts £159,347.65, Deposit account £205,183.83 – Cllr Hall suggested moving money into the deposit account for the interest.

8.2 Review of Policy Documents: Financial Regs – Defer to May. Workplace Pension Scheme -

We have a legal requirement to set up a workplace pension scheme and the Clerk has been in contact with a financial advisor/accountant. It was agreed that we would use NEST and that the Parish Council would contribute 8% of Clerks salary over £520 threshold. We will engage an accountant to set up the scheme, the clerk thought it would be around 3 hours work at £85 per hour.

8.3 Gov.uk Email addresses - Defer

8.4 AGAR Form 3 2024/25 – To be approved at the June meeting

9 PLANNING

CTIL 14155826 MANOR FARM, TN15 9DG proposed upgrade to the existing telecommunications installation at Manor Farm to provide enhanced 2G and 4G coverage and new 5G service provision.
No comment.

9.1 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

25/00508/PA LITTLE HOLT, COPT HALL ROAD, IGHTHAM, SEVENOAKS, TN15 9DU. Demolition of existing car port and erection of two storey extension incorporating new garage with bedroom over.
“Objection on grounds of overdevelopment.”

25/00546/PA CHANCE COTTAGE, BATES HILL, IGHTHAM, SEVENOAKS, TN15 9HB. Right hand side of driveway to the front of the property: Fell to as close to ground level as possible 2 sycamores.
“No objection”

25/00577/PA REDWELL, REDWELL LANE, IGHTHAM, SEVENOAKS, TN15 9EE. Details of Condition 3 (materials) pursuant to planning permission TM/24/01048/PA (Proposed first floor rear extension onto balcony and internal alterations). *No comment*

25/00640/PA BRACKENWOOD, PINE TREE LANE, IVY HATCH, SEVENOAKS, TN15 0NJ. Small timber shed for incidental domestic use, sited entirely within the residential curtilage of Brackenwood, Pine Tree Lane. *“Objection on grounds of overdevelopment and note misrepresentation on the description of the shed which is referred to as a garage in the application.”*

25/00630/PA 1 EZEL VILLAS, BOROUGH GREEN ROAD, IGHTHAM, SEVENOAKS, TN15 9HU. Removal of existing conservatory and construction of a new single storey rear extension. *“No objection.”*

9.2 PLANNING DECISIONS – APPROVED

25/00218/PA THE GATEHOUSE, RECTORY LANE, IGHTHAM, SEVENOAKS, TN15 9AJ. S73 application for variation of condition 3 (plans) of planning permission TM/22/00567/FL (Proposed rear extension and internal alterations).

25/00279/PA REDWELL, REDWELL LANE, Ightham, SEVENOAKS, TN15 9EE. Listed Building Application: Installation of home 7kw Electric Vehicle charging point on wall at East side of property.

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25/00143/PA FARLEY COTTAGE, COPT HALL ROAD, IGHTHAM, SEVENOAKS, TN15 9DT. Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: Single storey rear extension.

25/00010/PA FIRCREFT, COPT HALL ROAD, IGHTHAM, SEVENOAKS, TN15 9DT. 1 x Willow (applicants ref. T4) - Reduce back to previous pruning points. Coppiced Willow (standing in front garden of Farley Cottage adjacent to the boundary with Fircroft - applicants ref. T6) - Prune branches back to previous pruning points. Standing in Area A2 of Tree Preservation Order.

25/00026/PA 70, NUTFIELDS, IGHTHAM, SEVENOAKS, TN15 9EA. Trees located on bank in rear garden in location of red line on applicants plan - Reduce the height of the Oak trees to previous reduction points, Reduce the height of the Birch trees by 6m, Lift the crowns of the Ash trees to 6m above ground level. All Standing in Woodland W1 of Tree Preservation Order.

24/01984/PA BOUNDARY OAST, FEN POND ROAD, IGHTHAM, SEVENOAKS, TN15 9JF. Timber orangery to replace the existing conservatory

9.3 LOCAL PLAN. www.tmbc.gov.uk/local-plan

10. CORRESPONDENCE – (* circulated in advance)

KALC News April 2025*

KALC – S.137 Expenditure - The new limit is £11.10 per elector

KALC Training Bulletin & Weekly Briefings

Parish Infrastructure Statement 2025 for completion – Deadline 1 June 2025

KALC SURVEY - 10 YEAR PLAN FOR THE NHS <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PY82TNZ> -

St Peter's Church, Ightham - churchyard working parties dates

Police CCTV Registry

Parish Partnership Panel - Thursday 29 May 2025 - 7.30pm – Cllrs Willingham and Hogarth will attend.

Letter from West Kent Mediation – Request for a donation – It was **agreed** we would contribute £50

Tonbridge Counselling Service – Request for a donation– It was **agreed** we would contribute £50

KCC Adoption of the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-39

PCC launches new Police & Crime Plan

KALC – Update to Chairman's database – Permission for details to be added – **agreed**

11. AOB – Cllr Hall reported that he had been in contact with the church about providing a maintenance schedule as the Parish Council currently contributes £8,000 year towards this. He also reported that the Parish Council were unhappy about the removal of the Lime Trees but noted that permission has now been granted by TMBC. There is other tree work that is required due to some damage to the headstones, and plans to take a sycamore down.

Cllr Burgham asked what we could do to close meetings earlier. It was agreed that we should start meetings at 7pm from May.

Cllr Mitchem reported that at the recent KALC meeting, concern was raised about what would happen when TMBC became part of a Unitary as they are currently debt free unlike other Boroughs.

Cllr Emmett asked whether we would be providing a wreath for VE Day? The Clerk will order one.

The meeting closed at 10.49 and went into Part 2.

Signed.....Dated.....