



6/25

Minutes of the meeting of IGHTHAM PARISH COUNCIL held on Tuesday 17 June 2025 at 7.00pm at Ightham Village Hall

MINUTES

Present: Cllr Willingham – Chair, Cllr Holden – Vice Chair, Cllr Burgham, Cllr Clark, Cllr Emmett, Cllr Gunson, Cllr Hogarth, Cllr Mitchem, The Parish Clerk, County Cllr Rayner, Borough Cllr Betts, The Chair of Governors, Ightham Primary School and 3 members of the Pioneer Academy Trust

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Cllr Hall

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS- None

3. PUBLIC - *None present*

4. MINUTES - The Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 20 May 2025 were approved with 3 minor amendments

5. INTRODUCTION FROM IGHTHAM SCHOOL PIONEER ACADEMY Counsellor Willingham welcomed representatives from Ightham Primary School. Paula Price, Chair of Governors, introduced the new head teacher, Sue Saheed, Vicky Marsh, Chair and Regional Director of the Pioneer Academy and Moira Pickering, Vice Chair of Governors. Vicky Marsh said that the governing board did a great job of academisation and reported that the Pioneer Academy covers schools in Kent and Surrey. They have 22 schools ranging from 40 to 900 pupils. Their aim is to secure school improvements and support staff with a well-established curriculum and engender safe happy learning. Even though the school is now part of the academy trust it will not lose the uniqueness of a community school. Councillor Willingham said that we have also always supported the school and would like to invite the new trust to come for us for any help. The school is still under Ofsted but now take their finances directly from central government. The budget is managed by the school. Sue Saheed has come from Halstead Primary School and has been in education for 19 years. Her school also did a conversion to an academy, so she understands the process. Halstead went from requiring improvement to outstanding and also achieved academic success with 100% of pupils achieving “expected” status. Councillor Willingham said that Cllr Hogarth was the parish representative for the school. Paula Price said that she hoped that we were reassured that the relationship between the school and parish council would continue. Councillor Holden asked where we were with Ightham annex as the school no longer had a relationship with KCC. Paula said that in terms of the lease, the academy trust was looking for a duplicate of the lease we had with KCC, starting on the 1st of September. The clerk will contact Warners to get a draft lease to send to the trust via Paula.

6. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR & BOROUGH COUNCILLOR - Borough Councillor Betts reported that the West Kent Rural Grants Scheme opened on the 16th of June. The scheme is run by Tonbridge and Malling and applicants can apply for a maximum of £20,000 or 50% of the project cost. The grant is aimed towards community groups who want to improve tourism and reduce carbon emissions. Councillor Betts asked for us to advertise the grant which will run until all the grant money is used up. There will also be another round of green business grants, which will start in three to four months.

Councillor Betts reported that Tonbridge and Malling headquarters, Gibson East will be refurbished to a carbon neutral standard and Gibson West will be sold or leased to save costs, currently around £20,000 per year. The buildings will need to be separated and work to start this will commence in a couple of months.

The UK Prosperity Fund has a new scheme to support new business start-ups and is giving grants of up to £500. Councillor Betts asked us to promote to anyone starting a new business.

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



Councillor Betts reported that a new enforcement manager is starting in the planning department at TMBC.

Councillor Betts reported that the PPP will remain but will encourage more engagement with parishes. Councillor Betts now has the housing portfolio and reported that there are 270 applications each month for housing in the borough. Councillor Betts aims to challenge the number of empty houses in the borough, currently more than 400. Land banking also needs to be addressed. A question was raised about staffing in the planning team; Councillor Betts said unfortunately the private sector are taking officers away and since the announcement of local government reorganisation, some officers have left as they are concerned about the future of their jobs. TMBC are doing a recruitment campaign which is looking positive.

Councillor Holden asked whether there was any news on the local plan? Councillor Betts reported that in October there will be a revised site allocation (Reg 18B), and we will have the opportunity to have a fresh look at the sites. The local plan is being pushed forward despite local government reorganisation. TMBC must build 1,100 homes per year which is putting them under immense pressure.

Councillor Mitchem asked Councillor Betts to follow up on the allocation of the litter picking budget and Councillor Betts said that he would chase this up.

Councillor Holden asked whether the green grants could be used towards solar panels and Councillor Betts said that the West Kent Rural Grant would support solar panels and parish councils would qualify. He reported that solar panels can now be incorporated into roofs.

County Councillor Rayner reported that Reform had appointed Linden Kemkaran as the leader of KCC and Richard Palmer as chair of East Kent. He reported that the leader was struggling to get members to attend training which is an issue as councillors are unable to sit on committees without formal training. No committee meetings have taken place since the election so there is no viable business to report.

Councillor Rayner reported that arrangements are in process for the sale of County Hall and there will be a meeting next week. There is a recommendation that Sessions House is sold, and Invicta house will be renovated. Reform has to make savings of £85 million and with the recent government announcement but there will be a transfer of funds of £15 billion away from southern counties, this will likely result in a further £15 million in savings for Kent. This can only be balanced with the sale of significant assets.

The Government is proceeding on the basis that KCC will no longer exist from 2028 although councillor Rayner believed they would struggle to afford the upfront cost of bringing in unitaries. Councillor Rayner has suggested that KCC starts to plan for a new wave of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. With the recent events in the Middle East this is only likely to increase.

Councillor Emmett reported that he was proposing to take KCC to court over the state of Old Lane - Councillor Rayner recommended that he quoted the highways qualifications and stated that they did not meet the criteria laid down in the law.

Councillor Holden commented that the approach of KCC seems to be to dispose of assets, whenever there is a shortfall of funds, to fix the gap. Councillor Rayner said that The Government will permit local authorities with funding issues to sell capital assets to plug revenue gaps, this has already happened in Croydon, Thurrock and Medway. Councillor Emmett reported that once assets are sold, they're gone forever.

Councillor Rayner left the meeting.

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



7. MATTERS ARISING

Highways & PROW Matters – KCC are currently consulting on the Oldbury Lane 20mph TRO; the consultation deadline is 23.6.25. The Clerk reported that Oldbury Close had mistakenly been included in the drawings but is a private road so will not be included.

Old Lane declassification update – The Clerk circulated a comprehensive email from KCC concerning the maintenance of Old Lane. KCC have confirmed that they have a statutory duty to maintain it under s.41 of the Highways Act 1980, and the lane now features on their “unfunded risks/problem sites”. We have been warned that it is low priority, and funding is short so will take some time. IPC have offered funding to speed things along. Cllr Emmett reported that he wished to contact the legal department at KCC to pursue a claim and this will be on his own behalf rather than on behalf of Ightham Parish Council.

Pedestrian walking sign on Bates Hill – we are looking for an alternative site for the signage to be positioned as the verge that it was due to be positioned on is no longer viable.

Mirror on Back Lane junction – it was suggested that we need 2 mirrors to cover both directions, the Clerk will get some quotes.

Back Lane bus stop – update – The Clerk has reported the bus stop to KCC to refurbish the timetable case and has requested a clean although it is our responsibility. It was suggested that we looked at employing a contractor to remove the green algae. Cllr Emmet suggested someone who advertises in the Parish magazine. The Clerk said that the Leathercote sign also needs cleaning and perhaps they could do both.

Velocity has sent us a comprehensive report looking into a 20mph speed limit on The Street. Velocity confirmed that KCC had done their research and followed the correct DfT guidelines. They have however suggested that we may be suitable for a DfT trial site for village centres and Cllr Mitchem has asked them to follow up on this to see whether it is worthwhile pursuing.

Cllr Emmet reported that he had stopped a parent from crossing A25; the Clerk will ask the school to put a reminder in the newsletter to use the footbridge. Double yellow lines have now been approved at Dark Hill.

Clerk to report weeds on the centre islands between Perfetto and Crown Point.

Allotments – Repairs to gate post, we have received a quote for £300, this was agreed. Cllr Emmett has spoken to the resident about fly-tipping garden waste.

Recreation Ground – Car park repairs have been completed. Repairs to goal post – no update.

Tennis club and recreation ground path lights – Cllr Willingham to follow up with the electrician.

Playground repairs – we are awaiting a quote for some minor repairs including to the gate latch. The Clerk has a meeting to discuss wet pour surfacing on 26 June. Ightham Sign – Cllr Mitchem had been in contact with the Royal British Legion about the new sign but has received no further response and suggested that we use Sign of The Times instead, they have quoted £740 plus £50 delivery - this was agreed. The Tennis Club and Scouts have sent their logos, and the Football Club have confirmed that they would like to be included on the sign. The sign will be in aluminium, 2m x 1m and fixed onto 2 posts. Cllr Mitchem will get designs and colour ways to circulate. We are still awaiting a design from KCC for a recreation ground road sign which is on our HIP.

It was reported that James Hitchcock had stood down from the Football Club, we are waiting for the new contact details. James Reid from scouts has reported that there is a possibility of a second Ightham football team but raised concerns about the lack of capacity for them to use the pavilion facilities due to the 5% limit on hires.

Village Hall - The Village Hall Committee met with Theis Khan last week and were shown some designs and costings. Cllr Holden will investigate finance options before we take this to the next stage. Agreed.

New defibrillator – The Clerk reported that the new defibrillator was in situ. It was suggested that we offer the old defib to The Plough to cover Ivy Hatch.

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



Flooding – Busty Stream – Cllr Clark reported that the Busty needs clearing, the Clerk will ask James Hayward. Drainage mapping - Nothing to report. Cllr Holden asked Councillors to inspect drains after recent flooding incidents in East Kent.

Oldbury Annexe – Update. Inspection and new lease – The Clerk will ask Warners to draft a new lease and will arrange an inspection. Cllr Hogarth suggested that we ask for a deposit, this was agreed.

Archive - Advertise for replacement archivist – The Clerk has placed an advert in the Parish magazine.

Clerks Appraisal – Cllr Holden suggested that we do the appraisal at the annual budget meeting, this was agreed.

8. FINANCE & POLICY

8.1 The following accounts were submitted for payment and approved: Proposed by Cllr Emmet and seconded by Cllr Burgham

Clerks Salary & Expenses	£967.54
Clerks Pension	£30.37
Employer NI Contribution June 2025 DD	£tbc
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	£1,249.60
James Hayward - trees and hedges April & May	£1,764.00
Scribe – New Finance Package DD	£62.40
Business Stream - Water rates for pavilion DD	£28.00
WelMedical – New Defibrillator	£1,020.00
TMBC – ASB Team contribution	£1,000.00
KALC – Annual Planning Conference	£84.00
Tyrrells – Repairs to fence and gate at rec	£546.00
Bastion – Repairs to car park	£5,830.50
Clear Councils Insurance – Insurance policy	£3,783.18
Velocity - Highways Report	£2,400.00
Theis Khan - Architect RIBA Stage 1 fees	£3,000.00
Julia Weller – Internal Audit	£500.00
Transfer from NW current account to Unity	£50,000.00

Income - Interest £255.59

Balances 31.5.25 Current accounts: Unity **£62,208.40**, NatWest **£87,551.36**

NatWest Deposit account **£283,753.96**. The Clerk passed statements and bank reconciliations to Cllr Holden.

Cllrs Gunson and Clark initialled invoices and Cllr Hogarth will authorise payments.

8.2 Review of Policy Documents: Financial Regs/Standing Orders – Cllr Holden has reviewed the Finance Regs and raised a couple of queries regarding quotes, the Clerk will cross check against the standing orders. Emergency Report - Clerk to circulate.

8.3 Insurance Policy renewed – The Clerk reported that she had spent some time with the insurance Company reviewing our policy and that there were several clauses that are standard. The Clerk thanked Councillor Gunson for her comments on the policy. A couple of amendments have been made, and we have renewed the policy effective 1st June.

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



8.4 AGAR Form 3 2024/25

1. To Note the Annual Internal Audit Report - Approved. Cllr Holden noted that we need to look at gov.uk email addresses for Councillors. The Clerk reported that other Parishes had some issues with these addresses, Cllr Emmett recommended that we seek advice from his computer contact.
2. To approve and sign the annual governance statement 2024/5 – Approved and signed by Cllr Willingham and the Clerk
3. To approve and sign the Accounting Statements 2024/5– Approved and signed by Cllr Willingham and the Clerk
4. To note the bank reconciliation, analysis of variances and reserves reports – Accepted.
5. To note the notice period for the exercise of public rights - 20th June to 31st July

8.5 NatWest Mandate - Agreement to sign mandate to remove ex councillors Cracknell, Fielder, Chartres, Edwards and Brierley from both NW accounts – Cllrs Mitchem and Willingham signed. (The Clerk noted that the mandate had been previously signed but not applied over both accounts)

9 PLANNING

9.1 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

25/00748/PA 19, FEN MEADOW, IGHTHAM, SEVENOAKS, TN15 9HT. 1 x Goat Willow (Applicant's Ref: T1 circled black on location map) Reduce by 50% from current height of 17m x 12m spread to a height of 9m x 6m spread, removing weight and spread from crown to reduce failure. Tree has several past split limbs and snap outs in crown. Standing in Group G2 Tree Preservation Order. "No objection."

25/00872/PA VIEWLANDS, JUBILEE CRESCENT, IGHTHAM, SEVENOAKS, TN15 9AE. Proposed single storey side extension. "Objection - this extension appears to be very out of keeping with the look and building style of the rest of the Crescent. Residents, who have made changes, have been mindful of the uniform appearance of the houses as a group and have been careful to choose materials (red brick and terracotta roof tiles) that reflect that building tradition".

25/00917/PA MIDSUMMER MEADOW, Sevenoaks Road, Ightham, Sevenoaks, TN15 9AD. Lawful Development Certificate Existing: Use of former annex as independent. "No comment"

9.2 PLANNING DECISIONS – APPROVED

25/00811/PA LAND BETWEEN OLDBURY HATCH AND OLDBURY HOUSE, Oldbury Lane, Ightham, Sevenoaks. Non-Material Amendment to planning permission TM/24/00467/PA to alter the position of the terrace steps at the rear.

25/00771/PA THE TOWN HOUSE, THE STREET, IGHTHAM, SEVENOAKS, TN15 9HH. Beech tree-reduce overall height to 2m in line with the fence height. Due to loss of light to the property.

25/00772/PA CHURCH OF ST PETER, FEN POND ROAD, IGHTHAM. Holly tree T1 - Holly tree growing close to/on tomb stone causing damage. Remove to as close to ground level as possible.

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/side extension.

25/00378/PA LITTLE HOLT, COPT HALL ROAD, IGHTHAM, SEVENOAKS, TN15 9DU. Conversion of existing double garage to home office.

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).

25/00106/PA LAND AT NUTFIELDS, IGHTHAM, SEVENOAKS. 2 x Oak, 1 x Silver Birch, 1 x Willow and 1 x Sycamore (applicants ref. T2, T3, T8, T10 and T14) - Remove as specified in Report by The Tree Consultants dated 23rd August 2024 and received on the 22nd January 2025. 2 x Oak (applicants ref. T4 and T7) - Reduce as specified in Report by The Tree Consultants dated 23rd August 2024 and received on the 22nd January 2025. 1 x Beech and 1 x Sweet Chestnut (applicants

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



ref. T12 and T13) - Reduce height as specified in Report by The Tree Consultants dated 23rd August 2024 and received on the 22nd January 2025. (3 x dead Silver Birch, 1 x dead Cotoneaster and 2 x dead Oak (applicants ref. T1, T5, T6, T9, T11 and T15) - Remove/fell as specified). All standing in Woodland W1 of Tree Preservation Order.

10. CORRESPONDENCE – (* circulated in advance)

KALC News May 2025*

KALC Training Bulletin & Weekly Briefings

Parish Infrastructure Statement 2025 - The Clerk reported that we could only include items where we had some costings and suggested that we include a new village hall, this was agreed.

Local Government Reorganisation – Training 26th June 2025

Road Safety & Active Travel Group Newsletter

Clerks' Forum is on Tuesday 15th July 2025

Chairmans' Forum 22nd July 2025

Local Government Reorganisation - Parish Partnership Panel

Consultation on a town council for Tonbridge

News highlights for Tonbridge and Malling

KALC Planning Conference 2025 – Clerk attending 20.6.25

KALC AI Training – Clerk attending 18.6.25

KALC EGM – Local Government Reorganisation – Clerk attending 19.6.25

Date of next meeting Tuesday 22nd July – Cllr Hogarth gave apologies. August meeting to be on Wednesday 20th August.

11. AOB – Cllrs Hogarth and Clark reported that the speedwatch sign on Borough Green Road had been damaged and removed twice.

Cllr Clerk reported the SBS taxi signs had been put up in various locations.

The meeting went into Part 2 and closed at 10.03pm

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

