

**STELLING MINNIS PARISH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 MARCH 2026 HELD AT 7.30PM IN  
STELLING MINNIS VILLAGE HALL**

**Present:** Parish Cllr Max Couch (Chairman)  
Parish Cllr Ann Day  
Parish Cllr Nick Smith  
Parish Cllr Robert Hubble  
Parish Cllr Garry Watts  
Parish Cllr Sally Morley-Smith

Gail Hubbard, Clerk to the Council  
There was one member of the public present.

The Chairman began by reading out the statement about filming and recording during the meeting.

**46. APOLOGIES, DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS**

- 46.1 Apologies for absence received and confirmed by the Council Members who cannot attend a meeting. These shall be tendered to the Parish Clerk prior to the meeting, under Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, the members present must decide whether the reason(s) for a member's absence shall be accepted. Apologies received from Cllr Haffenden and FHDC Cllr Jenny Hollingsbee. Cllr Martin to arrive late as firstly attending Stanford's PC meeting.
- 46.2 Declaration of changes to the Register of Interests. There were none
- 46.3 To receive Declarations of Interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda. In accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 in respect of members and in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect of officers. There were none.
- 46.4 Requests for Dispensations. There were none.
- 46.5 Declarations of Lobbying. There were none.

**47. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 14 JANUARY 2026**

The minutes from the previous meeting on 14 January were proposed by Cllr Day, seconded by Cllr Morley-Smith and AGREED as record of the meeting. The minutes were duly signed by the Chairman.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There was none.

**48. CORRESPONDENCE**

The following items of correspondence had been circulated to the Cllrs;

- 48.1 KCC Highways – invite to RSATG Road safety seminar, Two events in April. Clerk is already planning to attend Deal event and Cllr Hubble volunteered to attend the Deal event as well, clerk to book a space.
- 48.2 Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government – consultation on Local Government reorganisation in Kent
- 48.3 FHDC – invite to next meeting at SMVH items on agenda: District food network/community energy/Economic appraisal of district

## 49. PLANNING

### 49.1 RECEIVED updates on planning matters

Cllr Hubble provided an update on the Bower Farm planning enforcement case, he reported that the defendants had not attended the court hearing in February. All parties have been notified and are awaiting feedback from FHDC.

Cllr Hubble also gave the following updates:

- He had reported the water leak in Curtis Lane
- The Curtis Lane sign had been demolished again by a lorry; Cllr Hubble has re-straightened and will reinstate it.
- Cllr Hubble has written to the highways officer about the potholes in Curtis Lane and had reported to highways the terrible state of Sandy Lane, sections of this road have now been resurfaced, which is a great improvement.
- Cllr Hubble raised the issue of vehicles driving on the grass outside the shop, very close to the new SMPC bench. He suggested a section of fencing could be installed to protect the bench. There were some discussions and several other suggestions including concrete blocks or a large tree in a pot to protect the bench. However as this is Minnis land permission would need to be sought to position something in this location. Cllr Smith had already asked Cllr Haffenden to speak with the land agents on this matter, no response as yet. Item to be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

### 49.2 DISCUSSED new planning applications received

None		
------	--	--

### 49.3 NOTED decisions by the planning authority

None		
------	--	--

## 50. VILLAGE MATTERS

### STELLING MINNIS HIP REVIEW

The clerk updated the council on the outcome of the of the HIP online meeting she had with the new highways community engagement officer for Folkestone district. The details are shown in the snippet below.



### Highway Improvements Team working in Partnership with Stelling Minnis Parish Council Highway Improvement Plan (HIP)

#### Live Priorities Record

Priority	Location	Has this issue been raised previously?	Problem/Concern	What are your objectives/ what options would you like KCC to consider?	KCC Comments
Please prioritise issues in the order of most importance	Please be as specific as possible	Y/N	Please provide details of any evidence that you have	Please refer to the Highway Information Pack. Whilst we will investigate specific requests, it is essential to be clear on what the problem is that is trying to be resolved so that we can work with you to ascertain the most suitable solution	<b>This column is to be completed by the Community Engagement Officer ONLY</b>
1.	Curtis Lane	Y	This is a very narrow stretch of road where the hedges impinge on either side of the road making it even narrower. This often means any speed limit signs can't even be seen.	If a 30mph limit is not possible what is the criteria for it to be reduced to 40mph.  At present you pull off Stone Street with a 50mph limit onto a narrow rural road with a 60mph limit – this makes no sense.	02/03/26 LC – Advised PC that given that the existing average speeds are below 30mph, implementing a 40mph speed limit would probably increase speeds as 40mph would become a target. There are also no crashes in the last five years to suggest a safety issue. LC to speak to wider team to see if a 40mph speed limit is feasible.
2.	Stelling Minnis central village roads	N	Speed of vehicles travelling through and around the village	20mph limit for centre of village roads	02/03/26 LC – Any newly implemented speed limit needs to be over a minimum of 600m distance, Minnis Lane alone does not meet this and so LC to speak to wider team to see if a wider 20mph speed limit is feasible. LC to deliver a 30mph toolkit in the meantime.

The wider team had now responded and felt they might be able to support the 20mph scheme and were looking at how the minimum length of road could be incorporated. There would be a considerable cost involved with a 20mph limit as the TRO (Traffic Regulation Order) is £3000 before any works are even carried out. This might mean the scheme would not be viable for SMPC to pursue.

The 30mph toolkit had been delivered to the clerk and was given out to Cllrs at the meeting; this includes a large banner to be displayed in the parish, 30mph stickers for residents wheelie bins, to dish out and some posters which might be able to be displayed in the shop. Cllr Watts took the banner and was going to seek permission to site on the Minnis or private landowners' boundary.

### **ON STREET EV CHARGING SCHEME**

The latest KCC funding scheme for EV chargers is for on street chargers rather than off street provision so there is no opportunity to re-apply for the village hall carpark at this point. Residents can nominate streets that they believe would benefit from on street EV chargers, however this seems to be aimed at areas where properties do not have driveways and could not install their own chargers.

Residents can continue to nominate their street for public chargers using an interactive map on KCC's website: [www.kent.gov.uk/onstreetev](http://www.kent.gov.uk/onstreetev).

### **STELLING MINNIS VILLAGE HALL 25 YEAR CELEBRATION**

Cllr Day advised Cllrs that plans were currently under discussion to hold an event to mark this celebration, possibly an afternoon tea, with a provisional date of Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July. There is a VH Committee meeting next week when this will be discussed further.

### **KENT INVICTA FLAG**

Cllr Day asked if SMPC would consider the purchase of a Kent Invicta flag to fly from the flagpole from the CIL funds. There was some discussion over size (probably a 2 yard flag would be required) and costs of flag but the matter was deferred until the next SMPC meeting. There was also mention of a bench for outside the hall to commemorate 25 years, but this was not pursued any further at this point.

FHDC Cllr Martin arrived at 8.15pm.

## **51. ANNUAL PARISH MEETING ARRANGEMENTS**

The poor attendance at these meetings recently was discussed along with any ideas to encourage better attendance. Cllr Day suggested that an invite was put on the SMPC Facebook page inviting local groups to attend and speak at this years APM, in a hope to also boost their own numbers and increase awareness in the village. Clerk to action. No refreshments to be served at this years meeting as it was felt it was not worthwhile.

## **52. REPORTS**

The full reports can be found in the Appendix at the end of the minutes.

52.1	Website report	Cllr Smith
52.2	Kent County Council	Cllr Hespe
52.3	FHDC Council	Cllr Hollingsbee/Cllr Martin
52.4	Village Hall	Cllr Day
52.5	The Windmill	Cllr Morley-Smith

## **53. FINANCE**

**53.1 NOTED** receipts of income

None	0.00
<b>TOTALS    £0.00</b>	

**53.2 NOTED** the forthcoming CIL payment from FHDC for 23/1967 totalling £359.72.

**53.3 AUTHORISED** payments

**Direct Debits to note**

DD	Hugo Fox – monthly website fee Jan & Feb	23.98
DD	Unity Trust – account charge Jan & Feb	12.00
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>£25.98</b>

**Payments for authorisation**

CHQ044	Clerks salary – February	324.80
CHQ045	SMS CIS and payroll solutions	36.00
CHQ046	Age UK Hythe & Lyminge – annual grant	100.00
CHQ047	Clerks salary – March	317.00
CHQ526	HMRC – final QTR PAYE payment	237.80
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>£1015.60</b>

The above payments were proposed by Cllr Hubble, seconded by Cllr Smith and AGREED for payment.

**53.4 NOTED** the Unity banking forms were signed by Cllr Smith and Cllr Morley-Smith to add them as signatories.

**53.5 RECEIVED** the bank reconciliation to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026. The Cllrs received and noted the latest bank reconciliation.

**54. AOB FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

Cllr Hubble shared that the 5k run is being arranged again this year with funds raised split between the School/Churches/Village Halls.

Cllr Day mentioned she is holding a lunch at The Rose & Crown on 29<sup>th</sup> March to raise funds for Upper Hardres Church, they need £8,000 for urgent repairs. Tickets can be purchased from Cllr Day.

The meeting closed at 8.38pm.

*Dates of future meetings: 13 May Statutory Annual Meeting, 20 May Annual Parish Meeting, 8 July, 9 September, 11 November 2026.*

Signed..... (Chairman)

Date.....

## APPENDIX

### SMPC REPORTS 11 MARCH 2026

#### 52.1 Website Report

Community site working as should at present, no issues.

Cllr Nick Smith

#### 52.2 Kent County Councillor Update Report – Cllr Chris Hespe

##### Local Government Reorganisation

The government's public consultation ends on 26 March 2026 and it is anticipated that the shape of local government in Kent will be announced in early July. KCC strongly believes that 'Option 1A' is the best for the County, involving a single Unitary authority with three Area Assemblies. This would provide the strategic capability; avoid costly and disruptive disaggregation of 'people-based' services such as Adult Social Care and SEND; provide local level services, and be significantly less expensive than all the other options. Option 1A is £459 million less expensive than one of the other options being put forward by district councils, and currently there is no indication that central government would meet those costs. KCC is concerned that the costs of local government reorganisation would fall on the local Council Taxpayers. You will find all options from Kent detailed on the Kent Leaders' website and on the KCC website. Please make your views known.

##### School Places

96% of Kent pupils have been offered one of their preferred secondary schools for September 2026; that is 17,941 pupils – an increase of 304 children from the past year.

##### Trading Standards Alert

Please be aware that Trading Standards has received reports of doorstep criminals in East Kent, intimidating residents into paying for gutter clearance and online investments.

##### Kent Film Office

The Kent Film Office has just celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of supporting film and TV in Kent. Over this period, £85 million of increased investment has been generated; it has supported hundreds of placements into the industry and strengthened Kent's growing creative sector. Its work continues to bring jobs, skills and fresh opportunities to local people, whilst promoting Kent's heritage, coast and countryside on screen.

##### Playground Festival

KCC is organising a programme of creative activities for babies and young people between 22 and 31 May 2026, involving 150 events at 20 venues, primarily libraries and community hubs. For more information, visit [www.playgroundkent.co.uk](http://www.playgroundkent.co.uk)

##### Infrastructure Funding Statement

KCC continues to secure significant Section 106 contributions from developers to support education, highways, adult social care and community services. This funding helps KCC to deliver new school places, invest into local roads, improve public rights of way and strengthen community facilities. The annual KCC Infrastructure Funding

Statement is online on the KCC website, and contains a breakdown by district for 2024/25.

### **Kent and Medway Business Fund**

The Fund, which helps local businesses to grow, innovate and create jobs, is open for applications. Since November 2025, 17 new loans with a total value of £2 million have been issued. Details can be found on the Web.

### **Kent and Medway Growth Hub**

The Hub provides support to businesses as they grow, adapt and plan for the future. In the first three quarters of 2025/26, the Hub supported 1,106 businesses and gave targeted support to 770 of them. Businesses are given practical tools to help them succeed. Recent workshops organised have been on digital marketing, artificial intelligence in business and starting a business.

### **Visit Kent and Invest Kent (formerly Locate in Kent)**

Invest Kent provides guidance on property, talent, supply chains and local networks. Visit Kent has resumed its active marketing to encourage visitor footfall across the County. Spring will see the launch of free access to business and marketing support for tourism bodies (see VisitKent website for details).

Chris Hespe  
Kent County Councillor for Elham Valley  
10 March 2026

## **52.3 District Councillor Reports**

### **Cllr Elaine Martin**

#### **New affordable homes**

The first council tenants have begun to move into newly built, affordable rent homes on the Risborough Barracks development in Folkestone. A total of 44 homes are due to be completed by the Autumn and will all be allocated to applicants on the council's housing list. Six new homes are also being provided by the council in Lyminge and will also be let at affordable rents to those on the waiting list. All the new properties have an EPC rating B – keeping energy costs down for residents and supporting the council's carbon reduction ambitions.

#### **Council agrees balanced budget**

Folkestone & Hythe District Council's 2026/27 budget – the third in succession not to be funded from general reserves – has been approved. While it provides £20m to be spent on key services supporting residents across the district, there is also a strong focus on the future. An improved council tax reduction scheme is also being introduced to further help working age, low-income households. The budget is supported by a 2.99% increase in the district council's portion of council tax (equivalent to approximately 17p a week for a Band D property). The council is responsible for collecting council tax but 75% of the money is distributed to other services e.g. Kent Fire and Rescue.

#### **LGR Consultation**

Government ministers have launched a consultation on the five options for the future number of local authorities in Kent and Medway has begun and is open until Thursday 26 March. They want to hear views from Kent organisations, residents and businesses on the biggest proposed shake up of local government in 50 years. Under the current

system KCC delivers some services such as education, social services and roads, and the district councils deliver others like emptying bins and providing housing services.

F&HDC councillors agreed last year to support the option known as 3a. This proposes three unitary authorities – east, west and north Kent and puts the current district together with the council areas of Dover, Thanet, Canterbury and Ashford. It also follows the area covered by the Police force, Kent Fire and Rescue and the NHS. To take part in the government’s consultation, visit [Local government reorganisation in Kent and Medway - GOV.UK](#). A decision on which option ministers have chosen is likely to be announced in the summer.

### **Freight to Rail**

Concerted lobbying by F&HDC Green Councillors and local MP, Sojan Joseph, has resulted in Network Rail securing the Barking Goods Yards resulting as an intermodal hub allowing the transfer of freight and goods from both lorries and the National Rail Network on to European gauge wagons which will allow freight to move seamlessly into mainland Europe. This intermodal hub has the potential to remove 140,000 lorries per year from the M20 and is a significant move in reducing traffic on the M20.

### **Folkestone A Brighter Future - halfway through**

The regeneration of Folkestone town centre is now more than halfway complete. The scheme has been running for ten months with work continuing at seven different sites around the town.

A new “green heart” is replacing the former Folkestone bus station at Bouverie Square with a more inviting space being created, including an area for play. The new linear bus station on Middelburg Square has progressed well, with some of the permanent bus shelters now installed. Cheriton Place will be the next site of works for the rest of March and into April with improvements to the footways and paving.

### **Folca building**

An important step towards bringing an iconic Folkestone building back into public use is to be made next week. Folca 2 – the Art Deco section of a former department store on Sandgate Road – will be subject to a range of improvement works ahead of its repurposing, starting Monday 9 March. Over six months, Folkestone-based company AW Construction will ensure the structure is watertight and ready for use. Specific tasks include an internal strip out, damp proofing, replacing the existing roof and some windows, and the installation of a new party wall which will separate it from Folca 1. The first visible work will be the removal of external stairs on Albion Mews Road as this is critical to the first phase major energy efficiency improvements. £1.44m from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme will be used to transform the building and reduce its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by over 100,000kg per year. Most of the work being carried out is internal, but scaffolding will be necessary on Albion Mews Road and Sandgate Road.

### **Folkestone Town of Culture bid**

More than 90 people attended workshops to help in the first stage of a possible bid for Folkestone to become the UK’s first Town of Culture. The workshop discussions and feedback will greatly assist the council to write an expression of interest in putting the town forward for the accolade. If successful the next stage would be the preparation of a full bid to gain the prestigious title and £3 million to fund a programme of cultural celebrations during 2028.

### **High Streets Connect and Grow Rural**

Free district-wide programmes are running to help businesses adapt, attract customers and grow. Free mentoring and interactive workshops are being offered as ideal for high street retailers, cafes, hospitality venues and visitor facing independents. The rural

programme will empower creative makers and diversification projects across Romney Marsh, the North Downs and rural communities. They are ideal for farm enterprises, rural producers, accommodation providers, home based makers and start ups. More information by emailing [economy@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk](mailto:economy@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk)

### **Good Food Retail Project**

Seven local shops in the east of Folkestone are taking part in a new project to promote eating well on a budget and staying healthy. The council is supporting the Kent County Council led project in which the stores are encouraged to stock healthy food choices and display recipe leaflets and advice about healthier eating.

### **Volunteer award scheme**

The search is on for volunteers who go that extra mile in dedicating their time and skills for others in the district. Nominations are open for the [Folkestone & Hythe Excellence in Volunteering Awards](#) run on behalf of the council by Kent Coast Volunteering. Awards will be presented in June and the deadline for nominations is Friday 17 April.

**Contact:** [Elaine.Martin@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk](mailto:Elaine.Martin@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk)

### **Cllr Jenny Hollingsbee**

**Budget** – the FHDC budget was set at the full Council Meeting held on 25 February. My group voted against the budget as we felt borrowing £6m to improve the Hythe Swimming Pool was not sensible. The Hythe Pool has been subsidised for many years and is constantly requiring maintenance. We feel this funding, together with S106 monies from the Nickolls Quarry development, should be put towards a new facility that could create additional income to help with running costs and for future sustainability. However, this could all be changed under the Local Government re-organisation when Folkestone & Hythe become part of a large Unitary Administration. We should know the government's decision on who we will merge with some time during the summer.

**My account** – My account is a good way of reporting issues to the Council. There is a long list of issues that can be reported in this way, for example fly tipping, missed bin, anti-social behaviour, noise nuisance, dangerous dog etc. If you have not registered go to [www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk](http://www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk) and click on My account at the top right hand corner

**Independent Custody Visitors** - The ICV Scheme is a statutory, volunteer-led programme that helps ensure people held in police custody are treated fairly, with dignity, and informed of their rights. Volunteers make unannounced visits to custody suites and play a vital role in safeguarding some of the most vulnerable people in our communities. Applications are welcomed from people of all backgrounds, identities, and lived experiences. If you'd like to give back, support your community, and help promote transparency in policing, this could be the role for you. Applicants must be at least 18 years old to apply. Find out more and to apply, please visit [kent-pcc.gov.uk/icv](http://kent-pcc.gov.uk/icv)

**Ward Grants** – the 2025/26 scheme is now closed and will re-open for 26/27 at the end of May.

## **52.4 Stelling Minnis Village Hall**

The Chairman is currently working on better advertising for the hall including its online presence. Cllr Day has been looking at the possibility for a different bank account as the current one is very limiting (cannot pay in cash).

Cllr Ann Day

### **52.5 Windmill**

AGM to be held soon, date TBC, nothing else to report at present.

Cllr Sally Morley-Smith