

A Meeting of the Parish Council was held at The Memorial Hall, The Street, Frittenden on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March at 7.30pm.

Present were: Cllr R Vernon  
Cllr A Staples  
Cllr M Viviers  
Cllr J Tuke  
Cllr L Gosbee

In attendance: Mrs E Nightingale (Clerk) & 1 member of the public

The meeting was chaired by Cllr Vernon.

## **PUBLIC FORUM:**

None

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr S Murray, Cllr C Russell (County), Cllrs A Fairweather & N Warne (Borough)

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct Part 2)**

None.

### **3. COUNTY COUNCILLOR UPDATE**

In advance of the meeting Cllr Russell had circulated a report by way of an update. Cllr Russell reported that:

The Kent County Council (KCC) budget was set with a 3.99% increase to the council tax household charge. A section 25 assurance statement published with the budget contained the following:

*“This approach does not come without significant risks with the risk on adult social care now considered to be on a par with the risk on special education needs (SEND) spend as the highest risks. The decision to raise the council tax household charge below the level permitted without a referendum poses a long-term financial risk as a result of the council tax income forgone.”*

Cllr Russell has been assisting Parish Councils with their applications to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) for grant funding for road improvements. She has also been trying to persuade TWBC to have a second round of bidding for any funds still available once the initial applications have been approved and paid out. Unfortunately, that suggestion has been refused and it is not yet known where the balance of the available funds will be directed. This will be something for Borough Councillors to investigate. Cllr Russell will continue to liaise with the relevant officers at KCC and Parish Councils over the summer to see where we are with the schemes that have been proposed.

Cllr Russell attended a meeting with the cabinet member for education and the KCC officers in relation to the provision of a non-selective secondary school in Cranbrook. The meeting went well and there are some positive next steps to take. A meeting about pavement parking in Cranbrook was also productive and it was interesting to listen to what the other authority members such as the police are doing about the ongoing situation.

Cllr Russell attended a meeting with KCC officers, a TWBC councillor and a parish council representative to discuss the road narrowing by Brook Place. She has also visited Frittenden Primary School where the headteacher kindly gave up some of her day so that Cllr Russell could understand school budgets and organisation from their side of things, which will be invaluable for her work on the Children's, Young People and Education Committee.

#### 4. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 6<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2026

It was proposed by Cllr Staples, seconded by Cllr Gosbee, and **RESOLVED** (1 abstention) that the Minutes from the Planning Meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2026 are a true and accurate record of that meeting. It was further proposed by Cllr Tuke, seconded by Cllr Gosbee, and **RESOLVED** (1 abstention) that the Minutes from the Meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2026 are a true and accurate record of that meeting. That being so, Cllr Vernon will sign the said Minutes as acting Chair.

#### 5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

##### Locking the Parish Field Gate

The Clerk is looking into the signage required advising of who to contact to obtain the combination for the lock.

##### Communications via social media

The agreed statement has been posted on the Community Facebook page.

##### Excavations adjacent to Water Lane

Headcorn Parish Council had kindly confirmed that the works were lawful. The Clerk will circulate its response to her query in that regard.

##### Misleading road closure signage

This item is outstanding. The clerk will write to the relevant officer at KCC in advance of the next meeting of the Council.

##### KALC Awards

The clerk had submitted the Council's nomination and invited KALC to consider it even though it was out of time. The Clerk will follow up with KALC.

##### Highway Improvement Grant

KCC have rejected the Council's proposal for a 20mph zone within the Village Gateways and/or a graduated speed limit (60mph to 40mph) on the approaches to the Village Gateways. It has however agreed to develop the following scheme to address the Parish's concerns around speeding through the village:

- (i) Upgrade of the Village Gateways on Cranbrook Road and Mill Lane;
- (ii) Erection of 20mph advisory plates on the WigWags (flashing lights) on The Street to create an advisory 20mph zone along the section of the road adjacent to the School / Preschool;
- (iii) Improved signage / road markings at the Village Gateways to highlight the start of the 30mph speed limit on the three main routes through the village (Cranbrook Road / Headcorn Road & Biddenden Road), to include the replacement of old, very faded 30mph signs.

As soon as KCC has provided designs and costings for the above scheme, the Clerk will submit an application to TWBC for grant funding. TWBC is still accepting applications but it is not known how long it will continue to do so. Cllr Russell had therefore kindly been assisting the

Clerk in trying to get the required information from KCC as soon as possible and has been liaising with TWBC.

## 6. COUNCILLOR VACANCY

The Clerk had not been notified by TWBC Elections Officer that the required number of electors had requested an election to fill the vacancy on the Parish Council following the resignation of Cllr Lawrence. It was therefore open to the Council to fill that vacancy by co-option.

Councillors discussed whether to do so but ultimately agreed to wait until the Council's current term ended and there were elections to constitute a new Council in April 2027. It would keep that decision under review and consider co-option before then if it became apparent that the Council was not able to function effectively with 6 rather than 7 members.

Cllr Staples noted that it would be good if the next Council included a member from Knoxbridge to ensure the whole Parish was represented.

## 7. GROUND MAINTENANCE CONTRACTOR

It was proposed by Cllr Viviers, seconded by Cllr Gosbee, and **RESOLVED** by all members present that the 2026/27 Grounds Maintenance Contracts 1, 3, 4 and 5 would be awarded to the current contractor, Groundcare & General Services and that Grounds Maintenance Contract 2 would be awarded to the current contractor, Nigel Sestanovic, both of whom were considered to be doing a good job.

## 8. EASTER FUN RUN 2026

It proposed by Cllr Vernon, seconded by Cllr Tuke and **RESOLVED** by all members present that the Parish Council would, once again, stage the Easter Fund Run with the organisation of that event delegated to Charlotte Boyd and any net proceeds being split equally between Frittenden Memorial Hall and Macmillan Cancer Support.

## 9. ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

Cllr Staples has been advised that Katie Lam MP is not able to attend the Annual Parish Assembly but that she would be happy to provide a report which could be handed or read out at the meeting.

Councillors were keen to ensure that the meeting was well attended as it represented an opportunity for the community to come together and find out more about the Parish Council and its activities. It was agreed that the Clerk should invite Cllr Russell to attend to provide a report on the activities of KCC. The Clerk will also invite the new Local Beat Officer from Kent Police to attend.

The Annual Parish Assembly will take place on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

## 10. UPDATE ON ROAD NARROWING BY BROOK PLACE

Cllr Vernon met with Adrian Bone to discuss the impact of the road narrowing on his property and business. Thereafter, he attended a meeting with KCC and Cllrs Russell and Fairweather during which he raised, amongst other things, the issues identified by Mr Bone. KCC has agreed to meet with Mr Bone and has also ordered an additional Stage 3 Safety Audit. Once available, the results of that audit will be shared with the Parish Council and discussed at the next scheduled Council meeting.

## **11. UPDATE FROM HANDS OFF OUR HERITAGE WORKING GROUP**

Cllr Vernon noted that the Working Group had shared with KCC the views of its Highways Consultant and, while KCC Highways were not wholly in agreement with those views, it had lodged a holding objection to the planning application. KCC's Conservation Officer had also lodged a holding objection relating to design issues. However, the relevant officer at KCC had made a full objection on the basis of drainage issues.

It appeared likely that the application would now be considered by TWBC's Planning Committee at a meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2026. The Working Group was liaising with the four members of the public who wanted to speak at the meeting.

## **12. VILLAGE FETE 2026**

Cllr Viviers confirmed that the fete will take place on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2026.

The Bell & Jorrocks would be selling food (paella) and providing a bar. Other local suppliers would be selling vegetarian food and burgers. A band had very kindly agreed to donate their time and there would be a brick a brac stall to raise funds to cover the costs of putting on the event. It was hoped that there would be other local sellers with stalls. The Fire Brigade based at Headcorn will be approached to see if they can send an engine for children to visit and a number of other events had been agreed.

The organising committee was now looking for volunteers to help with the setting up and clearing up before and after the event.

## **13. SPEEDWATCH**

Cllr Staples reported that there had been 5 sessions of Speedwatch since the last Council meeting. 15 out of 175 vehicles had been recorded at speeds of 35mph or greater. 1 letter had been sent out and the highest speed recorded was 41mph. Cllr Staples noted that the road narrowing by Brook place did appear to be having a traffic calming effect. During 2 sessions at Chestnut Close only 1 vehicle was recording speeding (out of 101 passing vehicles).

## **14. PLAYGROUND INSPECTIONS**

Cllr Gosbee had taped off the slide and erected notices explaining that it had been taped off because it was unsafe. Unfortunately, someone had removed the tape and pulled up the plywood used to temporarily repair the bottom step, leaving bits of wood strewn around the foot of the steps. Cllr Gosbee will, once again, tape off the slide and the Clerk will put a post on the Community Facebook page explaining that the slide was closed pending repair for the safety of users of the playground.

The Clerk reported that she had met a local contractor to discuss whether the steps / slide was capable of economic repair or whether it would be a better use of the Council's funds to replace with new. The contractor had also looked at the other pieces of equipment, having had received from the Clerk a copy of the latest RoSPA Annual Inspection report, and they had advised that the rooster rocker be replaced. All other items were sound, but needed cleaning. The Clerk had asked the contractor to put together quotes for the various options that were available for renovating the mound / slide and replacing the rooster. Once that information was available, the next step will be discussed by the Council and alternative quotes can be maintained for the chosen scheme.

Cllr Gosbee noted that the wire stock fencing within the hedge between the Parish Field and Laundry Lane had been trampled down, meaning that dogs and/or children could get through the

hedge. The Clerk was asked to approach a local contractor for a quote for replacing the damaged fencing.

## 15. ROAD REPORT

Cllr Gosbee noted that a glug machine had gone down Sunnyside and cleared three drains. However, it had not gone on to clear any other of the drains in the village. It was unclear why that was the case.

Cllr Gosbee had reported a very large pothole on Grandshore Lane as a danger to life because it represented a significant risk to cyclists or motorcyclists, particularly after dark. Cllr Gosbee was pleased to note that the pothole was repaired within two hours of that report. 85-90% of the potholes on Biddenden Road had also been repaired and Cllr Gosbee has put a cone on a pothole on Headcorn Road.

## 16. PLANNING

### New Applications

- None

### Outcome of Previous applications

26/00002/FULL	Land North of East Barn, Headcorn Road, Frittenden Conversion of barn to dwelling with proposed extension; associated garage, garden land, parking & landscaping enhancements (Alternative scheme to permission 25/00681/FULL) <b>PERMISSION REFUSED</b>
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### Planning appeals

- None

## 17. GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

- Correspondence had been received about the hedge behind the tennis court. The Clerk was instructed to obtain a quote from the Ground Maintenance Contractor for the cost of taking out the hedge. Once that information was to hand, the Council will consider the available options.

## 18. FINANCE

- It was proposed by Cllr Viviers, seconded by Cllr Gosbee, and **RESOLVED** by all members present to pay the accounts as follows:

FRITTENDEN PAYMENTS – MARCH 2026					
Cheque Number	GROSS	VAT	NET	SUPPLIER	DETAILS
BACS	£22.00	Nil	£22.00	Frittenden Memorial Hall	Hall Hire (Feb planning meeting & Mar Council meeting)
BACS	£54.94	£9.46	£45.78	FCC Waste Management Ltd	Litterbins (Feb)

BACS	£57.20	Nil	£57.20	Mrs E Nightingale	Clerk's Expenses - Mar
BACS	£228.87	Nil	£228.87	Mrs E Nightingale	Clerk's Salary - Mar
BACS	£57.20	Nil	£57.20	HMRC	PAYE
BACS	£250.00	Nil	£250.00	Mr N Sestanovic	Ground Maintenance Contract 2 – 2025/26
BACS	£702.00	£117.00	£585.00	Transport Planning Associates Ltd	Professional Fees re: Bellview planning application
BACS	£1,260.48	£450.00	£1,050.40	Iceni Projects	Professional Fees re: Bellview planning application
DD	£11.99	£2.00	£9.99	Hugo Fox	Website Hosting
DD	£20.99	£3.50	£17.49	Hugo Fox	Domain & 5 x email addresses
DD	£97.18	£4.63	£92.55	NPower	Electricity for streetlighting
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,762.85</b>	<b>£347.09</b>	<b>£2,416.48</b>		

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 20:56pm.

Chairman's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_