

Luddesdown Parish Council

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**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Luddesdown Parish Council
held on Monday 9th March 2026 at 7:30pm
in Luddesdown Village Hall**



Members Present:

Cllr P Crow
Cllr L Martin
Cllr J Rossouw
Cllr L Rossouw
Cllr G Mead

In Attendance:

Cllr D Morton, KCC, Cllr D Dibben, GBC, Charles Amis – Clerk
& Responsible Financial Officer
7 parishioners

1. Apologies for Absence: To receive and accept apologies –

Cllr S Jassal (unconfirmed)

2. Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest.

3. To approve minutes of the previous Parish Council Budget meeting held on 19.1.2026

Cllr Martin proposed the minutes of the 19th January 2026 Parish Council Budget meeting as a true and accurate record and Cllr Crow seconded.

4.1 Silverhand – GBC Planning had agreed planning permission for the temporary pop-up Lion PH. The pop-up Lion PH is going well. Silverhand have laid out a new path from the car park by the pop-up Lion PH to the public footpath at the top of the slope. The path will be permissive and open to visitors to use. Silverhand will be adding bushes to the slope.

Silverhand will be recruiting new staff for when the Lion PH reopens as the public house will be larger than before. A lambing event will be taking place on 18th-19th April by the pop-up Lion PH and there will be free entry. Two new lambs have been born and Silverhand are expecting 157 new born lambs. Silverhand are setting up bug hotels for school children and uniformed organisations.

There is a calving event at the end of April. The breed of the cattle is English Longhorn.

Silverhand will remove vines in May part of re-orientating the vines. The sheep are being kept all year round. The electric fence will be moved by the footpath.

4.2 Luddesdown Society - After terrible weather in 2024, it was thankfully dry for the 2025 May Fair – if a bit windy. Over 500 people enjoyed a great afternoon with all the usual stalls and a bumper pass-the-parcel for the kids. There was also an

exhibition celebrating both 80 years since VE Day and 40 years since the “Battle of Luddesdown”.

Thanks to everyone who attended, especially all the volunteers who worked tirelessly to ensure the event went smoothly.

We held a **Quiz Night** in October which was very well-attended and a **Christmas Party** which included a special visit from Father Christmas.

Just before Christmas we delivered **hampers** to 16 over-80 year-olds in the village.

There was a good turn-out for our **New Year’s Day Walk**. The ground was very muddy but the weather was OK.

From funds raised at the May Fair and other events, we were able to make donations of nearly £2,000 to:

Kent Air Ambulance, Ellenor, Luddesdown Village Hall, Luddesdown Rights of Way Group, Luddesdown Church and Cobham Pre-School.

The next event we have planned is the May Fair on 4th May. We would welcome volunteers to help out and we look forward to seeing you there

4.3 Luddesdown Rights of Way Group - My name is Ian Sheridan chair of the Luddesdown & District Rights of Way Group.

We are primarily a friendly local walking group that explore the stunning countryside around Luddesdown, Cobham and further afield.

Gentle, scenic walks — perfect for older adults who prefer flat terrain and good company

As well as the social aspect, our Group's objectives are to: -

- 1) Foster the caring enjoyment of the countryside by walkers and riders using the lawful rights of way:
- 2) The promotion of better relations between path users, landowners and farmers:
- 3) The solution of local rights of way difficulties through active liaison with similar non-statutory bodies and with the Highway Authority and community service through voluntary clearance and way-marking of local rights of way as approved by the Highway Authority.

One of our committee members is retired KCC Public Rights of Way officer Pat Luxford. Pat can address any issues with the Paths and consult with KCC, to take necessary action. She regularly attends GROC meetings on our behalf.

Whilst on our walks our members continue to monitor and report any issues with paths etc they find whilst out walking.

Our membership currently stands at 50 members.

We meet every Wednesday at 1100 at various locations throughout the area.

On average 15 to 20 members do a two mile walk on the local footpaths of Luddesdown ending back at a pub for lunch. There is great anticipation for the reopening of the Lion.

We also do an occasional longer walk at the weekend usually covering Luddesdown, Cobham, Gravesend, Cuxton and further afield. We have recently done walks at Shorne Country Park, Jeskyns, Rochester, Cliffe and a London visit via the Uber boat from Gravesend.

Due to the wet weather in recent months we have had to diversify and have done more unconventional walks such as a walk around Bluewater. Although there is a lovely walk around the outside of the shopping complex this was inside. Although I didn't go despite the many distractions they managed to walk right around both floors.

We hold four social events a year. At our socials we hold quizzes and raffles etc and occasionally we have Speakers. Our next meeting is our Spring Social for our members which is this coming Saturday here at the hall. We are having a talk on The Japanese "Sakura" Cherry Blossom.

In 2024, we as a group registered an objection with Gravesham Council to the Cobham House Winery plans to build an industrial unit on land immediately behind Hevers Cottage and Mulberry House on Gold Street. A lot of members also put in their personal objections. Sadly, I believe this has been passed.

Our next meeting is our AGM in June.

We also produce a yearly magazine called Signpost which details our groups activities plus contributions from members and non-members on all sorts of subjects including many (fine and wet) photographs.

If anybody is interested in joining our group, please see me at the end of this meeting.

4.4 Luddesdown Village Hall – The Committee and Trustees have had another busy year keeping the hall in good condition and fit for use by its many hirers.

In the past 12 months we have undertaken 2 major projects:

Firstly, we have had the electrics updated. This was a major piece of work which involved completely removing all the electrical wiring and fuse boxes etc from the cabinet above the front door and replacing them with an installation which meets modern standards. We have also been issued with the appropriate electrical safety certificate, which will last for 5 years.

Our second major project was the complete repainting of the hall. All the exterior woodwork (window frames, doors and decking) have been repainted or stained and internally the entire hall, including kitchen and toilets, have been repainted from top to bottom.

In total these projects cost us £7,800, which you will appreciate, is a lot of money for us on top of all the other costs associated with running the hall on a day-to-day basis.

Additionally, you may have noticed as you came in, that we have installed grab rails on either side of the entrance door. These were at the request of the WI Craft group,

who use the hall regularly. One of their members is an elderly lady who has difficulty walking and she was finding it difficult to manage the steps up to the door without something to hold on to.

On the other side of the ledger, I am also happy to report that our income stream continues to be pretty strong and consistent. We have had another good year for bookings and the hall seems to be a very popular venue. In the 12 months to the end of December 2025 our income from bookings was just under £8,600. In addition to our income from bookings we have also received donations from the Parish Council and the Luddesdown Society. We are extremely grateful for these donations and thank you very much.

We would still like to see more Luddesdown residents making use of the hall and I'd like to remind everyone that we offer a 50% discount, from our normal hire fees, for parish residents and/or members of the Luddesdown Society so please help us by spreading the word to your neighbours.

4.5 Luddesdown Parish Church - During 2025 Luddesdowne church has had two Weddings, one Baptism and one burial of ashes.

We are very grateful to Rosemary Dymond once again, for cycling and raising funds for Luddesdowne church and The FOKC through the Friends of Kent Churches Ride and Stride held in September 2025. We also thank The Luddesdown Society who generously donated £400.00 to the church from the money raised at The May Fair.

Luddesdowne church and congregation have made donations to The Royal British Legion and Crisis.

Also, through a joint Harvest Service for all four parishes held at St Johns Meopham donations were sent to Poverty and Hope, the Food Bank and The Community Cupboard at West Kingsdown.

Unfortunately, due to my becoming unwell at the end of March 2025 I had not completed a grant application to Luddesdown Parish Council for the maintenance and upkeep of the grass to access Luddesdown Parish's War Memorial, which is located in Luddesdowne's Churchyard nor for the 2 months (Easter and December) free delivery of magazines to all homes in Luddesdown Parish. As I have been able to complete an application form applying for a grant in 2026 for the above, we hope to be successful.

We continue to be grateful for Garden Care who cut the churchyard and keep it in a very good condition. There is an area which is not cut until the autumn to leave for wild flowers to grow and seeds to sow.

Our services alternate with Cobham on Sundays and the occasional joint service for all four parishes Cobham with Luddesdowne and Dode and Meopham with Nurstead, for which the venue will vary. Luddesdowne church held an Armistice Day service and we are grateful to Cllr Peter Crow for doing the Bible reading. Cllr Peter Crow and Sandra Price laid wreaths at the War Memorial on behalf of Luddesdown Parish Council and The Royal British Legion.

Our Carols by Candlelight service was well attended again in 2025.

In March 2025 The Rev'd Pam Davies reached her 70th birthday and retirement from ministry. Less clergy in post has meant a lot more work for The Rev'd Canon Alyson Davie as our Priest-in-Charge, Hilary Savage, who is Cobham's churchwarden and has been trying to organise retired clergy to take our communion services and myself.

Meanwhile we hope to continue our tradition of being a warm and friendly church. We are always pleased to welcome new-comers as we have in 2025 and hope that with God's blessing we will remain a living reminder of His presence in this village, with The Rev'd Canon Alyson Davie as our Priest-in-Charge.

5. **Presentation of the KALC Community Award** – Richard Gagg was presented with the KALC Community Award for all of his help around the parish.
6. **Public Question Time** - GBC has granted permitted development rights to the owner of Cobham House Vineyard for the building of a barn/commercial building. Some local residents have taken to GBC to the High Court. There are up to five items that are being queried. Kent Downs are due to supply some information.

The owner has been moving equipment through Parsonage Farm and across Adrian Scripps land. An entrance had been installed at Gold Street.

The Barn/Commercial Building could lead to more traffic using Gold Street if the owner decides to carry out vineyard tours for visitors or hires the barn for events. A new owner may hold more events.

The meeting finished at 8.30pm and continued as a Full Council Meeting.