

A Meeting of the Parish Council was held at The Memorial Hall, The Street, Frittenden on Tuesday 3rd February at 7.30pm.

Present were: Cllr A Staples
Cllr R Vernon
Cllr S Murray
Cllr L Gosbee
Cllr J Tuke

In attendance: Mrs E Nightingale (Clerk), Cllr A Fairweather & 3 members of the public

The meeting was chaired by Cllr Staples (Vice-Chair).

PUBLIC FORUM:

A resident spoke about the road narrowing by Brook Place. They had submitted a complaint to Kent County Council (KCC) when the work was initially done in March 2025, but it had taken until October 2025 to receive a response to that complaint. It was now clear that the work had been approved on an incorrect premise (i.e. that the ditch could not be culverted due to flood risk) and the road remained in a dangerous condition due to inadequate lighting, road markings and signage. The neighbouring farmer had been severely impacted due to access issues and planning had been signed off by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) despite c.50 objections. The resident therefore asked the Parish Council to press this issue with KCC.

Another resident spoke on the same issue. They reported that there had been an incident that week where a car had mounted the pavement when pedestrians were on it. This had been reported to KCC and TWBC and Cllr Russell had also been made aware. The resident also raised the very large amounts of litter along Staplehurst Road which appeared to include pillows.

Garry Lawrence provided an update on the activities of the HOOH Working Group following submission of the Parish Council's comments on the Bellview planning application. 212 objections had been submitted from members of the public and objections had also been submitted by WKPS and CPRE. So far, the applicant had responded to flood risk and highways issues raised by KCC. The HOOH Working Group had shared the Highways Report commissioned by the Council directly with the relevant officer at KCC. They would also be providing KCC's Archaeological Officer with a copy of the Heritage Report relied on by the Council when objecting to the application, but would be holding fire on a publicity campaign until closer to the Planning Committee meeting at which the application will be considered. In the meantime, the HOOH would be coordinating those attending to speak at the Committee meeting to ensure that the limited time available was used most effectively.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr M Viviers, Cllr C Russell (County), Cllr N Warne (Borough)

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

None.

3. BOROUGH COUNCILLOR UPDATE

Cllr Fairweather has spoken with the Planning Officer dealing with the Bellview application. Cllr Fairweather has asked for the application to be called in whether the officer recommends approval

or not. This means that the application will be decided by the full Planning Committee even if the Planning Officer recommends refusal. Cllr Fairweather has also asked that the Larchmere application also be called in but, as with the last application concerning this site, it will only go to the Planning Committee for determination if the Planning Officer recommends approval.

Cllr Fairweather will be attending a meeting with KCC on 10th February to discuss the road narrowing by the Brook Place development. Cllr Russell will also be attending. Cllr Fairweather is not confident that the road/pavement layout will be changed but he hopes that, at the very least, the ongoing safety issues around the lack of lighting, access to the farm etc. might be addressed. In the meantime, Cllr Fairweather noted that the recent application by Canham Homes to discharge Planning Condition 10 only related to the construction of pavements within the Brook Place site and not the public pavement built out into the road. Those works were covered by Planning Condition 8 which was discharged by TWBC some months ago.

Cllr Fairweather noted that there was a very large pothole on the A229 as you approached the turning to Knoxbridge Farm. This had been reported by KCC's response was to put up a sign warning of a hump back bridge.

In light of the comments made in the Public Forum and in Cllr Fairweather's update above, Cllr Staples advanced consideration of item 7 of the agenda.

7. ROAD NARROWING AT BROOK PLACE

The Parish Council had been invited to attend the meeting on 10th February 2026. It was proposed by Cllr Staples, seconded by Cllr Gosbee, and **RESOLVED** by all members present that Cllr Vernon so attend as the representative of the Parish Council.

Cllr Vernon is preparing a list of questions / issues he would like addressed during that meeting and, as part of his preparations, he intends to meet with the owner of the farm to discuss the access issues caused by the road narrowing.

4. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 6TH JANUARY 2026

It was proposed by Cllr Vernon, seconded by Cllr Murray, and **RESOLVED** that, subject to an amendment made by the Clerk by hand, the Minutes from the Council meeting on 6th January 2026 are a true and accurate record of that meeting. That being so, Cllr Staples signed the said Minutes as acting Chair.

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

Updating Board in Memorial Hall

The Clerk confirmed that this was on hold following the resignation of Cllr Lawrence and pending the election of a new Chair during the Council Meeting to be held on 5th May 2026.

Gritting

KCC had advised that permission would not be granted for Parish Councils to make private arrangements to grit public roads. However, this might be revisited when planning begins in the Summer for next winter. The Clerk will therefore continue to liaise with other Parish Councils who expressed an interest in cooperating in this regard.

6. EARLY PUBLICATION OF DRAFT MINUTES

It had been suggested that it would be helpful to residents if draft minutes of Council Meetings were published in advance of being formally approved at the next meeting of the Council. It was therefore proposed by Cllr Staples, seconded by Cllr Vernon, and **RESOLVED** by all members present to publish draft minutes on the Parish Council's website as soon as they are reasonably available. The minutes will be checked by whoever chaired the meeting before they are published and clearly marked "DRAFT".

7. [Item 7 was advanced as set out above]

8. LOCKING VEHICULAR GATE TO PARISH FIELD

It was proposed by Cllr Vernon, seconded by Cllr Gosbee, and **RESOLVED** by all members present that the vehicular gate be locked at all times, but that the code to the lock be provided more widely to ensure that access could be gained via the gate in an emergency situation. A notice will be put on the noticeboard advising who to contact if access is required.

9. COMMUNICATONS WITH THE PARISH COUNCIL VIA SOCIAL MEDIA

It was agreed that social media was not a proper forum for communications with the Parish Council, not least because any member of the Council posting on Facebook, WhatsApp etc. could not speak for the Council without a resolution having been made at a properly constituted Council Meeting. It was therefore proposed by Cllr Staples, seconded by Cllr Vernon, and **RESOLVED** by all members present that the Clerk will post the following statement on the village's social media under the heading "How to communicate with your Parish Council":

There are currently several ongoing issues in the village that are emotive and further issues will arise from time to time. It is a testament to our strong sense of community that so many people care about Frittenden and its future. The Parish Council (PC) of course share this sense of community, indeed we volunteer our time and effort to help preserve it. We are always willing to engage with villagers on the issues concerning them. The best way to do that is to email our clerk Emma - clerk@frittenden-pc.gov.uk – and any matters raised will be considered at the next PC meeting. In addition, the PC meets on the first Tuesday of every month and anyone is welcome to attend and speak to their issue.

We do not constantly monitor the Community Facebook page or the Frittenden Eye Whatsapp Group (which are community rather than PC administered). Communication via these methods may not always be picked up and the PC will not respond on Facebook or Whatsapp. Facebook/Whatsapp should not therefore be seen as a means of bringing something to the PC's attention.

10. ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

Cllr Staples noted that the Annual Parish Assembly had not been well attended in recent years, which was a shame because it was an opportunity for residents to find out more about the work of the Parish Council and what it had been doing over the previous year.

It was suggested that Katie Lam MP be invited to speak and run a Q&A session during the next Annual Parish Assembly, which is to take place on 13th May 2026. Cllr Staples will make that invitation.

11. KALC COMMUNITY AWARD NOMINATIONS

Cllr Gosbee made a nomination and will provide the Clerk with details to allow her to submit an application.

12. EXCAVATION WORKS ADJACENT TO WATER LANE

Cllr Viviers had raised concerns about extensive excavations which had recently been carried out close to the road. He was concerned that those works might undermine the foundations of the road and cause damage to it if there was to be a landslip, particular in light of the recent very wet weather. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact Headcorn Parish Council to ascertain whether these works were lawful and, if not, whether any action was being taken by Headcorn Parish Council, Maidstone Borough Council or Kent County Council Highways.

13. VILLAGE FETE 2026

In advance of the meeting, Cllr Viviers had provided the Clerk with an update noting that:

- Cllr Viviers had met with one of the organisers of the Benenden fete and got some insight and advice.
- The organising committee had its first meeting in January and will have another on 12th February.
- The committee has assigned ownership of key tasks such as stalls, logistics, finances and general management.
- Cllr Viviers has spoken with the school PTA and they are willing to run a few stalls.
- This will be a community led event first and foremost.
- The two dates identified for the fete are 4th or 18th July, with 4th July being favoured at this time.
- The committee will be approaching a number of local vendors to see if they would be interested in running a stall and they are collating ideas for a number of events such as children's races, live bands, dog agility, vintage car show.
- The committee will be directly approaching people to volunteer their time to help run the event.

14. SPEEDWATCH

Cllr Staples reported that there had been 3 sessions of Speedwatch since the last Council meeting, with 3 other sessions having to be cancelled due to the weather. 13 out of 118 vehicles had been recorded at speeds of 35mph or greater, which was an offending rate of 11%. 3 letters had been sent out and the highest speed recorded was 40mph. When conducting Speedwatch by Chestnut Close 5 out of 84 vehicles were recorded speeding as they came from the direction of Cranbrook which represents about 1/3 of the level previously seen before the road narrowing / priority system by Brook Place. However, on a number of occasions, vehicles were observed going past the built-out bollard whilst another vehicle (which had priority) was approaching the narrowed part of the road. This suggested that the priority system was being ignored by some drivers. That data would be provided to Cllr Vernon in advance of his meeting with KCC.

15. PLAYGROUND INSPECTIONS

Cllr Gosbee had noted that the wood at the top of the slide was loose. It was currently in place but could be moved. He did not consider it to be hazardous but it will need to be closely monitored. Further, the top two wooden steps up to the slide were rotten. Again, he did not consider them to be unsafe but if he deemed that either of the above issues rendered use of the slide hazardous, he would tape it off to prevent it being used pending repairs.

Cllr Staples noted that the Council had an opportunity to replace items which might be beyond economic repair and make some improvements to the playground as a result of a very generous legacy from a former resident. The Council needed to draw up a plan which could then be costed but Cllr Staples suggested that those who used the playground be given an opportunity to contribute to that. The Clerk was therefore instructed to contact Frittenden Preschool to invite them / their parents to contribute ideas as to how the playground might be improved.

16. ROAD REPORT

Cllr Gosbee noted that there were a lot of potholes on the roads, which he considered to be in the worst state he had ever seen. Potholes on Biddenden Road had been outlined but it was not known when work would take place to repair them.

Cllr Gosbee had not seen a lot of fly tipping but agreed with the resident who commented in the public forum that there was a lot of rubbish along Staplehurst Road. He explained that what appeared to be pillowcases were actually sandbags which had been left behind by KCC or its contractors. He had asked KCC to remove them but this had not been done.

Cllr Gosbee noted that he continued in his efforts to get the drains cleared. The Clerk had received correspondence from a resident raising that issue and also asking whether KCC provided advanced notice of when the street cleaning vehicle would be coming through the village because it was often ineffective or unable to get to the road edges because of the number of parked cars and advance notice would allow those cars to be removed. The blocked drains had made this problem worse because mud and other debris collected at the sides of the road after heavy or sustained rain. Cllr Gosbee confirmed that no such advance notice was given.

Cllr Vernon noted that blocked drains meant that vast amounts of run off water was flowing into the foul drainage system. Southern Water may therefore have an interest in getting the drains cleared. He will provide details of this to the Clerk who will then write to Southern Water.

Cllr Staples reported that a resident had recently written to Cllr Russell about the problem of misleading road closure signs. If signs did not indicate which roads were closed, whether the closure was full or partial and, if the latter, from where, it was possible to be sent of very long and unnecessary diversions given the number of road closures in the area. Cllr Russell had written to the relevant officer at KCC Highways and received a very unsatisfactory response. It was therefore agreed that the clerk would also write raising this issue with KCC Highways, particularly given the delay such unnecessary detours could cause to the emergency services.

17. PLANNING

New Applications

26/00079/FULL	The Hatchin Tan, Grandshore Lane, Frittenden Variation of Conditions 9, 10 & 11 pf Planning Permission 25/02126/FULL – (additional time required to provide reports) NOTED
26/00080/FULL	The Hatchin Tan, Grandshore Lane, Frittenden Submission of Details in relation to Condition 3 – (landscaping); Condition 4 (biodiversity) of 25/02126/FULL NOTED

Outcome of Previous applications

- None

Planning appeals

- None

18. GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

- The Council had previously approved a donation to the Snowfields Academy Farm but the Clerk had been informed that the farm had closed following the recent retirement of the Farm Manager. The school was developing a horticultural area for pupils and the donation could be applied to that project, but it would be understood if the Council chose not to make the donation. It was agreed that the donation should be made to support the above horticultural project.
- The Clerk reported that Kent Police had appointed a Local Beat Officer for Frittenden, being PC Eleanor Deering. An on-line meeting had been offered by way of an introduction and it was agreed that Cllr Murray would attend such a meeting on a date/time to be confirmed.
- Headcorn Parish Council had taken the lead on putting together a Parish Resilience Cluster Group and it was holding a meeting of those Parish Councils interested in participating on 26th February 2026. No members of the Council were available to attend on that date and the Clerk will therefore give apologies.
- A number of Parish Councils, to include Frittenden, were yet to receive designs and/or costings from KCC in relation to the Highway Safety schemes proposed via their Highway Improvement Plans. That input was required before applications could be submitted to TWBC for funding via the Parish Road Safety Grant and so TWBC had confirmed that the deadline for applications had been extended beyond the end of January. No alternative date had yet been communicated.
- Charlotte Hunter had written confirming that she was willing to organise this years Easter Fun Run on behalf of the Parish Council. The proposed beneficiary of any net income was Frittenden Memorial Hall. This will be an agenda item for the next meeting of the council but, in the meantime, the Council was content for the event to be advertised on the same basis as last year.
- Katie Lam MP will be writing to all residents to invite them to participate in a survey about issues around the supply of water. The Parish Council can also submit a response on its own behalf.

19. FINANCE

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

FRITTENDEN PAYMENTS – FEBRUARY 2025					
Cheque Number	GROSS	VAT	NET	SUPPLIER	DETAILS
BACS	£17.00	Nil	£17.00	Frittenden Memorial Hall	Hall Hire (1 x meeting room session & winter surcharge)
BACS	£54.94	£9.46	£45.78	FCC Waste Management Ltd	Litterbins (Jan)
BACS	£59.00	Nil	£59.00	Mrs E Nightingale	Clerk's Expenses - Feb
BACS	£259.32	Nil	£259.32	Mrs E Nightingale	Clerk's Salary - Feb
BACS	£64.80	Nil	£64.80	HMRC	PAYE
BACS	£720.18	£120.03	£600.15	Transport Planning Associates Ltd	Professional Fees re: Bellview planning application

BACS	£2,700.00	£450.00	£2,250.00	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	£100.13	£4.77	£95.36	NPower	Electricity for streetlighting
Total	£4,008.35	£589.76	£3,418.89		

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9.13pm.

Chairman's Signature: _____

Date: _____