

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday, 21 January 2026 at 1930hrs

Shepherdswell Village Hall

MINUTES

In the absence of the Chair, Cllr Stauffer-Kruse (Vice-Chair) opened the first meeting of the year and took the opportunity to wish those present a Happy New Year. The resignation of Cllr Lyn Symes was reported and the Council recorded its thanks for her service to both the Council and the community.

To receive reports from the County and District Councillors, Community Warden, Community Beat Officer & Shepherdswell Green Spaces Group. Public questions and comments on agenda and non-agenda items (this section will be limited to 15 minutes or otherwise at the discretion of the Chair).

Nigel Baker, Chair of the Shepherdswell Green Spaces Group, reported that the group had not met since before the winter break and will next meet on 2 February. He confirmed that the Youth Hub Working Group has progressed revised design proposals, with final drawings and outline costings expected shortly, and a paper likely to come to the Council in March. He also advised that a paper on the play area refurbishment will be brought to Council in February and circulated to members in advance. The Group's AGM is expected to take place in late April.

A resident raised concerns regarding ongoing issues associated with activity at a neighbouring property and the impact this is having on local residents. The resident advised that the matter has been reported to the appropriate authorities and requested the Parish Council's support in raising the concerns with Dover District Council. The Parish Council noted the concerns and agreed to raise the matter with Dover District Council's Enforcement Team and to liaise with the Rural Police Officer and Community Warden.

A resident commented on the Public Participation Guidance scheduled for approval, expressing the view that it duplicated information already contained within the Council's Standing Orders. The resident also asked who holds Health and Safety responsibility for Coldred Pond and members confirmed that this lies with the Parish Council.

A resident expressed concern about the withdrawal of the local Stagecoach bus service and highlighted the significant impact on residents who are now left without public transport. She noted that comparable villages continue to receive limited services and asked why a similar arrangement could not be provided for Shepherdswell. The resident emphasised the difficulties faced by older and less mobile residents, particularly in accessing essential services without transport.

1/2025 IN ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Present: Cllrs Bradley Stauffer-Kruse (Vice Chair – acting as Chair for this meeting), Keith Roberts, Sue Taber, John Bulaitis, Marien Elgar, Terry Hunt, Sindy Denyer and Carole White

14 Members of the public

Clerk: Jan Hancock

Apologies: Cllrs Mark Watson (Chair), Aidan Softley and Barry Crush

2/2025 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON THE 19 NOVEMBER 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2025 were **AGREED** to be a true and accurate record, subject to a minor amendment **PROPOSED** by Cllr Roberts seconded by Cllr Hunt. **All AGREED**

3/2025 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Eggar declared an OSI on agenda item 11.01.

4/2025 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GUIDANCE POLICY

Following discussion, Cllr Roberts **PROPOSED** that the Guidance Policy be **APPROVED**, seconded by Cllr Hunt. **All AGREED**

5/2025 SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Following discussion and comment the Clerk agreed to review the Policy and circulate to members. **Cllr Roberts PROPOSED** that this item be deferred to the next meeting, seconded by Cllr White. **All AGREED**

6/2025 CO-OPTION POLICY & PROCEDURE

Cllr Hunt proposed that this updated Policy be **APPROVED**, seconded by Cllr Elgar. **All AGREED**

7/2025 PARISH CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk reported that the annual play inspection had been circulated, with an overall low-risk rating, and that items requiring attention would be brought to the next meeting for discussion. The new knee rail at Coldred Pond has been installed, and the Clerk will carry out an updated risk assessment. A Notice of Vacancy has been published, with confirmation from DDC expected next week on whether the vacancy will proceed to election or co-option. Preparations for the Shepherdswell Fête are underway, with several councillors involved. The grounds maintenance tender documents are being updated, including revised maps, and several contractors have expressed interest. EV charging points are expected to go live by the end of February. The Clerk also asked councillors to consider whether former councillors may continue to participate in Working Groups and noted the need to clarify how councillors authorised to post on behalf of the Parish Council are designated under the Social Media Policy.

8/2025 FINANCE

8-01 SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

Balances as 14 January 2026	£
Current A/C	9303.76
Business A/C	123799.34
INCOME	
HMRC VAT reclaim	5314.49
Farrier & Son – cemetery	700.00
Premises rent	300.00
EXPENDITURE TO RATIFY	
Hugo Fox – Website (2 months)	47.98
Clerk's Wages (December)	1163.23
Service Charge (2 months)	12.00
NEST (Pension, 2 months)	131.10

Chair mobile phone	63.79
VGA – Lights	100.00
Krystal Hosting (2 months)	26.40
BW Landscapes (Meadow View Fence)	1260.00
EXPENDITURE TO APPROVE	
Small Works Contractor (inv 337 & 338)	900.00
Clerk’s Expenses	373.68
Harmers (inv 26078) Fallen tree at allotments	468.00
Village Hall Fees – November & December	152.50
Harmers (inv 26157 & 26262)	1639.58
Play Inspection Co (inv 83124)	155.94
Parish Online (inv 29UE021-0005)	115.20
HMRC	180.74
Microsoft 365 for Councillors	69.12
	4054.76

Cllr Hunt proposed that the schedule of payments be APPROVED, seconded by Cllr Elgar. All AGREED

8.02 PRECEPT DEMAND FORM FOR 2026/27

Cllr Elgar PROPOSED that the Precept Demand Form for 2026/27 be signed, seconded by Cllr Denyer. All AGREED.

9/2025 PLANNING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Planning Committee held on 21 January 2026 will be available on the website once approved. Cllr Elgar (Chair of Planning) explained to members that the Planning Committee had resolved to defer the agenda item regarding the St Andrew’s Gardens development to the full Parish Council meeting. An email in response to various issues raised by the Parish Council has been received from Rebus and circulated.

The Parish Council **ACKNOWLEDGE** the email response received from Rebus Planning Solutions dated 15 January 2026.

The Parish Council **NOTE** that the Parish Council’s request for the Mill Lane access to be opened for two-way traffic cannot be facilitated. **NOTE** that the Parish Council’s suggestion to reduce the number of units on the St Andrew’s Gardens site is not considered viable by the developer. **NOTE** the confirmation that the footpath connection from the lower site will be retained. **NOTE** that the Construction Management Plan is being reassigned to a new Site Manager and will be re-issued for formal comment once complete. **NOTE** the update regarding ongoing discussions with Registered Providers concerning Affordable Housing provision.

Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that Cllr Bulaitis lead on the following:

- a balanced reply written to Rebus, welcoming some aspects of the letter but asking for more information/clarification about some matters.
- the Parish Council update its submission to the Reserved Matters application and to the Planning Application for 10 Mill Lane properties, taking account of the October discussions with Guildcrest/Rebus and the latest Rebus letter - the Parish Council submission should stress the need for a plan to mitigate the traffic through the estate, with the best option appearing to be through a loop road.
- the Parish Council contact DDC ward councillors and our KCC councillor to draw their attention to the Council’s position.

- the Parish Council participates in the discussions around and at the DDC Planning Committee that considers the Reserved Matters and Planning Application for the two sites.

This was seconded by Cllr Hunt and unanimously AGREED. Cllr Bulaitis to circulate correspondence for approval.

10/2025 WORKING GROUP REPORTS

10-01 **Carbon Footprint Working Group** – Cllr Roberts reported that the bank by the gate into Reed Meadow needs cutting into in order to accommodate the proposed recycling bins and shelter. Clerk to contact contractors.

11-02 **Highway Improvement Plan Working Group** – no report

11-03 **Communications Working Group** – Cllr Taber reported that this working group needed more Councillors to volunteer

11/2025 COMMUNITY

11-01 Carpenters Yard

Members discussed the request from the Shepherdswell and Coldred Land Trust to adopt maintenance of the bank and entrance to Carpenters Yard. Members rejected this request but **Cllr Hunt PROPOSED that the Parish Council ask their current contractors for a quote for mowing the bank twice a year, which will be presented to the Land Trust, seconded by Cllr White. AGREED with 1 abstention**

11-02 Stagecoach

Cllr Bulaitis thanked residents for their input. A report has been circulated. The Parish Council:

NOTE the negative impact that the reduction of bus services has had on the quality of life of residents in the Parish, particularly the young, elderly and disabled. **NOTE** that the new hourly bus service (route 92) launched on 24 November 2025 that connects Aylesham to Whitfield (via Nonington, Elvington & Eythorne) replaces the previous service known as Stagecoach Connect, which covered Shepherdswell and Coldred. **NOTE** that the decision not to route the new service through Shepherdswell and Coldred means a further reduction in bus services within the Parish. **NOTE** that the decision to exclude Shepherdswell and Coldred is likely to make the new service less commercially viable – and thus putting it at risk. **NOTE** that the decision to launch the new service was taken without any consultation with residents of Shepherdswell and Coldred, either through the ‘local engagement’ survey or by asking the Parish Council for its views. **NOTE** that there was an option (Option 3) to include Shepherdswell and Coldred in the route of the new service but this was rejected by the DDC Cabinet. **NOTE** the impact that this change makes on residents of neighbouring villages using the bus service as a connection to the train service in Shepherdswell.

Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that Eythorne & Elvington Parish Council are asked if they would like to be involved in this campaign and that Cllr Bulaitis and the Clerk co-ordinate:

- writing to DDC cabinet asking for a review of the decision, and the reopening of discussions with Stagecoach
- writing to the ward’s District Councillors asking for their support to support local residents in campaigning for a return of bus services to the Parish
- publicising the Council’s position in local press and social media

Seconded by Cllr Hunt. All AGREED

11-03 Cricket Fencing

Following discussion, at 2046hrs the meeting was paused to allow a resident to address the Council on this agenda item. The Chair then resumed the meeting.

Cllr White PROPOSED that the Cricket Club are requested to replace the metal posts around the cricket square or protect the exposed metal tops so that they do not form a safety hazard, seconded by Cllr Denyer. NOT CARRIED with 3 votes for, 4 against and 1 abstention.

12/2025 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held at 1930hrs on Wednesday 18 February 2026 at Shepherdswell Village Hall.