

Bredgar Parish Council
Minutes of the meeting
Held on Tuesday 25th November 2025
At Bredgar Village Hall

Present: Chair Cllr. Brian Clarke; Vice Chair Cllr. Nigel Osmer;
Cllr. Stephen Parfitt; Cllr. David Priestley; Cllr. Penny Twaites; Cllr. Malcolm Vessey and
Cllr. Hilary Whitnell.

Clerk: Teresa Hudson

Members of the Public: Four members of the public were present.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from SBC Cllr. Monique Bonney.

2. Declaration of Members' Personal and Prejudicial Interest

Cllr. Twites declared an interest in the Bexon Conservation Area consultation.

3. Declaration of any intention to record or film the PC meeting by any member of the Council or member of the public.

There were no intentions to record or film the meeting by anyone present.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the previous PC meeting held on 13th August 2025 were read and formally approved by the Parish Council. They are now available on the Parish website. Proposed by Cllr. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. Parfitt, all councillors agreed.

The Minutes were signed by the Chair at the end of the meeting.

Matters arising

Cllr. Osmer reported that the damaged bollard near the phone box was repaired quickly and efficiently by KCC.

Councillors felt that the builders were doing a good job of replacing the roof on Bredgar House.

Point 12 of the previous Minutes stated that the fly tipping clear up rate had deteriorated. Cllr. Parfitt clarified that the clear up rate had improved but that there had been a deterioration in establishing the perpetrators.

5. Resignation of Cllr. Mike Day/Co Option of new Councillor: Malcolm Vessey.

Following the resignation of Cllr. Day due to ill health, Councillors received a thank you card for his departing gift card.

Councillors welcomed Cllr. Malcolm Vessey who has been co-opted on to the PC. The Chair also welcomed Alison Goodhew and Drew Cullen to the meeting, both had expressed an interest in joining the PC; councillors hope they will both contribute to the meetings today and in the future.

6. Ten Minutes Representation from Members of the Public

There was nothing to report from members of the public.

7. Police/NHW Report

PC Richard Divers did not attend the meeting.

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8. Authorisation of Accounts

PAYMENTS

31/07/25	Unity Trust	Service Charge	6.00
01/08/25	EDF	Pond Electricity	54.62
01/08/25	Bredgar Farmshop	PO Rent	200.00
01/08/25	Ask A Gardener	Village Maintenance	150.00
01/08/25	Steve Wakeling	Maint of Rec Grd Play Area	220.00
04/08/25	Maypole Bells	Decking Repair	190.00
06/07/25	SBC	Brown Bin Rec Grd	62.00
14/07/25	SBC	Brown Bin Cemetery	62.00
28/07/25	Lloyds	Corporate Card Fee	3.00
31/08/25	Unity Trust	Service Charge	6.00
01/09/25	EDF	Pond Electricity	54.62
01/09/25	Bredgar Farmshop	PO Rent	200.00
02/09/25	Ask A Gardener	Village Maintenance	150.00
04/09/25	T. Hudson	Honorarium	463.83
09/09/25	Lloyds	Corporate Card Fee	3.00
18/09/25	Steve Wakeling	Play Area Grass Cut	55.00
26/09/25	Safeplay	Rec Grd Repairs	1486.80
30/09/25	Unity Trust	Service Charge	6.00
01/10/25	EDF	Pond Electricity	54.62
01/10/25	Bredgar Farmshop	PO Rent	200.00
01/10/25	Ask A Gardener	Village Maintenance	150.00
29/08/25	Timpsons	Key cut	9.00
16/09/25	Royal British Legion	Poppy Wreath	24.49
26/09/25	Lloyds	Corp Card Fee	3.00
23/10/25	Maypole Bells	Goal Repairs	1060.00
31/10/25	Unity Trust	Fee	6.00
03/11/25	EDF	Pond Electricity	72.77
03/11/25	Bredgar Farmshop	PO Rent	200.00
03/11/25	Ask A Gardener	Village Maintenance	225.00
06/10/25	Mutts Butts	Dog Waste Bags	104.78
10/11/25	Lloyds	Corp Card Fee	3.00
10/11/25	Steve Wakeling	Play Area Grass Cut	55.00

RECEIPTS

22/09/25	HMRC	VAT Refund	1208.21
25/09/25	Bredgar Cricket Club	Rec Grd Rent	50.00
26/09/25	SBC	Precept	6357.00
21/10/25	Mr & Mrs Griggs	Burial Plot Purchase	150.00

Proposed by Cllr. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. Osmer.
All councillors agreed.

9. Financial Matters

Financial Review

The Financial Review was circulated by the clerk prior to the meeting.

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Proposed by Cllr. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. Priestley. All councillors agreed.

Question:

What was repaired in the recreation ground for £2500?

Answer:

The swing seats and chains were replaced with new; the goalpost was resealed and the surface under the swings was resealed. Over previous recent years councillors had carried out minor repairs themselves; the repairs this year were in the ROSPA annual report and were carried out by local tradesman (Maypole Bells) and a play equipment company (SafePlay). Councillors got two quotes for the work and felt the repairs were good value and that the equipment will be safe for the children. In future, attempts will be made to obtain three quotes, but experience shows that some tasks are too small for some tradespeople.

The cricket club plans to replace the pavilion are not progressing, therefore repairs are being carried out to the building by the cricket club.

Budget for Precept 2026/7

The Chair circulated actuals and forecasts for the budget prior to the meeting.

The PC currently spends more than the annual precept each year, often topped up with income from the cemetery. This year the cemetery has produced little income.

The precept increase reflects on the council tax payable by residents. Councillors proposed to increase the precept by 7.5%. This equates to approximately £44.85 per annum for a household on Band D.

Proposed by Cllr. Whitnell, seconded by Cllr. Osmer. All councillors agreed.

Clerk's Honorarium 2026/7

Councillors debated the clerk's honorarium and agreed to increase it at the same rate as the precept 7.5%.

10. Village Matters

Community Governance Review (CGR - Letter from SBC)

The Chair informed the meeting that SBC are currently carrying out a Community Governance Review. Residents are able to suggest changes to town and parish councils.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

There is a Local Government Reorganisation Review currently ongoing whereby Kent Councils will need to consider new boundaries within Kent. This will have an impact on all services within the Councils. County and Borough Councils have until Friday 28th November to submit their proposals from the different options put forward.

Future of Bredgar Farm shop and Post Office

The freehold of Bredgar Farmshop has been sold. The new prospective owner is unknown at present.

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SpeedWatch

The Speedwatch equipment used by Bredgar Speedwatch members is shared with Tunstall Members. Tunstall have decided to cease their speedwatch activities and have loaned the equipment to Bredgar provided the maintenance is carried out. The maintenance costs are unknown but not expected to be excessive. Bredgar Speedwatch have accepted the equipment and continue to carry out sessions with good results.

The proposal to take on the maintenance of the equipment was proposed by Cllr. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. Parfitt. All councillors agreed.

Cllr. Parfitt informed the meeting that Rodmersham resident was interested in obtaining a Speedwatch camera for his area; it is possible he may want to share with Bredgar.

Highways Improvement Plan

- **Letter from Resident Re Heavy Vehicles in Bredgar**
- **Email from Resident Re Safety Exiting the Pond Decking**
- **Email from Resident Re Safety of Ducks/Moorhens at the Pond**

Councillors received three items of correspondence relating to highways matters.

Councillors gave consideration to each matter and explained to the meeting actions which have taken place in the past such as attempts to introduce 20mph in the village and obtaining a reduced speed limit in Bexon Lane. Both these attempts were rejected by KCC Highways but councillors will submit renewed proposals at the next Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) meeting.

A proposal for extra safety measures at the pond resulted in a proposal by councillors to erect a gate on the decking to prevent children from running into the road. Costs will be investigated by Cllr. Priestley. Proposed by Cllr. Priestley, seconded by Cllr. Clarke. All councillors agreed.

Councillors discussed whether to install netting around the pond to prevent ducks from getting on the road. It was rejected on the grounds that the ducks could fly onto the road but then be unable to get back onto the pond. However, the railings need replacing as the concrete is crumbling and will put be on the project list for future consideration. Councillors will explore the availability of grants for larger projects before considering fund raising by residents.

Many residents have expressed support for extending the 30mph speed limit on Bexon Lane to encompass most or all of the residential properties west of Ruins Barn Road. A proposal to include this in the HIP for discussion with Kent Highways, and to add it to the Project List, with costs estimated at about £6000, was agreed. Proposed by Cllr. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. Vessey. All councillors agreed.

Councillors agreed to ask KCC to reinstate the two missing width restriction signs at each end of Wrens Road to deter large vehicles from travelling between

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Sutton Baron Lane and the cemetery. It is hoped that large commercial vehicles will then be discouraged from using the narrow road.

11. Post Office Update

Due to the freehold of Bredgar Farmshop being sold, the future of the businesses within the Farmshop are uncertain. The Post Office is supported by the Parish Council and a committee of three councillors and the Post Mistress have met on several occasions to discuss the prospects of the post office and how to go forward should the premises become unavailable after the current lease expires in April 2027.

It is hoped that there will be an opportunity to negotiate a new lease when the time comes. A report from Cllr Osmer is filed with these Minutes.

12. Planning Matters

Highsted Park Update

Representation by 5Parishes at the Highsted Park Planning Inquiry has received a lot of support from residents. The enquiry ended at the end of October with 5Parishes making major contributions to the debate on behalf of the local community. It is now in the hands of the Inspector to write the report.

5Parishes continue to examine and respond to Inquiry documents; currently those on the Section 106 agreements, to ensure benefits for the local community and on traffic management are recorded as agreed.

Next Steps and Key Dates

- 26 November 2025 - Deadline for public comments on the Section 106 agreements.
- Friday 28 November 2025 - The Section 106 agreements, together with any public comments, will be sent to the Inspector.
- 19 December 2025 - Deadline for the parties to the agreements to sign and return the final (engrossed) versions to the Programme Officers.

After these steps, the Inspector will begin her final phase of work — reviewing the full Inquiry record, all written and oral evidence, and the completed legal documents. She will then prepare her detailed report and recommendation for the Secretary of State for Housing, who will make the ultimate decision on whether the Highsted Park applications are approved or refused.

There is no fixed timetable for the Secretary of State's decision, but the report is not expected to be completed until mid 2026.

£69000 has been raised from the community to pay the 5Parishes legal and expert witness fees, which is only about £1000 short of requirements. The 4 parishes, Milstead, Rodmersham, Bapchild and Bredgar previously agreed to fund any shortfall up to £16000. A proposal to contribute up to £300 from Bredgar towards the shortfall was made by Cllr. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. Priestley. All councillors agreed.

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The Local Plan

Due to central Government changes in the number of new houses required in Swale, the Local plan was delayed, but work by planners continued. Swale Borough Council have now recommenced the process. The next step is a consultation between 12th January and 23rd February 2026 where residents, interested parties and statutory consultees have the opportunity to review and make representations on the policies in the Draft Local Plan. Bredgar PC will respond after the Christmas period.

The Local Plan will need to provide alternative housing solutions if Highsted Park is rejected in part or whole.

If anyone would like their Highsted Park signs collected, please contact Cllr. Clarke .

Bexon Conservation Area Consultation Response

A public consultation draft document is currently available on the Character Appraisal and Management Plan of the Bexon Conservation Area. This will help to defend the rural landscape of the area.

There have been several responses from Bredgar residents submitted. The consultation ends on 10th December 2025. A Bredgar PC response text was proposed by Cllr. Priestley, seconded by Cllr. Clarke. All councillors agreed.

13. Reports from Councillors

Cllr. Clarke

Cllr. Clarke and Mr Clack looked at the LED lighting project for the pond and concluded that it would not save as much money as first thought due to lower energy consumption savings than anticipated, therefore the project may be postponed.

The pond electricity equipment is due a maintenance test.

Cllr. Clarke is unable to carry out the Carol Service reading and asked if any other councillor was available.

A resident has asked if the pedestrian entrance to the recreation ground could be tarmacked as it is very muddy. It was felt that it would still get muddy however far the tarmac was laid.

Cllr. Twaites

Nothing to report.

Cllr. Whitnell

The footpaths and gates are all ok. The footpaths alongside the proposed three new properties in Primrose Lane must be maintained.

Cllr. Osmer

Cllr. Osmer is to contact Matthew Low and enquire the costs of another year of maintenance for the hedge at the recreation ground. It is felt the benefits would be worth it in the long run to encourage growth of the hedge and reduction in weeds.

Proposed by Cllr. Osmer, seconded by Cllr. Clarke. All councillors agreed.

Cllr. Vessey

Nothing to report.

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Cllr. Priestley

The pond bank has been successfully repaired. Cllr. Priestley discussed with councillors whether a water treatment was beneficial. It was decided to wait a while as it was not urgent.

Cllr. Parfitt

The repairs in the recreation ground were necessary for safety reasons to address issues raised in our annual ROSPA report.

Councillors were pleased with the response from parishioners for the annual litter pick; it was a great success with around 60 bags of rubbish collected. The nitrous oxide canisters were not collected and had to be left for specialised collection.

The next police surgery will take place on Sunday 30th November in Bredgar Farmshop.

Parishioners are encouraged to use Bredgar phone box, calls are free, as 100 calls a year are required to retain it. Cllr. Parfitt regularly makes calls to maintain the facility.

14. Community Assets

Designating a local amenity as a Community Asset safeguards the first option to purchase should an owner decide to sell.

Councillors agreed to revisit Community Assets on a three-monthly basis.

15. Any Other Business

It is hoped Bredgar Railway will pass on their Christmas tree again this year to display at the pond. Next year a tree will be purchased by Bredgar PC to display earlier.

16. Date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting will be Wednesday 4th March 2026.