

The Minutes of the Meeting of Thurnham Parish Council  
held on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2026 at the Tudor Park Hotel, at 7:30pm.

*Councillors present: Duncan  
Smith  
Skinner  
Waters  
Wise*

*Also: Sherrie Babington (Parish Clerk), and members of the public.*

*The meeting was Chaired by Cllr Skinner.*

**1. Apologies.**

Members who cannot attend a meeting shall tender their apologies to the Parish Clerk prior to the meetings, under Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, the members present must decide whether the reason(s) for a member's absence shall be accepted.

*Apologies were received and accepted from:*

- Cllr Shelley – Holiday
- Cllr Dunlop – Personal

**2. Parish Councillor Vacancies**

Members noted that there remained two vacancies on the Parish Council.

The Clerk reported that the statutory notices had been displayed in accordance with the required procedures and one expression of interest had been received.

The Clerk advised that this would be followed up and reported back to the next meeting.

**3. Declaration of Interests.**

To receive Declarations of Interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda, in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 in respect of members and in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect of officers.

*No declarations of interest were made.*

To consider any Dispensation requests received by the Parish Clerk and not previously considered.

*No dispensation requests were considered.*

**4. Minutes from last Parish Council Meeting.**

To consider the minutes of the previous meeting and if in order sign as a true record.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2026 were circulated to all members.

**Proposed:** Cllr Wise

**Seconded:** Cllr Duncan

**RESOLVED:** Minutes approved.

The Minutes were then signed and dated by the Chairman of the meeting.

**5. Matters arising from the Minutes.**

Members discussed the current Call for Sites process and the Local Plan Review being undertaken by Maidstone Borough Council.

**6. Public Participation.**

No public questions were raised.

**7. Clerk's Report.**

The Clerk's report was received and noted.

**8. External Reports.**

a. To receive the MBC Ward Councillor's Report.

No Ward Councillors were present at the meeting; no apologies were received.

b. To receive the KCC Councillor's Report.

Members discussed engagement with Kent County Council and the importance of communication regarding highways matters and the Highways Improvement Plan process.

***Action: Clerk to write to KCC Councillor Sarah Emberson inviting her to attend future Parish Council meetings.***

c. To receive the Police Report.

No report submitted.

d. To receive Parish Councillors Reports.

No matters were reported.

**9. St Mary's Church.**

To receive a report on St Marys Church.

A report was received regarding ongoing matters at St Mary's Church.

Members were advised that work is continuing in relation to roof leaks and repairs to the fabric of the church building. It was noted that the church is in a strong position regarding grant applications and future repair works, with professional advice being obtained in connection with ongoing maintenance and improvement projects.

**10. Financial Matters.**

a. Financial Statement.

To receive and approve the financial statement and payments.

The Clerk advised that two financial statements had been circulated, one covering the period to 31st March 2026 and a second from 1st April 2026 onwards, in order to separate the year-end accounts from the new financial year.

Members were advised that notification of the first precept payment had been received, although the funds had not yet appeared on the bank statement in time for inclusion within the financial statement.

The Clerk further advised that the Mazars invoice included within the payments related to the previous external audit period.

Members considered the financial statements and raised no queries.

**Proposed:** Cllr Wise

**Seconded:** Cllr Duncan

**RESOLVED:** Approved.

## 11. Planning Matters.

### a. Planning Applications Received

**26/501113/FULL** - Griffins Weaving Street Weaving Kent ME14 5JS

Demolition of existing bungalow and erection of replacement self-build two storey dwelling, creation of rear paved terrace and front driveway with gate access.

Members considered the application.

**PC Comment: No Objections**

**26/501231/FULL** - Oakdene Firs Lane Hollingbourne Kent ME17 1XJ

Erection of single storey side extension.

Members considered the application.

**PC Comment: No Objections**

### b. MBC Planning Decisions.

26/500519/FULL

1 Baron Close Bearsted Kent ME14 4PZ

Conversion of existing garage with first floor side extension. Erection of a single storey side and rear extension including 2no. rooflights and changes to fenestration.

Application Permitted

25/504448/FULL

Friningham Cottage Friningham Detling Kent ME14 3JD

Demolition of existing conservatory. Erection of a single storey link-to outbuildings side extension with the conversion of workshop and green house into habitable space and an orangery including relocation of oil tank, insertion of a new rear terrace and changes to fenestration.

Application Permitted

### c. Other Planning Matters.

Members further discussed the Water Lane site and expressed concern that there appeared to have been little progress in resolving matters previously raised with Maidstone Borough Council. Concerns remained regarding the continued presence of waste materials, tyres and a container on the site.

Members considered that the matter should continue to be monitored and that a further update should be sought from the Borough Council.

**Action: Clerk to write to MBC Councillor Thompson seeking an update on the eastern Water Lane site.**

The Clerk confirmed that, following the previous meeting, the Parish Council had submitted comments in relation to the Cobham Manor Riding Centre application.

## 12. Highway & PROW Matters.

a. To consider general highway and PROW matters.

Members discussed the warning signs intended for use on parish lanes and Members agreed that further horse rider signs should be ordered.

Discussion took place regarding suitable locations for signage, including Caring Lane, Water Lane and Crismill Lane, with Members noting that such signage could assist in encouraging motorists to slow down and remain aware of walkers, cyclists and horse riders using the rural lanes.

**Action: Clerk to order additional horse rider signs.**

b. HIP (Highways Improvement Plan).

To receive an update on the Highways Improvement Plan.

Members discussed the concerns previously raised regarding Weaving Street and the use of the blocked section by motorbikes and unauthorised vehicles.

It was noted that the updated Highways Improvement Plan response now reflected the concerns previously raised by the Parish Council.

**13. Heritage Award.**

The Clerk advised that the Heritage Award was now in the process of being refurbished.

Members were advised that the award would be professionally mounted within a larger black frame, with new non-reflective glass fitted and the replacement plaque installed.

The estimated cost of approximately £98 was noted.

Members discussed future presentation arrangements for the award once refurbishment is complete.

**14. Annual Meeting of the Parish.**

Members considered arrangements for the Annual Meeting of the Parish.

The Clerk advised that there was no legal requirement for the Parish Council to call an Annual Parish Meeting and that many parish councils are now choosing alternative methods of community engagement where attendance at formal meetings is minimal.

Members discussed the historically very low attendance at annual parish meetings within Thurnham and acknowledged the challenges associated with community engagement in a parish with no central village hub, community centre or significant local organisations.

It was considered that producing an annual community report for circulation around the parish would provide a more effective means of updating residents on the work of the Parish Council and encouraging engagement.

**RESOLVED:** That no Annual Meeting of the Parish be called in 2026 and that an annual community report be prepared for circulation to residents.

**Action: Clerk to prepare a draft annual community report for Members' consideration.**

**15. Future Agenda Items.**

There were no future items.

16. Date of next Meeting.

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed to the press and public at 8.15pm.

Signed: .....

Date: .....