

PARISH COUNCIL OF BENENDEN

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 16th March 2026, 7pm, Iden Green Pavilion

Present	Cllrs Beveridge, Grant, Ham, Lewis, McMillan, Taylor, Thomas. Cllrs Dawlings, Neville, Russell. C Levett, Clerk. 4 members of the public.	
Item		Action Responsibility
1. APOLOGIES	Apologies were received from Cllr Cochrane.	
2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	No declarations of interest.	
3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING	The minutes from the Parish Council Meeting held on 16 th February 2026 were unanimously approved as a correct record of the meeting.	
4. REPORTS BY COUNTY/ BOROUGH COUNCILLORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full reports circulated. • Appendix A. 	
5. REPORTS BY CHAIR AND PARISH COUNCILLORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Thomas continues to attend meetings regarding Local Government Reorganisation. The consultation is open until 26th March, and anybody can comment Proposals for local government reorganisation in Kent and Medway - GOV.UK • Parish Chairs meeting takes place on 24th March. 	
6. PLANNING	<p>a. <u>Applications</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26/00360/FULL and 26/00361/LBC Benenden Girls School, Cranbrook Road. Replacement of 1no. timber casement window with a slim double glazed metal window <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Straightforward replacement window. <p>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support these applications subject to the works being satisfactory to the Conservation Officer.</p> • 26/00362/FULL Wealden Heights, Cranbrook Road. Erection of new gym & garden storage outbuilding. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ SITE CONSTRAINTS: 12 in total ❖ SITE HISTORY: 07/00274/FULL Two storey rear extension; 10/03229/HOUSE single storey triple bay garage, store room; creation of new vehicular access; 12/01100/HOUSE hard tennis court, 9' high perimeter fencing; 12/01924/SUB Condition 3 Landscaping scheme; 13/00903/ HOUSE Variation of Condition 2 12/01100 - Revised location of tennis court. All approved. ❖ LISTED BUILDINGS IN PROXIMITY: Grade II - Crit Hall, Little Crit, The Moat. None affected. ❖ APPLICATION FORM INFO: Walls - natural timber cladding to match house extension; Roof - single ply membrane, flat roof; Windows - timber aluminium composite windows; Doors - timber aluminium composite doors. ❖ GENERAL COMMENTS: Rear garden of property doglegs to rear of Little Crit with new building located on corner of the dogleg. Single storey flat roof height not visible from Little Crit due to numerous trees. Existing 2 sheds and storage container to be removed. <p>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application with a request for exterior lighting condition to comply with BNDP Policy BD5.</p> • 26/00320/FULL Bikkel, Goddards Green Road. Removal of outbuilding and construction of dwelling. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Extant permission 25/01543/FULL to convert garage into separate 2 storey, 3 bedroom dwelling occupying its own curtilage (BPC supported). ❖ Same design for a 2 storey (with basement storage), 3 bed home. 2nd floor within roof space. ❖ Timber-framed construction with Millboard composite cladding. ❖ Permitted scheme offered no renewable energy. Proposed scheme includes numerous carbon emission reducing and thermal features realising a far more efficient, future proof and environmentally responsible solution than attempting to upgrade the existing structure. <p>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application with a request for exterior lighting condition to comply with BNDP Policy BD5 and Policy EN8 of the Local Plan.</p> • 26/00451/FULL School Farm House, Cranbrook Road. Variation and Discharge of Conditions of Planning Permission 25/00196/FULL - replacement of existing dwelling to create single-storey dwelling, with associated car parking. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Condition 2 amendments: rooflights to bathrooms and hallway to improve daylighting and ventilation; Minor adjustments to window sizes and positions to coordinate with structural layout and improve daylighting and ventilation; Reconstruction of existing single-storey outbuilding with revised roof to address site conditions and ensure structural integrity. ❖ Discharge of Condition 7 - external lighting. All proposed external lighting is low intensity LED, 	

Chairman..... Date.....

These minutes are not a verbatim record of the meeting, but a summary of discussion and decisions taken at the meeting.

	<p>downward directed, shielded to minimise glare and light spill beyond site boundaries. No upward light emitted beyond horizontal. Lighting operated by sensors or timers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Outbuilding- part garage, store and plant room, and part games room/studio/ accommodation containing bathroom and kitchenette. <p>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support the variations and discharge conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26/00440/LBC Hurstdene, The Street. Internal alterations to annexe ground floor. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Lightweight stud partitions adjusted to create new bathroom and revised kitchen layout. Non-structural and do not affect external envelope. <p>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application subject to the works being satisfactory to the Conservation Officer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26/00439/LBC Hurstdene, The Street. Internal reconfiguration of first floor bathroom and ensuite <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Main House first floor: Repositioning of bath, shower, wc and basin. Minor adjustments to internal partitions. Re-siting of existing bathroom entrance door. ❖ Only lightweight internal partitions and fittings are involved. No historic features, floor structures or primary fabric removed or altered. <p>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application subject to the works being satisfactory to the Conservation Officer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26/00452/FULL Culpeppers, Coldharbour Road. Variation of Condition 2 of Planning Permission 23/01223/FULL - Changes to lower ground floor roof lights and fenestration. Ground floor window changes and size increase of bi-fold doors. Additional windows added to first floor and adjustments to roof lights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Lower ground floor: rearrangement of internal partitions; one large roof lantern replaced with two smaller roof lanterns within a green roof; the two external windows replaced with 2 bifold door sets. ❖ Ground floor: removal of internal partitions and reconfiguration; change of room positions, increased size of bifold doors to west elevation. ❖ First floor: additional windows and reconfiguration to some windows to suit external layout of building; adjustment of rooflights. <p>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26/00550/TNOT56 Telecommunications Consultation: Installation of a generator; alterations to perimeter fence; new AMF panel; replacement battery blocks and ancillary development Existing Base Station, Land At Beacon Farm, Benenden Road <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Consultation received too late for consideration at the Parish Council meeting and will be discussed by the Planning Group and its recommendations circulated to all parish councillors. ❖ 3 parishioners attended the meeting to make a presentation to BPC regarding the validity of the application and raising concerns about the proposals. The Planning Group will consider these concerns. <p>b. <u>Other Planning Matters</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uphill Development <p>Cllrs Thomas, Grant and Beveridge attended a meeting with Cllr Dawlings and TWBC Head of Planning on 13th March to share and discuss BPC’s concerns as a result of the outcome of the Uphill planning application and appeal.</p> <p>Carlos Hone (Head of Planning) and Lucinda Roach (Development Manager) attended on behalf of TWBC. BPC raised many issues as to how the Uphill application and appeal process was dealt with, particularly highlighting the lack of communication from Planning Officers with BPC and particularly with regard to their decision to recommend the application for approval, going against the BNDP policies as well as their own policies. The Planning Officers defended their position with an explanation that the (conditional) offer of £85k from the applicant towards Affordable Housing was the catalyst for their recommendation for approval. BPC did not accept this as justification for approval.</p> <p>The outcome of the meeting was that the TW Planning Officers understood the reasons for BPC’s</p>	
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	<p>dissatisfaction with the way this application had been dealt with, and agreed that when a site has been allocated for development in an NDP such as this, then it is imperative that the parish council is consulted on the progress of such applications and involved in the discussions/negotiations with the developer as well as the decision making process.</p> <p>Following discussions, BPC agreed that this matter has been taken as far as possible, as any further escalation would not alter the decision made on the application. The different approaches by developers for the allocated sites in Benenden was highlighted, with Esquire Developments and Canham Homes complimented on their collaborative approach with BPC and general consideration of the impact of development on a small, rural community, as opposed to the aggressive and unhelpful stance taken by Hestia Homes Ltd for the Uphill site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Lettings Plan ❖ Cllr Thomas contacted TWBC requesting that an LLP is put in place for Benenden to ensure affordable housing is offered to those with a housing need within the parish in the first instance. ❖ TW advised that this is typically developed and agreed with the Registered Provider operating on the specific site. Where required, the LLP is then approved by the Housing Portfolio Holder. ❖ TWBC provided a brief overview of current local housing need. Currently 11 applicants on the Housing Register with a confirmed local connection to the parish. ❖ The 12 almshouses at Walkhurst Road will be let directly by the charity to applicants in housing need who meet their specific criteria, which prioritises those with a local connection to Benenden. TW Allocations Team has been working with the charity to nominate suitable Housing Register applicants with a confirmed local connection. Occupancy is expected late March/early April. ❖ Affordable housing provision at the Benenden Hospital site has faced challenges securing a Registered Provider. TWBC has a meeting scheduled with the developer to discuss further. The current application proposes 87 dwellings in total, with a 30% affordable housing requirement, equating to 26 affordable homes. ❖ If the almshouses are allocated to applicants with a confirmed Benenden local connection this will significantly reduce the existing local housing need within the parish. Unless new eligible households with a Benenden connection come forward, the affordable homes at the Benenden Hospital site would then be allocated in line with the standard bidding hierarchy, meaning they would become available to applicants from across the borough. ❖ Registered Providers and developers often raise concerns about applying strict local connection criteria to intermediate products (Shared Ownership and First Homes). Initial demand for these is usually local, especially in rural areas, and providers often request a cascade mechanism. They may also propose additional LLP criteria, such as employment status requirements and no history of significant arrears. ❖ BPC welcomes discussion about the possibility of an LLP with the developer and Planning Officer. • 26/00123/ELEC Iden Green Recreation Ground. Electricity Notification - installation of a substation and underground cables. ❖ UKPN seeks confirmation from the LPA as to whether or not it raises any objections to the proposal. Further consultation does not take place. ❖ UKPN had approached BVT to install the substation on IG recreation ground and Trustees replied that they didn't support the proposed location and suggested somewhere less prominent. ❖ UKPN went ahead with application. Covering letter states that a pole mounted transformer, serving most of the village, is to be removed. ❖ The outcome/decision by TWBC is that it raises an OBJECTION and states that there is insufficient information to determine the potential for an adverse impact upon the HWNL, the Iden Green Conservation Area, and nearby heritage assets. 	
7. HIGHWAYS, FOOTPATHS & TRANSPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>HIP/Rural Parish Grant</u> ❖ The grant application to TWBC for £3,400 for the agreed highways project has been submitted and the outcome is awaited. ❖ Cllr Russell raised the issue with TWBC that many parishes have not received as much funding as was allowed (up to £25,000 for each of the 16 parishes) and asked whether there would be 	

	<p>potential for additional schemes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ TWBC advised that anything else on the HIP which could be made ready quickly could be submitted but TWBC is working to other deadlines and would redirect unspent money to other projects rather than holding it in reserve, so another funding round is unlikely. ❖ KCC Highways advised there is nothing else on the HIP which could be submitted in time. ❖ TWBC did not allow enough time for KCC design teams' work, and there were no extra resources available to deliver the planning, design and costings of schemes. ❖ BPC realises the additional work this has created for Highways but is nonetheless disappointed at the outcome, especially given the fact that BPC has had its HIP in place, and is regularly reviewed, for longer than many other parishes. ❖ The HIP review process will continue as normal and Cllr Beveridge and the Clerk will discuss this with Highways in due course. 	GB/CL																																																																																																																																			
8. RESOURCING/ FINANCE	<p>a. <u>Monthly Finance</u></p> <p>TRANSACTIONS FROM 1st February 2026</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 80%;">Brought Forward Current Account</td> <td style="width: 20%; text-align: right;">4258.59</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Brought Forward Savings Account</td> <td style="text-align: right;">82881.15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Brought forward</td> <td style="text-align: right;">87139.74</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Income</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Payee</td> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Reference</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Amount</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">TOTAL</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3" style="padding-left: 20px;">Expenditure</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Supplier</td> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Reference</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Amount</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DD HugoFox</td> <td>Website</td> <td style="text-align: right;">23.99</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DD 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	<p>b. Grant Applications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grants/donations given from S137 funds to date total £4,705. BPC has the ability to give £16,294 under S137 heading. Support given to BVT this year (not from S137): Grounds Maintenance £5,088; Trees £3,440 (net figures). The Resourcing Committee recommended and the Parish Council unanimously agreed the following grants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Benenden Village Hall £4,320. To replace all the existing fluorescent lighting throughout the whole hall with more efficient and reliable LED lighting. ❖ Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services £100. ❖ Benenden's Community Shop £3,570. Shop redecoration, smoked glass over for new chiller, pizza over, griddle and food chopper. ❖ £6,300 to be ringfenced for BVT Benenden Playground improvements. The cost of the first phase of resurfacing work to be carried out is £6,305 + VAT, total £7,471. BVT is currently awaiting to hear the outcome of a grant application to the Bonfire Society towards playground maintenance. <p>c. Year-end Finances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An explanation is required for any reserves over 1.15 of precept ie anything over £59,800. Year-end predicted figures: General Reserves £57,800 and Ringfenced Reserves £13,050. Ringfenced reserves include Wildflower Meadow £6,750 (£7,000 grant from KCC, less £250 spent 2025/26) and £6,300 playground improvements. Total S137 spend £12,695. <p>d. Grounds' Maintenance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Resourcing Committee recommended and BPC unanimously agreed to award the 2026/27 grounds' maintenance contract to Tompsett Landscaping. BPC puts this contract out to tender every other year. This was done 2025/26 and Tompsett did not increase costs. This year Tompsett has applied an increase, but this is still cheaper than other quotes received last year. Actual cost 2025/26 £7,457.25 + VAT = £8,948.70. Roughly £6,000 of these costs are which BPC meets for BVT. Cost for 2026/27 is expected to be around £9,500. 	
9. ENVIRONMENT & MAINTENANCE	<p>a. Maintenance of Village Assets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It had been agreed to clear foliage from the bus stop and to replace the glass pane in the telephone kiosk. Cllr Taylor to provide contact details of someone who may be able to undertake maintenance work. Benches around the village will be looked at to establish, if possible, ownership and what repairs might be needed. Cllr Lewis raised again the issue of the litter bin at Iden Green Playground. The Clerk and Cllr Dawlings continue to try to resolve this with TWBC. Cllr Lewis to write separately to TWBC. <p>b. Village Tidy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Village Spring Tidy was held on 7th March and around 30 volunteers took part and tidied across the parish. It was noted that there was more discarded litter than previously. <p>c. New Bench</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new bench donated by Canham Homes has been installed opposite Benenden's. Thanks was given to Canham Homes and to Benenden's for organising the installation. The installation to BPC was £150. Bench to be added to the maintenance schedule. 	<p>MT</p> <p>DH/PG</p> <p>CL/TD JL</p> <p>DH</p>
10. VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS/ COMMUNITY	<p>a. Parish Councillor Vacancy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cllr Cruse resigned 21st February. As parish council elections take place this year the process to replace Cllr Cruse will happen after the election. 	

Chairman..... Date.....

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BPC usually considers parish councillor responsibilities at its May or June meeting and this will happen as usual. <p>b. <u>Allotments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sheep from the field immediately behind the allotment site got into the site and nibbled a lot of produce. The farmer has improved the fencing around the sheep. The Allotment Association may put some fencing along the bottom of the site or improve the hedging. <p>c. <u>Emergency Planning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guy Hagan had made a start on a plan for the parish, but this needs more work and development. Parish Councillors to consider if this is something they would like to take the lead on. 	ALL
11. CORRESPONDENCE / PARISHIONER QUESTIONS	<p><u>Ditch Maintenance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A parishioner raised the issue regarding ditches which have not been maintained and has led flooding, damaged verges and damaged roads. The parishioner will report an issue on Standen Street to KCC as the authority which is able to take action. Parishioners are encouraged to report through the KCC website Report or track a problem on the road or pavement - Kent County Council 	
12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING	Date of Next Meeting: Monday 20 th April, 7pm, Quinlan Centre, Benenden Hospital	
	The meeting closed at 8.40pm.	