

Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden Parish Council**The Minutes of the Meeting of Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden Parish Council
Held at Chattenden Community Centre on Thursday 4th December 2025 at 7.00pm.**

Parish Councillors present: Cllr Fray
Cllr Sparks
Cllr Chester
Cllr Pearce
Cllr Styles
Cllr Mitchell
Cllr Dunkley
Cllr Williams
Cllr Francis
Cllr Tildesley
Cllr Barton

Also: Sherrie Babington - Parish Clerk, and members of the public.

The meeting was chaired by Councillor Fray.

1. Election of Chairperson.

The Clerk informed the Council that, following the resignation of Cllr Sands (Chairman) a new Chairperson needed to be elected.

Nominations for Chair were taken:

- Cllr Sparks was nominated (proposed by Cllr Tildesley, seconded by Cllr Mitchell).
- Cllr Jean Fray was nominated (proposed by Cllr Styles, seconded by Cllr Dunkley).

A secret paper ballot was undertaken. Members voted, and Cllr Jean Fray was duly elected Chairperson.

The Chair expressed her gratitude and outlined her commitment to strong governance, stability, and restoring trust following recent events.

2. Chairpersons Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Cllr Fray signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

3. Apologies for Absence.

Members who cannot attend a meeting shall tender their apologies to the Parish Clerk prior to the meeting. 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 for:

- Cllr Cutting - Holiday
- Cllr Wood - Personal

4. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations.

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.

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no requests for dispensations.

5. Minutes of the Previous Meeting.

It was proposed by Cllr Williams, seconded by Cllr Chester, and agreed by all present that the minutes of the meeting held on 6th November 2025 be approved and signed.

The approved Minutes were then signed and dated by the Chairman.

6. Matters Arising.

- Speedwatch – Cllrs Cutting and Wood currently looking into this, a report will be given to the next PC meeting regarding the scheme.
- Overgrown vegetation at access junction to the Abbey Farm Development – the Clerk confirmed that this had been reported to Medway Council and a site meeting had been requested.

7. Parish Councillor Vacancies.

The Clerk reported that following the resignation of two Parish Councillors, there are currently two vacancies on the Parish Council.

The statutory notices had been displayed and Medway Council informed. If, within the 14-day notice period, no election is called, the Parish Council will proceed to fill the vacancies by co-option. If an election is called, Medway Council will arrange this accordingly.

8. Urgent Matters.

To consider any urgent matters raised by members.

Christmas Lighting: Cllr Pearce reported that earlier faults in two of five column-mounted Christmas lights had been reported to Medway Council. The contractor had inspected and reported all functioning.

9. Public Session.

To allow members of the public to raise any issues with the Parish Council.

Residents attended the meeting and spoke regarding the following:

Abbey Farm Development

- Overgrown hedging obstructing views for drivers and pedestrians.
- Repeated near misses due to obstructed sightlines.

Community Speed Watch

A member of the public updated the Council:

- He had completed Speed Watch training.
- Awaiting police demonstration of speed detection equipment.
- Warning letters will be issued to offenders; no enforcement powers apply.
- Medway Council will insure volunteers.
- Kent Police may occasionally attend sessions.

Footpath Safety – Knights Road / Wylie Road

- Overgrown vegetation, littering, broken glass and persistent maintenance issues.

It was agreed that the Clerk would contact MHS to request urgent attention and maintenance to the footpath.

10. Financial Matters.

a. Financial Statement.

To receive the financial statement and to authorise any payments.

The monthly financial statement was circulated and considered by members. The bank balances and payments were reviewed.

It was proposed by Cllr Williams, seconded by Cllr Dunkley, and agreed by all present that the financial statement be approved.

b. 2026/2027 Budget.

Members noted that the 2026/2027 Budget and Precept must be agreed by the January Parish Council meeting.

It was agreed that the Clerk would prepare a draft budget and precept recommendation for consideration by the Finance and General Purposes Committee, for presentation to the January PC meeting.

Action: Clerk / FA&GP Committee to progress draft budget and precept proposals.

c. Grant Application.

Grant Application – wHoo Cares Christmas Day Dinner

The Parish Council has received a grant application from wHoo Peninsula Cares CIC / wHoo Cares for support towards their Christmas Day Dinner 2025 project.

Summary of Project

The project provides a free Christmas Day Lunch and social gathering for residents who may otherwise be alone on Christmas Day. The event is open to all ages (with a particular focus on those aged 60+). Planning has already commenced, and the event will take place on 25 December 2025.

Total project cost: £1,200

Amount requested from Hoo Parish Council: £700

Funds will be used for:

- Christmas Day Lunch (Dinner)
- Small gifts for attendees

In accordance with the Council's Grant Policy (cap £500 per application), the Council approved a £500 grant. (Dunkley/Pearce)

11. Clerk's Report.

To consider any matters arising from the Clerk's Report.

Community Resilience Plan

The Parish Council has previously agreed to support and progress the development of a Community Resilience Plan for Hoo. Following recent correspondence with the Kent Resilience Team, a meeting will be arranged in the New Year to start the project in partnership with the Kent Resilience Team, Hoo Fire Station, and other agencies.

Once these dates are received, they will be circulated to members to arrange for Parish Council representatives to attend.

12. Chairman's Report.

To receive the Chairman's Report.

The Chair thanked members for their support.

She acknowledged recent events and stated that she was committed to leading the Council with trust and integrity.

13. New Community Centre.

To receive an update for the new Community Centre.

The following report was given:

- The planning application for the new Community Centre has now been formally submitted to Medway Council and validated reference MC/25/2312.
- Arrangements were now being made for a meeting with Medway Council to discuss the release of the previously approved Section 106 funds and to explore potential additional funding support to bridge part of the shortfall.
- Monitoring Officer's Advice – Declarations of Interest in relation to planning application
The Monitoring Officer has confirmed that Parish Councils are not classified as "relevant authorities" under the Localism Act for the purpose of granting dispensations. therefore, members are not required to apply for dispensations in relation to the Community Centre planning application.

14. Memorial Garden.

To receive a report on the Memorial Garden.

Cllr Williams reported that the Memorial Garden project is progressing well:

- Internal fencing completed, creating defined zones including:
 - Ashes interment area
 - Pet memorial area
- Extensive shrub clearance undertaken for safety and access.
- Wheelchair-accessible pathways are being installed using compacted Type 1 material.
- Safety signage being procured (five quotations requested).
- Temporary gate closures in force during works.
- Excess turf available for residents.
- Quotes for full rotivation and reseedling of the main lawn area will be brought to a future meeting.

15. Parish Council Committees.**a. Events Committee.**

A written report from Cllr Cutting was received.

Updates included:

- Christmas on the Green was highly successful; large turnout.
- Salvation Army Band & Two Nightingales performed.
- Lions Santa Sleigh scheduled for 22–23 December.
- Pantomime – "Dick Whittington" planned for 3 January 2026.
- New Year's Eve Event organised as a family-friendly community gathering.

b. Environment Committee.

Members received the Environment Committee minutes, and the following was agreed:

Pottery Road Recreation Ground

The footpath improvement works and car park patch repairs have now been completed. The works have been inspected, and the contractor's invoice is included on the financial statement for payment.

Kingshill Recreation Ground

The new self-closing gates have been ordered in line with recommendations. Footpath resurfacing works at this site will also be undertaken- a confirmed start date has not yet been received from the contractor. Members to be updated once this is confirmed.

MUGA Project

Invitations to quote for the new MUGA have been issued to seven play area contractors, with submissions due back by 31 December 2025.

Hoo Common

A site meeting with Medway Valley Countryside Partnership has been arranged for Wednesday 10 December at 9.30am meeting at Hoo Common. Members of the Environment Committee are invited to attend to discuss the planned volunteer workday for next year.

c. Finance, Audit and General Purposes Committee.

Members to meet ahead of January PC meeting to prepare draft budget and precept proposals for 2026/2027.

16. Planning Matters.a. Planning Applications Received.

The following planning applications were considered by the Parish Council:

MC/25/2154 - Deangate Ridge Leisure Complex Greenspace , Dux Court Road
Construction of a floodlit football foundation playzone with linked path.

Parish Council: Objection.

MC/25/2150 - Bramleys , 226 Main Road, Hoo St Werburgh, Rochester, Medway
Retrospective application for the retention of a single-storey outbuilding for use as an ancillary annexe incidental to the main dwelling.

Parish Council: Objection.

MC/25/1874 - 1 Ropers Farm , Ropers Green Lane, High Halstow, Rochester
Installation of a new swimming pool and associated filtration room/store/changing room.

Parish Council: No objection.

MC/25/2172 - 148 High Street, Rochester, Medway, ME1 1ER
Variation of condition 4 on MC/16/4952 (To extend the operating hours of the premises. The use hereby permitted shall only operate between the hours of 09:00 to 23:00 Sundays to Thursdays (inclusive) and Public Holidays and between the hours of 09:00 to 01:30 on Fridays and Saturdays.)

Parish Council: No objection.

MC/25/2256 - Flanders Farm, Ratcliffe Highway, Hoo St Werburgh, Rochester
The construction of a cold store building including associated engineering operations and landscaping.

Parish Council: No objection.

b. Planning Decisions by Medway Council.

MC/25/2204

Stoke Road Hoo St Werburgh Rochester Medway ME3 9BL
Overhead Line (Exemption) (England & Wales) Regulations 2009, Statutory Instrument 2009 No. 640
Electricity, Paragraph 3 (1) -establish whether there is a significant adverse effect on the environment
Raise No Objection

MC/25/2175

Land at the Former Sturdee Club and Land at Stoke Road Hoo St Werburgh ME3 9BJ
Application for a non-material amendment to planning permission MC/23/2857 for changes to external materials on various house types
Approval with Conditions

MC/25/1955

Land to the South of Stoke Road Adjacent Yew Tree Lodge Hoo St Werburgh Rochester Medway
Details pursuant to condition 19 (Acoustic Protection) on planning permission MC/19/3129 For Outline planning application with all matters reserved (other than means of access) for up to 100 dwellings and associated works and infrastructure.
Discharge of Conditions

MC/25/1920

Land to the South of Stoke Road Adjacent Yew Tree Lodge Hoo St Werburgh Rochester Medway
Details pursuant to condition 4 (Landscape and Ecological Management Plan) on planning permission MC/24/2403 - Approval of the Reserved Matters of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for the erection of 100 dwellings alongside associated landscape, works and infrastructure, and the discharge of conditions 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 18, 20, 23, 24 and 27 in relation to planning permission MC/19/3129
Discharge of Conditions

MC/25/1909

5 Guelder Rose Drive Hoo St Werburgh Rochester Medway ME3 9FX
Construction of a single storey rear extension in place of existing conservatory.
Approval with Conditions

MC/25/1890

Land at the Former Sturdee Club and Land at Stoke Road Hoo St Werburgh ME3 9BJ
Details pursuant to condition 3 (Phasing plan) and 10 (CEMP and traffic management plan) on planning permission MC/23/2857 - Construction of 134no. residential dwellings (including affordable and over 55's homes), children's nursery (Class E(f)), cafe/community hub (Class E(b)/F2(b)) and commercial/retail floorspace (E(g)/E(a)), new public open spaces, sustainable urban drainage systems, landscaping and biodiversity areas and play areas. Access to be from 4no. new locations from Stoke Road. Provision of roads, parking spaces, and earthworks - Demolition of the Sturdee Club and associated structures
Discharge of Conditions

c. Appeals.

No matters were considered.

d. Other Planning Matters.

Members discussed broader planning and Local Plan issues, including:

Members expressed concern about the lack of access to Local Plan Topic Papers despite assurances they would support transparency.

17. External Reports.

a. Hoo Village Hall (Oversight Committee).

Members received an update on the Village Hall from the Hall Manager.

- New signage, website, online booking system and increased hire usage reported.
- Hall finances are stable, and slightly ahead of forecast.

b. Alliance of Hoo Peninsula Parish Councils.

Cllr Pearce reported that Ward Councillors continued to attend Peninsula Parish Council meetings to keep up to date of the views of the Alliance Parishes.

c. Police and Pact Report.

Members received a written report regarding police matters and the PACT.

d. Ward Councillors' Reports.

Ward Councillors Sands, Pearce and Crozer reported on the following matters:

- Medway's grass cutting returning in-house; aim to reinstate 12 annual cuts.
- Seagrass planting initiative underway to improve biodiversity.
- Concerns over potential council tax increases (approx. 5%).
- Impacts of potential Local Government Reorganisation.
- Continued opposition to the expected Chattenden Barracks planning application The evolving position regarding the Medway Local Plan and likely timetable for consultation and submission.

The Parish Council thanked the Ward Councillors for their continued support and updates.

18. Exclusion of Press and Public – Confidential Item

To resolve that, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded due to the confidential nature of the following item.

Confidential Item

To receive and consider a report concerning an internal governance matter.

19. Date of the next meeting – Thursday 8th January 2026 – Hoo Village Hall.

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman closed the meeting to the press and public at 7.55pm.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____