

PARISH COUNCIL OF BENENDEN

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 19th January 2026, 7pm, Iden Green Pavilion

Present	Cllrs Beveridge, Cochrane, Cruse, Grant, Ham, Lewis, Thomas. C Levett, Clerk. 2 Parishioners	
Item		Action Responsibility
1.. APOLOGIES	Apologies were received from Cllrs Dawlings, Neville, Palmer and Russell.	
2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	No declarations of interest.	
3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING	The minutes from the Parish Council Meeting held on 15 th December 2025 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"> Presentation at Parish Chairs meeting on 9th December by the Rural and Community Housing Enabling Service regarding housing needs surveys. BPC will need to carry out a new survey before the NDP review. Cllr Thomas to enquire about timescales and costs of a survey. 	NT
6. PLANNING	<p>a. Applications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 26/00018/LBC Hurstdene, The Street. Internal alterations to annexe and 26/00017/LBC Internal alterations; window replacement with new doorset ❖ SITE CONSTRAINTS: Total of 13 constraints. ❖ SITE HISTORY: 21/01671/TCA Trees in conservation area notification. 24/02394/TDD Notification. No objection. ❖ LISTED BUILDINGS IN PROXIMITY: Many Listed Buildings; property within Benenden Conservation Area. ❖ APPLICATION FORM INFO: Proposed internal alterations to existing annex to facilitate improved guest accommodation. ❖ <u>Works to main house ground floor</u>: Existing kitchen and dining room to swap places; window in former dining room to be replaced with French doorset; stud wall between existing downstairs WC/shower room and laundry room to be removed to create larger space. ❖ <u>Main house 1st floor</u>: Reposition of stud wall between main bathroom and adjacent wardrobe. ❖ <u>Main house 2nd floor</u>: Conversion of existing attic storage room to ensuite bathroom to serve adjacent bedroom. Existing window retained and no external alterations. Retention of eaves storage to preserve existing roof-space configuration. ❖ <u>Works to Annexe</u>: Internal works to alter existing layout involving removal and construction of modern internal partitions with no impact on historic or structural fabric. <p>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support these applications subject to the works being satisfactory to the Conservation Officer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 26/00036/FULL Beacon Hall House, Rolvenden Road. Replacement conservatory; single storey extension; removal of front porch ❖ Existing rear conservatory to be replaced with well-insulated, single storey extension of modest footprint. ❖ Small single storey extension on the north elevation. ❖ Existing front porch to be removed to simplify the principal elevation. ❖ All extensions are single storey and subordinate to main dwelling. Ridge heights and roof forms remain secondary to existing house to ensure that original building remains the dominant element. Brickwork and roof tiles to match existing, timber or high-quality composite fenestration. Application has been prepared following pre-app advice. <p>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application.</p> <p>Also note that 25/02436/FULL Installation of ground mounted solar panels remains pending and there has been no activity.</p> <p>b. Other Planning Matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uphill, New Pond Road – Uphill appeal decision summary by Cllr Thomas circulated. ❖ Main issues as set out by Inspector in Appeal Decision, and at informal hearing at TWBC: <p><i>7. The main issue in this appeal is whether the proposal would provide an appropriate mix of housing, with particular regard to affordable housing provision.</i></p>	

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

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

	<p>10. The borough has a high need for affordable housing which equates to roughly 48% of the annual housing requirement. Written submissions recognise affordable housing is needed to accommodate people who work in the parish. As articulated by the Council and representatives of Benenden Parish Council during the hearing, affordable housing provision is an important local issue and a key priority of the BNDP.</p> <p>❖ Justification by the Inspector for allowing the appeal:</p> <p>49. Unless found viable by the late-stage review, the proposal would not provide the minimum percent of on-site affordable housing identified by either (BDNP) Policy SSP2 or (TWBC) Policy H3. However, delivery of this allocated site is of strategic importance to the implementation of the TWBLP's development strategy and, as noted in the Inspector's Report, Policy H3 seeks to strike a balance between supporting development and delivering affordable housing. The reasons for the omission of affordable housing provision are fully justified by evidence in accordance with the requirements of Policy H3. Consequently, I conclude the proposal would provide an appropriate mix of housing.</p> <p>50. The proposal would therefore comply with BNDP Policy SSP2 and TWBLP Policy H3 which together require the provision of affordable housing, unless exceptional circumstances indicate otherwise.</p> <p>The Parish Council considered the way forward following the appeal decision and agreed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cllrs Thomas, Grant and Beveridge to meet with Cllr Dawlings and TWBC Head of Planning. ○ Cllrs Thomas and Grant to look at all the published documents before meeting with the Head of Planning. If there appears to be missing documents/correspondence between TWBC and the applicant BPC will make a request under the Freedom of Information Act. ○ Following the meeting and depending on the reaction and feedback from TWBC BPC will decide whether or not to go to the press. The issue can be regarded as a national one demonstrating how developers avoid including affordable housing in developments. A copy of any press release would be shared with TWBC. The appeal decision has already been published on Kent Online. ○ Talking Point Article written by Paul Tolhurst to be published in the village magazine. ○ Cllr Thomas to discuss with Cllr Dawlings how best to raise the issue with Katie Lam MP and/or the Housing Minister. ○ BNDP review will go ahead with allocating sites if required as the parish is in a better position with an NDP with allocated sites than without and there has been success with 3 of the 4 allocated sites proposed in the current NDP, achieving a substantial amount of affordable housing in the parish. BPC will continue to work alongside TWBC. ○ Not to seek a judicial review, which would challenge the legality of the decision-making process and not the planning merits of the decision. This would be costly, and BPC spend would be capped at £10,000, and unlikely to overturn the decision in this case. 	<p>NT/PG/GB NT/PG</p> <p>NT</p>
7. HIGHWAYS, FOOTPATHS & TRANSPORT	<p>a. <u>HIP/Rural Parish Grant</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The scheme from Benenden's HIP was submitted to KCC Highways for the engineer's agreement and costing. ● The deadline for KCC Highways to confirm the scheme was 31st December and the application deadline for grant funding from TWBC is 30th January. 26th January. ● The Clerk has chased Highways and asked Cllr Russell to chase as well, but BPC has still received no communication or confirmation, and is presently unable to apply for the funding. <p>b. <u>Pavement Obstruction</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parishioner advised of a van completely obstructing the pavement opposite the Primary School and reported this. ● The van, which had previously been parked at the Village Hall, has now been moved back there. <p>c. <u>Road Closures</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cllr Cruse has written an article for the Village Magazine. ● Cllr Cruse to contact Highways regarding road closure issues on Walkhurst Road. 	RC

	d. <u>Hospital Development</u>			
	● Cllr Ham had raised the issue of the state of the road by the development with Esquire and hopefully this will be resolved.			
8. RESOURCING/ FINANCE	<u>Monthly Finance</u>			
	TRANSACTIONS FROM 1st December 2025			
	Brought Forward Current Account			7792.73
	Brought Forward Savings Account			92385.17
	Brought forward			100177.90
	Income			
		Payee	Reference	Amount
		J&C Musters	Arnold Cole Trust	500.00
		BVT	Telephone	250.00
		UTB	Bank Interest	495.98
	TOTAL			1245.98
	Expenditure			
		Supplier	Reference	Amount
	DD	HugoFox	Website	23.99
	DD	HugoFox	Emails	20.99
	FEE	Unity Trust Bank	Monthly Charge	6.00
	BACS	F&C Cleaning Services	Public Toilet Cleaning	766.35
	BACS	Benenden's Community Shop	Grant	4200.00
	BACS	Amazon	Telephone	999.00
	BACS	Employee	Staffing Costs	1517.79
	BACS	o2	Telephone	13.68
	BACS	F&C Cleaning Services	Public Toilets	747.76
	BACS	HMRC	Employer Contributions Q3	432.81
	BACS	Tompsett Landscaping	Grounds Maintenance	443.64
	BACS	JJM Locksmith	Public Toilet	95.00
	BACS	Ironmongery Experts	Public Toilet	44.07
	BACS	Ironmongery Experts	Public Toilet Door Handle	34.74
	TOTAL			9345.82
	Balance			92078.06
	Current account bank statement 116 31st December 2025			4196.91
	Savings account bank statement 020 31st December 2025			87881.15
	Reconciled			92078.06
January 2026 Payments Approved				
DD	Nest	Pension	120.87	
DD	Nest	Pension	120.87	
DD	Grenke Lease	Printer Lease	167.98	
DD	HugoFox	Website	23.99	
DD	HugoFox	Emails	20.99	
FEE	Unity Trust Bank	Monthly Charge	6.00	
BACS	Employee	Staffing Costs	1205.79	
BACS	o2	Telephone	13.68	
BACS	F&C Cleaning Services	Public Toilet Cleaning	747.76	
BACS	Iden Green Pavilion	Meeting Hire	16.00	
BACS	TP Jones	Payroll Q3	63.40	
BACS	Advanced Tree Solutions	Recreation Grounds Tree Work	1908.00	
BACS	Arnold Cole Trust	Property Charity Income	500.00	
BACS	P Grant	Toilet Roll Holder	22.99	

	<p>TOTAL 4938.32</p> <p>All invoices listed have been examined, verified and certified by the RFO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £5,000 transfer from savings to current account. <p>b. <u>Grant Funding</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benenden's has thanked BPC for its funding and advised that it has purchased a new laptop, a new menu board, a new oven which has been installed and a new worktop chiller which is on order. The café also has new furniture both inside and out, and has received favourable comments. There is a requirement for a number of other items, particularly in the shop, and they would like to submit another application in the next financial year. 	
9. ENVIRONMENT & MAINTENANCE	<p>a. <u>Public Toilets</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The door handle operated locking mechanism had failed completely. A new mechanism was purchased and fitted by a locksmith. The door can now be locked from the inside and opened. In the event of the lock failing, the door can be opened by using the slot on the outside and turning the handle. Cllr Grant has replaced the toilet roll holder. Cllr Grant is meeting with electrician on 21st January to look at the hand dryer which isn't working. <p>b. <u>Maintenance of Village Assets</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cllr Grant revised the report created by Cllr Hagan and added a tab noting the Public Toilet hardware replacement. Assets need to be inspected regularly and the spreadsheet kept up to date. Cllr Ham has agreed to take this on. The Clerk to provide BPC's Asset Register and Cllrs Ham and Grant will carry out a further revision of the maintenance schedule. <p>c. <u>Village Tidy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rolvenden advised that it holds a dedicated litter collecting day and its event this year is scheduled for 7th March and has asked if Benenden would like to co-ordinate its Spring Village Tidy on the same day. Rolvenden and Benenden circumstances differ in that Rolvenden takes special measures on the A28 and more control on the main roads, and volunteers are asked to sign up beforehand. Ashford Borough Council do not support the Rolvenden event, whereas Benenden does receive support from TWBC. It was agreed that the Village Tidy would take place on 7th March. Cllr Cochrane and the Clerk to organise. 	<p>PG</p> <p>CL PG/DH</p> <p>SC/CL</p>
10. VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS/ COMMUNITY	<p>a. <u>Parish Councillor Co-option</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two parishioners have expressed an interest in joining the Parish Council and attended the meeting to observe. The parishioners will be asked to submit an application which the Clerk will circulate to all Parish Councillors. <p>b. <u>Memorial Hall AGM</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Memorial Hall AGM takes place on 28th January, 2pm. BPC only uses the Memorial Hall very occasionally because of its regular Monday night booking. Cllr Cochrane to attend. 	<p>CL</p> <p>SC</p>
11. CORRESPONDENCE /PARISHIONER QUESTIONS	<p>a. <u>PRoW Issue</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A parishioner advised of that she had been in touch with KCC PRoW about a footpath issue, and that they had been incredibly helpful. The parishioner indicated that she may attend PC meeting. 	
DATE OF NEXT MEETING	Date of Next Meeting: Monday 16 th February, 7pm, Quinlan Centre, Benenden Hospital	
	The meeting closed at 8.15pm.	