



ACOL PARISH COUNCIL

The Village Hall
The Street
Acol
Kent CT7 0JA
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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 18th December 2025 at 7.30pm, Acol Village Hall

Present: Parish Councillors Richard Steel (Chairman) [RS], Sarah Corby [SC], Gavin Winpenny [GW], Wendy Winpenny [WW]

In Attendance: Sara Archer – Clerk, Skip & Teresa Ling plus 3 members of public.

Cllr Steel welcomed Skip and Teresa Ling to the meeting, who had recently been nominated to receive the Freedom of Acol award for 2025. A ceremony was held prior to the meeting in which Skip and Teresa were presented with certificates in recognition of their support and commitment to the Parish.

51/25-26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Kate Ruranski, PC Andy Howe, KCC Cllr Luke Evans, District Cllr Abi Smith, District Cllr Peter Evans, CW Gary Groombridge.

52/25-26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests declared.

53/25-26 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting held on 16th October 2025. These were proposed by Cllr G Winpenny, seconded by Cllr Corby, all were in agreement and therefore signed by the Chairman of the meeting as a correct record.

54/25-26 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- In view of the presentation to Skip and Teresa for the Freedom of Acol Award, Cllr Steel proposed their details were also submitted to KALC for inclusion in their Community Awards Scheme. The Scheme is supported by Kent County Council, the High Sheriff of Kent, and the Mayor of Medway. Recipients receive a framed certificate and unique opportunity to be recognised among fellow nominees to receive their award directly from the High Sheriff of Kent, KCC Chairman/Mayor of Medway at a presentation evening in April.

Skip and Teresa were pleased to accept this proposal, Cllr Steel would make the necessary arrangements.

- Cllr Steel advised he had attended a Thanet Area Committee meeting along with Cllr Gavin Winpenny. A presentation was received from a Community Health Team. Thanet reported one of the highest rates of suicide, with deprivation and inadequate health provision noted as having a contributory impact on health and wellbeing.

- It was acknowledged that Parishes had not been included in any consultation with regard to the Local Government Review.

- A new recruit for the litter picking team had been welcomed. The Clerk would arrange for equipment to be sourced for him.

55/25-26 CLERK'S REPORT

- The Clerk advised that the handyman from Minster had been contacted and asked to progress with the maintenance of the roundabout and to attend the site and discuss the installation of a safety gate at the entrance of the Recreation Ground. No response had been received, the Clerk would follow this up in the New Year.

- A meeting would be held with representatives from Birchington, to discuss the next steps to progress with a Neighbourhood Plan.

- The proposed maintenance contract for the CCTV equipment was discussed. It was considered and agreed that a contract would not be necessary at this time. The Clerk would advise the installation company of the decision.

RESOLVED: To contact the CCTV installation company on an as needed basis for any issues, and not enter into a maintenance contract at this time. **Proposed:** Cllr Steel, **Seconded:** Cllr Wendy Winpenny

56/25-26 COUNCILLOR'S REPORTS

Cllr G Winpenny had attended the Thanet Area Committee meeting along with Cllr Steel and echoed the report from Cllr Steel regarding the presentation from the Community Health Team. The shortage of GP's in the area was a significant concern.

Thanks were expressed to Cllr Winpenny and the team of volunteers for the completion of the village planters, positive feedback had been noted.

Cllr Corby advised that the Community coffee afternoon – ‘Bites & Banter’, had been arranged for 31st January 2026, 3pm-5pm. Donations would be welcomed which would be collected and put back towards the continuing provision of the refreshments. Of the £100 donation from the Village Hall Committee towards the refreshments, £35 would be carried over into the new year.

It was suggested that a polite reminder was posted on the facebook page to encourage dog owners to pick up after their pets, as incidents of fouling appeared to be increasing in the park and main street.

Cllr W Winpenny confirmed that following concerns raised regarding the safety and security of the Recreation Ground for young children, a self lockable gate was being explored to prevent small children from running into the nearby road. The Minster handyman had been approached and asked to visit the site and make a recommendation for a suitable gate for the location.

57/25-26 INDIVIDUAL OFFICER REPORTS

a) **Cllr Luke Evans** was not in attendance, however, he submitted the following report:

1. Water leaks – More water leaks across Kent recently due to the cold snap so it is important to report them to Southern Water as soon as they are identified. I reported one in Minster and one in Margate and both have now been repaired.
2. HTE – Plans are still moving forward with the proposed waste to hydrogen plant in Manston. I spoke with the Director after I rumours that they have run into trouble. This is not the case and they will give progress updates when necessary.
3. Swan Deaths – Environmental Agency are keeping very quiet on this matter. 50 swans found dead, hundreds of dead fish and even reports of dead foxes. I will continue to investigate this matter with Cabinet Holder for Environment.
4. Special Resource Provisions (SRP's) – KCC are investing £20m in up to 55 new SRP's in Kent to reduce transport costs and our reliance on the private sector. 37 planned to open in September 2026 and the remaining the year after. This will save tax payers tens of millions annually and will provide better quality, local SEND places.

b) **Cllr Peter Evans** was not in attendance, however, he submitted the following report:

- TDC cabinet have agreed a number of recommendations concerning the future of the Port of Ramsgate. These are concerning securing short term income and long-term asset disposure.

- Pie Factory Music:

A £535,000 grant from the Pride in Place Programme capital allocation was approved, to be paid to Pie Factory Music. This will enable them to buy the freehold of Ramsgate Youth Centre, and keep it as a vital resource for young people.

- High Street Rental Auctions:

The High Street Rental Auction designations were also approved, meaning that the Property team can push ahead with plans to bring empty shops back into use in Margate, Cliftonville and Ramsgate through mandatory auctions. There's a new webpage coming in the new year which will explain more about the scheme and how it will work.

- Residential Parking Policy Consultation:

On Friday 8 December, we launched a consultation on the draft Residential Parking Policy. The policy aims to establish a clear and consistent framework for managing on-street parking in residential areas across the district, excluding the main town centres. We are inviting local people to review the draft Residential Parking Policy and complete a short online survey on Your Voice Thanet. It closes on Monday 12 January 2026.

- The Sarah Thorne Theatre:

The Sarah Thorne Theatre in Broadstairs was sold outside of the auction to Parties who currently use it. This sale was done by Kent County Council on favourable terms to the current tenants so that the theatre can remain in use by the local community.

If you have any pressing issues that you would like me to take up please email me.

Cllr Abi Smith was not in attendance, however, she confirmed she had nothing further to add to Cllr Evans's report as above.

c) **PC Andy Howe** was not in attendance, however, he submitted the following report:

Acol Calls to the Police:

There have been 8 calls from Acol to Kent Police during this period, 2 were animal related where livestock have entered carriageways, 4 were vehicle related, 1 was a report of criminal damage and the last related to an alarm call. Having received information from the public, a vehicle used to move class A drugs was stopped and searched in the Acol area, resulting in one arrest and a vehicle being seized. As always, we are very thankful for the public's assistance.

Acol Recorded Crime:

There were 2 recorded crimes in the Acol area, 1 being the criminal damage and the 2nd relating to a dispute.

Reported issues:

I have had concerns raised about the drag racing and Skidz causing noise nuisance as far away as Cliffsend, please report any environmental issues via Thanet District Council web site or call 01843 577000 and select environmental.

I have also had continued concerns around speeding along Manston Road (Museum Road). Kent Police continue to conduct "pop up" speed checks and recently issued multiple Traffic Offence Reports at this location (fines). I have requested the residents raise their concerns via the Parish Council and I would suggest that a speed camera along this stretch would solve the issue and pay for itself in a very short period.

My activity:

Unfortunately, I have been removed from front line operations due to a permanent injury. I have been requested to maintain the administrative element of the Thanet Villages and Cliffsend Pegwell for the time being until I can be replaced.

Until that time, I will be requesting colleagues including The Special Constabulary and the Neighbourhood Task Force, to undertake visible and proactive duties/tasks in the area.

Crime reduction advice:

On the approach to Xmas, please ensure you don't leave valuables on show either in vehicles or at home, thieves will walk many roads looking for valuables and insecurities. Ring/Blink doorbells and cameras are at very affordable prices now and you don't necessarily need to sign up to storage contracts.

Kent Police are now conducting their drink drive campaign. We will be focussing on country pubs especially and vehicles leaving those locations are far more likely to be stopped during this period.

The A299 Thanet way will be remaining 50mph for the foreseeable (KCC will likely update you), Kent Police are placing mobile speed camera vans along this stretch daily. We are not just trying to catch people out, it is very dangerous to drive along this stretch in excess of 50 mph and there have been numerous near misses where drivers have lost control when hitting the bumps in the road, so please be careful.

d) **Community Warden Gary Groombridge** was not in attendance, however, he submitted the following report:

- Continue to do Visual Presence around the Villages.
- Continuing to do Information drop-ins at Minster Library. sessions Booked in, (still running)
- I have now carried out a drop surgery at Manston Village Hall in November; I will be running further drop-in Surgeries in the future. One was missed in December, due to a mistake by me. It clashed with another event.
- I am continuing to work with Heart in the community a Wellbeing Charity. The new wellbeing group continues to be held in Minster at the Salvation Army Hall. The last one was on Friday 5th December, which I headed up. Numbers are now growing, which is very encouraging!
- I'm also still trying to get a wellbeing group started for residents at Minster Library, there is still no one to oversee and run the group at this point. I may have someone who is interested in running the group again.
- I'm in the process of organising some digital workshops, hopefully to try and encourage people without digital skills to engage. I'm waiting to get some dates back from the organiser. I have twelve names so far.
- I had a call from a resident in Minster informing me of neighbourhood dispute. He told me he has put some more cameras up and he will let me know if things get any worse or he needs my help.
- I had another conversation with a Minster resident informing me of a man that had approached her up near McDonalds, asking her if he could give her a lift in his car. He also asked her some inappropriate things. She had called the Police to inform them; they passed the information on. I did email PC Andy Howe to let him know. He was already aware of the situation.
- I continue to attend and support the Man Shed in Minster, when I can, a group of mainly retired Men who get together to use their practical skills to support each other and the community.
- I've met up with the manager of Rivers Court, Housing 21 retirement living, in Minster. I spoke to some of the residents, I will be spending more time getting to know people. I have a scam presentation talk booked in along with Trading Standards on the 10th December for the residents.
- I continue to attend and support the residents at the wellbeing group that is held in Monkton Village Hall, some of the residents have put their names down for the future digital workshops.
- I continue to attend and support the residents at the wellbeing group that is held in the Pavilion at St Nicholas at Wade.
- I continue to attend and support the residents at the wellbeing group that is held in the Sun Inn at St Nicholas at Wade
- I'm in the process of trying to help a resident over in the Manston Area, who is isolated and feeling very low. I'm hoping to get her connected with the residents attending the Minster Wellbeing group, so that she feels connected and supported.
- I have been to see the deputy head at Monkton Primary school, and we have agreed to do some CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online protection), presentations to the Children and the Parents at the School in February. I've also been into Minster Primary School to see if they would be interested in the CEOP presentations. They haven't contacted me yet.

- I have contacted Orbit housing for a resident in St Nicholas at Wade, concerning damp and mould at her property. Still waiting to hear back from Orbit.
- I've recently helped a resident in Minster, who had told me he hadn't eaten for a few days. I was able to get a food parcel put together from the Salvation and drop it into him. I will be popping in to see him due to other concerns, that have been raised.
- I attended and supported the Barclays Big Blue Bus Fraud and Scam mobile unit at the Margate Christmas market. I spoke to many people throughout the day, concerning the different scams that are happening, giving advice and handing out, safety information and safety freebies. (This is not usually my area, but I said I would happily do the event)
- Continue to support the Men's wellbeing group held in the Church at St Nicholas at Wade. in the Church Café area. Seven of the men have put their names down for the digital workshops.
- Continue to do Information drop-in Surgeries in the Church at St Nicholas at Wade, speak to the residents hand out safety information leaflets, and again safety alarms and other freebies.
- Support a resident who came into the Heart In the Community group at the Salvation Army Church. He informed me that he hadn't eaten for four days, I made up a food parcel and dropped it round to his house.
- Westgate Boys and girls Brigade at Christ church, support the group, give a mild drugs and alcohol presentation to the group.
 - Set out a track and the children had to walk around with a try full of drinks while wearing glasses that obscure their vision. (beer goggles)
 - Set out another track with skittles and the Children had to navigate a remote-control car around the course, again wearing the beer goggle glasses.
- A resident contacted me to inform me of people parking on the Double yellow lines on Bridges Close, leading around to the Finches, at St Nicholas at Wade. I sent an email to Parking Enforcement.

58/25-26 HIGHWAYS

a) & b) It was noted the first stage towards the implementation of the 20mph traffic scheme had progressed with the Design Scheme fee being processed. Cllr Steel had contacted KCC to request a site meeting at Margate Hill and was awaiting a response.

The Clerk would contact the Community Engagement Officer with regard to the allocation of a 20mph speed awareness toolkit.

59/25-16 FINANCE

a) The Clerk presented the monthly bank reconciliations between the cash book and bank accounts.

RESOLVED: To approve the monthly bank reconciliation for October & November (Proposed: Cllr Steel, seconded Cllr W Winpenny).

b) The Clerk presented the monthly payment schedule which included the following payments:

Hugofox - Website hosting fee	£11.99
ICO - Registration fee	£47.00
Defib Machines Ltd - VH Defib	£960.10
Ionos - Email hosting fee	£15.00
S. Archer - Clerk's salary & expenses	£368.74
Hughes & Son - Grass Cutting	£192.00
KALC - Training fee	£60.00
Unity Trust - Service fee	£6.00
Hugofox - Website hosting fee	£11.99
Ionos - Email hosting fee	£7.20
S. Archer - Clerk's salary & expenses	£469.62
RBL - Poppy Wreath	£28.50
ATS Accounting - Payroll service fee	£60.00
Hughes & Son - Grass Cutting	£192.00
K. Ruranski - Repayment for plants	£139.99
Quex Park Estates - Land Hire:Rec	£80.00
Unity Trust - Service fee	£6.00

Receipts:

AVHC - Repayment for Defibs	£960.10
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RESOLVED: To approve payment of invoices included in the monthly payment schedule for December. (Proposed: Cllr Steel, Seconded: Cllr W Winpenny).

c) The Clerk presented the annual budget for 2026/27 which had been circulated to members and was noted with no comments. A raise of approx. 5% in the precept would be requested for the forthcoming year, in order to meet the raising costs of the Parish Council. This would have a very small financial impact on properties in the Parish.

RESOLVED: To approve the precept request of £11373 for 2026/27. (Proposed: Cllr Steel, Seconded: Cllr W Winpenny)

60/25-26 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

- Discussion took place regarding the Freedom of Acol Award and the potential introduction of a secondary scheme to acknowledge other volunteers in the village who make a significant contribution to the Parish. It was considered, and agreed, that those volunteers were acknowledged and thanked accordingly at Parish Council meetings, however, in future, this would also be followed up with a letter of thanks from the Parish Council.
- The re-introduction of the speedwatch scheme in Acol was discussed. It was confirmed that Speedwatch could not be effected within six months of the new 20 mph speed reduction measures being implemented.

61/25-26 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 19th February 2026, 7:30pm, Acol Village Hall.

The meeting was closed by the Chairman at 20:22hrs