

## PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday, 18 February 2026 at 1930hrs

Shepherdswell Village Hall

### MINUTES

In the absence of the Chair, Cllr Stauffer-Kruse (Vice-Chair) opened the meeting and welcomed all.

To receive reports from the County and District Councillors, Community Warden, Community Beat Officer & Shepherdswell Green Spaces Group. Public questions and comments on agenda and non-agenda items (this section will be limited to 15 minutes or otherwise at the discretion of the Chair).

Nigel Baker, Chair of the Shepherdswell Green Spaces Group, reported that the group had met on 02 February 2026 - draft minutes have been circulated. Progress on the football extension is stalled pending the finalisation of drawings. The paper on the play area, originally expected this month, is now delayed until April. The Green Spaces Group will hold its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on April 27th. A small funding request is included in the meeting papers for the council's consideration.

A resident raised concerns about the safety and suitability of the new rail installed at Coldred Pond. He commented on the state of the pond after heavy rain, which he stated had breached its banks and claimed the knee rail was installed within the flooded area. The resident questioned whether the council had considered if this location was suitable and organised, suggesting it could be dangerous.

A resident thanked the Parish Council for contacting DDC regarding the ongoing issues experienced by residents in Shepherdswell.

A resident questioned why KCC does not waive the 0930hrs restriction on concessionary bus passes, citing a similar action by another council and the need for residents to travel for medical appointments. The resident also asked if there has been an update following her request at the last meeting. The Clerk explained that following the last meeting, the Parish Council emailed the KCC and DDC councillors regarding this issue. DDC Councillor Jamie Pout responded via email, stating he is arranging a meeting in March with Joel Mitchell, the CEO of Stagecoach and will raise the issue. Councillor Pount's current understanding is that the decision on the demand-responsive bus service was based on low usage data for Shepherdswell and Coldred.

#### **13/2025 IN ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**Present:** Cllrs Bradley Stauffer-Kruse (Vice Chair – acting as Chair for this meeting), Keith Roberts, John Bulaitis, Marien Elgar, Terry Hunt, Sindy Denyer, Barry Crush and Carole White

14 Members of the public

**Clerk:** Jan Hancock

**Apologies:** Cllrs Mark Watson (Chair), Aidan Softley and Sue Taber

#### **14/2025 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON THE 21 JANUARY 2026**

The Clerk informed the meeting that under agenda item 11.03, the following has been added:

*Following discussion, at 2046hrs the meeting was paused to allow a resident to address the Council on this agenda item. The Chair then resumed the meeting.*

Cllr Terry Hunt **PROPOSED** that with this change, the minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2026 were **AGREED** to be a true and accurate record, seconded by Cllr Roberts. **All AGREED**

**15/2025      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Stauffer-Kruse declared an OSI on agenda item 18.01

**16/2025      SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

Following discussion, Cllr Denyer **PROPOSED** that the Social Media Policy be **APPROVED** and **ADOPTED**, seconded by Cllr Roberts. **All AGREED**

**17/2025      PARISH CLERK’S REPORT**

The Clerk reported on an email received after the agenda was published concerning a request from the Squirrel Scouts to use the recreation ground on June 13th 2026. It was noted that junior cricket coaching takes place on Saturday mornings from 0930hrs, but this was not seen as a conflict. The Council unanimously approved the use of the recreation ground by the Squirrel Scouts on June 13th.

The Clerk has attended various meetings and workshops resulting in three topics being added to the agenda for the March meeting - Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Local Government Reorganisation Consultation and Community Governance Review.

Following the meeting last month letters were sent to DDC cabinet members, local councillors, and KCC councillors regarding the bus service, with only one response received.

Funding for buses in Kent comes from KCC, but the specific local service was funded by DDC or Section 106 money, giving DDV potential influence. Cllr Bulaitis expressed disappointment at the lack of response and suggested publicising the Council's position and the letters they sent to the local press and on social media to increase pressure. A key issue raised was the lack of consultation with the Parish Council and residents during the initial review process and usage surveys, which undermines the claim of low usage. Cllr Bulaitis agreed to lead efforts in contacting the local press and publicising the council's position on the bus service.

**18/2025      FINANCE**

18-01      **SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS**

<b>Balances as 11 February 2026</b>	<b>£</b>
Current A/C	4002.55
Business A/C	123799.34
<b>INCOME</b>	
SGSG – container project	665.00
UK Power Network Wayfare	20.52
Premises rent (2 months)	600.00
<b>EXPENDITURE TO RATIFY</b>	
Hugo Fox – Website	23.99
Clerk’s Wages (January)	1163.23
Service Charge	6.00
NEST – Clerk Pension	65.55
Krystal Hosting – Emails	13.20

<b>EXPENDITURE TO APPROVE</b>	
Small Works Contractor (inv 339)	510.00
Clerk's Expenses	396.44
Harmers (inv 26400)	819.79
Village Hall Fees – January	92.50
HMRC	180.74
Coldred Forum Planters	205.78
Delta Electrical Services	240.00
	<b>2445.25</b>

Cllr Stauffer-Kruse left the room for the following proposal.

**Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that the schedule of payments be APPROVED, seconded by Cllr Elgar. All AGREED**

Cllr Stauffer-Kruse returned.

#### 18.02 ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

**Cllr Hunt PROPOSED that the Parish Council increase its annual contribution to the Royal British Legion for the Poppy Appeal from £100 to £150, seconded by Cllr White. All AGREED.**

#### 19/2025 PLANNING COMMITTEE

No report.

#### 20/2025 WORKING GROUP REPORTS

20-01 A proposal was raised in Councillor Tabor's absence regarding working groups. It was clarified that existing standing orders already permit working groups to appoint non-councillors (residents) to assist them. This appointment is the responsibility of the working group itself and does not require approval from the full council. It was reiterated that working groups do not have voting power; they prepare reports and recommendations for the council. The council agreed that no action was needed as the procedure is already established.

20-02 **Carbon Footprint Working Group** – Cllr Roberts reported that progress on the installation of recycle bins at the village hall has been delayed pending ground clearance. The EV charging points are due to go live by the end of February.

20-03 **Highway Improvement Plan Working Group** – The group has been in communication with the school regarding traffic problems. Cllr White asked why the village's annual application for a 20 MPH speed limit, particularly around the school and green, is consistently turned down. The reasoning given is either there is insufficient supporting data or that the road can carry the speed.

20-04 **Communications Working Group** – No Report

#### 21/2025 COMMUNITY

##### 21-01 Shepherdswell CE Primary School

A request has been received to fund £1200 toward the purchase of road safety signage. The exact number of signs this would purchase is currently unclear. The school have been advised that there is a KCC Highways Scheme (School Streets) that the school could explore for funding. The council noted that it lacks the authority to approve placing items on the public highway; this approval must come from the highway authority (KCC). Providing a grant could imply an approval the council is not authorised to give. Clerk to contact the school for more project details including the number of signs, their specific placement locations, and how the scheme would be managed. The parish Council note the parallels between their Highway Improvement Plan and any proposed school plan and so the Clerk will also help with the School Streets Scheme, if required.

##### 21-02 Recreation Ground

- i) Shepherdswell Green Spaces Group (SGSG) – members **ACKNOWLEDGED** the minutes from the meeting held on 02 February 2026.

- ii) Cllr Hunt **PROPOSED** that members **APPROVE** the request from SGSG for £375 contribution towards reseeding the goal mouths and anti climb measures, seconded by Cllr Denyer. **All AGREED**
- iii) Cllr Denyer **PROPOSED** that the Parish Council **AGREE** to arrange for a one-off clearance of vegetation and overgrowth on the football extension, with the area then being added to the ongoing grounds maintenance schedule to prevent recurrence. **Seconded by Cllr White. All AGREED**
- iv) Cllr Roberts **PROPOSED** to **ACTION** all Priority 1 and 2 items identified on the Clerk's Play Inspection Report action list, seconded by Cllr Hunt. **All AGREED**

#### 21-03 Grounds Maintenance Tender

The wording for the new grounds maintenance tender was discussed, with feedback having been circulated.

2027hrs the meeting was paused to allow SGSG to explain aspects of the comments on their feedback report.

The meeting was resumed and members confirmed agreement on the updated wording. **Cllr Hunt PROPOSED that the Clerk amend the document and circulate to Councillors before publishing, seconded by Cllr Denyer. All AGREED.** The agreed final submission date is 01 April 2026 to enable Councillors to consider before the contact commences on 01 May 2026.

#### 21.04 Coldred Acoustic Music Festival

**Cllr Hunt PROPOSED that members APPROVE the use of Coldred Village Green on 28 June 2026, seconded by Cllr Roberts. All AGREED**

#### 21.05 Reed Meadow Allotment Association

A report has been received from the Association and circulated. Members discussed and **Cllr Hunt PROPOSED that Council request a copy of the Fencing Survey, request the Small Works Contractor to look at the gate and surrounding area to provide a solution for the closure issue and to clear the detritus and ask the Allotment Association if they are willing to change the padlock combination annually and notify the clerk once it is done so other parties can be notified. And notify the Allotment Association that the Parish Council have no objection to the Association continuing to operate with 3 trustees. Seconded by Cllr Roberts. All AGREED**

#### 21.06 Shepherdswell History Society

**Cllr Elgar PROPOSED that members AGREE £300 funding toward updating the First World War plaques at the village hall, seconded by Cllr Crush. AGREED with 3 abstentions**

#### 21.07 Shepherdswell Summer Fete

**Cllr Denyer PROPOSED, in principle, to APPROVE use of the overflow car park at the village hall, providing that the hall was not in use. And the hardstanding of the football extension could be used for a display from a local blacksmith at Shepherdswell Fete providing adequate public liability insurance was produced. Seconded by Cllr White. All AGREED**

#### 21.08 Coldred Pond

A report/proposal from Cllr White has been circulated. Members discussed future maintenance responsibilities, including the need to understand any limitations associated with the new liner and any relevant warranty information. It was noted that the surrounding area has historically been maintained by the Council's grounds maintenance contractor, while the previous pond itself had been maintained with the assistance from Coldred Forum.

Councillors discussed whether additional documentation relating to maintenance requirements, warranties and operational limitations should be collated for the Council's records. It was noted during the discussion that the Parish Council already maintains an asset register and holds supporting documentation where it exists. Members expressed differing views on whether this should be undertaken as a standalone action or

as part of wider asset-management processes. **Cllr White PROPOSED that the Clerk should prepare a document answering all queries on her report for consideration at the April meeting, seconded by Cllr Denyer. 4 members voted in favour and with 4 against the motion was not carried.**

Before moving to the next item of business, a request was made under Standing Order 3(s) for the vote to be recorded. The voting was as follows: For – Cllrs White, Denyer, Crush & Bulaitis. Against – Cllrs Stauffer-Kruse, Elgar, Hunt & Roberts.

Cllr White requested that her dissatisfaction with the outcome be noted and indicated she did not wish to take further involvement in matters relating to Coldred Pond.

## **22/2025      DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held at 1930hrs on Wednesday 18 March 2026 at Shepherdswell Village Hall.