

Upper Hardres Parish Council

Annual Parish Meeting

Tuesday 12 May 2026, 7.30pm at Bossingham Village Hall

Minutes

1. Chairman welcomed those present and recorded attendance and apologies

Attending: Chairman Nick Waldron, Vice Chair James Hodgkinson, Cllr Jess Wood, Cllr Katy Ford, Clerk/RFO Karley Hubbard. KCC Cllr Mike Sole and 2 parishioners.
Apologies: Cllr Simon Warner and Christine Cope

2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 13 May 2025 were accepted and signed

3. Chairman's Report

see Reports

4. Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2026

see Reports

5. Reports from County and City Councillors

see Reports

6. Public participation session

Parishioner questioned why speed limit is 30mph outside Stelling Minnis Primary School and not 20mph. Cllr Mike Sole noted that it needs to be in Parish Council's Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) before conversations with CCC can start. Cllr Waldron raised concerns around previous lack of engagement from HIP Officer. To be added to July's meeting agenda.

7. Any other information

SignedNick Waldron *Chairman*, May 2027

Chairman Nick Waldron

Parish Clerk Karley Hubbard | clerk@upperhardres-pc.gov.uk | www.upperhardres-pc.gov.uk

REPORTS

Chairmans Report 2026

Welcome to the 2026 Annual Parish Meeting.

At our Annual Meeting of the Council held earlier this evening, I was elected as Chair for a fifth year and Cllr James Hodgkinson was voted as vice chair.

City and County Councillors

We continue to be well supported by our KCC Councillor Mike Sole, and our CCC Councillor Mike Bland. Their willingness to assist, attend meetings, and follow up on issues is much appreciated, and we thank them for their ongoing commitment to our parish.

Planning

Since April last year we have commented on 5 planning applications. We have the right to comment on applications and consider all of them. Do please make us aware if you have any concerns. Poor water quality issues continue to stall applications, and a long-promised solution is yet to materialise.

Communication with CCC and KCC

Communication with certain departments at both CCC and KCC remains challenging. Delays in responses and unclear lines of responsibility continue to cause frustration. I have raised these concerns with our County and Ward councillors. It is important to remind parishioners where our responsibilities and functions start and finish as we occasionally receive flak from parishioners for not helping with issues when we are powerless to do so.

Dog Fouling

Dog fouling has continued to be a concern across the parish, and over the past year we have taken several steps to address it, including installing a new waste bin outside the village hall.

Cllr James Hodgkinson continues to work with KALC Area Committee to gather wider insight, and a coordinated awareness campaign is being developed to encourage responsible behaviour. We would ask all dog owners to play their part in keeping our shared spaces clean for everyone.

CIL - Community Infrastructure Levy

We have continued to ring-fence a portion of our CIL funds for improvements to Bossingham Village Hall, and discussions with the committee are ongoing regarding priorities and timescales.

Village Hall

My thanks go once again to the Village Hall Committee for their hard work throughout the year. The hall remains well used, but the committee would greatly benefit from new members to share the workload and bring fresh ideas.

War memorial and garden

Thanks as ever to John Pitcher for his work in maintaining this. We're looking for a volunteer to continue this valued work. The commitment is flexible and would suit someone who enjoys light gardening and taking pride in community space.

Clerk

We welcomed Karley in January as our new Parish Clerk. A big thank you to Clare who has been our clerk for 15 years.

Over this time, she has kept various make ups of parish council on the straight and narrow and helped us navigate thorny issues. For these services we are extremely grateful. It is also important to note her hard work, outside of the Parish Council, in bringing the playing field behind the village hall to life. She worked tirelessly on this and it leaves a lasting legacy in the village. We wish her well and look forward to seeing the artwork that gets created in place of our agendas and minutes.

Email list

Karley continues to maintain the parish email list and now posts updates on Facebook as well. If you are not yet on the list, please do ask to be added so you can stay informed about local matters.

We are lucky to live in this fantastic area so let's keep a community voice on local issues.

Nick Waldron, Chairman, Upper Hardres Parish Council, 12 May 2026

Parish Clerk/RFO's report 2026 & Statement of Accounts

The end of year bank balance for the financial year 2025/26 was **£27,179.85**.

This includes **£16,570.02** which is the Canterbury City Council 'Neighbourhood Portion' of the **Community Infrastructure Levy** (CIL for short) following small local developments.

CIL funds can be spent on infrastructure, e.g. open space and community facilities, and highways improvements. Some funds have been spent on picnic tables, parasols and curtains for the village hall, other funds are earmarked for items in the Highway improvement Plan.

The Precept received from Canterbury City Council was **£7,931** to cover the costs of running the parish council. It is funded by a small charge on each household's Council Tax bill and increases slightly each year to meet our increased costs.

We received an annual **Concurrent Functions Funding** payment of **£1,925** from Canterbury City Council; this goes towards the cost of Grounds Maintenance for the Playing Field and the Village Hall, and the annual playing field safety inspection.

Our **Reserves Policy** includes Restricted funds for - emergency repairs to the village hall and the car park, and long-term maintenance of the playing field equipment. We aim to keep an amount in Unrestricted Reserves to meet any unexpected expenditure.

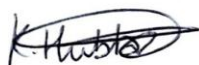
If you are not already on the **Parish Email List** and would like to be included, please email me and ask to be added.

Thank you.

Karley Hubbard, Clerk & RFO, Upper Hardres Parish Council, 12 May 2026

Upper Hardres Parish Council Balance Sheet for year ended 31 March 2026

	TOTAL	£	Budget 25.26	note
RECEIPTS				
CCC: Precept	7931.00		7931.00	
CCC: Concurrent Functions Funding	1925.00		1,925.00	1
HMRC: VAT repayment	1503.46		850.00	2
Total Receipts	£11,359.46			
PAYMENTS				
<i>Precept:</i>				
Clerk's salary	3,526.18		4,605.00	3
Clerk's annual expenses	218.76		371.00	4
Insurance premium	684.09		540.00	
Subscription to KALC	273.56		270.00	
Audit fees	0.00		210.00	
Election expenses	0.00		0.00	
Training/literature	60.00		60.00	
Website hosting	143.88		300.00	
Email hosting	8.97			
Defibrillator aftercare, parts, contr. to running costs	330.18		300.00	
PCC donation (s.137)	150.00		150.00	
Bank charges	24.95			5
Councillor planning fee reimbursement	85.00			
Office Supplies	138.99			
Meeting costs	0.00		25.00	
Contingency Fund	0.00	5,644.56	100.00	
<i>Concurrent Functions Funding:</i>				
Grounds maintenance & clearing	3,657.60		3048.00	1
Playing Field annual inspection	204.00	3,861.60	165.00	
<i>CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy):</i>				
Picnic tables for VH	2280.00			6
Parasoles for VH	369.90			
Table tennis corner protectors	25.00			
Waste bin	249.13			
Curtains for VH	2,908.61			
Signs for VH	90.00	5,922.64		
Total payments		£15,428.80		
Balance brought forward	31,249.19			
Receipts less payments	4,069.34			
Balance carried forward		£27,179.85		



Karley Hubbard Parish Clerk RFO



Nick Waldron Chairman

12 May 2026

KCC Councillor Mike Sole

This is my report for Parish Council Annual Meetings 2026.

I was delighted to be re-elected as the Kent County Councillor for Canterbury South last May, with an increased majority and vote share.

There were significant changes at KCC with control passing from the Conservatives to Reform UK, and the Liberal Democrat Group that I am in doubling in size to become the official opposition. I think that most people would acknowledge that it's been a rocky first year for the new administration, most with no previous political experience and often a lack of understanding about the powers and responsibilities of a county council. Of the 57 Reform councillors elected last year, 1 is now in prison, 7 have joined a new more right-wing Restore Britain party, 1 has joined UKIP and 1 is an independent.

Every time that there is a change it affects committee places so there has been a lot of "messaging around", and with the merger of some committees I lost my place on the growth and economic development committee, but I remain on the Kent Fire Authority and Flood Risk Management Committee.

Despite all of the media headlines and political shenanigans I have continued to work with officers to get things done. In particular this includes highway improvements, and I can't stress enough how important it is for parish councils to have a Highway Improvement Plan that is regularly updated and to request regular meetings with KCC to move it forward and check on progress.

In July we will be told by government how Kent will be split into Unitary Councils. Elections to these councils will take place in May 2027 and after a year in a shadow role, in 2028 KCC and Canterbury City Council will cease to exist. There are several possible models for a unitary council in our area, but the most likely options are either East Kent Council comprising Canterbury, Dover & Thanet, or a larger one that would also include Ashford and Folkestone.

Finally, I do have a small grant fund available for community projects. In the last year this has funded outdoor learning and play schemes at Wincheap Primary School, a dishwasher at Ickham Village Hall, sports facility in Bridge and chairs for Kingston Barn (Village Hall). Please get in touch if I can assist with anything or you know of local community groups that would benefit.

Concurrent function and parish grants to change. Parish capital grant up to £5000 get in quick. Community Governance review. KCC Pot hole new contractor. Taxi for CYP under 16 – there will only be a certain amount. Annual grant for local community – sports equipment, village signs.

CCC Councillor Mike Bland

This is a brief report of my activity over the past year. It does not include that of my colleague and fellow councillor as there will be a joint newsletter from us both coming soon. In respect of the ward as a whole, I have maintained a close interest and offered support regarding a number of planning enforcement actions. In respect of these and other planning matters I have maintained liaison with our MP Rosie Duffield.

Rural residents in the ward have contacted me for support regarding the annoyance of failed bin collections and illegal tipping. I have assisted in these cases and believe satisfactory outcomes have been achieved.

Recently, Cllr Brady and I challenged at an Overview Committee the lack of regard to rural areas and wards within the new draft Cultural Strategy for the Council. We made suggestions and called for some community engagement with the villages and hamlets in respect of how a Cultural Strategy could and should work for them. I would welcome a local discussion with residents and the Parish Council on what local people would like to see in such a strategy.

There are two looming big issues for the Council and District over the coming two years. The first is about the Draft Local Plan, and the second regarding Local Government Reform. There will be more focus and discussion on both in the coming months.

First, the Draft Local Plan. This is currently out for Regulation 19 public consultation together with the new Draft Transport strategy. The consultation finishes on Monday 18th May. At a special full Council meeting on 18th March I

voted for the Plan to be submitted for consultation and to be placed before the Planning Inspectorate for adoption. There are no new development sites identified in the plan for Upper Hardres Parish. There is however an interesting and overdue clarification proposed in respect of the 'boundaries' of village and hamlet areas. This strengthens protection for their character and definition. The Draft Transport Strategy in support of the Draft Local Plan is one which residents may wish to examine and comment on. Comments are possible through the City Council's website. All such comments will be conveyed to the Planning Inspector. The Draft Transport Strategy embeds the 'Bus First' and 'Active Travel' principles of the Draft Local Plan. Between now and 2042 there will be changes to the transport character of journey from the rural areas into Canterbury City. There will be more emphasis on park and ride and cycling and walking. There are ambitions too for further development of the type and frequency of buses. Cars will still be allowed through Canterbury, but the expectation is to reduce this through other healthier forms of transport.

Next major issue is Local Government Reform. A decision will be made shortly by the Government on whether Canterbury District will be combined with other Districts to form either one of three or four Unitary Authorities across Kent. There will be no City Council elections in May 2027 as would be normal. Instead sitting councillors will continue for a year as part of the transition to a new Unitary Authority. There will, however, be elections in May 2027 for councillors to a new 'shadow authority', that is the beginning of the new Unitary Authority which will take over from the district councils during 2027-8. More information on this will be published shortly.

Associated the Local Government Reform the council has launched a "Community Governance Review" which is out now and which closes on Sunday 5th July. This is an important consultation for Parish Councils, and I recommend the possibilities it allows are given serious consideration in light of the move to Unitary Authorities. For example, the Parish Council may wish to consider applying for more parish councillors, or may wish to consider unifying after discussion with a neighbouring Parish Council. These are important considerations given the likelihood that more may be asked of parish councils in the future. There will be a further consultation in respect of the results and any proposals coming from this review.

Lastly, both South East Water and Southern Water attended a Scrutiny Committee (of which I am a member) recently. The Scrutiny Committee heard presentations from both authorities and held them to account for poor service. There are planned improvements, but I am not persuaded these are sufficient. Whilst there has been much regional and national focus on coastal areas and sewerage I raised questions about Southern Water's performance in respect of our River areas, and particularly the River Stour. I shall be continuing that focus over the next year.

Finally you will be aware that our Liberal Democrat colleagues have decided to withdraw from the Coalition at Canterbury City Council. This leaves a minority Labour administration in situ.

I would very much welcome questions at the meeting and afterwards too!

Cllr Mike Bland

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Hardres & Stelling News report for 2026

Firstly, a big thank you to all who have written articles for inclusion in the Villages Community Magazine (Parish Magazine) for without you there would not be a magazine. I know that many readers look forward to the regular contributions.

Contributions regularly include community news from County, District/City, and Parish Councils together with the two Parish Churches and a message from the Parish Priest; as well as those from History Group, Gardening Society, both Village Hall, Johns Haffenden's Farmers notebook, Minnis Managers, a brief weather report as well as information on the mobile library dates and Windmill & Museum. With occasional articles from other clubs, societies and individuals these all go to make what I hope is an interesting and informative Community Magazine with something for everybody.

A big thank you to Bruce & Margaret Crawford and their band of delivery agents for getting the magazine to you; to Ann Day for handling the finances and selling all the advertising spaces, not forgetting Xinyang and Sijia at Stelling Minnis Stores for willingly continuing to allow some readers to collect their magazine from the shop.

Advertising spaces remain at 23 pages to allow for the increasing demands of the regular contributors and a limitation on magazine size placed by the printer of a total of 64 pages (front cover, 23 for adverts and 40 for the editorial material) because of machinery capacity. There is currently only ¼ page available for a new advert, thanks to Ann Day working so hard to fill the spaces that became available for 2026 due to natural churn of advertisers.

The annual subscription was able to be reduced this year to only £6.

Any images for the front cover should to be in Portrait format, please.

Nick Smith – Editor

Stelling Minnis and Upper Hardres History Group Chair's report for 2026

This year the Society continues to combined its core roles of researching local history and developing the archive of local history materials with talks for both members and the local community.

The Society has amassed, catalogued and preserves a wide range of historical documents, both originals and copies, relating to people and properties from the villages of Stelling Minnis, Bossingham and Upper and Lower Hardres. These materials are available on request to members of other similar societies in the area and the public. Several 'archiving sessions' have been carried out over the last year to review the collection and help with the cataloguing of the materials. We have accepted several new documents into our collection, including one from the 18th Century found in Upper Hardes Church. We are also investigating the digitising of some of our collection and improving our website.

Cara Cooper's talk on the changing nature of tourism in Peru was well attended. Her talk clearly demonstrated how the huge increase in tourism (mass tourism) has impacted on sites such as the Inca citadel of Machu Picchu, which has led to the authorities restricting access to the site in terms and numbers and limiting visitors to set paths.

We still hope that James Bennett will come and talk to us about his childhood in rural Kent.

Our next 'open talk' welcomes John & Rosemary Piddock in May to talk about the History of Kent Cricket.

Maxine's links with the Rotary Club of Canterbury offered us the opportunity to join their speaker evening presented by Christine Rayner, journalist and publisher of *Bygone Kent* talking about local characters and scandals. Who knew that Hollywood Star Audrey Hepburn lived in the area as a child attending Lyminge Primary School!

We were also able to Join the Rotary Club for their visit to the Fisherman's Museum in Folkestone which is packed full of photos and items relating to Folkestone's fishing heritage.

We also maintain our strong links with Stelling Minnis Windmill and Museum, and it was very encouraging to see a good number of visitors coming to the mill over the Easter holiday.

The Society has pleased to receive and approve a request for £500 for the new notice and Interpretation Board at St Mary's Church, Stelling.

My thanks to all members of the Society to for their going support, especially to Cara, our secretary/treasurer for her work with the minutes and accounts.

We are pleased to invite those with an interest in local history to come and along to our meetings on the third Thursday evening of each month.

Maxine Blades, Chair 2025/6