

**PARISH COUNCIL OF BENENDEN**

**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2025, 7pm,  
Quinlan Centre Benenden Hospital**

Present	Cllrs Beveridge, Cochrane, Cruse, Grant, Ham, Lewis, Thomas; C Levett, Clerk. 3 parishioners.	
<b>Item</b>		<b>Action Responsibility</b>
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 20 <sup>th</sup> October 2025 were unanimously approved as a correct record of the meeting.	
4. REPORTS BY COUNTY/ BOROUGH COUNCILLORS	<p>Cllr Russell. Full report circulated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Council Overview</b> Reform administration has lost 9 members. The administration has put forward a one unitary option for Kent and Medway to the LGR process but fail to explain how the regional assemblies would be created or work. This option only works on a financial basis, and precludes Kent and Medway from any form of devolution deal with central government and does not follow the rules given to arrange into unitary authorities, namely population size and areas and removes representation to a large extent, one councillor for the new super authority would do the work of 3 district councillors and the county councillor combined.</li> <li>• <b>Highways</b> Cllr Russell escalated some drainage issues to senior managers following a lack of response. Cllrs Russell and Palmer trying to meet with Highways officers in Hawkhurst to discuss the 4<sup>th</sup> pedestrian crossing. They are currently refusing to meet and a formal complaint has been made to KCC.</li> <li>• <b>Education</b> The cabinet member has said a meeting will take place with Support Weald Schooling. Cllr Russell has asked Katie Lam MPs team to contact Hams to ask them to extend the U2 route by one stop. Cllr Russell is looking into what section 106 money could be used.</li> <li>• <b>Members Grant</b> Some funding still available for community or village highways projects. These must be new projects and not repairs.</li> </ul> <p>Cllr Neville. Full report circulated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>S106</b> Cabinet Member advised there is no S106 funding although sizeable amounts are allocated to specific projects. Funds originally allocated to rural bus services were pooled to support the Number 5 bus service. Cllr Neville in ongoing discussions with S106 officers and will be notified should any new funding rounds become available.</li> <li>• <b>Extraordinary Full Council meeting</b> 17<sup>th</sup> November to consider that the business case for LGR in Kent and Medway for three unitary authorities (option 3A) is approved for submission to Government by 28<sup>th</sup> November. Option 3A remains the preferred option, though the business cases for a single authority and for four authorities are still supported by some Leaders.</li> <li>• <b>Planning</b> Inspector's final report on the Local Plan received 14<sup>th</sup> October. Full Council will vote on its adoption on 10<sup>th</sup> December. TW housing completions trajectory remain on target. New Planning and Infrastructure Bill at report stage and expected to receive Royal Assent. Likely to be a new consultation on the NPPF covering National Development Management Policies. Guidance is expected soon on how Local Planning Fee setting may progress.</li> <li>• <b>Southern Water Bead Spill Camber Beach</b> Described as one of the worst plastic-pellet pollution incidents, caused by mechanical failure at the Eastbourne Wastewater Treatment Works. Poses serious threat to marine life and coastal ecosystems. Cleanup efforts underway.</li> <li>• <b>KCC and Kent Fire and Rescue</b> Currently unable to operate fully as several councillor-members suspended or removed, restricting KFR Chief Executive from approving major spending or strategic decisions potentially affecting emergency readiness and public safety.</li> </ul>	
5. REPORTS BY CHAIR AND PARISH COUNCILLORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr Thomas reported on meetings regarding Local Plan and Local Government Reorganisation.</li> <li>○ Local Plan: The Inspector suggested that policies are not duplicated in the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Development Plans. Proposed sites will be included in the BNDP and not in the LP. The house building requirement in the borough will be 678 new homes per year.</li> <li>○ LGR: document from Parish Chairs Briefing held on 12<sup>th</sup> November circulated showing the various options. Option 3a, three unitaries, which is the most acceptable based on the evaluation criteria, will most likely be recommended by TWBC.</li> </ul>	
6. PLANNING	<p>a. <u>Applications</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>25/02569/FULL</b> Orchards, Cranbrook Road. Erection of a single-storey annexe with associated groundworks &amp; retaining wall</li> </ul>	

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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.*

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>25/02570/FULL</b> Orchards, Cranbrook Road. Excavation of ground &amp; erection of a timber sleeper retaining wall</li> <li>❖ SITE CONSTRAINTS: 11 in total.</li> <li>❖ SITE HISTORY: 06/01207/FULL Erect extension, alterations to existing house, block existing vehicular access, create new access .14/00700/HOUSE Carriage house to replace existing garages/workshop. 16/07752/FULL Single storey rear extension with glass roof. All approved</li> <li>❖ LISTED BUILDINGS IN PROXIMITY: None.</li> <li>❖ PLANNING STATEMENT INFO: Annexe to accommodate applicant's parents. 2-bed, single storey timber-framed, brickwork and white horizontal cladding and pitched tiled roof. Self-contained but reliant on main house. No separate access, address, garden, utility meters, residential curtilage, septic tank or letter box. Ancillary to main house.</li> <li>❖ PLANNING GROUP COMMENTS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Proposal is for a very large annexe to support the needs of the applicant's family comprising 2-beds, kitchen, utility, dressing room, wc, ensuite, and living area. Proposed building occupies an area nearly as large as main dwelling before a large rear extension was added, and is almost the same size as Grey Gables next door.</li> <li>○ BPC understands that the government meaning of multigenerational living (as referred to in the planning statement) is that all generations occupy the same dwelling.</li> <li>○ Proposed development constitutes inappropriate development in the HWNL. The annexe, by reason of its proposed size, form, siting and scale would not appear subservient to the dwelling house within the site and would appear out of scale with this and neighbouring properties.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to object to these applications.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>25/02550/FULL</b> Bikkel, Goddards Green Road. Erection of an outbuilding</li> <li>❖ SITE CONSTRAINTS: 16 in total.</li> <li>❖ SITE HISTORY: 19/03289/FULL Barn to east. Demolition of two barns and conversion of one agricultural building into single residential dwelling, associated change of use of land to residential curtilage and erection of garage. 25/01543/FULL Land adjacent. Conversion of outbuilding to single dwelling. Both approved.</li> <li>❖ LISTED BUILDINGS IN PROXIMITY: Grade II - To NNE 1, 2, &amp; 3 Goddards Green Cottages; To S The Hop House; To E of The Hop House 1 &amp; 2 Primrose Cottages. No impact on listed buildings.</li> <li>❖ DESIGN &amp; ACCESS STATEMENT INFO: Traditional 1.5 storey timber cart-style building. Brick plinth, supporting oak frame, featheredge cladding, clay plain tile roof. Single storey in profile with 2.25m eaves height and 5.7m ridge height. Loft room lit by two south facing conservation rooflights. Ground floor- single garage and implement store with lean-to log store (40m<sup>2</sup>). First floor - home office, wc &amp; shower accessed via an external staircase (19m<sup>2</sup>). Could provide occasional guest accommodation. Sited adjacent to dwelling and set within small clearing in wooded copse. Will not interfere with tree roots. Screened by existing vegetation. Access - currently via a 'drive in drive out'. Proposed use of west entrance only as main access to and from dwelling. Existing driveway expanded to provide parking and turning.</li> <li>❖ GENERAL COMMENTS: Original garage has consent under 25/01543/FULL for conversion to a dwelling. Design is in keeping with landscape.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application</b> with a request for exterior lighting to comply with BNDP Policy BD5.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>25/02436/FULL</b> Beacon Hall House, Rolvenden Road. Installation of ground mounted solar panels.</li> <li>❖ SITE CONSTRAINTS: 10 in total</li> <li>❖ SITE HISTORY: 07/00196/FULL Erection of single storey pre-fabricated stables, tack room &amp; hay store with associated access drive - approved. 12/01577/FULL Conversion of stables to holiday-let accommodation - BPC supported, TWBC refused, overturned on appeal for 2 holiday-lets. Conversion not carried out. 19/00779/FULL Conversion of stables into detached dwelling - approved.</li> <li>❖ PROPOSAL: installation of PV array of 30 x SunPower Performance modules, low level, ground mounted framing.</li> <li>❖ PRE-APP ADVICE: To primarily supplement the domestic power supply for nearby dwelling. Permitted development rights exist for installation of ground mounted solar panels within residential curtilage of a dwelling, but there are no permitted development rights allowing those outside the curtilage. In this instance, the proposed location is within a historically agricultural field to the south of the site and, whilst within the same ownership, it is not within the primary</li> </ul>	
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	<p>residential curtilage of the dwelling therefore full planning permission required. Generally, local and national policies are supportive of domestic renewable energy schemes. In this instance, the primary concerns would be the visual impact on the HWNL and would require details showing the panels could be installed without causing harm to any protected species. To be positioned at the northwest of the field. Field not visible from any public viewpoints and location adjacent to the boundary of the residential curtilage and western boundary. Unlikely to have a significantly harmful impact on the character of the HWNL, especially as the development is ultimately reversible and close positioning next to the residential boundary would limit the spread of domestic style structures into the undeveloped field. Development would be close to the existing property and face south, resulting in maximising the potential solar gain and limiting the spread of built form. An application in this location would likely be supported by officers.</p> <p>❖ GENERAL COMMENTS: Similar proposal to 23/02298/FULL Apple Garth which BPC supported and TWBC approved, but description was more specific and 'Installation of solar panels for domestic use'. Renewable energy is supported by BNDP policy BD8.</p> <p><b>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application</b> with a request that domestic use is specified in the conditions of any approval to prevent further development of panels within an agricultural field.</p> <p>b. <u>Other Planning Matters</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benenden Meadows, Walkhurst Road</li> <li>❖ KCC Soft Landscapes Team agreeable to planting of two trees, to be selected, planted and maintained by KCC and would become highway trees. Cost £1,203.</li> <li>❖ Previously discussed that Canham Homes absorb the cost as a gesture of goodwill, but had further advised that they would contribute but not cover the entire costs.</li> <li>❖ Separately Canham Homes offered to buy a new bench for opposite the Shop but suggested that BPC would need to install it.</li> <li>❖ Cllr Thomas has discussed the trees and the bench further with Canham Homes and it is hoped that they will meet the costs.</li> <li>• 23/00294/OPDEV Appeal against TWBC enforcement notice Plot 0005 Apple Pie Farm</li> <li>❖ Breach: Without planning permission, the laying of a concrete hard standing and the erection of a timber framed building on the land.</li> <li>❖ Appeal dismissed.</li> <li>❖ Requirements of the notice: (1) Break up the concrete hard standing; (2) Demolish the timber framed building; (3) Remove all resultant rubble, materials and rubbish from the land following compliance with Steps (1) and (2); and (4) Remove all building materials including but not limited to: grab bags, window panels, tarpaulin, timber posts, pipework and bags of sand/rubble from the land.</li> <li>❖ The period for compliance with the requirements is 6 months.</li> <li>• Hole Park woodland creation at Stepneyford, Benenden</li> <li>❖ Letter received from Hole Park regarding a proposal to plant some significant areas of new woodland on marginal agricultural land and inviting comments. Details circulated.</li> <li>❖ BPC to respond that it welcomes the creation of new woodland and the steps taken to minimise harm to the landscape and views across the parish from public rights of way and properties.</li> </ul>	CL
7. HIGHWAYS, FOOTPATHS & TRANSPORT	<p><u>a. Highways Improvement Plan/Rural Parish Grant</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schemes were submitted by the deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> October and are now with Highways engineers to investigate, design and cost by 31<sup>st</sup> December in order that BPC can submit the grant application to TWBC in the new year.</li> </ul> <p><u>b. Speedwatch</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paul and Lesley Figg have passed the Speedwatch online training and are awaiting contact from Kent Police regarding the onsite/equipment training.</li> <li>• Suitable sites will then be risk assessed.</li> <li>• It was suggested that any Speedwatch activity should not start during the winter months.</li> </ul> <p><u>c. Road Closure Rolvenden Road</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details received from SGN regarding the B2086 road closure between the junctions of Ramsden Lane and Pullington Cottages from 17<sup>th</sup> November for 4 weeks had been published by BPC.</li> <li>• The Bull had raised concerns about the impact on business and the Clerk had given details on how to contact SGN and KCC Highways and had shared the concerns with Cllr Russell.</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Councillors commented on the number and position of Road Closed signs which are misleading.</li></ul>			
8. RESOURCING/ FINANCE	<u>Monthly Finance</u>			
	TRANSACTIONS FROM 1st October 2025			
	Brought Forward Current Account			27705.91
	Brought Forward Savings Account			82385.17
	Brought forward			110091.08
	Income			
		Payee	Reference	Amount
		Digital Automation	Settlement - Printer Lease	1233.06
	TOTAL			1233.06
	Expenditure			
		Supplier	Reference	Amount
	DD	Nest	Pension	120.87
	DD	HugoFox	Website	23.99
	DD	HugoFox	Emails	20.99
	FEE	Unity Trust Bank	Monthly Charge	6.00
	BACS	Corporate Finance	Settlement - Printer Lease	1233.06
	DD	Grenke Leasing Ltd	Printer Lease	22.39
	DD	Grenke Leasing Ltd	Printer Lease	167.98
	BACS	Employee	Staffing Costs	1166.79
	BACS	o2	Telephone	13.68
	BACS	F&C Cleaning Services	Public Toilets	747.76
	BACS	Tompsett Landscaping	Grounds Maintenance	887.27
	BACS	TP Jones	Payroll Q2	63.40
	BACS	Military Grave Restorer	War Memorial	520.00
	TOTAL			4994.18
	Balance			106329.96
	Current account bank statement 114 31st October 2025			13944.79
	Savings account bank statement 018 31st October 2025			92385.17
	Reconciled			106329.96
	November 2025 Approved Payments			
	DD	Nest	Pension	120.87
	DD	HugoFox	Website	23.99
	DD	HugoFox	Emails	20.99
FEE	Unity Trust Bank	Monthly Charge	6.00	
BACS	Employee	Staffing Costs	1166.79	
BACS	o2	Telephone	13.68	
BACS	Tompsett Landscaping	Grounds Maintenance	2330.57	
BACS	Business Stream	Public Toilets	41.73	
BACS	Iden Green Pavilion	Meeting Hire	16.00	
BACS	F&C Cleaning Services	Public Toilets	766.34	
BACS	ASL	Printer Ink Delivery	12.00	
BACS	RBL Poppy Appeal	Wreath	25.00	
BACS	Alex Durnell	War Memorial	134.25	
BACS	Edf	Public Toilets	953.85	
BACS	Military Grave Restorer	War Memorial	520.00	
TOTAL			6152.06	
All invoices listed have been examined, verified and certified by the RFO				

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>edf public toilets payment: no payment has been made since January. An estimated invoice covering several months had been received, despite the fact the Clerk submits an actual reading every month. The Clerk is trying to resolve this with edf but the Resourcing Committee agreed to make the payment rather than have a large outstanding invoice.</li> </ul>	
9. ENVIRONMENT & MAINTENANCE	<p><u>a. Village Tidy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Took place Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> November with over 30 volunteers covering the whole parish.</li> <li>It was agreed to increase the equipment and voucher numbers to 40 for the next tidy.</li> <li>Unfortunately not all KCC verges were cut in time.</li> </ul> <p><u>b. War Memorial</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cleaning of the war memorial by Military Grave Restorers was complete in time for Remembrance Sunday</li> <li>The green stains were very deep into the stone and extra poultice had to be applied.</li> <li>The bronze was not polished as this would have caused damage, but a protective stain was applied.</li> <li>It is recommended that the war memorial is cleaned every 3 years to limit the green stain returning.</li> </ul> <p><u>c. Strawberry Wood Culvert</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As agreed, letters have been sent to the landowners asking that they keep the areas for which they are responsible clear.</li> </ul>	
10. VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS/ COMMUNITY	<p><u>a. Parish Councillor Co-option</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The notice of the two current vacancies has been published.</li> <li>If 10 electors of the parish request an election within 14 days, an election must be held within 60 days.</li> <li>If no election is called by 28<sup>th</sup> November, BPC can fill the vacancies by co-option.</li> </ul> <p><u>b. Allotments</u></p> <p>Nothing to report.</p> <p><u>c. PC Email Addresses/Website</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BPC is required to use a .gov.uk domain and has made this change to the website.</li> <li>Instructions have been sent to all parish councillors to set up the new parish councillor email addresses with an aim to have these in place by 30<sup>th</sup> November.</li> <li>The old website and existing emails will be shut down on 31<sup>st</sup> December.</li> <li>The main contact for the Parish Council remains the Clerk. New email address: clerk@benendenparishcouncil.gov.uk</li> <li>Individual parish councillor new email addresses:  debbie.ham@benendenparishcouncil.gov.uk  graham.beveridge@benendenparishcouncil.gov.uk  julie.lewis@benendenparishcouncil.gov.uk  nicola.thomas@benendenparishcouncil.gov.uk  peta.grant@benendenparishcouncil.gov.uk  russell.cruse@benendenparishcouncil.gov.uk  stephen.cochrane@benendenparishcouncil.gov.uk</li> <li>New email addresses will be published on the website and in the Village Magazine. Parish Councillors to notify anyone they have regular contact with.</li> </ul> <p><u>d. KALC Community Award</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BPC agreed who to make the award to.</li> </ul> <p><u>e. RBLI</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jane Dalton-Holmes, who has organised the RBL Poppy Appeal for over 30 years, would like to hand over to someone else to volunteer to be the village representative for the RBLI.</li> <li>Cllr Thomas to ask her to write something to be included in the Village Magazine.</li> </ul>	ALL
11. CORRESPONDENCE /PARISHIONER QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kent Ramblers Association <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invitation to parish councils with an interest in protecting Kent's public rights of way network to attend a seminar on 27<sup>th</sup> November at Lenham Community Centre.</li> <li>Cllr Cruse to attend.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Affordable Housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parishioner question regarding the New Pond Road Development.</li> <li>Cllr Thomas explained that the planning application submitted by the developer had originally</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	NT  RC

	<p>included Affordable Housing (as flats) but as the application progressed the developer advised that Affordable Housing was not viable. This was recommended by TW Planning Officers but was refused by TWBC Planning Committee, which the applicant appealed. An informal meeting with the Planning Inspector and the other parties is scheduled to take place on 9<sup>th</sup> December. BPC will attend.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Other sites put forward for development have all included Affordable Housing and the Walkhurst Road development provides almshouse accommodation.</li> <li>○ Anyone wishing to be considered for Affordable Housing must register with TWBC <a href="#">Housing Register</a> in the first instance and then register with housing associations or the Benenden Almshouse Charities.</li> </ul>	
DATE OF NEXT MEETING	Date of Next Meeting: Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> December, 7pm, Iden Green Pavilion.	
	The meeting closed at 8pm.	