

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BROOK PARISH COUNCIL
ON 21st MAY 2026 HELD IN BROOK AND HINXHILL VILLAGE HALL**

Present: Cllr S Betty (Chair) Cllr A Betty
Cllr Masters Cllr Penberthy
Cllr Redfern

One member of the public and the Clerk

		To be actioned by
1.	Election of the Chairman and any Vice-Chairman for the Council year 2026-27	
	Cllr Redfern proposed that Cllr S Betty be elected as Chair. Cllr Penberthy seconded this. Cllr S Betty was duly elected as the Chairman. Cllr S Betty proposed that Cllr Redfern be elected as Vice-Chairman for 2026-27, Cllr A Betty seconded this.	
2.	Completion of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office Form	
	The Declaration of Acceptance of Office Form was completed by the Chairman.	
3.	To receive and approve apologies for absence.	
	Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Wood; these apologies were approved.	
4.	To receive declarations of interest (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests). The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared.	
	There were no declarations of interest to be received.	
5.	To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 19th March 2026	
	The minutes were signed as a true record.	
6.	To discuss matters arising from the above minutes not covered by the agenda.	
	Cllr S Betty has not contacted the Public House yet. There was no update regarding Hudson's Field.	
7.	To receive the report from the Borough Councillor	
	The Borough Councillor Ward Member report had been circulated.	
	UPDATE ON NUTRIENT NEUTRALITY AND NUTRIENT CREDIT SCHEMES	
	Stour Environmental Credits (SEC) SEC, a joint venture company set up by Ashford Borough Council and Canterbury City Council in 2024, has now begun issuing nutrient credits. This will allow new homes and mixed-use developments across the Stour catchment that have previously been delayed by nutrient neutrality rules to progress. This initial mitigation scheme is expected to support the delivery of more than 1,500 new homes, with an initial credit release already enabling up to 30 dwellings to progress. Further credits will be released on a regular basis as existing schemes progress, and new environmental mitigation projects are explored. The company is already working with developers, landowners and other stakeholders to expand the supply of credits over time, helping ensure the scheme can respond to future housing need across the catchment.	
	Stodmarsh Stream Enhancement Scheme (SSES) Approval has also been granted for a major new environmental scheme in the Stour catchment which is running in tandem with SEC. The Stodmarsh Stream Enhancement Scheme, delivered by Greenshank	

<p>Environmental in partnership with Dace Environmental, is one of the UK’s largest nature-based nutrient neutrality and nutrient mitigation projects.</p> <p>Spread across five sites and more than 2.5 kilometres of small watercourses, the scheme uses natural interventions to reduce the levels of nitrogen and phosphorus entering the River Stour before it reaches the protected Stodmarsh wetlands.</p> <p>SSES will restore heavily managed agricultural ditches into more natural streams that slow the flow of water and allow nutrients to be filtered out. This reduces pollution in the catchment while generating the credits needed to support new development. The scheme requires only narrow strips alongside existing ditches, allowing surrounding farmland to remain in production. It will also support local wildlife and help manage both drought and heavy rain by holding more water in the landscape. The mitigation work is carried out by landowners from the proceeds generated by the sale of environmental credits.</p> <p>The work is secured for more than 80 years to ensure long-term environmental benefit and certainty for local planning authorities and developers.</p> <p>The first phase of the scheme has now received approval and is projected to unlock between 3,000 and 5,000 homes across Ashford, Canterbury and the wider River Stour catchment. A second phase is expected to support a further 3,000 homes, bringing the total potential to up to 8,000 homes over the two phases.</p> <p>PRESERVATION OF HERITAGE ASSETS</p> <p>There has been much publicity recently, particularly on social media, regarding the future of the Mark IV Tank in the town centre. Regrettably this publicity is based on untrue speculation rather than fact.</p> <p>At the February Cabinet meeting of Ashford Borough Council, the Leader made a statement confirming that a reserve fund of £1m towards the future maintenance of listed heritage assets owned by the Council, including the tank, would be created. Councillors will then be able to decide which listed assets need to be prioritised and a working group will then decide which projects are to be funded, therefore ensuring that the limited resources can be targeted at those assets that provide the best outcomes for stakeholders.</p> <p>For the avoidance of doubt, the Leader has clarified the position by confirming there are no proposals to move the tank out of the town and at this stage none are even being considered. A list of heritage assets in need of preservation, including the tank, will be put to the working group for consideration during the summer. Potential options will then be considered by councillors towards the end of the year before the public are consulted for their say on the future of the various assets.</p> <p>Cllr Redfern asked about the Stour Catchment document, it lacks details as the documents didn’t explain how the pollutants would not run into the Stour. Cllr Betty explained that this wouldn’t be stopped, this is an off set of pollutants to ensure nutrient neutrality.</p>
<p>8. Public Session: To receive questions and comments from the public on any agenda item</p> <p>The member of public asked about what is happening with the noticeboard. This is under agenda item 19.</p> <p>The member of public explained that people are parking on pavements, this is causing some concern, especially when the Museum have their open days. Cllr Masters explained that the field opposite the Museum will be used for future events.</p> <p>The member of public expressed concerns about the additional use of the play park. The play equipment has exceeded its life expectancy, so needs replacing. There is nothing to stop members of</p>

	<p>the public arriving to use the play area but, this would only be people passing. It is not likely to be a destination. Cllr Betty explained that the PC had spoken with the Village Hall Committee and they have reduced the number of people utilising the Recreation ground use as part of hall hires.</p> <p>The member of the public asked whether the pub will be opening. No-one present knows the answer to this.</p>
9.	To confirm loss of eligibility to use the General Power of Competence
	The meeting was informed that the Council no longer meets the electoral mandate of having at least two-thirds of the council elected, the Parish Council, therefore, is no longer eligible to use the General Power of Competence.
10.	Appointment and Scope of the Internal Auditor
	The meeting was circulated with the Clerk's recommendations regarding the Internal Auditor for 2026-27. The Parish Council approved that Mrs Lister should be appointed as the Internal Auditor for 2026-27.
11.	To agree representatives on other Committees for 2026/27
	<p>Planning Committee Chair – Cllr P Penberthy Planning Committee Members – Cllrs V Redfern and A Wood Village Hall Representative – Cllr S Betty will attend the Village Hall Annual Meeting. Highways and Environment – Cllr Masters KALC Representative – Cllrs A and S Betty Caretaker Committee Representative – Cllr S Betty</p>
12.	To review the Terms of Reference for the Caretaker Committee.
	The Parish Council reviewed and agreed the Terms of Reference for the Caretaker Committee.
13.	To review the effectiveness of the System of Internal Controls: Councillors are asked to consider the Statement of Internal Control in support of the Annual Governance Statement.
	The Parish Council reviewed and agreed the System of Internal Controls.
14.	Financial matters:
	<p>a) To approve the following financial documents:</p> <p>i. To receive the end of year accounts</p> <p>The Parish Council received the end of year accounts.</p> <p>ii. To receive the report from the Internal Auditor</p> <p>The Parish Council received the report from the Internal Auditor.</p> <p>iii. To approve the Governance Statement 2025/26, section 1 of the AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2026.</p> <p>The Parish Council approved the Governance Statement 2025/26, section 1 of the AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2026.</p> <p>iv. To consider and approve the Accounting Statements 2025/26, section 2 of the AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2026 and the supporting Bank Reconciliation as at 31st March 2026, the explanation of significant variance. To ensure that the Accounting Statements 2025/26 are signed and dated by the person presiding at the meeting.</p> <p>The Parish Council considered and approved the Accounting Statements 2025/26, section 2 of the AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2026 and the supporting Bank Reconciliation as at 31st March 2026, the explanation of significant variance. The Accounting Statements 2025/26 were signed and</p>

dated by the person presiding at the meeting.

b) To note/authorise the following:

i. To note the Parish Council’s financial position for 30th April 2026.

The Parish Council noted it had £30,604.30 in the bank account. The Clerk will contact Cllr Wood regarding the income received.

ii. To authorise any payments

Payee	£
KALC	239.83
Clear Insurance	1,131.74
T Block	423.90
HMRC	2.41
Village Caretaker Account	2,500.00
Tracey Block	424.08
S Lister	60.00
Tracey Block	423.70
Bank charges	14.00
HMRC	2.41
HMRC	2.81
Tracey Block	423.70
Kompan	16,051.56
Brook Church Clock	100.00

15. Review of the Council’s subscriptions to other bodies i.e. KALC

The Parish Council reviewed the Council subscription to KALC.

16. Review of the Council’s: Financial Regulations, Standing Orders, Asset Register and Risk Assessment, and confirm arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks; complaints procedure; policies, procedures and practices in respect of its obligations under freedom of information; data protection; policies, procedures and practices in respect of its obligations under freedom of information (see also standing orders 11, 20 and 21); policy for dealing with the press/media; employment policies and procedures and IT Policy.

The Parish Council reviewed and approved the Council’s Financial Regulations, Standing Orders, Asset Register and Risk Assessment, and confirm arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks; complaints procedure; policies, procedures and practices in respect of its obligations under freedom of information; data protection; policies, procedures and practices in respect of its obligations under freedom of information (see also standing orders 11, 20 and 21); policy for dealing with the press/media; employment policies and procedures and IT Policy.

17. To receive an update on the Recreation Ground to include the Open Spaces Policy and Play area.

Cllr Redfern noted that the issue of plaques needs to be agreed. This will be discussed at the next meeting.
 Cllr Wood had circulated the Parish Council with the latest plans regarding the play area.
 The Zip-wire has been installed on the play area.
 S Betty has spoken to Mike West regarding the clearing of the scrub.

18. To consider any changes to the Risk Assessment

There was no change to the Risk Assessment.

19. Village sign/noticeboard update

Mike West’s contact has made sleeves for the noticeboard and sign to sit in.
 There was a discussion about where it should it go.

	<p>Cllr Penberthy proposed that it is put back where it was. Cllr Redfern supported this proposal. The PC agreed to spend up to £500 for the installation of the noticeboard.</p> <p>It is noted that the capsule is next to the sign, this is behind the sign. The sign should be refitted and the noticeboard installed in the near future.</p>						
20.	Planning matters: to authorise a response to any application(s) and to note any recent planning decisions by Ashford Borough Council or any correspondence on planning matters						
	<p>Cllr Penberthy reported that:</p> <p>Pear Tree Cottage – ABC decision has not yet been made.</p> <p>The Willows – application approved, conditions applied as per the PC request.</p> <p>Spelder’s Hill House – objection response sent.</p>						
21.	To receive any updates on Highways/Environment						
	<p>The footpath down the side of Brookbank. KCC will undertake a revetment.</p> <p>The vegetation needs cutting back along Brookbank, the Caretaker will undertake this.</p> <p>Pothole near Old Post House – reported but KCC has confirmed no further action will be taken.</p> <p>Maintaining the path to the cricket field – this is the responsibility of the landowner.</p>						
22.	To receive the Caretaker Report						
	All continues well.						
23.	To receive the KALC Report						
	There was no report but the minutes are available.						
24.	Any Other Business (for information purposes only):						
	<p>The Village Hall Committee has made contact regarding a disabled parking space. The Clerk will look into this; it was suggested that hatching should also be marked out at the end of the ramp.</p> <p>Kent ACRE have requested funding; the PC did not feel that making a contribution would be advisable.</p> <p>Cllr Redfern asked about getting items on the agenda. Items for the agenda request to be sent to all Councillors.</p> <p>There has been an incident of anti-social behaviour on the recreation ground. The Clerk will look into any measures that could be undertaken regarding this.</p>						
25.	Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.						
	<table> <tr> <td>Thursday 16th July 2026</td> <td>Thursday 17th September 2026</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Thursday 19th November 2026</td> <td>Thursday 14th January 2027</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Thursday 18th March 2027</td> <td>Thursday 20th May 2027</td> </tr> </table>	Thursday 16 th July 2026	Thursday 17 th September 2026	Thursday 19 th November 2026	Thursday 14 th January 2027	Thursday 18 th March 2027	Thursday 20 th May 2027
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Thursday 18 th March 2027	Thursday 20 th May 2027						

The meeting closed at 18:20.

Signed:

Date: