

Linton Parish Council  
The Minutes of the Annual Statutory Meeting of Linton Parish Council held in Linton Village Hall  
on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at 7.30pm

Councillors present: Patricia Burden  
 Bernard Cresswell  
 Patrick Gerrish  
 Peter Paterson  
 Caroline Richer  
 Tony DiMarco

Also present: Mrs. Sherrie Babington (Parish Clerk), MBC Ward Councillors Brain Clarke and Simon Wales.

The meeting was chaired by Cllr Cresswell.

1. To elect a chairman.

Cllr Bernard Cresswell was proposed for the position of Chairman.

**Resolved:**

That Cllr Cresswell be elected Chairman of Linton Parish Council for the municipal year 2026/2027.

**Proposed:** Cllr Gerrish

**Seconded:** Cllr Richer

**Agreed by all Members present.**

2. To receive the Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Councillor Cresswell accepted the office of Chairman and signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

3. Apologies.

Members who cannot attend a meeting shall tender their apologies to the Parish Clerk prior to the meetings, under Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972. The members present must decide whether the reason(s) for a member's absence shall be accepted.

*No apologies were received.*

4. To elect a Vice-Chairman.

Cllr Caroline Richer was proposed for the position of Vice-Chairman.

Members discussed the role of the Vice-Chairman and noted that the primary purpose of the role was to stand in for the Chairman where required, particularly in relation to chairing meetings.

**Resolved:**

That Cllr Richer be elected Vice-Chairman of Linton Parish Council for the municipal year 2026/2027.

**Proposed:** Cllr Cresswell

**Seconded:** Cllr Burden

**Agreed by all Members present.**

5. To appoint Committees, representatives to outside bodies and other appointments.

Members reviewed the representatives for outside bodies and other appointments as set out on the agenda.

**Resolved:**

That the following appointments be agreed:

### **Representatives for Outside Bodies**

Footpaths Officer – Cllr Paterson  
 Village Hall Representative – Cllr Burden  
 Tree Warden – Cllr Gerrish  
 Highways – All Councillors  
 KALC – All Councillors  
 Webmaster – Cllr DiMarco, Burden and Parish Clerk  
 Maidstone Police – All Councillors  
 Allotments Manager – Cllr Gerrish  
 Playground – All Councillors  
 Community Liaison – All Councillors  
 Neighbourhood Watch – Cllr Paterson as Lead Councillor  
 Speed Watch – Cllr Gerrish  
 Planning – All Councillors  
 Linton Archivist – David Sendles  
 Litter Picks – Cllr Richer

### **Appointment of:**

Internal Auditor – Martin Thomas & Co  
 Bankers – Lloyds TSB  
 External Auditors – Mazars LLP

### **Memberships:**

Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC)  
 Information Commissioners Office (ICO)  
 Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)

### **6. Declarations of Interest.**

To receive Declarations of Interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda, in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 in respect of members and in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect of officers.

*No declarations of interest were made.*

To consider any Dispensation requests received by the Parish Clerk and not previously considered.

*No dispensations were considered.*

### **7. Parish Councillor Vacancy.**

No applications had been received for the councillor vacancy.

### **8. Minutes of the Previous Meeting.**

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2026 were circulated and approved as a true record.

*Proposed by Cllr Gerrish, seconded by Cllr Richer.*

*Signed and dated by the Chairman of the meeting.*

### **9. Matters Arising.**

Members noted the actions from the previous meeting.

Cllr Gerrish advised that he had not yet progressed the matter relating to the mirror erected on Parish Council land near the allotments but would take this forward

***Action: Cllr Gerrish to progress the matter relating to the mirror on Parish Council land.***

Cllr Cresswell updated Members on the digitisation of historic Parish Council records and photographs. He advised that he had now collected the boxes and had taken possession of photographs. These would be packed and passed to the digitisation company.

***Action: Cllr Cresswell to progress the digitisation project.***

#### **10. Public Participation.**

No members of the public were present.

#### **11. Clerk's Report & Correspondence.**

The Clerk advised that there was nothing further to bring to Members' attention that had not already been circulated by email.

#### **12. Local Government Reorganisation / Community Governance Review.**

Ward Councillors Clarke and Wales provided an update on the Local Government Review and Community Governance Review.

Members were advised that the Government's decision on local government reorganisation was still awaited, with a decision anticipated around July, although this could be later. The final boundaries were also still awaited.

It was reported that the proposal for a Maidstone Town Council had been considered by full Council and that public participation had been sufficiently in favour for the matter to progress. Members were advised that the boundaries had been sorted and that the proposed Town Council would have 22 councillors, making it one of the larger parish/town councils in the country.

Cllr Wales explained that the creation of a Town Council would provide a future home for the mayoralty, civic regalia and the town hall function once local government reorganisation had taken place.

Cllr Clarke explained that the creation of a Town Council reflected the position in many other districts and that, as the county town, Maidstone would otherwise be on the back foot without a local council. He referred to previous parish boundary changes and explained that, in his experience, public consultation could show strong support for being represented by a parish council, even where a precept would be payable.

Members noted that elections for the shadow authority were expected in May 2027 and that the new authority would take over in May 2028.

#### **13. KCC & MBC Ward Councillor Reports.**

Ward Councillors Clarke and Wales gave a detailed report to Members.

Cllr Clarke advised Members that, subject to formal confirmation, he expected to become Mayor of Maidstone from Saturday 16th May 2026. He advised that if the Parish Council had future events, the mayor could be invited through the formal process on Maidstone Borough Council's website.

Members congratulated Cllr Clarke on his appointment as Mayor of Maidstone.

Cllr Wales advised that he had attended a promotional event in relation to the Greensands / hospice proposal. The planning permission granted was an outline permission for the hospice to relocate to the Greensands site.

Members were advised that the hospice was now seeking to raise the necessary funding and had also applied for Community Infrastructure Levy funding.

Members noted that the proposed relocation would not significantly increase the number of beds. However, the new site would provide additional space, amenity space and flexibility for future expansion, which was not available on the current site.

Members expressed concern regarding the location of the site, the lack of public transport accessibility and the additional traffic impacts on Linton Crossroads. Concern was raised that the proposal could generate additional staff, visitor and service traffic throughout the day and night.

Cllr Clarke explained that, through the Local Plan process, there was a wider issue around allocating land not only for housing but also for uses such as care homes, children's homes and healthcare facilities. He advised that where a need exists, but no specific site has been allocated, it can be difficult to resist proposals that come forward as windfall opportunities, even where local impacts are recognised.

Members discussed the difficulty of the current planning framework, where each proposal must be considered on its merits and where the absence of specific site allocations can make refusal difficult. Cllr Clarke advised that the aim through the Local Plan process was to try to ensure that such uses were considered and, where possible, directed to more appropriate locations.

Members thanked Cllrs Clarke and Wales for their attendance and report.

#### 14. **Financial Matters.**

##### a. Financial Statement.

Members considered the financial statement.

The Clerk advised that a cheque for £178.94 for paper and ink should be added.

Members considered the financial position, and no further queries were raised.

##### **Resolved:**

That the financial statement be approved, subject to the addition of the cheque for £178.94 for printing materials.

**Proposed by:** Cllr Gerrish

**Seconded by:** Cllr Richer

**Agreed by all present.**

##### b. 2025/2026 Accounts and AGAR.

To consider the 2025/2026 Accounts and AGAR.

The Clerk circulated the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, including the Annual Governance Statement, Internal Audit Report, accounts, balance sheet, income and expenditure account and bank reconciliation.

The Clerk advised that as the Parish Council's gross income and expenditure for the year was below £25,000, the Council qualified for exemption from a limited assurance review for the 2025/2026 financial year. Members noted that the Certificate of Exemption would therefore be submitted to the external auditor.

Members noted the sections of the AGAR, including the Annual Governance Statement and Accounting Statements, together with the Internal Auditor's report.

**Resolved:**

That the Internal Auditor's report be noted.

**Resolved:**

That the 2025/2026 accounts, AGAR documentation and Certificate of Exemption be approved for signature and submission to the external auditor.

**Proposed:** Cllr Gerrish

**Seconded:** Cllr Richer

**Agreed by all Members present.**

**15. Highways Matters and PROW.**

To discuss highway related matters.

The Clerk confirmed that the Highways Improvement Plan had been completed and asked Members whether they wished her to submit it.

**Resolved:** That the Clerk submit the Highways Improvement Plan to Kent County Council.

Members discussed recent roadworks outside the village hall. It was reported that the works related to the installation of a new water meter at the alms houses.

No further highways or Public Rights of Way matters were raised.

**Action:** *Clerk to submit the Highways Improvement Plan.*

**16. Planning Matters.**

a. Planning Applications.

The Clerk advised that there were no new planning applications for consideration.

b. Planning Decisions

No planning decisions were reported.

c. Other Planning Matters.

No other planning matters were raised.

**17. Other Reports.**

a. Allotments:

Cllr Gerrish reported that the allotment tidy-up had taken place and had gone well. Approximately 25 people attended.

He advised that the double plot which had previously been subject to notice had now partly been re-let, with half of the plot allocated. Monthly inspections were now being carried out, with plots being marked out of five so that conditions could be monitored more clearly.

Members noted that the allotments had improved significantly under Cllr Gerrish's management and that the general position was positive.

b. KALC:

No updates were received.

c. Playground:

Members discussed the £5,000 grant funding which had been allocated for use before the end of March 2027.

It was noted that Members had previously considered installing picnic benches with tables at the playground. The cost was approximately £800 per bench and three benches had agreed.

Members discussed whether there was scope to provide additional play equipment within the remaining grant funding, including provision for older children. A basketball hoop was suggested, although Members noted that consideration would need to be given to the appropriate location, safety requirements and whether a hardstanding area would be required.

Members discussed the fact that the playground was a valuable facility but was not well promoted. It was noted that there was currently no clear signage from the main road, Wheelers Lane or Cornwallis Avenue, and that the playground was not properly featured on the Parish Council website. Members considered that many residents may not know it exists.

Members agreed that better publicity was needed, including photographs of the playground and a dedicated website page. Members also discussed the potential to use the playground for a future community event once new benches had been installed.

**Action: Clerk to seek advice and costings for potential basketball hoop.**

**Action: Members to provide photographs of the playground for use on the website and in publicity.**

d. Website:

To consider any matters relating to the Linton Website.

Members discussed the Parish Council website in detail.

It was noted that the website was now one of the Parish Council's main ways of informing residents, particularly as newsletters were no longer being produced in the same way.

Members expressed concern that parts of the website were out of date, including items on the front page and historical information. The Clerk advised that she could make changes to the website but required Members to identify out-of-date information and provide updated photographs where required.

Cllr DiMarco confirmed that he was willing to continue assisting with the website. It was agreed that Cllrs DiMarco and Burden would review the website page by page and report back with any outdated information or suggested changes.

Members discussed the need to make the website more interesting and useful to residents, including by adding better village information, photographs, details of the playground, history of the village and other local facilities.

Members also discussed updated noticeboard information. Cllr Gerrish had prepared an example of a more visually engaging notice for the noticeboard, although the Clerk noted that the meeting dates shown on the example would need correcting. Members agreed that updated notices could be prepared, provided the information was accurate.

**Resolved:**

That Cllrs DiMarco and Burden review the website and report back with recommended updates.

**Action: Cllrs DiMarco and Burden to review the website and provide updates to the Clerk.**

**Action: Clerk to remove outdated front-page website items where appropriate.**

Parish Council Logo.

Cllr Gerrish presented a proposed updated Parish Council logo based on the village sign.

Members discussed the proposed design and agreed that the updated logo could be adopted and used on the website, noticeboards, correspondence and publicity materials.

Members thanked Cllr Gerrish for preparing the design.

**Resolved:**

That the updated Linton Parish Council logo prepared by Cllr Gerrish be adopted for use by the Parish Council.

***Action: Cllr Gerrish to provide the Clerk with high-resolution copies of the logo.***

***Action: Cllr Gerrish to provide the Clerk with the Christmas newsletter in PDF format for uploading.***

e. Speed Watch:

Cllr Gerrish reported that the Speed Watch equipment had been charged and tested, but there appeared to be a broken cable. He advised that once the equipment was working, it would be tested.

***Action: Cllr Gerrish to investigate the issue with the Speed Watch equipment and arrange testing once working.***

f. Neighbourhood Watch:

No matters were reported.

g. Linton Village Hall:

Cllr Burden reported that some work had been carried out in the gentlemen's toilets.

Members discussed the wall near the pub. It was reported that a metal fence had been erected to prevent access and reduce the risk if the wall deteriorated further. Members noted that Shepherd Neame remained responsible for the wall.

Members noted that the Village Hall had been trying to get action on the wall for some time and welcomed that some steps had now been taken.

h. Parish Annual Report:

Members discussed the Parish Annual Report.

Cllr Cresswell asked Members to provide any items that they felt should be included in the annual report.

Members discussed whether the Annual Report should also include useful contact details, but it was noted that its main purpose was to report on Parish Council activity during the year.

***Action: Clerk to prepare a summary of key items from the year's minutes for the Annual Report.***

***Action: Members to provide short reports for their own areas of responsibility.***

i. Parish Litter Pick:

Members discussed litter pick and the need for updated photographs of volunteers for use on the website.

It was noted that there had been discussion with the relevant authority regarding the separation of litter into clear and green bags. The Clerk confirmed that she was still awaiting further clarification.

***Action: Clerk to continue seeking clarification regarding litter pick arrangements.***

**18. Other Matters and Items for the Next Agenda.**

Members discussed the BT telephone box; it was suggested that residents could be asked for ideas for possible uses of the telephone box.

Members discussed possible future community and social events. Cllr Gerrish advised that he had spoken with church representatives regarding church and village events, including the strawberry cream teas in June. It was noted that previous events had been much larger, with plant stalls, jam stalls and other activities, but that volunteer numbers had reduced over time.

Members discussed whether the Parish Council could help encourage a wider village event in future, possibly linked to the playground, the church, the pub or Loddington Farm.

Members agreed that this should be placed on the next agenda so that possible ideas could be considered properly.

*Action: Telephone box to be included in the Annual Report / resident engagement, asking for ideas for future use.*

*Action: Future community/social event ideas to be placed on the next agenda.*

**19. Date of Next Meeting.**

The next meeting will be held on Monday 1st June 2026 at 7.30pm in Linton Village Hall.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.05 pm.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairman)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_