

Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden Parish Council**The Minutes of the Meeting of Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden Parish Council
Held at Chattenden Community Centre on Thursday 8th January 2026 at 7.00pm.**

Parish Councillors present: Cllr Fray
Cllr Sparks
Cllr Chester
Cllr Pearce
Cllr Styles
Cllr Mitchell
Cllr Dunkley
Cllr Williams
Cllr Francis
Cllr Tildesley
Cllr Cutting
Cllr Wood

Also: Sherrie Babington - Parish Clerk, and members of the public.

The meeting was chaired by Councillor Fray.

1. Apologies for Absence.

Members who cannot attend a meeting shall tender their apologies to the Parish Clerk prior to the meeting. 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.

Apologies were received and accepted for:

- Cllr Barton- Work

Apologies were also received from Ward Councillor Sands.

2. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations.

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.

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no requests for dispensations.

3. Parish Councillor Vacancies.

1. To note confirmation received from Medway Council that no request has been received to hold a by-election in respect of the two existing Parish Council vacancies, and that the Council may therefore proceed to fill these vacancies by co-option.
2. To note the resignation of Councillor Teresa Gissing, which has created a further vacancy on the Parish Council.

Members were advised that:

- A statutory Notice of Vacancy to be displayed for the newly arisen vacancy following Councillor Gissing's resignation; and
- Co-option notices to be displayed in respect of the two existing vacancies.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting.

It was proposed by Cllr Williams, seconded by Cllr Tildesley, and agreed by all present that the minutes of the meeting held on 4th December 2025 be approved and signed.

The approved Minutes were then signed and dated by the Chairman.

5. Matters Arising.

The following were reported to members:

Christmas Lights

During the course of the month, a number of issues arose in relation to the parish Christmas lights. These issues were reported by the Clerk and Cllr Pearce to Medway Council. As a result, Medway Council has confirmed that the Parish Council will not be charged for the Christmas lights for this year.

Members are advised that an investment in the purchase of new Christmas lights for future years will be required, subject to Council approval. The Clerk will make enquiries regarding costs through Medway Council, as the Parish Council is required to use Medway Council's appointed contractor.

PC Committees

Meetings of the Environment, Planning and Finance Committees have taken place during the course of the month. Reports and any recommendations arising from those meetings will be reported under the relevant agenda items.

Section 106 Funding

Meetings have taken place with Medway Council regarding Section 106 funding, and updates arising from these discussions will be reported under the relevant agenda item.

Planning Matters

Planning objections agreed by the Parish Council at the previous meeting have been submitted in accordance with the resolutions made.

Abbey Farm Development – Road Safety

Following concerns raised at a previous meeting regarding road safety in connection with the Abbey Farm development, it was agreed that the Parish Council would request a site meeting with Medway Council. Medway Council has now agreed to this request, and a site meeting will be arranged in the near future during normal office hours.

Members are asked to confirm who will attend this meeting to represent the Parish Council.

7. Urgent Matters.

To consider any urgent matters raised by members.

No matters were raised.

8. Public Session.

To allow members of the public to raise any issues with the Parish Council.

Residents attended the meeting and spoke regarding the following:

Abbey Homes Development

Concerns were raised regarding restricted sightlines at the roundabout caused by vegetation growth.

Action: Clerk to request visibility splay information ahead of the site meeting with Medway Council.

Tree Planting Programme- Abbey Homes Development

It was reported that 760 trees are due to be planted with volunteer sessions scheduled throughout January and February.

It was agreed that the planting plan would be requested from Medway Council and circulated to members.

Action: Clerk to progress.

Speed Watch

An update was provided on Speed Watch. It was confirmed that:

- Cameras are available on loan
- A minimum of six trained volunteers is required

Action: Cllr Cutting and Wood to investigate further and report back to a future PC meeting.

Transport Strategy and Planning Infrastructure

A resident raised concerns were regarding:

- Cumulative planning impacts
- Lack of infrastructure provision
- Bus reliability and transport strategy

Resolved:

That Medway Council officers be invited to attend a future meeting to discuss transport strategy and infrastructure planning.

Action: Clerk to progress.

Public participation was closed.

10. Financial Matters.

a. Financial Statement.

To receive the financial statement and to authorise any payments.

The monthly financial statement was circulated and considered by members. The bank balances and payments were reviewed.

It was noted that the parish church clock had been serviced and that the condition of the clock face may require attention in due course.

It was proposed by Cllr Williams, seconded by Cllr Wood, and agreed by all present that the financial statement be approved.

b. 2026/2027 Budget.

The Finance Chair presented the Finance Committee recommendation.

Members were advised that:

- A 15% increase was recommended to avoid reliance on reserves
- The increase equates to £5.44 per annum for a Band D property (approximately 10 pence per week)

It was agreed that an explanatory article would be prepared for the parish newsletter.

Resolved:

That the Parish Council approve a 15% increase in the precept for 2026/27, setting the precept at £184,200.

Proposed: Cllr Williams

Seconded: Cllr Wood

Vote: Approved by all present with one abstention.

11. Clerk's Report.

To consider any matters arising from the Clerk's Report.

The Clerk reported on correspondence from a resident regarding flags erected in Chattenden. The resident advised that complaints have previously been made to L&Q and Medway Council, and that while flags have been removed elsewhere, those in Chattenden remain.

She informed members that this had been reported to Medway Council and the issue had now been resolved.

12. Chairman's Report.

To receive the Chairman's Report.

The Chair reported on:

- Arrangements for data protection training for councillors
- Accessibility and availability to councillors
- A historical reflection on community support drawn from parish records

The Chair emphasised the importance of working together to serve the local community.

13. New Community Centre.

To receive an update for the new Community Centre.

Cllr Williams reported that:

Members received a detailed update on progress with the New Community Centre project. It was reported that the planning application has been submitted and is currently under consideration, with one objection received to date.

Members were advised that based on current cost estimates, there remains an overall funding shortfall of approximately £1.3 million, meaning that further funding will be required in order to deliver the scheme in full.

Following a recent meeting with Medway Council, Members were informed that it has been provisionally agreed that a further allocation of Section 106 funding could be released to the Parish Council in order to avoid any delay to the project once planning permission is granted. This would enable the Council to progress the project without interruption while S106 funding arrangements are finalised.

Members noted that, in addition to future Section 106 releases, the Parish Council would need to actively pursue external grant funding and other funding opportunities to address the remaining funding gap.

It was further reported that Cllr Williams had updated the project costings to forward to Medway Council to enable the Council's Legal Department to prepare and finalise the legal documentation relating to the transfer of the remaining Section 106 funds currently held for the project.

Action:

- The Parish Clerk to formally request the release of the further Section 106 funding from Medway Council and to continue liaising with officers regarding funding arrangements.
- Cllr Williams and Clerk to update and submit revised project costings to Medway Council to support the preparation of legal and financial transfer documentation.

14. Memorial Garden.

To receive a report on the Memorial Garden.

Cllr Williams reported that the Memorial Garden project is progressing well:

Members were advised that the main construction works within the Memorial Garden have now been completed, including the installation of internal fencing to section off designated areas for the interment of ashes, including provision for pet ashes.

It was reported that noticeboards and associated signage have been ordered and are due to be installed shortly. Once these are in place, the Memorial Garden would be ready to move into the operational phase.

Members were further advised that work is now progressing on the preparation of the associated operational policies, including those relating to memorial benches and the interment of ashes. These policies will be brought back to the Parish Council for consideration and approval in due course.

15. Parish Council Committees.**a. Events Committee.**

It was reported that:

- Christmas on the Green was successful with 343 children attending
- Santa sleigh tours raised over £600
- Pantomime attendance was low but costs were fully covered

Future events confirmed:

- Autumn Tea – 10 October 2026
- Christmas on the Green – 28 November 2026

Proposed “Rent a Dinosaur” Event – Spring 2026

The Events Committee presented a proposal to organise a family “Rent a Dinosaur” event in Spring 2026, provisionally scheduled for late April or early May 2026, subject to supplier and volunteer availability.

It was reported that:

- The event would be a free community event
- Arrangements would be required for professional dinosaur entertainment, first aid cover, and stalls
- The initial estimated cost discussed at committee stage was approximately £2,500 excluding VAT

Members were further advised that:

- The Events Committee currently holds approximately £1,200 remaining within the current year’s Events budget

- A sponsor has indicated a willingness to support events in the new financial year
- Any remaining balance would need to be met from the Events budget and income generated from stalls and refreshments

Members discussed:

- The need to secure sufficient volunteers
- The need to carefully manage costs
- The requirement for formal approval of expenditure prior to any further financial commitment

Resolved (in principle):

That the Parish Council approve in principle the organisation of a “Rent a Dinosaur” event in Spring 2026, subject to:

- Final confirmation of supplier availability and event date,
- Confirmation of sponsorship funding,
- Availability of sufficient volunteers, and
- A full cost breakdown and budget report being presented to a future Full Council meeting for formal approval prior to any further financial commitment being made.

b. Environment Committee.

Members received and noted the report of the Environment Committee meeting held on 5 January 2026.

Members noted that the Committee had considered proposals relating to the replacement of the existing tarmacked football area with a new Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), together with associated access improvements. The Committee also considered issues relating to pedestrian access within the recreation ground, to improve the muddy and slippery conditions at the Webb Close entrance.

Recommendation to Full Council:

- Accept the quotation from Safeplay Playground Services Ltd for the Kingshill Recreation Ground Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) project and authorise the works, including seeking additional quotations for associated signage and continuation of the internal footpath network.
- Approve proceeding with quotations for the installation of an additional footpath from the Webb Close entrance to integrate with the existing pathway network within the recreation ground.

Following consideration of the Environment Committee report, Members supported the recommendations brought forward and agreed that the proposed works would improve safety, accessibility and facilities at Kingshill Recreation Ground.

RESOLVED:

1. That the quotation from Safeplay Playground Services Ltd for the installation of a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) at Kingshill Recreation Ground be accepted and the works authorised.
2. That further quotations be sought for associated signage and the continuation of the internal footpath network within the recreation ground.
3. That the Parish Clerk be authorised to obtain a quotation for the extension of the footpath from the Webb Close entrance to integrate with the existing pathway network, with a further report to be brought back to Full Council for consideration.

c. Finance, Audit and General Purposes Committee.

Christmas Lighting

Members considered the recommendation of the Finance, Audit and General Purposes Committee regarding the future provision of Christmas lighting within the parish. It was noted that the existing lighting was in need of replacement and options for future replacement and improvement were considered.

Members discussed the opportunity to replace the current Christmas lighting scheme and expand coverage to additional lamp columns within the village in order to improve reliability, visual impact and long-term value. It was noted that any replacement scheme would need to be delivered in liaison with Medway Council, as the lamp columns are owned by the authority.

Recommendation to Full Council:

It was recommended that the Parish Council support, in principle, the replacement of the existing Christmas lighting scheme and the expansion of coverage to additional lamp columns. It was further recommended that the Parish Clerk be authorised to liaise with Medway Council to identify suitable locations, available options and indicative costs for a replacement and expanded scheme, for future consideration by Council.

RESOLVED:

That the Parish Council support, in principle, the replacement and expansion of the Christmas lighting scheme and authorise the Parish Clerk to liaise with Medway Council to obtain options, suitable locations and indicative costs, with a further report to be brought back to a future meeting of Full Council for consideration and decision.

16. Planning Matters.

a. Planning Applications Received.

The following planning applications were considered by the Parish Council:

MC/25/2312 - Hoo Village Hall , Pottery Road, Hoo St Werburgh, Rochester
Construction of a community centre (demolition of existing community Centre (Use Class F2) and associated external works such as access, parking and landscape.

Parish Council: Letter of support to be submitted to Medway Council.

MC/25/2527 - Hundred of Hoo Swimming Pool , Main Road, Hoo St Werburgh
Installation of new external air handling unit at Hoo Sports Centre.

Parish Council: No objection.

MC/24/2022 - Land West of Hoo St Werburgh, Rochester, Kent
Outline planning application (with all matters reserved except access) for the construction of up to 450 dwellings, commercial floorspace (up to 500sqm), community use building (up to 500sqm), associated public open space, landscaping, outdoor sports facilities, drainage and earthworks.

It was agreed that:

- The objection dated 11 November 2024 to the Taylor Wimpey application be reiterated
- The Section 106 request be increased to £1.3 million

Resolved:

That the objection be resubmitted and the updated Section 106 request be submitted.

b. Planning Decisions by Medway Council.

MC/25/2408

Land At the Former Sturdee Club and Land at Stoke Road Hoo St Werburgh ME3 9BJ

Details pursuant to condition 20 (Suds) A and B only on planning permission for MC/23/2857 For construction of 134 no. residential dwellings (including affordable and over 55's homes), children's nursery (Class E(f)), cafe/community hub (Class E(b)/F2(b)) and commercial/retail floorspace (E(g)/E(a), new public open spaces, sustainable urban drainage systems, landscaping and biodiversity areas and play areas. Access to be from 4no. new locations from Stoke Road. Provision of roads, parking spaces and earthworks - Demolition of the Sturdee Club and associated structures

Discharge of Conditions

MC/25/2350

Land At the Former Sturdee Club and Land at Stoke Road Hoo St Werburgh ME3 9BJ

Details pursuant to condition 22 (Construction surface water management plan) on planning permission MC/23/2857 for construction of 134no. residential dwellings (including affordable and over 55's homes), children's nursery (Class E(f)), cafe/community hub (Class E(b)/F2(b)) and commercial/retail floorspace (E(g)/E(a), new public open spaces, sustainable urban drainage systems, landscaping and biodiversity areas and play areas. Access to be from 4no. new locations from Stoke Road. Provision of roads, parking spaces and earthworks - Demolition of the Sturdee Club and associated structures

Discharge of Conditions

MC/25/2238

6 Branta Fields Hoo St Werburgh Rochester Medway ME3 9BF

Application for a Lawful Development Certificate (proposed) replacement of the existing timber shed with a new timber garden room to the rear of the garden.

Approval

MC/25/2194

The Windmill, Annexe Ratcliffe Highway Hoo St Werburgh Rochester Medway ME3 8QB

Change of use of an existing residential bungalow (Use Class C3) to office use (Use Class E) in direct connection with the adjoining osteopathic clinic.

Approval with Conditions

MC/25/2154

Deangate Ridge Leisure Complex Greenspace Dux Court Road Hoo St Werburgh Rochester

Construction of a floodlit football foundation playzone with linked path

Approval with Conditions

MC/25/2155

Deangate Ridge Leisure Complex Greenspace Dux Court Road Hoo St Werburgh Rochester

Advertisement consent for installation of non-illuminated vinyl banners

Approval with Conditions

MC/25/2150

Bramleys 226 Main Road Hoo St Werburgh Rochester Medway ME3 9HG

Retrospective application for the retention of a single storey outbuilding for use as an ancillary annexe incidental to the main dwelling.

Approval with Conditions

MC/25/2115

Opposite 247 Bells Lane Hoo St Werburgh Rochester Medway ME3 9JD

Overhead Line (Exemption) (England & Wales) Regulations 2009, Statutory Instrument 2009 No. 640 Electricity, Paragraph 3 (1) -establish whether there is a significant adverse effect on the environment

Raise No Objection

MC/25/2058

Unit 1A London Medway Commercial Park James Swallow Way Hoo St Werburgh Rochester
Relocation of compactors and installation of HGV electric vehicle charging points with associated plant, infrastructure and works

Approval with Conditions

MC/25/1612

Buttercrock Wharf Vicarage Lane Hoo St Werburgh Rochester Medway ME3 9LQ
Construction of an industrial building with mezzanine to be used for purposes falling under Class E of the UCO (Light industrial and small office) -demolition of existing office building

Approval with Conditions

c. Appeals.

No matters were considered.

d. Other Planning Matters.

Members discussed the legal topic papers associated with the emerging Local Plan and their relevance to the Parish Council's consideration of the Plan. Following discussion, it was agreed that Cllr Sparks would liaise with Dave Chetwyn in relation to this matter, should this be necessary.

Authority was given for Cllr Sparks to proceed on behalf of the Parish Council.

Proposed: Cllr Williams

Seconded: Cllr Fray

Agreed: Unanimously

Members also noted the planning application relating to 137 Bells Lane, which had been validated and progressed without consultation with the Parish Council.

It was reported that this matter had been raised with Medway Council, who acknowledged the oversight and issued an apology for the failure to consult. Medway Council advised that steps would be taken to ensure this does not occur again and confirmed that the Parish Council would be added to receive the weekly planning application list directly from Medway Council to improve notification and transparency going forward.

17. External Reports.

a. Hoo Village Hall (Oversight Committee).

Members received an update on the Village Hall from the Hall Manager.

b. Alliance of Hoo Peninsula Parish Councils.

Cllr Pearce reported that Ward Councillors continued to attend Peninsula Parish Council meetings to keep up to date of the views of the Alliance Parishes.

c. Police and Pact Report.

Members received a written report regarding police matters and the PACT.

d. Ward Councillors' Reports.

Ward Councillors Pearce reported on the following matters:

- The Ward Councillor provided an update on the progress of the Local Plan examination and advised that he is monitoring Government consultations and changes to national planning policy, and their potential impact on the parish.

- He reported ongoing engagement with Medway Council regarding planning matters, including major development proposals affecting the area.
- Concerns were raised regarding parking issues on Vicarage Lane and surrounding roads, with the Ward Councillor advising that he will continue to press for improved enforcement and review of the situation.
- He confirmed that he would circulate a written report to all Members following the meeting to provide further detail and updates on these matters.

18. Exclusion of Press and Public – Confidential Item

It was resolved that, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded due to the confidential nature of the following item.

Confidential Item - Community Award Nominations

To consider nominations for the KALC and Parish Council Community Awards.

19. Date of the next meeting – Thursday 5th February 2026 – Hoo Village Hall.

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman closed the meeting to the press and public at 9.15pm.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

Confidential Item - Community Award Nominations**To consider nominations for the KALC and Parish Council Community Awards.**

Members considered the report relating to the Parish Council Community Awards and the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) Community Award for 2026.

KALC Award 2026

It was agreed that the KALC Community Award nomination would be submitted in the name of Ward Councillor Ron Sands in recognition of his significant and sustained contribution to the parish and wider community. Members acknowledged Cllr Sands' long-standing service to the Parish Council, including his roles as Councillor and Chairman, his work as a Medway Councillor, and his continued commitment to supporting and representing local residents.

Parish Council Community Award 2026

Members also agreed the following recipients of the Parish Council Community Awards, to be presented at the Annual Parish Meeting in May 2026:

David Thomas – Individual Community Award

wHoo Cares Volunteers (wHoo Cares) – Group / Organisation Community Award

RESOLVED:

That the Parish Council submit a nomination for the KALC Community Award 2026 in the name of Ward Councillor Ron Sands, and that the following recipients be approved for the Parish Council Community Awards, to be presented at the Annual Parish Meeting in May 2026:

David Thomas – Individual Community Award

wHoo Cares Volunteers (wHoo Cares) – Group / Organisation Community Award

It was further RESOLVED that the Parish Clerk be authorised to progress the agreed nominations and make the necessary arrangements in accordance with the relevant award schemes and timescales.