

POSTLING PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of Postling ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held at Postling Village Hall on Tuesday 26 May 2026 at 7.30pm

1. Attendance and apologies for absence

Attending: Chairman Frank Hobbs, Councillors George Burgess, Helen Calderbank, Christine Hobbs, John Pattrick, Daniel Shaddick, Parish Clerk Clare Hamilton, Gill Dixon.

Apologies: Cllr Rob Lye, County Cllr Christopher Hespe, District Cllr Elaine Martin, District Cllr Jenny Hollingsbee, Jim Nicholls.

2. Minutes of previous Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 27 May 2025 were approved unanimously and signed.

3. Chairman's report

Your Parish Council has had a relatively quiet year.

Local planning applications have on the whole been straight-forward and non-controversial.

We have progressed with our Parish Highway Improvement Plan, the proposal for a 20 mph limit through the village has finished its consultation programme, we now await KCC's response.

We had problems with Southern Water and their fleet of tankers travelling from Elham to Hythe on a 24-hour shuttle. Apparently KCC gave them Sandling Road as a suitable route to take. The only good thing to come out of this, is that the road has had considerable patching works done to make it safer. We are looking at whether a Lorry Watch scheme is feasible for Sandling Road.

Otterpool Park slowly continues on its way, the District Council has now got Homes England onside. Planning permission for the waste water plant has now been granted by KCC, this was needed for building works to start. The Parish Working Group is still meeting regularly with the Otterpool team. The delay in starting any building is still putting pressure on the District Council to allow more sites to be developed elsewhere, with no help towards infrastructure.

Our District Councillors Jenny Hollingsbee and Elaine Martin have attended our meetings on a fairly regular basis, and our County Councillor Christopher Hespe provides us with regular updates and has attended one meeting.

We supported the Village Hall Committee with a grant of £500 towards their Solar panels project.

Finally, I would like to thank your Councillors for their time and inputs, and of course our Parish Clerk Clare for her excellent work in keeping us up to date on everything.

Frank Hobbs, Chairman

4. Postling New Village Hall Association report

Governance

Last year I reported that we would be re-registering Postling Village Hall as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) for administrative purposes, bringing the charity up to date with current practices. This was completed on 16 June 2025 and our new charity number is 1213640. We are now in the process of winding down the previous version of the charity.

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My thanks go to Peter Le Feuvre for his help with this process.

Running Costs

I am pleased to report that our bid for funding from the District Council's Green Grant Scheme was successful last year. Further bids for funding also resulted in generous contributions from Postling Parish Council, Cllr Jenny Hollingsbee, The Roger De Haan Charitable Trust, and the Tory Family Foundation. The solar panels and battery system was installed in February and we are looking forward the benefits of reduced running costs.

I would like to thank Chris Clark in particular for the time and effort he contributed in researching and completing application forms for the various funding agencies, and for his commitment and enthusiasm in helping to get the project off the ground.

As a result, the cost of the installation has been covered in its entirety. We are now in the fortunate position of having a surplus, courtesy of the Tory Family Foundation, who have agreed that the remaining funds can be used towards updating the hall's original storage heaters to complement the solar and storage project. We are currently in the process of obtaining quotes for these works.

Maintenance

The swings in the rear garden were removed at the end of last year due to the unsafe condition of the wooden frame. There are no plans to replace them. There are no outstanding maintenance issues and, whilst the décor and kitchen are beginning to look a little tired, the hall remains serviceable and has been maintained to a good standard. The outside area continues to be maintained by committee members and volunteers at no cost to the charity.

Usage/Hire

Our main user remains Badgers Bridge Nursery, and the arrangement with them is due to continue. The hall also continues to be regularly hired by groups such as the Table Tennis Club and Craft Club, along with occasional private bookings. It also serves as a venue for village events, including providing tea and cakes during Open Gardens events and hosting quiz nights.

Jim Nicholls, Chair, Postling Village Hall Committee

5. Appointment of parish representatives to the Village Hall Association

Cllr Helen Calderbank proposed the re-election of Jim Nicholls, Gill Dixon and Chris Clark.
Cllr Christine Hobbs seconded, all in favour.

6. District Councillors' reports *see Appendix*

7. Kent County Councillor's report *see Appendix*

8. For information

Meeting closed at 7.45 pm.

Signed Frank Hobbs, *Chairman*, May 2027

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Appendix

District Councillor North Downs West – Jenny Hollingsbee

As one of the North Downs District Councillors, I represent the Communities of Bodsham, Elmsted, Etchinghill, Lyminge, Monks Horton, Postling, part of Rhodes Minnis, Sellindge, Stelling Minnis, Stanford, Stowting and all points in between.

This year has been a bit of a "annus horribilis," – losing my husband last May, falling over and “smashing” my hip as the Consultant said. Then, I had a planned operation, followed by being diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease!! I am very grateful to the staff at William Harvey Hospital for their kindness and support over the year and to the Parkinson’s team that I am now under. I am also grateful to my colleagues and friends who have been a great help to me; also to you the Parish Councillors and local residents for your understanding. I have managed to address and deal with most of the issues that have been brought to my attention and to continue attending as many meetings as possible in the Ward and for the District. I have also managed to write monthly reports for Parish Council Meetings and the Village Newsletters. It is unfortunate that quite a few meetings clash ie Stelling Minnis and Stanford, Lyminge & Sellindge (which also clash with Planning & Licensing which takes priority for me). I am on the Planning & Licensing and Personnel Committees and I lead the Conservative Group at the District Council. I am a Governor at Sellindge Primary School, on the Patients Participation Group at Sellindge Surgery and President of The Sellindge Sports & Social Club.

I have continued to question the Leader on Otterpool Park and Hythe Swimming Pool, both of which seem to be making little progress. I have dealt with a number of planning issues and have been concerned by the closure of Lyminge Age Concern. The District Council plan to convert the Age Concern building to five one bedroom flats.

Local Government Re-organisation has been one of the major issues for the District Council over the last year and I have been a member of the Working Group. We do know that in May 2028 FHDC will disappear. We are waiting for a decision from Government as to which districts we will be partnered with – the decision is expected in July. However, in the current political climate, things may change!

The closure of Folkestone Sports Centre caused a lot of concern but the takeover of the Sports Centre by The Sports Trust and the refurbishment that is taking place, particularly of the Swimming Pool is welcome. The District Council have agreed a grant of £2.4m to support the work on the Swimming Pool and we look forward to the re-opening later this year.

There have been a number of strategic planning applications submitted and likely to be submitted and the Head of Planning has published the first edition of a new Planning leaflet which can be accessed here [Planning newsletter | Folkestone & Hythe District Council](#) This newsletter highlights major planning applications, progress on strategic development sites, updates on planning policy, enforcement, Community Infrastructure Levy funding, and wider place making initiatives.

Ward Grants

Our Ward Grant Budget has been increased this year with funding moved from other sources. This gives us the opportunity to support more local organisations across the Ward. If you are looking for a small grant please do get in touch. See below the organisations that I have supported this year –

Organisation	Amount Awarded
Canterbury Beekeepers for elimination of the Asian Hornet in the North Downs West	£274
Monks Horton Community Group	£500

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Lyminge Primary Stage Stars (operating out of Lyminge Primary School)	£250
Postling Village Hall – Contribution towards solar panels	£250
Folkestone Rugby Club – contribution towards a lift (inclusive access)	£250
Sellindge War Memorial Hall – replace fencing	£355
1 st Sellindge Scout Group – First Aid Training	£140
Sellindge Football Club – pitch improvements	£500
Sellindge Sports & Social Club – Disable access front door	£481
Total	£3000

I am happy to be contacted by email or on my mobile and if there are any issues that I can help you with please let me know.

Contact jennyhollingsbee@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk Mobile 07887918458

District Councillor Elaine Martin - Annual Report

I have enjoyed representing the community of North Downs West in this past year. I thought it might be a good idea to review this year's activities, so I have set out below some of the highlights.

Otterpool Park progress

F&HDC have signed a new collaboration agreement with Homes England which will focus on obtaining outline planning permission. Recently, Homes England bought a piece of land at the Westenhanger end of the development with the aim of progressing infrastructure works and early delivery homes. We also have heard that KCC have approved plans for the wastewater treatment plant which is a major step forward. Whilst there has been no visible sign of progress on the Otterpool Park development there has been a lot of work going on in the background. Much of this is confidential in nature and cannot be reported on.

Local Government Reorganisation

A lot of work has been done by the Officers on arrangements for LGR. We do not yet know what structure the Government will impose for Kent and therefore have not heard which other District Councils we will be grouped with. We should find out in June or July what the reorganisation of Kent will look like.

New Homes

Having made a promise at the start of our term to deliver 80 new council owned properties by the end of our term we will have delivered 240 affordable, energy-efficient new homes for the use of council tenants. This has been a major achievement for this administration.

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Freight to rail

F&HDC Green Councillors and local MP, Sojan Joeseeph, lobbied Network Rail to secure the Barking Goods Yards to be used as an intermodal hub allowing the transfer of freight and goods from both lorries and the National Rail Network on to European gauge wagons. This will allow freight to move seamlessly into mainland Europe and has the potential to remove 140,000 lorries per year from the M20.

Folkestone sports centre & Hythe pool

F&HDC approved a £2.4m grant to The Sports Trust for Folkestone Sports Centre enabling it to reopen the swimming facilities. The pool has been closed since August 2024. The grant will help to support the objectives of F&HDC's strategic leisure approach, provide local schools with lessons and bring a long-standing community asset back into use. Once it is open again, F&HDC can proceed the planned refurbishment of Hythe Pool. In addition, £75,000 has been provided for sports and physical activity across the District.

Folkestone A Brighter Future

Work is ongoing on the Folkestone a Brighter Future project which is revitalising the town with KCC's work on the new road layouts, changes to the bus stands and the new play area are all progressing well and the aim is to be completed by autumn this year.

FOLCA

Folca 1, the Edwardian part of the building, is now in the final stages of being sold and the purchaser is intending to restore that part of the building to it's former glory. The money from the sale will be put towards the development of Folca 2, the Art Deco section of the building. Folca 2 will have a mixed use including a new Medical Centre. Funding for this has been agreed by the Integrated Care Board.

Grace Hill library

The KCC owned building that housed the Grace Hill library in Folkestone was forced to close over a year ago. The building has now been purchased by Folkestone Town Council who are hoping to raise the money to renovate it and bring it back into public use.

Cliff stabilisation at the Road of Remembrance

The Road of remembrance has been closed since January 2024 due to a cliff landslide making it unsafe to use. Since then KCC plan for work to begin soon on stabilising the cliff and repairing the road to make it usable again. F&HDC have contributed £236,000 to this work. The work should take a year to complete.

Youth Forum

This administration has been keen to get young people involved in shaping the District's future and get their views on what is important to them. To this end we have held two Youth Forums involving a variety of young people from different schools and Further Education colleges.

Green grant scheme

Following the success of last year's Green Grant scheme, the administration allocated £250,000 for this year's scheme. Projects are match funded by the applicant and range from small ones like installing Solar Panels on Village Halls to larger ones such as equipment for a microbrewery.

Council Tax Reduction

An improved council tax reduction scheme which will further help working age, low-income households has come into effect. F&HDC have developed a revised approach – offering up to 100% support – in response to the rise in the cost of living and the withdrawal of incentive funding by Kent County Council. Nearly 6,000 working age households in the district currently receive council tax reduction.

EES

The European Entry Exit System has been implemented at both Eurotunnel and Dover Port. The EES requires you to have biometric data taken, i.e. your photo and fingerprints, to avoid the need for your passport to be stamped

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whenever you enter or exit the UK.

North Downs Forum

The North Downs Forum is a group of local residents interested in what is happening in the area. The Forum is open to any residents in the area, there is no need to be a Parish Councillor or part of a community group. We meet approximately every two months at different venues, alternating between ND West and ND East.

Members Ward Grant

This year, the member's Ward Grant is being increased by £2,000. That means we will each have £5,000 to allocate to local community based projects. If there are any projects that you feel I could support, please contact me.

I have regularly attended Parish Council meetings and listened to local views. I have given reports to the meetings and to local newsletters. I have allocated all my Ward Grant this year to various local community projects such as providing money for 1st aid training, equipment to eliminate Asian hornets, tourist information boards and contributing to the RBL Community Choir.

In closing I just want to say what a privilege it has been to serve you this year.

Contact: Elaine.Martin@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

Kent County Councillor Christopher Hesse - Annual Report

With many Parish Councils in Elham Valley (there are 16!) holding their annual meetings around this time, it may be opportune to reflect on my first year as a County Councillor.

My role is to ensure good quality services are provided at County and local level, whilst representing the 20,000 residents of Elham Valley. I have been welcomed in so many places, and I would like to thank you for that. The County Council is the largest in England, is hugely complex and has a net spend of approximately £1.6 billion. I will write a future newsletter outlining the breadth and reach of KCC, but for the time being you may be interested to hear what the first year of the new administration at County Hall has achieved:

Money

We inherited a dreadful financial position from the previous administration, but in the year we have reduced debt by £114 million and debt interest paid by £3,362 per day. We managed to set a Council Tax increase lower than 86% of County, Metropolitan and Unitary Councils in England. Across the year, we made £115 million savings and re-prioritised future spend of £39.5 million.

A budget for 2026/27 has been set with no extra borrowings, a net increase in reserves, and increased spending for Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Environment, Highways and Transport.

Putting Kent First

For Local Government Reorganisation, we devised an option for local government to save Kent taxpayers £450 million over 10 years.

We produced 'Reforming Kent'; a plan setting out Kent's priorities.

The Council scrapped the 'Climate Emergency Declaration' and subsequent need to spend and achieve Net Zero by 2030. We declared an 'Illegal Migration Emergency' in Kent to highlight cost and safety; and we campaigned for new Nuclear provision at Dungeness; International rail services to reopen at Ashford and Ebbsfleet; and began exploration of establishing an Environment Tax for foreign lorries.

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Saving Services

We overturned proposals to close 34 Libraries, close Country Parks, lose 35 Community Wardens, discontinue with School Crossing Staff and close four Household Waste Centres, which had all been threatened by the previous administration.

Education Services

We struggled with the increasing cost of special educational needs, and reducing costs of home to school transport proved to be an ongoing problem. But overall, 98% of Early Years settings were deemed 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted, and 96% of pupils obtained a place at one of their preferred schools.

Businesses

We were keen to support Kent businesses, so we produced Kent's first Commercial Strategy, provided enhanced support for 500 Kent supplier companies, and awarded £55 million more value of contracts to Kent companies. More than 1,100 businesses were assisted via the Kent and Medway Growth Hub.

Roads

Like all areas in the UK, our roads suffered during the 'freeze/thaw' of Winter. The surfaces were patched on a temporary basis, but we can usually only provide a good repair in dryer weather. We spent a record amount on pothole repairs (£67 million) and filled in the region of 50,000 potholes, which is a significant increase on previous years. We re-tendered for a new contractor, and Ringway will commence in May 2026. The heavy rainfall posed drainage problems, particularly in Elham and Ottinge, although we did manage to clear more than 85,000 gullies across the County. Significant road improvements were made during the year, including Spitfire Way in Hawkinge, the High Street in Etchinghill and the B2086 (Stone Street) near Petham and Stanford.

Other Services

We carried out nearly 7,000 weddings and civil ceremonies, welcomed 2.7 million visitors to libraries and 1.2 million to country parks. Some 99.6% of municipal waste was diverted from landfill and the Council dealt with well over 650,000 tonnes of waste.

Member Community Grants

Grants were issued to a number of organisations in Elham Valley, including MCA Dance for Special Needs; Hawkinge Community Events for Summer, Halloween and Christmas events; Elham Valley Cricket Club; Sellindge and District Bowls Club and Shepway Wanderers FC Disability.

The Next Year

I am committed to protecting valued services and ensuring your money is spent wisely. We will have tighter contracts and greater value for money, and I will seek to ensure that Elham Valley residents' needs are addressed by KCC.

Chris Hesse

Kent County Councillor for Elham Valley, and Cabinet Member for Local Government Efficiency and Reorganisation.