

PARISH COUNCIL OF BENENDEN
Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 18th May 2026, 7pm,
Quinlan Centre Benenden Hospital

Present	Parish Cllrs Beveridge, Cochrane, Grant, Ham, Lewis, McMillan, Taylor, Thomas. C Levett, Clerk.	
Item		Action Responsibility
1. APOLOGIES	Apologies were received from County Cllr Russell and Borough Cllrs Dawlings, Neville and Palmer.	
2. PARISH COUNCIL ELECTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Parish Council election was uncontested and all existing parish councillors were duly elected with effect from 7th May 2026 for a 4 year term. Parish councillors completed Acceptance of Office and Declaration of Interest forms. 	
3. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR OF THE PARISH COUNCIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cllr Beveridge nominated Cllr Thomas as Chair of the Parish Council. This was seconded by Cllr Lewis and unanimously agreed. Cllr Cochrane nominated Cllr Grant as Vice Chair of the Parish Council. This was seconded by Cllr Ham and unanimously agreed. 	
4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	No declarations of interest.	
5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING	The minutes from the Parish Council Meeting held on 20 th April 2026 were unanimously approved as a correct record of the meeting.	
6. REPORTS BY COUNTY/ BOROUGH COUNCILLORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full reports circulated. Appendix A. 	
7. REPORTS BY CHAIR AND PARISH COUNCILLORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional reports. 	
8. PARISH COUNCILLOR RESPONSIBILITIES	<p>The Parish Council agreed the following responsibilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resourcing Committee: Cllrs Beveridge, Cochrane (Chair), McMillan, Thomas. Bank signatories: Cllrs Beveridge, Cochrane, Lewis, Thomas. Bank reconciliations: Cllr Grant. Planning: Cllrs Beveridge, Grant (lead), Thomas. Highways: Cllrs Lewis and Taylor. Assets: Cllr Ham. Village Tidy: Cllr Cochrane. Wildflower Meadow: Cllr Cochrane. Allotments: Cllr Grant. Resilience: Cllr Taylor. <p>To note, parish councillor members as trustees of other village charities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benenden Village Trust : Cllrs Grant, Lewis and Taylor. Gibbon and Buckland Trust : Cllr Lewis. 	
9. PLANNING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Applications</u> 26/00847/FULL Springhill Cottage, Standen Street. Conversion of garage to ancillary accommodation ❖ SITE CONSTRAINTS: 11 in total. BNDP LE1 Panoramic views - not affected by proposal. BNDP Parish wide policies. HWNL. ❖ SITE HISTORY: 82/00339/FULL Double garage. 92/00998/FULL Stable block/hay barn. 96/00077/FULL Two storey extension to east (side) elevation, porch to rear and chimney to west elevation. All approved. ❖ LISTED BUILDINGS IN PROXIMITY: None. ❖ APPLICATION FORM INFO: Conversion of existing double garage into habitable two-storey annexe, to be used in association with main dwelling only (ancillary accommodation). ❖ GENERAL COMMENTS: Pre-app advice not sought. Existing: brick built, tiled half-hip tiled roof, double garage, 2 doors, tile hung above doors. Proposed: LH door bricked up, RH door replaced with solid timber doors with frosted sidelights. Existing door in west elevation bricked up. Little change in roof height. 2 windows in north elevation to remain. Solid timber window in roof of west elevation. Ground floor: open plan layout accommodating Kitchen/Living room of 22m² and bathroom of 2.9m². Staircase to first floor containing a bedroom. <p>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application with ancillary to the main house condition and external lighting conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 26/01021/FULL and 26/01022/LBC Woodcock Inn, Woodcock Lane. Replacement of first 	

Chairman..... Date.....

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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.

	<p>floor window with a door & installation of external staircase.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ D&A STATEMENT: Fire escape from first floor level. LHS elevation at far end from gate and footpath. Window enlargement to accommodate new fire escape door, width remains same as window. Galvanised steel staircase and post. <p>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support the application subject to the works being satisfactory to the Conservation Officer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was noted that BPC often responds to planning consultations with requests for external lighting conditions, and these are rarely set out in approved planning conditions. To be raised with TW Head of Planning. • <u>Other Planning Matters</u> • Hospital Development ❖ BPC had requested a post and rail with stock wire fencing on the boundaries of plots backing onto open meadows rather than the 1.8m high close boarded fence as proposed. ❖ Following feedback from previous clients Esquire raised concerns about a post and rail 4ft fence, and suggested a compromise, offering security in terms of height with a filtered view. ❖ The alternative proposed fencing complies with BNDP and BPC unanimously agreed to support this. • Local Plan Briefing <p>Cllrs Thomas and Grant attended a local plan briefing. Briefing presentation documents – Appendices B. and C.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Local Plan Review: TWBC adopted its Local Plan in December 2025, and within this, Strategic Policy STR 1 The Development Strategy, commits TWBC to commencing a Local Plan Review within 6 months of adoption of the Plan. TWBC is required to publish its ‘Notice of Intention’ to commence plan-preparation by 30 June 2026. The Local Plan Review will be produced following the new plan-making system, which introduces a series of new plan-making stages and includes a requirement to adopt Local Plans within 30 months. This update will include details of the Local Plan Review timetable, key upcoming stages, and the revised housing need for the plan period. The Local Plan Review will allocate land to meet growth needs of the borough, including for housing, employment and for associated supporting infrastructure. ❖ Call for sites: As part of the work for the Local Plan Review, TWBC launched a call for sites on 11th May - a formal, early-stage process where the Council invites landowners, developers and the public to submit land in the borough for potential development, such as housing and economic land. Planning officers assess all submitted sites for suitability for development and identify available land to meet future development needs and build the evidence base for the Local Plan. Suitable sites form potential allocations in the Plan. ❖ To note, the government has increased the housing need figure in the borough from 678 to 1,098 dwellings per annum. ❖ Parish Councillors raised concerns regarding adequate infrastructure in rural areas. ❖ The Parish Chairs group has asked when parishes will be advised what sites have been submitted and which are being assessed. This will be updated through the Parish Chairs meetings. • Hawkhurst NDP Pre-Submission Consultation. ❖ Consultation runs 27th April to 8th June. ❖ No sites will be allocated. ❖ Policies very similar to BNDP. ❖ No comment from BPC. 	
10. HIGHWAYS, FOOTPATHS & TRANSPORT	<p>a. <u>HIP/Rural Parish Grant</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Clerk has chased KCC Highways regarding commissioning the agreed work. • Hawkhurst Community Speedwatch Group has expressed its disappointment that, like many other parishes, it failed to receive the full allocated grant of £25,000 from TWBC and is looking for collaboration from other parishes to try to achieve this. • The Clerk has shared details of BPC’s award with Cllr Dawlings and Hawkhurst. 	

	<p>b. <u>Speeding Traffic</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact from residents of Goddards Green Road requesting BPC backing for speed reduction, particularly along the stretch where Goddards Green cottages, Finnigans Cottage and Eaton Cottage sit on a blind bend. Volume of traffic and traffic speeds have increased considerably. • Some traffic calming measures are planned as part of the new housing development and these may go some way to addressing some of the concerns, and slow traffic generally along Goddards Green Road. Making any request to KCC Highways is a long and difficult process and a reduction in the speed limit is extremely unlikely, requiring certain studies and evidence and statutory criteria to be met. The statistics would very unlikely back up the need. • The residents have indicated that they are willing to volunteer for Speedwatch and the Clerk will discuss further with them. BPC has already agreed to purchase any necessary equipment. • BPC to include speed reduction along Goddards Green Road on a future HIP and discuss with KCC Highways what measures could be taken. 	CL																																																																																																																																												
11. RESOURCING/ FINANCE	<p>a. <u>Monthly Finance</u></p> <p>TRANSACTIONS FROM 1st April 2026</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Brought Forward Current Account</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>7706.83</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Brought Forward Savings Account</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>63287.16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Brought forward</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>70993.99</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Income</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Payee</td> <td>Reference</td> <td>Amount</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>TWBC</td> <td>Precept</td> <td>27025.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>27025.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Expenditure</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Supplier</td> <td>Reference</td> <td>Amount</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DD</td> <td>HugoFox</td> <td>Website</td> <td>23.99</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DD</td> <td>HugoFox</td> <td>Emails</td> <td>20.99</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DD</td> <td>Grenke Leasing</td> <td>Printer Lease</td> <td>167.98</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SO</td> <td>WKPS</td> <td>Annual Subscription</td> <td>35.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FEE</td> <td>Unity Trust Bank</td> <td>Monthly Charge</td> <td>7.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BACS</td> <td>Employee</td> <td>Staffing Costs</td> <td>1206.79</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BACS</td> <td>o2</td> <td>Telephone</td> <td>15.68</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BACS</td> <td>F&C Cleaning Services</td> <td>Public Toilet Cleaning</td> <td>766.34</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BACS</td> <td>FA Bartlett Tree Expert</td> <td>Tree Work</td> <td>726.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BACS</td> <td>KALC</td> <td>Annual Subscription</td> <td>1079.70</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BACS</td> <td>Tompsett Landscaping</td> <td>Grounds Maintenance</td> <td>975.99</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>5025.46</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Balance</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>92993.53</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Current account bank statement 120 30th April 2026</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>29706.37</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Savings account bank statement 024 30th April 2026</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>63287.16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reconciled</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>92993.53</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Approved payments for May 2026</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>DD</td> <td>HugoFox</td> <td>Website</td> <td>23.99</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DD</td> <td>HugoFox</td> <td>Emails</td> <td>20.99</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DD</td> <td>Nest</td> <td>Pension</td> <td>120.87</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DD</td> <td>Nest</td> <td>Pension</td> <td>120.87</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FEE</td> <td>Unity Trust Bank</td> <td>Monthly Charge</td> <td>7.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BACS</td> <td>Employee</td> <td>Staffing Costs</td> <td>1206.79</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BACS</td> <td>o2</td> <td>Telephone</td> <td>15.68</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BACS</td> <td>F&C Cleaning Services</td> <td>Public Toilet Cleaning</td> <td>770.18</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BACS</td> <td>Tompsett Landscaping</td> <td>Grounds Maintenance BVT</td> <td>343.20</td> </tr> </table>	Brought Forward Current Account			7706.83	Brought Forward Savings Account			63287.16	Brought forward			70993.99	Income					Payee	Reference	Amount		TWBC	Precept	27025.00	TOTAL			27025.00	Expenditure					Supplier	Reference	Amount	DD	HugoFox	Website	23.99	DD	HugoFox	Emails	20.99	DD	Grenke Leasing	Printer Lease	167.98	SO	WKPS	Annual Subscription	35.00	FEE	Unity Trust Bank	Monthly Charge	7.00	BACS	Employee	Staffing Costs	1206.79	BACS	o2	Telephone	15.68	BACS	F&C Cleaning Services	Public Toilet Cleaning	766.34	BACS	FA Bartlett Tree Expert	Tree Work	726.00	BACS	KALC	Annual Subscription	1079.70	BACS	Tompsett Landscaping	Grounds Maintenance	975.99	TOTAL			5025.46	Balance			92993.53	Current account bank statement 120 30th April 2026			29706.37	Savings account bank statement 024 30th April 2026			63287.16	Reconciled			92993.53	Approved payments for May 2026				DD	HugoFox	Website	23.99	DD	HugoFox	Emails	20.99	DD	Nest	Pension	120.87	DD	Nest	Pension	120.87	FEE	Unity Trust Bank	Monthly Charge	7.00	BACS	Employee	Staffing Costs	1206.79	BACS	o2	Telephone	15.68	BACS	F&C Cleaning Services	Public Toilet Cleaning	770.18	BACS	Tompsett Landscaping	Grounds Maintenance BVT	343.20	
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BACS	Everyday Play Ltd	Benenden Playground	6566.00
BACS	Business Stream	Public Toilet	41.29
BACS	Edf	Public Toilet	299.71
BACS	KSS Air Ambulance	Donation	100.00
BACS	Benenden Village Hall	Meeting Hire	42.50
TOTAL			10737.06

All invoices examined, verified and certified by the RFO

b. Internal Audit

- The internal audit took place on 8th May and the report had been circulated. The report will be submitted to the external auditor.
- The internal auditor raised the following points for action:
 - ❖ Minutes: to differentiate between parish, borough and county councillors.
 - ❖ Phone charges: look for a cheaper service provider.
 - ❖ Previous audit: The Clerk had reported to the PC in September that the external auditor had advised that the unaudited AGAR is now required to be published. As this had not happened BPC has to “no” this year relating to the exercise of public rights.
- Page 3 of the AGAR, the Annual Internal Audit Report, was completed and signed by internal auditor.
- The Resourcing Committee will discuss any matters arising when it next meets.
- To note:
 - ❖ Compliant, new website and parish councillor email addresses in place and existing IT Policy is adequate and the requirements of the new assertion 10 requirements have been met.
 - ❖ Managing BPC finances and meeting Reserves Policy requirements has been a positive achievement.

c. 2025-26 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

Documents circulated, which had been considered by the Resourcing Committee, and form part of the return to the external auditor:

- AGAR Form 3.
- Explanation of ‘no’ response
- Bank reconciliation
- Earmarked reserves
- Statement of variances
- Notice of appointment of date for the exercise of public rights.

i. Annual Governance Statement.

- The Parish Council unanimously agreed and approved the Annual Governance Statement, and this was signed by Cllr Thomas and the Clerk at the meeting.

ii. Annual Accounting Statements

- The Parish Council unanimously agreed and approved the Annual Accounting Statements, and this was signed by Cllr Thomas at the meeting.
- The Clerk had signed at the meeting with the internal auditor.

iii. Public Inspection

- The dates for the exercise of public rights to inspect the Parish Council’s accounts commences 3rd June 2026 and ends 14th July 2026.

d. Donation

- Donation request received from Air Ambulance Charity Kent Surrey Sussex.
- The Resourcing Committee recommended a donation of £100, in line with its policy for charity donations, and this was unanimously agreed.

12. ENVIRONMENT & MAINTENANCE	<p>a. <u>Maintenance of Village Assets</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Phil Robins has confirmed that he will carry out repairs to the telephone kiosk broken glass pane. <p>b. <u>Litter Bins</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cllr Dawlings to raise again with TWBC. 	TD
13. VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS/ COMMUNITY	<p>a. <u>Annual Assembly</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Takes place Saturday 23rd May, 2pm, Benenden Village Hall. ● Draft agenda circulated. <p>b. <u>Benenden Allotment Association</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Allotment structure applications, agreed by BAA committee and approved by BPC. ❖ Plot 2b. Wooden shed 6ft x 4ft. Free standing on plastic base. ❖ Plot 3b. Wooden shed 6ft x 4ft. 10” metal pegs to anchor to ground. ❖ Plot 5a and 5b. A second shed, but on a full-sized plot. Wooden shed 6ft x 4ft. Adequate bolts to paving slabs to anchor to ground. ❖ Allotment Association. Creation of a communal shed to enable BAA to store communal tools and provide a place for notices and the site First Aid kit. Approx 8ft x 10ft (excluding roof hanging). Wooden shed with glass window and felt roof, secured to a wooden base. To be sited on plot 11/12 which is unused and heavily shaded from light and rain by mature trees. Less visible from road and largely shielded from cottages next door by trees. <p>c. <u>Gibbon and Buckland Trust</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It was unanimously agreed that Cllr Lewis continues as BPC representative on the G&B Trust. ● Cllr Lewis has been re-appointed as a trustee. 	
14. CORRESPONDENCE /PARISHIONER QUESTIONS	No other correspondence or questions.	
15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING	Date of Next Meeting: Monday 15 th June, 7pm, Iden Green Pavilion	
	The meeting closed at 8.10 pm.	