

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BROOK PARISH COUNCIL
ON 18th SEPTEMBER 2025 HELD IN BROOK AND HINXHILL VILLAGE HALL**

Present: Cllr S Betty (Chair) Cllr A Betty
Cllr P Penberthy Cllr Redfern
Cllr Wood

The Clerk

		To be actioned by
1.	To receive and approve apologies for absence.	
	There were no apologies for absence received.	
2.	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.	
	Cllr S Betty declared an interest as a member of the Planning Committee at Ashford Borough Council in the Planning Application PA/2025/1331, he stated that he would leave the meeting should this be discussed under the planning section of the agenda.	
3.	To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd May 2025	
	The minutes were signed as a true record.	
4.	To discuss matters arising from the above minutes not covered by the agenda.	
	Cllr S Betty will ask the Borough Council about consulting neighbouring parishes when there is an application that could affect that parish.	
	It was noted that the Borough Council grant panel meeting was moved and took place on 24 th July.	
5.	To receive the report from the Borough/County Councillor	
	<p>The Borough Councillor Ward Member report had been circulated.</p> <p>There is a local plan consultation event taking place at Wye Village Hall on 29th September between 3pm and 7pm. The deadline for comments is 5pm on 13/10.</p> <p>The Kent Fire and rescue Service consultation on rural service expires on 1/10.</p> <p>The Unitary Authority discussions are noted on the Borough Council website, a company is looking at cost implications for the Councils.</p> <p>The County Councillor, Brian Collins introduced himself as the elected representative from Kent County Council. He is also the Deputy leader and has a large portfolio. He has 13 parishes to represent but welcomes issues to be sent to him via email to brian.collins@kent.gov.uk.</p> <p>KCC have abolished the Net Zero Emergency Policy as it has stopped the Council from appointing anyone who isn't net zero compliant from being awarded contracts.</p> <p>The big subject is pot holes, the tractors and lorries are bigger and are breaking up the road edges. Money is a big issue and it is costly to get repair work under way. The main contractor for road repairs is being released and the new contract is out to tender. Report pot holes using the online tool, if not marked and then repaired within 4 weeks, contact Brian Collins by email and he will chase. Road surfacing cannot be prioritised but actual pot holes can be.</p>	

	<p>The reporting system for pot holes is being modernised and work has started on a reporting app.</p> <p>There are a lot of misconceptions regarding Local Government Reorganisation and nobody knows yet what will happen. The Government has asked for the 14 Councils to respond, KCC believe that there should be just one Unitary Authority covering the whole of Kent. The Government will make a decision by mid-2026.</p> <p>Cllr Betty asked Cllr Collins if he could help with the HIP for Brook. The speed is too high to be able to reduce the limit to 20mph. The PC does want to install a gateway at each end of the village, these are £1500 each, Kent Highways have offered to pay for one, can Cllr Collins assist with the cost of the other? Cllr S Betty wondered if HIPs could be considered in a different way and more support provided to parishes with a very small precept.</p> <p>Cllr Collins explained that there are a lot of budgetary constraints as the County Council has a £700m debt forecast for the end of 25/26. Cllr Collins will look at the scheme though.</p> <p>Cllr Collins was also asked to consider if there is any available funding for the play area in Brook.</p>																	
6.	Public Session: To receive questions and comments from the public on any agenda item																	
	There were no members of public in attendance.																	
7.	Financial matters:																	
	<p>To approve the following financial documents:</p> <p>To note the Parish Council’s financial position for 31st August 2025.</p> <p>The Parish Council noted it had £11,186.36 in the bank account.</p> <p>To authorise any payments</p> <table><tr><th>Payee</th><th>Amount</th></tr><tr><td>Clerk</td><td>£405.08</td></tr><tr><td>Clerk</td><td>£405.08</td></tr><tr><td>Bank Charges</td><td>£12.00</td></tr><tr><td>RoSPA Check</td><td>£110.40</td></tr><tr><td>Clerk</td><td>£405.08</td></tr><tr><td>Clerk</td><td>£405.08</td></tr><tr><td>HMRC</td><td>£12.00</td></tr></table>	Payee	Amount	Clerk	£405.08	Clerk	£405.08	Bank Charges	£12.00	RoSPA Check	£110.40	Clerk	£405.08	Clerk	£405.08	HMRC	£12.00	
Payee	Amount																	
Clerk	£405.08																	
Clerk	£405.08																	
Bank Charges	£12.00																	
RoSPA Check	£110.40																	
Clerk	£405.08																	
Clerk	£405.08																	
HMRC	£12.00																	
8.	Local Government Reorganisation:																	
	<p>I. To consider whether there are any ABC/KCC Assets the PC wishes to try to preserve/acquire.</p> <p>The Parish Council discussed whether to submit an application to register Stonebridge green as a Village Green. This is currently owned by KCC as we know from the title plan. Looking forward this land may be vulnerable under a local authority and therefore we need to decide whether to apply for the land to be registered as a Village Green to provide the utmost protection of this land.</p> <p>A village consultation about this would need to be created and Cllr S Betty proposed that we take this forward.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To take forward the application to register Stonebridge as a Village Green.</p>																	

	<p>II. To receive any update from the KALC EGM on Local Government Reorganisation</p> <p>There was nothing new to report.</p>	
9.	To agree and adopt the Open Spaces Policy.	
	<p>The Open Spaces Policy had been circulated and the following amendments were agreed:</p> <p>As the Parish Council is the riparian owner of the Recreation Ground, it is partially responsible for the brook that runs around the land; the Environment Agency is, however, responsible for the river bed. This information is to be added to the maintenance/ownership section of the policy.</p> <p>The wording for memorials was to be altered to say another form of appropriate memorial may be considered.</p> <p>These changes will be made and the policy circulated.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To adopt the policy subject to the changes suggested.</p>	
10.	To receive and adopt an IT Policy and General Data Protection Policy.	
	RESOLVED: To adopt the policies as circulated.	
11.	To consider Recreation Ground Matters.	
	There are 3 trees that need to be looked at, the Caretaker will be asked to look at these and the area at the back of the Hall. The Clerk will check that the members of the Caretaker Committee would be comfortable with Paul undertaking this additional work over the winter months.	
12.	To consider the vacancy on the Council.	
	Following the resignation of F Penberthy, a vacancy has arisen and is being advertised as per the democratic policies at Ashford Borough Council. This advert expires on the 23 rd September.	
13.	To consider any changes to the Risk Assessment.	
	There were no changes to be made to the Risk Assessment.	
14.	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 explained to the meeting that he will co-ordinate responses for the Planning Committee and the Clerk will then submit the responses.</p> <p>PA/2025/1556 – The Parish Council agreed that no objection response would be sent with comments asking the Officer to consider the footprint that is large relative to the existing building. This is going to be visible from paths in the village and the materials need to be considered. The PC will ask for a condition to be added requesting non-reflective glass so as to be sympathetic to the area.</p> <p>Local Plan – Currently the site allocations are not being published, the planning committee were asked to check what would affect Brook, HOU3a has been removed and Brook was previously protected by this. This protection seems to have been at the cost of the large villages. The red line of village confines is also likely to be removed.</p> <p>Cllr S Betty left the meeting.</p> <p>PA/2025/1331 – The Parish Council agreed to object to the application for a BESS in support of the concerned villagers of Brook and our neighbouring parish of Brabourne.</p> <p>The Clerk advised that the response from the AONB National Landscape Unit was very well written and</p>	

	highlights many of the points that are relevant to Brook. Cllr S Betty rejoined the meeting.	
15.	To receive an update regarding Play area.	
	The Borough Council grant has been awarded. Cllr Wood has written to 27 businesses/land owners. The flower show has raised £200, this has been allocated for play ground funds and will be transferred.	
16.	To receive an update on the Village Hall.	
	Cllr S Betty reported that the Village Hall Committee have been in touch regarding a scheme for bouncy castles to be used again. Unfortunately this does not resolve the Risk Assessment issues highlighted previously. Cllr Betty will attend the next Hall meeting to discuss. There was also a suggestion that the Village Hall Committee would install CCTV. If well sited, this might be useful.	
17.	To receive any updates on Highways/Environment	
	There was no further update.	
18.	To receive the Caretaker Report	
	The Caretaker had issues with his van but this has been replaced.	
19.	To receive the KALC Report	
	The KALC report had been circulated.	
20.	Any Other Business (for information purposes only):	
	The Parish Forum is on 24/11 – Cllr A Betty will attend. The Highways seminar is on 2/10. An update on the land behind the former cricket club had been circulated and was received with interest. Cllr Penberthy questioned whether the electric fence of Mike West’s land was appropriate. This is to be checked.	
21.	Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.	
	Thursday 20 th November 2025 Thursday 15 th January 2026 Thursday 19 th March 2026 Thursday 21 st May 2026	

Signed:

Date: