

**Bredgar Parish Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting**  
**Held on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2026**  
**At 7.30pm**  
**At Bredgar Village Hall**

**Present:** Chair Cllr. Brian Clarke; Vice Chair Cllr. Nigel Osmer;  
Cllr. Stephen Parfitt; Cllr. David Priestley; Cllr. Penny Twaites; Cllr. Malcolm Vessey and  
Cllr. Hilary Whitnell.

**Clerk:** Teresa Hudson

**Members of the Public:** Five members of the public were present.

**1. Apologies**

There were no apologies to report.

**2. Declaration of Members' Personal and Prejudicial Interests**

There were no interests to declare.

**3. Declaration of any intention to record or film the PC meeting by any member of the Council or member of the public**

There were no intentions to record or film the meeting by anyone present

**4. Minutes of the previous meeting**

The Minutes of the previous PC meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2025 were read and formally approved by the Parish Council. They are now available on the Parish website. Proposed by Cllr. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. Osmer, all councillors agreed.

The Minutes were signed by the Chair at the end of the meeting.

**Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

**5. Ten Minutes Representation by the Public**

Bredgar School are removing their gym equipment and invited the Parish Council to make an offer with a view to relocating it to the recreation ground. The equipment has been at the school for six years and has a twenty-year guarantee.

Councillors were grateful and are to investigate the generous offer.

**6. Police / NHW Report**

PC Divers has continued holding surgeries in the villages. He also carries out crime prevention in Sittingbourne and work on VAWG, Violence to Women and Girls. He advises using 101 to report problems and report to him as a backup. Parking issues in the village abated for a while but continue at times.

Speedwatch is carried out usually every Friday. There have been instances of repeat offenders who, after 4 or 5 letters receive a fine.

Bredgar is considered a 'low crime' village.

**Bredgar Parish Council  
Minutes of the Meeting  
Held on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2026  
At 7.30pm  
At Bredgar Village Hall**

**7. Authorisation of Accounts**

**PAYMENTS**

31/10/25	UT	Fee	6.00
03/11/25	EDF	Pond Electricity	72.77
03/11/25	Bredgar Farmshop	PO Rent	200.00
03/11/25	Ask A Gardener	Village Maintenance	225.00
06/10/25	Mutts Butts	Dog Waste Bags	104.78
10/11/25	Lloyds	Fee	3.00
10/11/25	Steve Wakeling	Rec Grd Grass Cutting	55.00
31/11/25	UT	Fee	6.00
01/12/25	EDF	Pond Electricity	72.77
01/12/25	Bredgar Farmshop	PO Rent	200.00
02/12/25	Ask A Gardener	Village Maintenance	150.00
04/12/25	T. Hudson	Honorarium	463.83
04/12/25	5Parishes Fund	Inquiry Contribution	300.00
12/12/25	Adrain Martin	Pond Maintenance	220.00
12/12/25	Mazars	Audit Fee	252.00
12/12/25	BWL Railway	Xmas Tree Donation	100.00
24/12/25	Matthew Low	Rec Grd Hedge Maint	500.00
01/01/26	Bredgar Farmshop	PO Rent	200.00
01/01/26	EDF	Pond Electricity	72.77
10/12/25	Cllr. B. Clarke	Remembrance Plants	12.98
10/12/25	Lloyds Bank	Fee	3.00
03/01/26	Ask A Gardener	Village Maintenance	150.00
31/12/26	UT	Fee	6.00
12/01/26	Lloyds	Fee	3.00
04/12/25	SBC	Rec Grd Brown Bin	62.00
09/12/25	Asda	Xmas Gift	8.48

**RECEIPTS**

29/12/25	Bredgar Cricket Club	Rec Grd Rent	50.00
19/01/26	KCC	Grass Cutting	327.87
22/01/26	Bredgar Book	Sale of Book	15.00

Councillors asked why the village maintenance is sometimes a different amount. The clerk replied that usually the invoice is for a whole day but sometimes the gardener works a day and a half.

Proposed by Cllr. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. Whitnell. All councillors agreed.

**8. Financial Matters**

**Financial Review**

The Financial Review was circulated prior to the meeting.

Proposed by Cllr. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. Parfitt. All councillors agreed.

**Bredgar Parish Council  
Minutes of the Meeting  
Held on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2026  
At 7.30pm  
At Bredgar Village Hall**

Councillors were asked if there was a Reserves Policy as it would crystalise ambitions and goals, an alternative could be a 'sinking fund', as the precept does not cover all expenditure so savings are gradually used up for general expenditure.

Councillors proposed to consult KALC for advice.

Councillors were invited to submit possible projects for the coming year to facilitate the budget at the AGM.

A safety check is due for the pond electricity this year.

**9. Village Matters**

**Telephone box**

The national policy for red telephone boxes is that they must be used at least 52 times each year to be kept in use. Several parishioners use the box as calls are free. It came to light that there was a possibility of withdrawal in 90 days so Cllr. Parfitt endeavoured to save it as it has protected heritage. He has succeeded in keeping it for now but encourages residents to continue to use it as the PC would like to retain it for the future.

**Cllr. Twaites left the meeting at 8.30pm.**

**Fly Tipping**

Cllr. Parfitt is constantly on the lookout for fly tipping in the village. He is commended for having a very good clear up rate whether it be Swale picking it up, or himself taking smaller loads to the tip.

**10. Post Office Update**

The PC have a Working Party lead by Cllr. Osmer for the retention of Bredgar Post Office.

Following the recent news of the sale of the freehold of Bredgar Farmshop, it is hoped that a new lease for the Post Office can be negotiated with the new owners, allowing it to stay in its current location after April 2027 when the present lease expires. However, this is by no means certain, so we should prepare the ground accordingly.

A survey has been carried out which shows high support for retaining the post office in Bredgar.

Post Office Ltd have been contacted for advice and assistance but have not yet responded in any meaningful way. The PC has also contacted the estate agent involved but had no response.

The new owners may negotiate a new lease when the current one expires in April 2027 but that is not at all assured.

Possible re-location sites in Bredgar have been sought, and the best option for space and parking etc. is Bredgar Village Hall if such a proposal is acceptable to the Village Hall Committee, and funding is in place.

**Bredgar Parish Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting**  
**Held on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2026**  
**At 7.30pm**  
**At Bredgar Village Hall**

Cllr. Osmer proposed that the PC approve a plan of action to approach the Village Hall Committee and if agreed in principle, to produce a fully costed plan with the agreement of Post Office Ltd, the Sub Post Mistress, the Parish Council and the Village Hall Committee, to be completed this year, by which time funding will need to be in place. The PC will need to agree to continue contributions for another five years, the minimum time which the Sub Post Mistress has agreed in principle to run the business.

Proposed by Cllr. Osmer, seconded by Cllr. Clarke, all councillors agreed.

Cllr. Whitnell is to meet with the Chair of the Village Hall Committee and feed back.

Cllr. Parfitt informed the meeting that a petition by the Conservative Party has succeeded in ensuring that rural post offices will stay open.

## **11. Planning Matters**

### **Community Governance Review – Response**

The Community Governance Review closed on 9<sup>th</sup> February. Bredgar PC submitted a response on the consultation which is an opportunity to review governance in the area and consider a number of options including creating new town or parish councils in currently unparished areas, parish council name changes and boundary reviews.. The Bredgar PC response supported the creation of a Sittingbourne Town Council and requested to be consulted if any neighbouring parish boundaries are identified for change.

The response is available to view on the Parish Council website.

At the Western Area meeting attended by Chair, Cllr. Clarke, it was reported that creation of a Sittingbourne Town Council, a Sonora Fields Parish Council and changes to Tunstall parish boundaries are some suggestions being taken forward to the second stage.

### **Local Plan Regulation 18 – Response**

The Local Plan consultation closed on 23<sup>rd</sup> February. Bredgar PC submitted a response which supported the Draft Local Plan but proposed many improvements and corrections, including additions to the vision statement, and for better services, water supply, more energy efficient new housing, conserving and enhancing landscapes and countryside gaps, and heritage - including these with non-designated status.

The response is available to view on the Parish Council website.

### **Barnpool – Lawful Development Certificate**

Since the previous meeting, an application for a Lawful Development Certificate (LDC) was applied for at Barnpool in Primrose Lane. Submitted by a company called My Tribe which places children in a home environment with carers. This would be a home of four children and two carers.

**Bredgar Parish Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting**  
**Held on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2026**  
**At 7.30pm**  
**At Bredgar Village Hall**

A LDC is not a planning permission. It's a legal determination of fact. The local planning authority (LPA) must decide only whether the proposed development would be lawful as a matter of planning law.

Local and Parish Council opinions are not requested and must be ignored.

The Chair consulted the LPA about the LDC procedure as we had not seen one like this before and as a result the PC decided not to comment. It was confirmed that any building changes forthcoming in the future, will follow the normal planning application process, with the usual right to comment.

The LDC was approved on 28th January.

The LDC proved quite contentious in the way it came to light as it was felt by some residents to be underhand. If the PC were asked to comment it would have liked to take residents opinions into account. Of those residents aware of the LDC, all objected online to the proposal.

The PC would have preferred the LPA had informed neighbouring residents about the LDC process, as that would have allowed a more open and frank discussion about the proposal in the village.

**Bexon Conservation Area**

Councillors are pleased that Bexon Conservation Area has been approved.

**Highsted Park**

The Inspector's report has not been published yet. Following completion, the Inspector will send her recommendation to the Secretary of State.

5Parishes Group has been working on this and other issues in the background.

A planning application at an empty property in Primrose Lane may create some parking problems during construction of the extension and possible light detriment to a neighbouring property. However, approval has been given by SBC.

**12. Policy Review**

**Finance Policy**

Cllr. Priestley reviewed the Finance Policy and suggested updates for the outdated legislation references. Councillors also agreed to make the first reference of payment to be bank transfer rather than cheque. The clerk will action this.

**Statement of Internal Control**

The current external auditor is Mazars. References will be updated. By the clerk.

**13. Reports from Councillors**

**Cllr. Twaites**

Nothing to report.

**Bredgar Parish Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting**  
**Held on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2026**  
**At 7.30pm**  
**At Bredgar Village Hall**

**Cllr. Osmer**

Several signs in the village will be removed as they are obsolete including the camping signs and 'new junction ahead' sign.

At the Highways meeting with Jennie Watson, Cllrs Osmer and Clarke were unsuccessful when proposing a 20mph system in Bexon Lane as the criteria was not met. Attempts to introduce the speed limit in 2019 were also turned down as traffic was too fast. However, Kent Highways agreed to do more speed tests, which will be carried out later this year, to see if a village wide 20mph scheme is feasible.

The missing sign in Wrens Road will not be reinstated by Highways as the area for limiting large vehicles is much wider than that road and signs are further out.

**Cllr. Whitnell**

A resident in Swanton Street has approached the clerk regarding a footpath that runs diagonally across their garden. They have contacted PROW to have it rerouted, at their cost, and were told it could take two years for the request to be processed. The owners have asked the Parish Council to help if they can. Cllr. Whitnell will look into ways that may assist the applicant.

**Cllr. Vessey**

Nothing to report.

**Cllr. Priestley**

Seven boxes of historical village documents have been taken to Maidstone Archive. The paperwork is stored with the clerk.

Designs for a gate on the decking were presented to councillors for approval. It was decided that a wooden gate would be preferable. The waste bin may also be relocated to a more suitable position.

Cllr. Priestley will circulate the specifications by email.

**Cllr. Parfitt**

Although the village bus service was lost several years ago, signs with QR codes on have been appearing at bus stops in the area. MP Helen Whately informed Cllr. Parfitt that KCC have indicated 'new money' is becoming available but will likely be swallowed up by the education dept. However, the new QR signs will tell the public where the nearest working bus stop is located.

Cllr. Parfitt represented Bredgar at a Helen Whately Parishes Round Table meeting where the main topic of conversation centered on water issues rather than the agenda as it took place when the county was experiencing massive problems with water shortages.

South East Water thought that as Bredgar is in the 01622 area it was nearer Maidstone and so directed residents to Headcorn for supplies.

A consensus at the meeting was to keep Maidstone and Swale councils as they are.

An interesting fact emerged at the meeting: the signs 'Road ahead closed' and 'Road closed ahead' have different meanings. Road ahead closed probably means you won't get very far, and Road closed ahead means you may have a chance to get to your destination.

**Bredgar Parish Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting**  
**Held on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2026**  
**At 7.30pm**  
**At Bredgar Village Hall**

**Cllr. Clarke**

Cllr. Clarke attended the quarterly Swale Liaison meeting. It included an explanation of the Precept, a Swale budget consultation and update on the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). KCC has opened a consultation on LGR with questions and invited views on the different areas proposed. Cllr. Clarke asked if councillors had a preference? A document will be circulated by email for discussion and possible consultation response.

Cllr Clarke attended a KALC LGR Workshop - Neighbourhood Area Committees. Where a representative from Somerset Council, which has already gone through this process in 2023 presented interesting information on how it has evolved. In their case, they set up one Unitary Council, 18 area boards and 279 parishes. The boards were formed from one member of each parish and would then recommend to the Unitary Council what should be done for the community. The Unitary Council then makes the decisions. The Unitary Council tends only to carry out the statutory duties but allocate a budget to carry out the recommendations from the Area Boards. Area Boards would run the projects. All planning is dealt with by the Unitary Council. The Parish Councils' precept tended to rise by between 50% and 80% but remained at 10% of the overall council tax bill.

Cllr. Clarke also attended the Western Area meeting where there was a presentation on Resilience. Bredgar generally resolves issues such as flooding etc. by residents stepping up when required but the PC may consider creating a Resilience Plan.

**14. Community Assets**

**Consideration of any village premises**

Councillors made no suggestions at the meeting.

**15. Any Other Business**

There was no other business to discuss.

**16. Dates of further meetings**

**Suggested dates for the coming year:**

**Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2026**

**Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2026**

**Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2027**