

The Minutes of the Meeting of Thurnham Parish Council
held on 22nd June 2026 at the Tudor Park Hotel, at 7:30pm.

Councillors present:

Cllr Duncan

Cllr Smith

Cllr Skinner

Cllr Waters

Cllr Wise

Cllr Shelley

Also: Sherrie Babington, Parish Clerk and KCC Sarah Emberson.

The meeting was opened by Cllr Skinner.

1. Apologies.

Members who cannot attend a meeting shall tender their apologies to the Parish Clerk prior to the meetings, 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 from:

- Cllr Dunlop – Personal

2. Parish Councillor Vacancies

Members noted that two applications had been received for the current Parish Council vacancies.

They discussed co-opting a married couple to the Parish Council, and expressed concern particularly as the Council was already operating with a small number of councillors

Members agreed that it would be preferable at this stage to invite one of the applicants to proceed with an application for co-option, while making clear that both would be able to stand for election in the usual way should they wish to do so at the next ordinary election.

Action: Clerk to write to the applicants thanking them for their interest and advising that Members would welcome one of them proceeding with an application for co-option at this stage.

3. Declaration of Interests.

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.

No declarations of interest were made.

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

No dispensation requests were considered.

4. Minutes from last Parish Council Meeting.

To consider the minutes of the previous meeting and if in order sign as a true record.

The Minutes of the Annual Statutory Meeting held on 18th May 2026 were circulated to all Members.

Members noted that an amendment was required to the attendance record. The Clerk advised that this would be corrected.

Subject to this amendment, the Minutes were approved.

Proposed: Cllr Shelley

Seconded: Cllr Wise

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Annual Statutory Meeting held on 18th May 2026 be approved as a true record, subject to the correction to the attendance record.

The Minutes were then signed and dated by the Chairman of the meeting.

5. Matters arising from the Minutes.

There were no matters arising not otherwise covered on the agenda.

6. Public Participation.

To discuss any questions received by members of the public.

There were no members of the public present.

7. Clerk's Report.

The Clerk reported that Maidstone Borough Council would be holding a Landscape Character Assessment stakeholder workshop on Monday 13th July 2026 from 1.30pm to 3.30pm at Maidstone Town Hall. Members were advised that the purpose of the workshop was to present the Council's revised technical Landscape Character Assessment to local and parish councillors and key stakeholders, and to consider what should be included in the local guidance document.

Members noted the information.

8. External Reports.

a. To receive the MBC Ward Councillor's Report.

No MBC Ward Councillor's Report was received.

Members discussed the lack of attendance, apologies or reports from Maidstone Borough Councillors. It was noted that it would be helpful for Borough Councillors to provide updates or apologies where they were unable to attend.

b. To receive the KCC Councillor's Report.

KCC Councillor Sarah Emberson gave her report to the meeting.

Cllr Emberson advised Members that she represented 17 parishes and was pleased to attend the meeting.

She gave an update on Kent County Council matters, including the financial position inherited by the current administration. Members were advised that KCC's debt had reduced from approximately £734 million to approximately £590 million and that savings had been made.

Cllr Emberson reported that savings had also helped protect services, including country parks, libraries, school crossing patrols and community wardens.

Cllr Emberson also reported on issues relating to water supply and resilience. Members were advised that, following recent water outages, KCC had undertaken work with communities, parish councils, schools,

social care providers, charities and other organisations to understand the impact of the outages and improve future resilience.

Members discussed water supply concerns, particularly in relation to new housing development and infrastructure capacity. It was noted that water companies were not currently statutory consultees in the planning process.

Members also raised highways matters with Cllr Emberson, including the Quiet Lane Scheme for Pilgrims Way, Water Lane and Thurnham Lane area. Cllr Smith expressed concern that these lanes were increasingly used by walkers, cyclists and visitors to local vineyards, but remained subject to the national speed limit despite their narrow width, blind bends and rural character.

Cllr Emberson agreed to liaise with KCC Highways officers, including Emily Rogers, and to assist in progressing discussions on the Highways Improvement Plan.

Action: Clerk to forward the Parish Council's Highways Improvement Plan and previous correspondence relating to the Quiet Lane proposals to KCC Cllr Emberson.

Members also discussed the planning decision relating to land north east of the M20 and south east of Water Lane, Thurnham, and the monitoring of the site to ensure compliance with the planning conditions.

c. To receive the Police Report.

No report submitted.

d. To receive Parish Councillors Reports.

No matters were reported.

9. Parish Council Policy Review.

To review and adopt the PC Policies, Internal Controls and Risk Register for 2026.

It was agreed that the policy review would be deferred until the next meeting.

Members discussed the implementation of dedicated Parish Council .gov.uk email addresses for councillors. The Clerk asked Members to email from their new official Parish Council email addresses once they were set up, so that personal email addresses could be removed from the circulation list.

They also discussed the potential future purchase of dedicated tablets or devices for councillors, to assist with security and keeping Parish Council business separate from personal devices. Members noted that this was not currently mandatory but may become best practice in due course.

Members agreed that options and costs should be obtained for basic tablets or devices, including any associated software, licenses and security requirements.

Action: Clerk to circulate the updated IT Policy for review.

Action: Clerk to obtain costings for councillor tablets or devices and bring the matter back to a future meeting.

10. St Mary's Church.

To receive a report on St Marys Church.

Members received an update regarding St Mary's Church.

It was noted that the Church accounts had been brought up to date and filed with the Charity Commission.

Members also noted that the car show was due to take place on Sunday 16th August 2026. The Parish Council had previously agreed to provide financial support for the provision of portable toilet facilities for the event, and the payment was included within the financial statement.

11. Financial Matters.

a. Financial Statement.

To receive and approve the financial statement and payments.

Members considered the financial statement, including the additional payment, and raised no queries.

Proposed: Cllr Shelley

Seconded: Cllr Waters

RESOLVED: Financial statement and payments approved.

12. Planning Matters.

a. Planning Applications Received

26/501849/FULL - Brickfield Cottages, Coldblow Lane, Thurnham, Kent ME14

Section 73 - Application for minor material amendment to approved plans condition 2 to allow changes to the external finishes of the property pursuant to 23/503917/FULL for demolition of existing bungalow, 1 no. outbuilding and 2 no. tanks with fencing. Erection of 1 no. four bedroom dwelling with associated works and landscaping.

Members considered the application and raised no objection.

RESOLVED: No objection.

26/501954/FULL - 3 Betony Gardens, Weaving, Kent ME14 5FR

Removal of existing garage doors and brick pier and replacement with matching double width garage door.

Members considered the application and noted that the property was located within the wider area but raised no objection.

RESOLVED: No objection.

26/502105/FULL - Lysander, 3 Ace High Close, Thurnham, Kent ME14 3ND

Erection of part two storey part single storey rear extension including a terrace on first floor to rear and side elevation.

Members considered the application and raised no objection.

RESOLVED: No objection.

b. MBC Planning Decisions.

23/505534/FULL

Land North East of the M20 and South East of Water Lane, Thurnham, Kent

Proposed engineering operations for excavation of soils and deposited materials, and regrading and restoration of land, resubmission of 22/502512/FULL.

Application Permitted.

Members discussed the decision and the history of the site. Concern was expressed regarding the need for the site to be properly monitored and for the conditions attached to the permission to be enforced.

Members noted that the Environment Agency had previously been involved and that the matter remained of concern due to historic waste, tyres and deposited material on the land.

Action: Clerk and Members to continue monitoring the site and liaise with the relevant authorities where necessary.

26/501183/PN14J

Kent County Showground, Detling Hill, Detling, Kent ME14 3JF

Prior notification for the installation of solar equipment on non-domestic premises. Prior approval for design and external appearance of the development and the impact of glare on occupiers of neighbouring land.

Prior Approval Granted.

Members noted the decision.

26/501113/FULL

Griffins, Weaving Street, Weaving, Kent ME14 5JS

Demolition of existing bungalow and erection of replacement self-build two storey dwelling. Creation of rear paved terrace and front driveway with gate access.

Application Permitted.

Members noted the decision.

26/501231/FULL

Oakdene, Firs Lane, Hollingbourne, Kent ME17 1XJ

Erection of single storey side extension.

Application Permitted.

Members noted the decision.

c. Other Planning Matters..

No further planning matters were raised.

13. Highway & PROW Matters.

a. To consider general highway and PROW matters.

Members discussed a number of highway matters.

It was reported that the Roundwell road sign had been knocked down and required reporting to Kent Highways.

It was also reported that vegetation was obscuring the 30mph signs on Roundwell, and that this should also be reported.

Action: Clerk to report the Roundwell road sign to Kent Highways.

Action: Clerk to report vegetation obscuring the 30mph signs on Roundwell.

Pedestrian safety near the Tudor Park Hotel and the A20 was discussed and members asked whether the original scheme details for the A20 refuge island could be checked to confirm whether any footway improvements had been included, particularly up to the bus stop.

Action: Clerk to check the original details and specification for the A20 refuge island scheme and whether footpath works were included.

b. HIP (Highways Improvement Plan).

To receive an update on the Highways Improvement Plan.

Members discussed the Highways Improvement Plan earlier in the meeting with KCC Cllr Sarah Emberson. The main matter discussed was the request for Quiet Lane measures or other suitable traffic calming and safety measures in the Pilgrims Way, Water Lane and Thurnham Lane area.

Members agreed that this should remain a priority and that KCC Cllr Emberson's assistance should be sought in progressing the matter with KCC Highways.

Action: Clerk to forward the current Highways Improvement Plan and previous correspondence to KCC Cllr Emberson.

14. Heritage Award.

Members discussed arrangements for the presentation of the Heritage Award.

It was agreed that the presentation to the Bearsted and Thurnham Society would take place at the July Parish Council meeting. Members agreed that the presentation should take place at the start of the meeting, followed by a short break for refreshments.

RESOLVED: That the Heritage Award presentation to the Bearsted and Thurnham Society take place at the July meeting, with refreshments arranged.

Action: Clerk to invite John Horne to present the award.

Action: Clerk to confirm attendance numbers with the Bearsted and Thurnham Society and arrange refreshments.

15. Future Agenda Items.

Members discussed the draft Parish Council Annual Report.

The Clerk advised that the report had been prepared in draft and circulated to Members. It was agreed that the report should include the councillor vacancies and the QR code to encourage residents to sign up to the Parish Council website.

Members discussed printing and distribution. It was noted that distribution through the Net magazine would be the most cost-effective option and that copies could also be made available in local shops for residents who may not receive the magazine.

Members agreed that the report should be printed and distributed, subject to the final cost being confirmed. It was anticipated that the overall cost of printing and distribution would be under £300.

RESOLVED: That the Parish Council Annual Report be finalised, printed and distributed, subject to the final cost being confirmed.

Action: Clerk to finalise the Annual Report, obtain final printing and distribution costs and circulate to Members.

No further future agenda items were raised.

16. Date of next Meeting.

Members agreed that the next meeting would be held on:

Monday 20th July 2026.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed to the press and public at 8.30pm.

Signed:

Date: