

PARISH COUNCIL OF BENENDEN

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 20th October 2025, 7pm, Iden Green Pavilion

Present	Cllrs Beveridge, Cochrane, Grant, Hagan, Ham, Lewis, Thomas; Cllrs Dawlings; C Levett, Clerk. 1 parishioner for Strawberry Wood Culvert item.	
Item		Action Responsibility
1.. APOLOGIES	Apologies were received from Cllrs Russell, Neville and Palmer.	
2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	No declarations of interest.	
3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING	The minutes from the Parish Council Meeting held on 15 th September 2025 were unanimously approved as a correct record of the meeting.	
4. PARISH COUNCILLOR RESIGNATION	<p>Cllr Hagan advised that he is regretfully stepping down from his Parish Councillor role due to other commitments.</p> <p>Parish Councillors thanked him for his input over the past 4 years and all agreed he would be a loss to the Parish Council.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Clerk would start the process of co-option as there are now 2 vacancies on the Parish Council.</p>	CL
5. REPORTS BY COUNTY/ BOROUGH COUNCILLORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Dawlings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TW Local Plan ❖ The inspector has approved the LP and it will be formally adopted at next Full Council. The LP submitted in 2021 included a settlement in Tudeley with supporting infrastructure but this was withdrawn as it was within the Green Belt and close to the AONB. The Plan will likely have sufficient support and as a result the house building requirement in the borough will be 650 new homes per year, rather than 1,100+ without the Local Plan. ❖ TW town centre will take a higher percentage of new builds and taller builds are being looked at. Suggested designs are not unattractive. ❖ Hopefully Tunbridge Wells can take 6-7,000 new builds over the course of the plan, taking pressure off the infrastructure in the AONB. ❖ A shortened plan will result in a call for sites in the relatively near future and consideration will have to be given to BNDP. ○ LGR ❖ Various options are still being considered across the county. Schemes have to be submitted by the end of November and central government will then consider and make a decision next year. ❖ Some parish councils have raised concerns about the impact of LGR, but LGR is about the division of responsibilities between the county, borough and district councils. There is no suggestion of parish council boundary changes and there are no material references to parish councils in the white paper. Once a new unitary authority is formed it might look at its relationship with parish councils. • Cllr Russell (full report circulated) : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New council strategy “Reforming Kent” has been devised and will be used to facilitate the budget making process. The current administration is, on the whole, running to the previous administration’s budget and savings that were programmed to be made have been made, such as early repayment of some long term loans. ○ Attended various HIP meetings. Parishes have to submit full updated HIP to KCC by end of October indicating which scheme(s) they are putting forward for the Rural Parish Grant. ○ New reporting tool for potholes Report or track a problem on the road or pavement - Kent County Council. ○ Highways cabinet member to raise issue of emergency works closing A road with no diversion signs in place with the Streetworks coordination team. ○ Discussions with Hams to allow the U2 bus to stop at Hartley but Hams is resistant. ○ Awaiting a meeting with the cabinet member for education. ○ Members Grant available to community organisations. • Cllr Neville (full report circulated) : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ TW Local Plan has met its Duty to Co-operate and the plan is now defined as Sound. ❖ Issue of rural buses was raised in latest Planning Policy Working Group meetings. ❖ Application process for the highways funding programme will start at the end of the year. ❖ South East Water has requested a Drought Order. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Oak & Ivy Pub is on TWBC's 'Buildings at Risk Register'. The business plan of refurbishing the property and opening as a pub is no longer viable. Pre-app advice has been sought regarding changing the use of the property to residential in order the building can be occupied and the historic elements of the building can be maintained. ❖ Housing Advisory Panel requested an update on the take-up of the landlord incentive scheme. 15 incentive payments (tenancies secured) since 1st April. Total spend £24,716.66. ❖ KCC was to assume management of both PR1 and PR2 (Mount Pleasant) on 1st October but this has not been achievable and will commence as soon as possible. There will be a six-month period where warning notices will be issued upon the first offense committed by a vehicle. ❖ The Joint Transportation Board noted information and provided feedback and updates on improvements to Calverley Precinct and Fiveways. ❖ Details of Highways Forward Works Programme: 2025/26. • Cllr Palmer reported : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work to move the end of Heartenoak Road to create better sight lines for exiting vehicles in Hawkhurst is ongoing and due to a delay with Southern Water moving a water main will not now complete until the end of November/beginning of December. ○ Park Farm Butchers will remain in the shop on Hawkhurst Colonnade until after Christmas. ○ Borough Councillors will be attending briefings for the Local Plan. 	
6. REPORTS BY CHAIR AND PARISH COUNCILLORS	Cllr Thomas has attended various meetings to discuss LGR.	
7. STRAWBERRY WOOD CULVERT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item previously been discussed by BPC and information received from Victor Kellett had been shared. • Request was made to take action to maintain the culvert as the stockade has been undermined and a lot of debris has built up. The Kellett family have cleared a lot the debris and blockages but there is still work to do and without ongoing maintenance it will block up again. • Ownership of watercourses generally falls to the riparian owner: ie the landowner adjacent to or containing the watercourse, and the landowner would typically be responsible for the maintenance of the section within their boundary. • The watercourse runs under PRoW WC330 but the culvert is not a KCC asset. • The Kent High Weald Partnership was involved as a one-off project but does not have any responsibility for the site. It could organise volunteer tasks days at a likely cost of £610. • BPC agreed, as a first step, that it would establish who the landowners are and to write to them and request that they keep the culvert clear of debris, as is their responsibility. 	NT
8. PLANNING	<p>a. Applications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25/02184/REM Broughton, Rolvenden Road. Approval of Reserved Matters (Appearance, Landscaping, Layout & Scale) following Outline Permission for (Demolition of existing structures and storage uses and erection of a detached bungalow) (23/00188/OUT refers) ❖ Very comprehensive proposed drawings and details for the bungalow. ❖ Native hedgerow planting, wildflowers, fruit trees, management of existing trees and new planting. Wildlife shelters and insect houses. Rainwater harvesting, grey water tank, bat boxes. Hot water solar roof pipes. Sloped or level access - no steps. Drive topping 10mm shingle with Cellweb tree root protection beneath. EV charging point. Low level, single downlights with PIR exterior lighting. Natural slate roof. Velux roof windows. Dark grey windows. Black guttering. Volcanic Ash colour cladding and exterior wood. ❖ Complies with BNDP policies. <p>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25/01906/FULL Land Adjacent Rothermere Close, Walkhurst Road (Almshouses site). Variation of Condition 3 of Planning Permission 19/00822/HYBRID - Amendment to shape and design of approved attenuation pond. ❖ Changes following further analysis re: soil filtration rates and to allow for adequate storage and discharge. <p>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25/02440/FULL Appleshaw, Dingledden Farm Road. Retrospective. Swimming pool. ❖ SITE HISTORY : 19/03120/FULL Erection of two storey link between existing house and existing garage; continuation of roof slope to front/side extension to infill corner of living room; garage conversion - approved. 20/00077/FULL Proposed two bay detached garage and closing off existing access - refused. 20/02219/FULL Demolition of existing timber hay store and construction of replacement hay store and tractor shed - approved. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ LISTED BUILDINGS IN PROXIMITY: No listed buildings in proximity. ❖ GENERAL COMMENTS: 1.5m deep below ground swimming pool. Installation completed 2020. Within rear garden. <p>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to make no comment this application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Applications considered and agreed between meetings:</u> ● 25/02016/TPO Vicarage Coach House, The Green. TREES: 2 no. LIME (G1) - Crown lift up to 5m above ground level. ❖ Reason for lift: Lower growth obstructing access drive. <p>The Parish Council agreed to support this application subject to the works being satisfactory to the Tree Officer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 25/02129/FULL 13 Rothermere Close. Single storey rear extension & installation of 2 no. rooflights. ❖ SITE CONSTRAINTS: 11 in total inc. BNDP parish wide policies. ❖ LISTED BUILDINGS IN PROXIMITY: None. ❖ GENERAL COMMENTS: Single storey rear extension of brick under a flat roof with 2 no. skylights and bifold doors. Brick to match existing. Flat roof with 2 no. skylights. <p>The Parish Council agreed to support this application.</p> <p><u>b. Other Planning Matters</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Benenden Meadows, Walkhurst Road ❖ Cllr Thomas met with Canham Homes and the residents of Walkhurst Lodge. ❖ It was agreed that there is some justification for the privacy concerns, and this could be addressed by the planting of native trees on the verge. The verge, on the east side of Walkhurst Road in front of the new development, is KCC Highways owned land. ❖ Considering the visibility splays this would seem to be an acceptable solution as there is room to accommodate a tree or two on the verge without impeding on sight lines for access to Walkhurst Road from the development. ❖ In principle Benenden Almshouse Charities has no objections and believes the planting of two trees in this area would be beneficial to the lane and continue the line of trees that already exists. The hedge and the land to the centre of the ditch remain in the Charity's ownership. ❖ Canham Homes has contacted KCC but not yet received a response. ● Canham Homes, Signage ❖ Canham Homes have updated the signs, which BPC had agreed were acceptable, and confirm that the dimensions for both signs are 850mm wide x 600mm high. ❖ As agreed, the signs will be placed on the verge at the entrance to BVH and opposite the Village Shop, and Canham Homes will donate a new bench to replace the lost one. ● APP/M2270/W/25/3366410 - Uphill, New Pond Road ❖ Notification from Planning Inspectorate that the appeal has been changed from written representations to an informal hearing to be held 9th December at 10am. ❖ Cllrs Dawlings and Thomas will attend. 	TD/NT
9. HIGHWAYS, FOOTPATHS & TRANSPORT	<p><u>a. Highways Improvement Plan</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Current, revised HIP circulated. ● Cllr Beveridge and the Clerk met with Emma Richmond, Highways Community Engagement Officer, on 19th September to discuss the HIP and on Friday 17th October to discuss items which can funded through the Rural Parish Grant, which have to be agreed by KHS by the end of October, and the grant application submitted by the end of the year. ● KHS is trying to agree one scheme for each parish which has submitted a HIP. ● It was agreed that the items regarding Iden Green approaches and crossroads could be put forward as one scheme to Highways Engineers for approval and costing. ● Other items will remain on the HIP and be considered in the normal way in due course, including issues at Benenden crossroads. ● Cllr Beveridge and the Clerk will review the HIP next year when, hopefully, some items will have been actioned. <p><u>b. Speedwatch</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Paul Figg has chased Kent Police again for details of how to get trained to be able to start up, but has not yet received a reply. ● A parishioner who lives opposite the primary school has indicated a willingness to get involved. 	GB/CL

10. RESOURCING/ FINANCE	a. Monthly Finance		
	TRANSACTIONS FROM 1st September 2025		
	Brought Forward Current Account		6382.58
	Brought Forward Savings Account		81909.55
	Brought forward		88292.13
	INCOME		
	Payee	Reference	Amount
	TWBC	Precept	26000.00
	Unity Trust Bank	Interest	475.62
	TOTAL		26475.62
	EXPENDITURE		
	Supplier	Reference	Amount
	DD Nest	Pension	115.02
	DD Nest	Pension	150.12
	DD HugoFox	Website	23.99
	DD Corporate Finance	Printer Lease	178.80
	FEE Unity Trust Bank	Monthly Charge	6.00
	BACS Employee	Staffing Costs	1387.99
	BACS o2	Telephone	13.68
	BACS HMRC	Employer Contributions Q2	867.46
	BACS AMMF	Donation	100.00
	BACS Great Dixter House and Gardens	Donation	150.00
	BACS F&C Cleaning Services	Public Toilets	766.34
	BACS Tompsett Landscaping	Grounds Maintenance	887.27
	BACS Blue Hen Flowers	Peter Driver Flowers	30.00
	TOTAL		4676.67
	Balance		110091.08
	Current account bank statement 113 30th September 2025		27705.91
	Savings account bank statement 017 30th September 2025		82385.17
	Reconciled		110091.08
	October 2025 Payments Approved		
	DD Nest	Pension	120.87
	DD HugoFox	Website	23.99
	FEE Unity Trust Bank	Monthly Charge	6.00
	BACS Corporate Finance	Settlement - Printer Lease	1233.06
	DD Grenke Leasing Ltd	Printer Lease	22.39
	DD Grenke Leasing Ltd	Printer Lease	167.98
	BACS Employee	Staffing Costs	1166.79
	BACS o2	Telephone	13.68
	BACS F&C Cleaning Services	Public Toilets	747.76
	BACS Tompsett Landscaping	Grounds Maintenance	887.27
	BACS TP Jones	Payroll Q2	63.40
	BACS Military Grave Restorer	War Memorial	520.00
	TOTAL		4973.19
	All invoices listed have been examined, verified and certified by the RFO		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £10,000 transferred from Current to Savings Account. The new printer has been installed and the contract with Corporate Finance terminated and the new contract with Grenke Leasing commenced. The settlement figure owed to Corporate Finance, £1,233.06, had to be paid by BPC. An invoice for £1,233.06 from BPC to Digital Automation was issued and paid. 		
	b. War Memorial Cleaning		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TWBC Conservation Officer confirmed that no consent is required to clean the War Memorial or repair any loose mortar. The Resourcing Committee considered the quotes received, having received better clarification. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ EB Sculpture : Quote - £900.00 (£750 net); Possibility of reducing the quote by £150 if equipment to be hired if shared with another job; Quoted clean would not remove green staining but included removing loose mortar and repoint all open joints; To remove green staining requires specialist poultice, which would have to be bought and would require multiple visits. Additional costs would likely be several hundred pounds. ❖ Military Grave Restorer : Quote - £1,040.00 (£965 net); Includes removal of green staining 		

