# 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 pari for Strawberry Wood Culvert item.	shioner
Item	Tol Strawberry Wood Culverthern.	Action
1 APOLOGIES	A 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	Responsibility
2. DECLARATION OF	Apologies were received from Cllrs Russell, Neville and Palmer.	
INTERESTS	No declarations of interest.	
3. MINUTES OF	The minutes from the Parish Council Meeting held on 15 <sup>th</sup> September 2025 were unanimously	
PREVIOUS MEETING	approved as a correct record of the meeting.	
4. PARISH	Cllr Hagan advised that he is regretfully stepping down from his Parish Councillor role due to other	
COUNCILLOR RESIGNATION	commitments.	
	Parish Councillors thanked him for his input over the past 4 years and all agreed he would be a loss	
	to the Parish Council.	
	It was agreed that the Clerk would start the process of co-option as there are now 2 vacancies on	CL
	the Parish Council.	
5. REPORTS BY COUNTY/	Cllr Dawlings	
BOROUGH	o TW Local Plan	
COUNCILLORS	❖ 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	withdrawn as it was within the Green Belt and close to the AONB.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.	
	o 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):  New years is a "Reference Kent" has been deviced and will be used to facilitate the	
	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.	
	And the state of t	
	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.	
	<ul> <li>Highways cabinet member to raise issue of emergency works closing A road with no diversion</li> </ul>	
	signs in place with the Streetworks coordination team.	
	<ul> <li>Discussions with Hams to allow the U2 bus to stop at Hartley but Hams is resistant.</li> </ul>	
	<ul> <li>Awaiting a meeting with the cabinet member for education.</li> </ul>	
	<ul> <li>Members Grant available to community organisations.</li> </ul>	
	Cllr Neville (full report circulated):	
	TW Local Plan has met its Duty to Co-operate and the plan is now defined as Sound.	
	<ul> <li>Issue of rural buses was raised in latest Planning Policy Working Group meetings.</li> </ul>	
	<ul> <li>Application process for he highways funding programme will start at the end of the year.</li> </ul>	
	<ul> <li>South East Water has requested a Drought Order.</li> </ul>	
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	*	Oak & Ivy Pub is on TWBC's 'Buildings at Risk Register'. The business plan of refurbishing the	
	ľ	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:	
	0	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.	
	0	Park Farm Butchers will remain in the shop on Hawkhurst Colonnade until after Christmas.	
6. REPORTS BY	0	Borough Councillors will be attending briefings for the Local Plan.	
CHAIR AND PARISH COUNCILLORS	Cil	r Thomas has attended various meetings to discuss LGR.	
7. STRAWBERRY	•	Item previously been discussed by BPC and information received from Victor Kellett had been	
WOOD CULVERT		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.	
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- LISTED BUILDINGS IN PROXIMITY: No listed buildings in proximity.
- GENERAL COMMENTS: 1.5m deep below ground swimming pool. Installation completed 2020. Within rear garden.

## The Parish Council unanimously agreed to make no comment this application.

- o Applications considered and agreed between meetings:
- 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.

The Parish Council agreed to support this application subject to the works being satisfactory to the Tree Officer.

- 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.

The Parish Council agreed to support this application.

### b. Other Planning Matters

- 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 9<sup>th</sup> December at 10am.
- Cllrs Dawlings and Thomas will attend.

TD/NT

GB/CL

#### 9. HIGHWAYS, FOOTPATHS & TRANSPORT

# a. Highways Improvement Plan

- 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.

### b. Speedwatch

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. Chairman Date Page 3 These minutes are not a verbatim record of the meeting, but a summary of discussion and decisions taken at the meeting.

10. RESOURCING/ FINANCE	a. Monthly	Finance		
FINANCE	TRANSA	CTIONS FROM 1st September 2025		
	Brought I	Forward Current Account		6382.58
	0	Forward Savings Account		81909.55
	Brought 1			88292.13
	INCOME			332323
		Payee	Reference	Amount
		TWBC	Precept	26000.00
		Unity Trust Bank	Interest	475.62
	TOTAL	•		26475.62
	EXPEND	TURE		
		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	02	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
		account bank statement 113 30th Septer		27705.91
	_	account bank statement 017 30th Septer	nber 2025	82385.17
	Reconcil			110091.08
		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 BACS	Grenke Leasing Ltd	Printer Lease	167.98 1166.79
	BACS	Employee o2	Staffing Costs 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
	DAGS	Thildry Crave nesturer	vvai i isiiioilat	520.00

All invoices listed have been examined, verified and certified by the RFO

- £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.

4973.19

• 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

**TOTAL** 

- 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.
  - ❖ 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

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( hairman	Date	Page 4

	1110 11100tillig 0.0300 at 0.23piii.	
MEETING	The meeting closed at 8.25pm.	
13. CORRESPONDENCE /PARISHIONER QUESTIONS DATE OF NEXT	No items.  Date of Next Meeting: Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> November, 7pm, Quinlan Centre Benenden Hospital	
	<ul> <li>d. KALC</li> <li>KALC AGM takes place on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> November.</li> <li>BPC unanimously agreed to adopt the KALC Community Awards Scheme. Nominations must be submitted by 30<sup>th</sup> January.</li> </ul>	
	of an exchange of views with some members of the parish council on the benefits to the community and challenges of fundraising of the planned internal reorganisation at St George's church, costing £800k-£1 million.  • Cllrs Cochrane and Thomas will meet informally with the Chair.	SC/NT
	<ul> <li>Instructions to set up individual parish councillors are expected soon and will be shared.</li> <li>The Clerk will arrange to take down the old website.</li> <li>St George's Church</li> <li>The Chair of the church's fundraising sub-committee contacted BPC to explore the possibility</li> </ul>	CL
	<ul> <li>b. PC Email Addresses</li> <li>New PC email addresses are in the process of being set up. £17.49 + VAT per month.</li> <li>These will be in the format firstname.surname@benendenparishcouncil.gov.uk.</li> </ul>	
	<ul> <li>Water: Mains water turned off for the winter. Commercial water supply quotes awaited.</li> <li>Parking: Area to be reinforced with wood chippings over the winter which worked well last year.</li> <li>1 vacant quarter plot available.</li> </ul>	
	resigned from Committee. Simon Mortimore and Terry Baldwin appointed onto Committee.  • Finance: Bank account balance of £2,804. Committee agreed no increase in rent. Estimated charge for water costs shared amongst plotholders.	
ORGANISATIONS/ COMMUNITY	<ul> <li>BAA has a new email address - <u>benendenallotments@gmail.com</u>.</li> <li>Committee: Louise Johnson resigned as Secretary; Sarah Pain covering the role. Chris Heath</li> </ul>	
12. VILLAGE	Unfortunately, and unavoidably, the flower bed and grass have been trampled and covered in dust. Alex Durtnell has dug out the plants and will replant before Remembrance Sunday.      a. Allotments	
	Work commenced on 30 <sup>th</sup> September. It is a slow process and the green staining is very deep requiring extra poultice and the work is taking longer than anticipated but will be complete in time for Remembrance Sunday.	
	<ul> <li>The Parish Council to consider a permanent memorial to Peter Driver at the field, perhaps a tree.</li> <li><u>c. War Memorial</u></li> </ul>	
	19 bags have been received so far from Great Dixter and almost half the field has been strewn.  Cllr Cochrane hopes that the rest of the field can be covered next year and that over the next couple of years this will start to make an impact.	
	<ul> <li>b. Wildflower Meadow</li> <li>4 more bags of strewings have been received from Great Dixter which Cllr Cochrane has spread on the meadow.</li> </ul>	
& MAINTENANCE	<ul> <li>The annual autumn village tidy will take place on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> November.</li> <li>Cllr Beveridge commented that the road verges have not yet been cut, making picking up litter more difficult. The Clerk to follow up with KCC.</li> </ul>	CL
1. ENVIRONMENT	The Resourcing Committee unanimously agreed to award the contract to Military Grave Restorer.      A. Village Tidy	
	with specialist poultice; Original quote did not include repair to any loose mortar etc but amended to include in the price quoted.	