

POSTLING PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of Postling Parish Council meeting held in Postling Village Hall on Tuesday 28 July 2026 at 6.30pm

1. Attending: Chairman Frank Hobbs, Councillors George Burgess, Helen Calderbank, Christine Hobbs, Rob Lye, John Patrick, Daniel Shaddick, Parish Clerk, District Cllr Jenny Hollingsbee.
Apologies: District Cllr Elaine Martin, County Cllr Christopher Hespe.
2. **It was resolved** unanimously to accept the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2026.
3. There were no Members' declarations of interest on Agenda items.
4. Public Participation session not required.
5. Matters arising not included on agenda
- Cllr Helen Calderbank to report local footpath issues
6. Planning Applications received since last meeting, circulated to Councillors for comments, outcomes of those deliberations, and to consider any applications received since this agenda was published:
 - a. 26/1028/FH Douglas Farm, Cuckoo Lane, Postling CT21 4ET
Erection of single and double-storey side and rear extensions with terrace and balustrade to rear, following demolition of garage.
Awaiting decision from F&HDC. PPC No objection.
 - b. 26/0749/FH Fairview, Sandling Road, Postling, CT21 4HB
Erection of dwelling following demolition of existing bungalow.
F&HDC Approved with conditions. PPC No objection.
 - c. 26/0465/FH Green Acres, Farthing Common CT18 8DH
Erection of stable and associated hardstanding
F&HDC Approved with conditions. PPC No objection.
7. Highways
 - a. Highway Improvement Plan (HIP)
- Consultation on the reduction of 30mph limit to 20mph and Lorry Watch:
Due to staff changes at KCC requiring recruitment, training and the integration of new officers, progress with these matters is delayed.
 - b. The Street
- Water pipe works by Affinity Water on 14 July:
Road closure notice received on 14 July informing of same day road closure.
- Water running down The Street adjacent to Orchard Field paddock:
Enquiry no. 954636, reported to KCC Highways 20.03.26, response received 30.06.26 - 'Risk assessed, no action required'. Subsequently reported to Affinity Water who found a leak on a domestic pipe which they then repaired.
 - c. Potholes Cuckoo Lane & The Street
Further repairs carried out since last meeting.

Chairman Frank Hobbs

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8. Finance

- a. Balance of account at 28 July 2026 £6,545.75
- b. To note Payments and Receipts since last meeting

Payments:

HugoFox	Web hosting	11.99
HugoFox	Email hosting	2.99
HugoFox	Web hosting	11.99
HugoFox	Email hosting	2.99
KALC	Annual subscription	196.15
Zurich Municipal	Insurance renewal 5/5	305.50
PNVH	Hall hire 2026/27	48.00
F&HDC	Litter bin emptying 2026/27	97.45
Hopkins	2026 AED Aftercare	249.48
Parish clerk	Salary April May	466.96
Church PCC	Donation s137	100.00
HugoFox	Web hosting	11.99
AgeUK	Donation s137	100.00
Air Ambulance	Donation s137	200.00
HugoFox	Email hosting	2.99
HugoFox	Web hosting	11.99
HugoFox	Email hosting	2.99

Receipts: None

- c. Expenditure due before next meeting:

Parish clerk	Salary June July	£ 466.96	
HugoFox	Website hosting Aug Sept	£ 19.98	vat £4.00
	Email hosting Aug Sept	£ 5.98	vat £1.00
Hopkins	Trauma Bleed Kit	£ 45.00	vat £7.50

It was resolved to approve expenditure, proposed by Cllr John Patrick, seconded by Cllr Christine Hobbs and approved unanimously.

- d. Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2025/26 (AGAR) and Exemption Certificate were submitted to the External Auditor on 2 June and acknowledged; no further information needs to be supplied. AGAR also uploaded to website and pinned to noticeboard.
- e. S.137 annual donations have been made and thanks received from the Parochial Church Council, Age UK, and Air Ambulance Kent Surrey Sussex.

9. Reports from District and County Councillors - *see Appendix*

10. Local Government Reorganisation

As announced on 16 July, the Secretary of State has opted for a unitary council from April 2028 covering the areas currently served by Swale, Ashford and Folkestone & Hythe.

11. Otterpool Park Working Group

Homes England have purchased land east of Stone Street at Westenhanger to build 250-300 homes and planning permission will be applied for by the end of November.

12. Defibrillator

It was resolved to purchase Hopkins+ AED Community Trauma Bleed Control Kit at the discounted price for Parish Councils of £37.50 +VAT.

13. Postling Village Hall fire safety review

The Chair of the Village Hall Committee has reviewed the VH's fire safety arrangements. As Badgers Bridge Nursery is the main hall user he will liaise with them to ensure that the wider fire safety requirements for the village hall are adequately addressed. A copy of the Nursery's current Fire Safety and Risk Assessment Policy has been received.

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14. Training

Clerk attended a free webinar by Scribe Accounting – ‘Digital AGAR in Action, Proper Practices Update & What’s Next’ - on 13 July to learn about the change to digital AGAR submissions.

15. For Information

- Litter bin: The bin is not being emptied as regularly as it should, clerk to follow up
- Ward Grants: Cllr Jenny Hollingsbee highlighted the availability of the District Councillor Ward Grants
- 2026 meeting dates: 29 September, 24 November
- Next Parish Council meeting: 29 September 2026
- Meeting closed at 7.05pm.

Signed..... Cllr Frank Hobbs, Chairman, 29 September 2026

Appendix Reports from District and County Councillors

District Councillor Jenny Hollingsbee

I have to start with the tragic death of Ann Widdecombe believed to have been murdered in her own home in Dorset. No words can describe the absolute horror that is felt by her friends and family as well as the wider community. My condolences are with her friends and family at this difficult time.

I recently took part in a cross party video to demonstrate that although our political beliefs are very different we can, and do respect our differences. This was to mark the 10th anniversary of the murder of Jo Cox and five years since the murder of Sir David Amis in his surgery.

LGA Conference - I recently attended this Conference in Bournemouth where there were many sessions on Local Government Re-organisation. We were told that imminently we would have an announcement as to who FHDC would be partnering with and by the time you read this we may know. I attended a session on Town & Parish Councils after LGR where Catherine Needham, co-author of “The 21st Century Parish and Town Councillor and Clerk” Report, discussed and debated many of the challenges faced.

See <https://21stcenturypublicservant.wordpress.com/the-21st-century-parish-and-town-councillor-and-clerk/>

National Planning Reform - as from 31 October 2026 there are likely to be major changes in how decisions on planning applications are dealt with. Councillors' will no longer have the opportunity to ‘call-in’ an application. Applications will be considered under two criteria with only major applications being considered by the Planning Committee. More on this next month.

Lydon Field Lyminge - I attended the Exhibition on the proposed development and have noted many issues raised by residents.

Solar Farms - My group are putting forward a motion on Solar Farms to the next full Council Meeting due to be held on 22 July - details are published on the Council website.

Contact jennyhollingsbee@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk Mobile 07887918458

District Councillor Elaine Martin

Emergency plans to use Folkestone Racecourse

I have received an email from Toby Howe, the Strategic Resilience Manager at Kent County Council, informing me of the intention to use the old Folkestone Racecourse as a ‘layover and passenger wellbeing site’. This is an extract from the email:

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As we did in May of this year, we are working with the KMRF and DfT as an emergency contingency to stand up layover and passenger wellbeing locations for tourist traffic to use as an alternative to remaining on the road during extreme periods of congestion. The site at Lydden Hill Racetrack is ready for use, however the need for an additional site near the M20 was determined. The Department for Transport has confirmed that a layover site and passenger wellbeing location will be made available at the former Folkestone Racecourse site at Westenhanger, off the A20, and work is underway to ready this site to be available for the busiest part of the summer.

The site will not be 'advertised' and it is not anticipated that it will be used except in extremis when we would expect to have further support from other KMRF partners, if necessary, to support traffic management in and around the area. Whilst the site is operational, we will have CSAS accredited operatives directing and marshalling traffic both onto and off of the site, with clear signage from the M20. If the site is required to be stood up for use, there will be comms managed by the KMRF.

To reiterate, this site will run in conjunction with the Lydden Hill Race Circuit and, when stood up by the KMRF, will only be for tourist traffic to use as an alternative to remaining on the road during extreme periods of congestion.

It is hoped that these facilities won't be needed but plans need to be made in case of emergency and cars getting backed up on the M20.

LGR update

The Secretary of State has decided that a new Unitary Council will be formed called Mid Kent and will comprise of F&HDC, Ashford Borough Council and Swale District Council.

This is the geography the Secretary of State has opted for:

- a unitary council covering the areas currently served by Swale, Ashford and Folkestone and Hythe in the middle of Kent.
- a unitary council covering the areas currently served by Dartford, Gravesham and Medway in the north.
- a unitary council covering the areas currently served by Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells in the west.
- a unitary council covering the areas currently served by Canterbury, Thanet and Dover in the east.

The brand new councils will not come into being until 1 April 2028 – known as Vesting Day. There is no indication, as yet, that Town and Parish Councils will be affected by this change. We will get what is known as a Structural Change Order sometime in the autumn. This Structural Change Order will set out how the Unitary will be organised.

I am not sure what F&HDC have in common with Swale but this is what the Secretary of State has decided. The other issue is that this Unitary council doesn't follow the economic or health geographies which are important for this area.

We have a good relationship with both Ashford and Swale's councils and we will do our utmost to work through this together for the best outcome for all our residents.

Folkestone Leisure Centre

Unfortunately, the Folkestone Leisure Centre has been targeted by a group of youths who caused significant amounts of damage to the site. The glass was broken and thrown into the pool along with the clocks and fire extinguishers. The pumps had to be turned off and the pool emptied. The main damage came from all the taps being turned on and the outlets being blocked causing flooding that has damaged the floors. These will need replacing. The damage has resulted in The Sports Trust having to pay significant amounts of extra money to repair the damage and will cause a delay in getting the facility reopened.

Otterpool Park

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Otterpool Park LLP held a Public exhibition in Sellindge Village Hall on Wednesday 24 June. The Exhibition was to update the public on the next steps for Otterpool Park. The council resolved to grant planning permission for Otterpool Park in 2023 and several elements have progressed. The exhibition covered the changes at Otterpool Park. Homes England have purchased Hillcrest Farm which is close to Westenhanger station. They are planning to develop the southern end of the site for the delivery of the first homes there with an access road coming off the A20.

North Downs Forum

At the last North Downs Forum meeting we had a talk by Michaela Luckett, the Good Neighbours Service Co-Ordinator at Kent Coast Volunteering. Their volunteer befrienders contact lonely people experiencing social isolation in the south coast area including the North Downs. They also provide transport for people to get to appointments. They are looking for volunteer drivers and volunteers with some time to spare to contact clients on a regular basis. They can also be contacted if you know someone who would like to use their Good Neighbour service or require transport to attend appointments. Please call 01304 367898 if you can volunteer or know anyone who would like their help. The next meeting is being held at Knowler Farm on the 24th September when the topic will focus on producing food for your own use.

Renters' Rights Act

Renting is changing and the council's private sector housing team has been working to get the message out to tenants, landlords and letting agents living and working in the private rented sector. The first phase of the Act, which came into force on 1 May, is tenancy reforms and details are published on the council website. The Act abolishes Section 21 'no fault' evictions. Landlords will no longer be able to service a notice without providing a valid reason for eviction.

Accommodation for Homeless people

F&HDC has bought a block of new flats to help residents facing homelessness. The flats in central Folkestone, are to provide short-term housing for families facing the crisis of having nowhere to live. The eight two-bedroomed flats, have been designed to offer safe, modern and energy efficient accommodation. Each flat is fully self-contained, giving residents privacy and stability while they wait to move into permanent housing. The purchase is part of the council's pledge to invest £5 million in supporting residents and reducing costs by expanding its supply of council owned flats to be used for temporary accommodation. This reduces the cost of using private, nightly-let short-term accommodation.

Contact: Elaine.Martin@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

County Councillor Christopher Hespe

Local Government Reorganisation

The government has pledged to announce the future for local government in Kent by mid-July 2026. It is possible that devolution through the establishment of regional strategic authorities will return to the government's agenda. Five options for local government reorganisation were submitted from the County, however there was no consensus on the best option amongst the local authorities. KCC has prepared extensively (including submitting a detailed proposal and assessing 165 of its services for disaggregation), although matters of resilience of services is a great concern for elected Members.

KCC Budget Consultation

KCCs consultation on its budget for 2027/28 is open to 7 September 2026. The public's views are being sought on which services matter most to them, where savings should be made and Council Tax. In 2025/26, the Council made £100 million of savings, reduced long-term debt by 20%, set a balanced budget with no additional borrowings and a net increase to reserves, and increased spend in Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Growth, Environment and Transport. KCC set a percentage Council Tax rise lower than 89% of County, Unitary and Metropolitan Authorities in England. Your views are welcome at www.kent.gov.uk/budget

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Fly-Tipping

KCC, through the Leader Linden Kemkaran, organised Kent's first-ever conference on Fly-Tipping on 10 July 2026, bringing together local authorities, enforcement agencies, central government representatives and landowners to explore ways that these agencies could work better together to address this blight on our towns, villages and countryside.

A plan of action is being prepared following the conference.

Solar Generation

KCC has produced a position statement outlining its view on solar farm developments in the County. There are numerous proposals under consideration currently and in the position statement KCC states its objection to excessively large proposals, developments on our best countryside, and concerns with battery storage developments. KCC believes that solar development can be positioned best on rooftops and old industrial sites.

Water Resilience Partnership

In the past 12 months, Kent has experienced significant and disruptive water supply issues. KCC believes that this situation is not acceptable and has pledged to establish a Water Resilience Partnership for Kent. In order to do this, KCC is calling all major players (government, local authorities, water providers, developers, farming and businesses, water management, and campaign and interest groups) to gather for the inaugural meeting and workshop on 8 October 2026. KCC's view is that a framework for collaborative action is required, and that will be the outcome from this inaugural meeting.

Summer Reading Challenge

The theme for this year's Summer Reading Challenge for 4 – 11 year olds is 'Read to the Beat' and will involve music, rhythm and storytelling. There will be free events and workshops held at libraries. Signing up for the challenge can be done at libraries or online. Last year, 18,000 children took part in Kent. See

www.kent.gov.uk/summerreadingchallenge

Member Community Grants

Small grants in the region of £250 to £500 are available for community events and activities. Applicant organisations must have a bank account and be non-profit-making. To get the ball rolling, please send short details of your project to Christopher.Hespe@kent.gov.uk

Short Film on First Year

If you would like to watch a short film on the first year of the Reform UK administration at KCC, please search the following on Youtube: Reform UK Kent: 1 year in Control of KCC/What We've Achieved for Kent.

Chris Hespe, Kent County Councillor for Elham Valley and Cabinet Member for Local Government Efficiency and Reorganisation

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