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**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
held on 4th September 2025 at 7:00pm Monkton Village Hall**

Present **Parish Councillors** Davina Ransom [DR], Andy Kershaw [AK], Jason Button [JB], Steve Were [SW]

In Attendance Sara Archer – Clerk, District Cllrs Abi Smith & Peter Evans, KCC Cllr Luke Evans, PC Andy Howe, Community Warden Supervisor Aaron Klubienshadi, Community Warden Gary Groombridge plus 11 members of the public.

26/25-26 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Apologies had been received from Cllr Brown (Re-cooperating from operation)

27/25-26 **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**
No interests were declared.

28/25-26 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**
No issues or concerns raised.

29/25-26 **MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS**
It was resolved to accept the minutes of the previous Parish Council meeting held on 3rd July 2025 as a true record. These were proposed by Cllr Button and Seconded by Cllr Kershaw and duly signed by the Chair of the meeting.

30/25-26 **FINANCIAL MATTERS**
a) Members resolved to approve the Schedule of Payments below, which had been previously circulated.
This was proposed by Cllr Kershaw and seconded by Cllr Button.
S. Archer - Clerk's salary & expenses
HMRC - Employee PAYE
Hugofox - Website hosting fee £11.99
RoSPA - Safety Inspection £105.60
Playdale - Safety Surfacing £312.38
Javes Security - Alarm Service £82.00
SLCC - Clerk's membership £90.00
NEST - Clerk's pension
S. Archer - Clerk's salary & expenses
Spectrum Safety - Fire Equipment service £90.54
Unity Trust - Service Charge £6.00
Hugofox - website hosting fee £11.99
Unity Trust - Service Charge £6.00

b) The banking reconciliations for July & August were approved.
This was proposed by Cllr Button and seconded by Cllr Kershaw.

c) A grant application had been received from Monkton Methodist Chapel which had been circulated to members and was considered under S.82 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023. A window had been significantly damaged and was in urgent need of repair for the safety of users of the building and to prevent any further damage to the fabric of the building through water ingress.
The application was considered and supported by members.
RESOLVED: To approve grant funding of £350 towards the replacement of the damaged window at the Methodist Chapel. This was proposed by Cllr Ransom and seconded by Cllr Were.

d) Due to the expansion in numbers of houses within the village, the newsletter printing costs had subsequently increased. The Parish Council were therefore approached to consider raising their contribution towards the costs accordingly. The figures provided showed a small increase of approximately £8.00. This was discussed and agreed to increase the contribution in line with the additional printing costs provided.

Signed.

Date.

RESOLVED: To approve the increase in contribution towards funding the printing costs of the village newsletter. This was proposed by Cllr Kershaw and seconded by Cllr Ransom.

31/25-26

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Cllr Ransom - Vice-Chair, on behalf of the Parish Council, offered her very best wishes to Cllr Brown for a speedy recovery following her recent hip operation.

An invitation had been received from Manston Parish Council, to attend their meeting and receive the presentation from representatives of the Hydrogen Transition Energy company. Councillor Ransom's husband would be attending the presentation; however, all residents were welcome to attend the public meeting.

Information had been received regarding the Stour Valley Restore - a major new initiative being developed by the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership. Its mission will be to work at a landscape scale to bring about positive change for the Stour Valley and its important natural and cultural heritage. Once Stour Valley Restore is up and running, the *Land for Nature and Climate* grant programme would provide funding, up to £25,000 per application, for land management projects. This could benefit the Recreation Ground significantly and would be followed up by Cllr Ransom accordingly.

32/25-26

INDIVIDUAL REPORTS

To receive updates for the following:

a) County Councillor – **Cllr Luke Evans** reported as follows:

Me

I just wanted to give you all a little background about me as I have not met any of you yet. I am married with two children and live in Garlinge. Professionally, I have worked as a Teacher in SEND education now for 25 years and recently qualified as a Headteacher. At KCC I am the Deputy Cabinet Holder for Education and Skills and my specialist area of expertise in supporting our Cabinet Holder is SEND. Other passions of mine are football and environment/wildlife, especially tree planting which I am well known for in Thanet after delivering Isle of Thanet Trees and Woods Initiative (ITTWI) which was Thanet's largest ever tree planting project. I am just a normal person that doesn't like the direction this country has taken in recent years so decided to get involved in politics to see if I can make a difference in the hope that my children can look forward to a brighter future. Regardless of party politics though, I hope that over the coming years I can really get to know you all and we can build an excellent working relationship for the benefit of our community.

LGR

As the Local Government Reforms are probably one of the biggest issues that will affect all residents of Kent in the coming years I just wanted to give you all an update on it from KCC's perspective thus far.

- KCC held its inaugural Devolution and LGR Committee meeting on 28 July.
- there is widespread concern about the timescale being imposed on Kent in such a significant issue. KCC Leader did write to the Secretary of State to request a 4-month extension, but this request was outright declined.
- Members are concerned about the potential costs to residents of Kent in terms of transitional and operational costs and would not want to see any such costs falling on residents. The Government have provided absolutely no detail on how this process will be funded so our concerns are real. We have been informed that councils involved in LGR will most likely have to use up to 85% of capital funds/assets to pay for this process.
- KCC and districts have been invited by the Government to submit their proposals for LGR by 28 November 2025.
- the Government has yet to inform Kent of its required timetable for devolution.
- KCC and districts are working with KPMG who will be producing business cases for seven options for LGR - these seven include a new 'Hybrid' model which emerged at the Committee meeting.
- KCC Members remain unconvinced of the merits of LGR, but KCC will continue to work with partners to see if a workable solution can be found. If a workable solution cannot be found there has been discussion of holding a referendum on the matter as we believe the people of Kent should have their say if LGR could cost the taxpayer a great deal of money without any benefits. Some might even believe that LGR is a bad thing for Kent and will have considerable negative effects.
- KCC Members believe strongly that there should be thorough consultation with the public and impacted organisations, but this could best be carried out when there is further clarity on options, costs and any benefits.
- Linden (KCC Leader) met with district Leaders on 13 August, so may be able to share further news soon.

Highways

Reform UK have decided to take a slightly different approach to managing our highways compared to the previous administration. Instead of filling random potholes here and there we have decided to opt for an approach that relays and repairs roads in larger sections. In theory, this approach is trying to be more proactive in the maintenance of our roads rather than be reactive which we have seen under the previous administration. £67m investment in our roads was announced last week. Canterbury Road into Birchington from St Nicholas Roundabout is a good example of the work we are undertaking.

Signed.....

Date.....

HIP

I am the authorised HIP Officer at various parish councils now and have built constructive relationships with both Paul Valek and Lezanne so if you require me to be your HIP KCC representative it will be my pleasure.

HTE

HTE is the new proposed waste to hydrogen facility that is planned to be built at Manston. The technology behind this project is amazing as it literally uses unrecyclable waste and puts it through a gasification process at 3000 degrees centigrade which produces hydrogen. I recently went on a site tour of the site and have had 2 in-depth meetings with the directors of this proposed facility. The most recent meeting had the KCC Head of Planning and the Cabinet Holder for Economic Development and Coastal Regeneration, so this project has turned a few heads. The reason I am telling about this is because there will be an open consultation coming up soon in September where you can meet the team behind the proposal, ask questions etc and provide feedback for the planners. Once the dates of the public consultation are released, I will share them with you.

Residents were encouraged to raise any concerns, such as increased traffic movements and safety, during the consultation period.

Cllr Evans also advised that a potential solution was being explored with regard to the proposed site of the converter substation on Minster Marshes. Further information would be available in due course.

b) District Councillors – **Cllr Peter Evans** advised the meeting of the upcoming Heritage Open Days across the District. Further information, including locations and details of the event, could be found online at www.visitthelanet.co.uk/heritageopendays

DEFRA had recently published results from the air quality survey.

A consultation had opened regarding the Council Tax Support Scheme.

Cllr Evans volunteered to speak on behalf of the Parish Council at any Planning Committee meeting. He explained he had a number of years of experience in planning and due to sustainability and amenity issues, he was fully in support of objections to further development in Villages.

Cllr Abi Smith reported as follows:

- Called in **Foxhunter** expansion application:

Key Objection Points:

- **Location unsuitable** - Site not in Local Plan, intrudes into countryside outside village confines
- **Unsustainable location** - Inadequate public transport, few local amenities, car-dependent
- **Pedestrian safety risk** - No pavements at site entrance, increasing traffic on Monkton Street
- **Overdevelopment** - Adding 55 units to existing 300 caravans creates excessive density
- **Infrastructure strain** - Sewerage system already failing, recent flooding incidents
- **Emergency access concern** - Only one access road, no emergency exit, wildfire risk with climate change
- **Drainage problems** - Watercourse already blocked, flooding risk, land unsuitable for infiltration
- **Biodiversity loss - 21.62% habitat loss, fails 10% net gain requirement, vegetation already cleared**
- **False transport claims - Misleading bus service information**, very limited public transport
- **Traffic congestion** - Will add to existing problems, combined with two other approved developments nearby
- **Van parking issue** - Park policy forces commercial vehicles onto village streets
- **Recreation loss** - Removes green space and football pitch with no mitigation
- **No village benefit** - No economic advantage to local community.

Also:

- Working with CA to support a local, vulnerable adult.
- Advising Minster residents about the planning application next door (which has been delayed again).
- Objecting to the St Augustine's Cross planning appeal. Lo
- Researching safety concerns related to the BESS plant planned for Minster (which I called in, it was refused but it has gone to appeal). The applicant's own technical reports prove this drainage system will fail during the conditions it's designed to handle. **Approving a development where the applicant admits multiple "flood risk" conditions and system failures would be negligent.** The drainage failures aren't minor technical issues to be resolved by condition - they're fundamental design flaws that make the development unacceptable in this location. The drainage system discharges **directly into the River Stour** via a 150mm outfall.
- Opposing a retrospective planning application to store timber by the A299 layby. I support renewable energy, but we cannot allow our agricultural heritage to be industrialised. The applicant should find appropriate industrial sites, not convert our countryside as a convenience."
- Objecting to two planning appeals in St Nicholas at Wade.

Signed.....

Date.....

- Supporting a very restive agitated community in Sarre against another housing development.
- Meeting a director of Hydrogen TE.
- 14 Kent Council Leaders met yesterday to decide the shortlist of geographical models for Unitary Councils in Kent.
- Each will be subject to preparation of a Business Case, before submission to central government by the deadline of 28 November. The costs will be met from the grant from government.
- The meeting decided 2 of the models should form the shortlist. They are: (1) **Option 3a**: If it were to be the final choice, it would create 3 Unitary Councils in Kent. The East Kent Council would cover the area of the current District Councils of Thanet, Canterbury, Dover, Folkestone & Hythe, and Ashford, **and** (2) **Option 4b**: if this were to be the final choice, it would create 4 Unitary Councils in Kent. The East Kent Council would cover the area of the current District Councils of Thanet, Canterbury and Dover.
- Maps of these options are attached.
- Any Kent council can still commission a business case for other geographical options, but the costs of that work would be borne by the Councils themselves.
- Once the options have been submitted in November, the final decision as to which to select lies with the Sec of State.

From TDC:

- PSPO: The Council will not implement the PSPO that was the subject of the pre-action correspondence. The Council will review the evidence and consult on an amended order. "This decision follows legal correspondence from the Free Speech Union relating to multiple aspects of the Public Spaces Protection Order. The council believes that entering into protracted legal disputes, at extensive cost to the local taxpayer, should be avoided where an alternative approach can be taken.
- TDC purchased four homes for affordable rent: three x 3-bedroom homes at Westwood Point for total £943,487, and one at Spitfire Green for £360,000.

c) Parish Councillors – **Cllr Were** advised a meeting had been arranged with Monkton Football Club to discuss the future expectations and working agreement. Residents were encouraged to contact Cllr Were with any items they wish to be addressed at the meeting.

d) Kent Police – **PC Andy Howe** reported as follows:

Monkton Calls to Police

During August there were 29 calls to Kent police from Monkton Village, these included:

3 x nuisance calls relating to vehicles racing on the fast roads

2 x Domesticated calls

17 x vehicle related calls such as broken-down vehicles and Road Traffic Crashes

2 x Theft calls at Foxhunter

1 x Harassment call

1 x Concern call

1 x Dispute

1 x Drugs related call (cannabis use)

Monkton Crimes

There were just 3 crimes recorded during this period and none of note.

Crime Reduction Advice

We have seen a rise in cold calling across the villages, more specifically individuals offering to work upon driveways and roof work. Please do not engage with cold callers or accept work to be done in these situations, they are far more likely to result in fraud and civil disputes. Please source any work via recognised sites such as "Check a Trade".

There were a few vehicle breaks over the August period in the main Towns, the majority were due to vehicles being left insecure. Please check every night that your vehicles are secure and that you have left no valuables inside or on show.

My Activity

As you may be aware, over the summer period I have been regularly called back into the main towns for seasonal operations and to assist with the call demand. This has resulted in a significant reduction in my visibility in the rural area and the villages. These issues can't be avoided, but we have now entered a more stable period, so I hope to be more visible again.

My current focus is upon a couple of locations in both Manston and Acol for proactive Policing, and areas where poaching/hare coursing is likely to occur. I have been attending the park area in Monkton on a regular basis due to a report of nuisance activity but have yet to find any significant issues.

Please let me know if you wish for me to focus on anything within Monkton.

e) KCC Community Warden – Supervisor **Aaron Kluibenshadi** explained that following a Consultation last year, 70 Community Wardens had been cut to 36 Wardens, who were deployed to the most vulnerable Ward locations, this included Thanet. Subsequently, **Gary Groombridge** had been appointed for the Thanet Villages.

Signed.....

Date.....

The remit of the Community Warden has evolved, and the service now worked closely with a number of stakeholders, including Kent Police, Social Services, Community Resilience and Trading Standards to name a few.

The primary focus was on positive wellbeing and supporting individuals to reintegrate into the community, tackling isolation and loneliness.

In addition to the above, **Gary Groombridge** advised he had been holding information drop-in sessions at Minster Library, and offered to attend community groups to present talks on scams, wellbeing etc.

Gary explained he had been involved with welfare checks, acting as a liaison with external agencies and encouraging isolated individuals to reconnect with the community.

Gary would also be involved in re-initiating the Speedwatch Scheme if possible.

A presentation from Trading Standards had been arranged for 15th October, 10:45-11:45am in Monkton Village Hall, all were welcome.

33/25-26

PLANNING

a) To note any new Planning Applications.

F/TH/25/0697 – Foxhunter Caravan Park, Monkton

Application called-in. Noted land not included on Local Plan. Objection submitted.

b) To receive an update on previous applications:

OL/TH/24/1119 - W S Cole And Son, 116 Monkton Street, Monkton

PENDING

OL/TH/24/1460 - Land South Of, Monkton Street, Monkton, Kent

PENDING

F/TH/24/1067 - Brooksend Service Station Canterbury Road

PENDING

F/TH/25/0508 – Barn Studio, Canterbury Road, Monkton

GRANTED

34/25-26

RECREATION GROUND & PLAY AREA

a) Following the recent RoSPA inspection report, a number of remedial works had been completed with a few repairs to be completed.

The spinner had been decommissioned and was awaiting spare parts and repair.

Playground inspection training had been organised for Councillors Were and Kershaw, and the current inspection form would be updated.

35/25-26

HIGHWAYS

a) Cllr Kershaw advised of the following updates:

- Sunken drains at Willet Hills replaced.

- Flooding at Seemark Close, no water ingress noted, however, drains to be reported to be cleaned. Cllr Luke Evans advised he would follow this up on behalf of the Parish Council. Cllr Kershaw would forward the relevant information regarding location and postcode of the drains to be maintained.

36/25-26

DATES OF THE NEXT MEETINGS

The next Parish Council meeting is to be held on 6th Nov, 7pm Monkton Village Hall

The meeting was closed by the Chairman at 8:20pm.

Signed.....

Date.....