



Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 6 May 2026 in Detling Village Hall

Present: Cllr Chris Houlihan (Chairman), Cllr Laura Maclaren (Vice Chairman) and Cllr Steve Jubb; and Mrs Wendy Licence (Clerk).

Also present were five members of the public.

Cllr Houlihan welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Public Time

The meeting was adjourned for the Public Time

A village development plan; finance; village assets; parking issues; highways signage; street name plate; second Thames crossing were raised by members of the public.

The meeting was reconvened

1. Election of Chairman

Cllr Maclaren **PROPOSED** Cllr Houlihan to the office of Chairman; **SECONDED** by Cllr Jubb: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Cllr Houlihan signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the presence of the Clerk.

2. Election of Vice Chairman

Cllr Houlihan **PROPOSED** Cllr Maclaren to the office of Chairman; **SECONDED** by Cllr Jubb: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Cllr Maclaren signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the presence of the Clerk.

3. Apologies.

Apologies were received from Cllr Clive English (at another meeting); Cllr Stephen Thompson (at another meeting); and Cllr Bianca Willmott (personal): noted.

Apologies had also been received from County Councillor Sarah Emberson.

4. Declaration of Interest. or Lobbying

None were declared.

5. Dispensations

None

6. Items to be taken in closed session

All items to be taken in public session.

7. Committees and Working Groups

a) To Appoint Members to the Highways and Transportation Working Group

It was **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** to appoint Cllr English, Cllr Houlihan, Cllr Maclaren, Cllr Thompson, Mr Trace Heard and Mr Peter Dabnor to the Working Group.

b) To Appoint Members to the Open Spaces Working Group

It was **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** to appoint Cllr English, Cllr Jubb, Cllr Maclaren, Mr Daren Seal, Mrs Donna Seal and Mr Tony Taylor to the Working Group.

8. To Appoint Representatives to External Bodies

a) To confirm KALC representatives

It was **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** that Cllr Maclaren and Cllr Thompson be the Parish Council's representatives at KALC Maidstone Area Committee meetings with Cllr English being a substitute Member.

b) To confirm Village Hall Management Committee representative

It was **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** to appoint Cllr Jubb as the Parish Council's representative on the Village Hall Management Committee

c) To confirm Co-ordinated Parishes Traffic Group representative

It was **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** to appoint Cllr Maclaren as the Parish Council's representative on the Coordinated Parishes Traffic Group

d) To confirm Speed Watch representative

It was **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** to appoint Cllr Jubb as the Parish Council's representative on Speed Watch.

e) To confirm and update Councillors areas of Interest

It was **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** for Cllr Willmott and Cllr Maclaren to oversee the Digital Friends project.

9. To Adopt the Scheme of Delegation

It was **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** to adopt the Scheme of Delegation.

10. Approval of the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 7 April 2026

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

It was **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** to accept the minutes of the meeting held on 7 April 2026 as a true record; the minutes were duly signed by Cllr Houlihan.

b) Matters arising from the minutes (except those issues appearing under specific headings)

Cllr Maclaren said that it was mentioned that there was a footpath to the school from the bottom of Hockers Lane, but there is not a footpath.

Cllr Houlihan said there is an intention to install one.

11. Highways

Cllr Maclaren reported that in the last year, the Council has consulted on three major issues: parking, 20mph speed limit and the closing of the A249 entry at Jades Crossing.

The 20mph scheme should be installed this summer. The Council is mindful of the speeding issues and rat-running in Hockers Lane which impact on road safety especially on the bends. A meeting has been held with KCC Highways and the design team is currently putting together schemes to improve road safety.

A further meeting with KCC Highways was held to discuss the high volume of accidents and road safety in White Hill Road and again the design team is looking at ways to improve safety.

Parking remains a priority but following an inconclusive survey, it has been agreed to monitor the situation and work with Maidstone Borough Council Parking Services on the installation of restricted parking times by the shop to reduce commuter and commercial parking.

12. Open Spaces

Cllr Maclaren reported that a meeting was held with Southern Water following sewage spills at Monks Meadow and on the bends in Hockers Lane; this resulted in the identification of the volume of surface water entering the foul drainage system, which is contributing to the issue of over-capacity, especially in times of high rainfall. Southern Water has already installed a safety level checking device at the lowest manhole point in Monks Meadow and they are monitoring capacity 24/7. In addition, they are updating the pipework mapping and are looking at measures to reduce surface water entering the system; Southern Water is hoping to offer affected residents a solution shortly. It is hoped that if measures are taken to reduce surface water entering the sewers and with continued monitoring, the overflows in Monks Meadow should cease, or at least Southern Water will be able to control the situation.

Detling Parish Council is actively working with The Kent Wildlife Trust to address the disrepair and recent damage caused by motorcyclists in The Larches. The Police are aware and monitoring the situation; residents can report any issues of antisocial behaviour direct to the Police online or by calling 101. Works are planned which include restricting access by unauthorised vehicles.

13. Visitors

County Councillor Sarah Emberson was unable to attend and sent the following report:

It's hard to believe that a year has passed since last May, when Reform UK took control of Kent County Council and I was elected as your Kent County Councillor. As such, I 'd like to give you some insight on the things I've been doing and talk about the achievements of the administration.

Those first weeks were very intense. We undertook extensive inductions and training before moving onto committee work. Many of us were new to Local Government, so it was important to understand both the responsibilities and the constraints we work under. I now sit on several key committees covering the Kent Pension Fund to Local Government Reorganisation, but my main focus is making sure local voices are heard.

Working with Parish Councils is a vital part of that. In my division alone there are 17 Parish Councils, and I attend their meetings regularly. As KCC is the highways authority, highways issues understandably dominate many discussions — from potholes and drainage to speeding and signage. My role is to act as a bridge between Parish Councils / communities and KCC officers, helping ensure the Local Highways Improvement Plans are progressed wherever possible, while being honest about budgets and timescales.

With roads and safety in mind, not long after being appointed, I attended a Kent Police Speedwatch seminar to learn about the scheme and be able to support the volunteers who give up their time to help slow traffic in our communities. I believe their contribution is invaluable.

I've met many societies, clubs and headteachers and through the Member Community Grant scheme, I've been able to support local groups and schools. We are so lucky to have so many clubs and volunteers in Kent.

At a county level, the new administration inherited a very challenging financial position — with high levels of debt £734m, services under threat and significant savings were required. During our period in office, we reduced debt by £114million, reducing our debt interest by £3362 per day and delivered £115 million in savings, helping stabilise the council's finances while protecting essential services and in February we announced a reduced council tax levy of 3.99% - a rate lower than 86% of County, Metropolitan and Unitary Councils in England. We have also managed to save, libraries, country parks, crossing staff, (lollypop ladies to you and I) and Community Wardens which were all under threat when we came into office.

Roads or should I say their deterioration, have been a major priority. Just by way of an example, for the year ending Jan 2025 approx 2500 potholes were reported, to Jan 2026 this number had increased to

11,600. During the last year, a £67 million investment has gone into highways maintenance, one of the largest programmes of its kind. Around 50,000 potholes have been filled, along with extensive patching and resurfacing. There is a lot more to do and it must be appreciated that Kent has over 5,500 miles of roads and they've seen decades of under investment. While we cannot fix everything at once, safety-critical works are prioritised. On May 1st, a new highways contract and budget went live. This will allow a more extensive programme of permanent repairs to move forward.

We've also worked to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy, support local businesses - £55m more of contracts awarded and provided enhanced support for 500 Kent supplier companies, and ensure decisions are driven by value for money. We're leading a Kent-focused response to Local Government Reorganisation — one that aims to protect local identity and ensure community engagement rather than remote decision-making.

I believe huge progress has been made in a very short time, but there is more to do. We will continue to protect your valued services, emphasise quality, spend money wisely and put Kent residents first.

I remain committed to working closely with parish councils, community groups listening to your concerns, and making sure your voices continue to shape decisions at County Hall.

14. Planning

Ref: 26/500979/FULL

Address: 55 Hockers Lane Detling Kent ME14 3JN

Proposal: Erection of 2no. dormer extensions to the side roof slopes to existing loft accommodation. Amended plans

Councillors considered the revised details and noted that the design and scale is out of keeping with the character of bungalows, which have apex dormer windows to the front of the properties. The amended plan extends the right-hand added dormer which was formally limited to the back of the property, to the full roof front to back. This creates a box top on the roof, making it look like a block of flats, and it is not in character with the rest of the street. A more acceptable design would be to have dormer apex windows in a roof, facing the road. This would mean two apex-style dormers on each side of the building, similar to the property to the right, which would be in keeping with the design and character of the rest of the street.

15. Financial Matters:

a) Finance report

The Clerk reported that the Independent Internal Auditor will audit the accounts; the Council will sign off the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the June meeting and submit it to the external auditors afterwards. The documents will be published on the Council's website when available. A VAT reclaim of £257.35 has been submitted.

b) Invoices for payment

| Cheque no | Payee | Reason | Nett | VAT | Total |
|-----------|---------------------|------------------------------|-------------|------------|------------------|
| 500290 | DCK Payroll | Payroll | 31.50 | 6.30 | £37.80 |
| 500291 | Kent County Council | SID- shared scheme | 3482.5 1 | 696.5 0 | £4,179.01 |
| 500292 | Administration | Expenses | 104.86 | 2.72 | £107.58 |
| 500293-4 | Staff costs | | | | |
| 500295 | EDPT Ltd | Installation of notice board | | | £195.00 |

Councillors **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** to make the payments.

c) To consider Heart of Kent Hospice request for a grant

Councillors considered the request and **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** to defer the application to the end of the financial year.

d) Review of banking arrangements

Deferred to next meeting.

16. Village Hall Lease

Cllr Houlihan reported that the Council had escalated the matter to a senior partner; the solicitor is going through a series of steps to progress this matter. The Council is happy that this is going in the right direction.

17. Speedwatch

Cllr Jubb reported that there have been Speedwatch sessions in Hockers Lane; the number of speeding vehicles has increased.

Cllr Houlihan said the data is captured and sent to the Police.

Cllr Maclaren informed Councillors that data can be collected from the Speed Indicator Device (SID) and the Police may attend and hold a Speedwatch session.

18. Community Resilience

Deferred to next meeting.

19. Digital Friends - Digital Champion Network

Deferred to next meeting.

20. Assets of Value to the Community

The Clerk reported that the nominations have been submitted and the Council is waiting for a response.

Date of next Meeting Tuesday 2 June 2026

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.20pm.

Signed as a true record of the meeting:

Chairman

Date: 2 June 2026