

**STELLING MINNIS PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 JUNE 2025 HELD AT 7.30PM IN
STELLING MINNIS VILLAGE HALL**

Present: Parish Cllr Max Couch (Chairman)
Parish Cllr John Haffenden (Vice Chairman)
Parish Cllr Ann Day
Parish Cllr Nick Smith
Parish Cllr Garry Watts
Parish Cllr Robert Hubble
FHDC Cllr Elaine Martin
KCC Cllr Chris Hespe

Gail Hubbard, Clerk to the Council
There were no members of the public present.

The Chairman began by reading out the statement about filming and recording during the meeting.

13. APOLOGIES, DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

- 13.1 Apologies for absence received and confirmed by the Council Members who cannot attend a meeting. These shall be tendered to the Parish Clerk prior to the meeting, under Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, the members present must decide whether the reason(s) for a member's absence shall be accepted. Apologies received and accepted from Cllr Morley-Smith and Cllr Jenny Hollingsebee.
- 13.2 Declaration of changes to the Register of Interests. There were none
- 13.3 To receive Declarations of Interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda. In accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 in respect of members and in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect of officers. Cllr Day and Cllr Watts declared an interest in the Village Hall as both are committee members.
- 13.4 Requests for Dispensations. There were none.
- 13.5 Declarations of Lobbying. There were none.

14. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 14 MAY 2025

Cllr Watts was aggrieved that the discussion regarding the received complaint had been discussed at the end of the last meeting without him present and was unhappy with the wording used in the minutes. There was support for Cllr Watts in what he was trying to do (protect the buffer zone) but it had not been gone about in the right way. A discussion ensued about the wording and a suitable amendment was agreed. The minutes from the previous meeting with the discussed amendments were then proposed by Cllr Haffenden, seconded by Cllr Smith and AGREED. The minutes were duly signed by the Chairman.

It was also AGREED that the clerk write to the management committee of Rose Lane estate and request them to make residents aware of the buffer zone around the estate and how this should be managed. This is not a parish council matter but for the management committee to enforce as the buffer zone needs careful management.

ADJOURNMENT

There was none.

The Chairman welcome Cllr Chris Hespe to the meeting. Cllr Hespe introduced himself to the Cllrs, he has no previous political background, but he has worked in leisure management/international law including working for KCC. He is covering 14 parishes and hopes to be able to attend parish council meetings. Cllr Hespe thanked the outgoing Cllr, Cllr Carey for all her work over the past years. Cllr Hespe has been given the role of Deputy Cabinet Member for finance, Chair of Policy and Resources Committee and he is on the Local Government Review Committee.

Cllr Hespe reported the financial position at KCC is very dire they are £714million in debt, which means interest of £84,000 per day.

Cllr Hespe had sent his report for the meeting and this was previously circulated to the Cllrs: the full report can be found in the Appendix at the end of the minutes.

The Chairman wished Cllr Hespe every success in his new role.

15. CORRESPONDENCE

The following items of correspondence had been circulated to the Cllrs;

- FHDC – results of the Government survey on remote meetings and proxy voting – circulated to Cllrs
- KALC – latest newsletter – circulated to Cllrs

16. PLANNING

16.1 DISCUSSED/NOTED planning applications received for consideration since the last meeting

25/0891/FH	Erection of replacement garage. Little Tullys, Pony Cart Lane, Stelling Minnis CT4 6AU	No objection to be raised by SMPC
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16.2 NOTED decisions by the planning authority

25/0659/FH	Erection of a single storey pool house Doghouse Farm, Stone Street, Petham CT4 5PU	REFUSED
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17. VILLAGE MATTERS

APM ARRANGEMENTS 2026

The Chairman proposed that the APM for 2026 be held before the Annual May meeting, due to a lack of interest in the village and attendance the past few years. This was not carried as the Cllrs preferred to keep these two meetings separate, with fears of a very long evening with two meetings in one evening. The two meetings for 2026 would remain with the current arrangement.

WORKING TOGETHER AND FUTURE PLANS

This item was deferred till the September meeting.

18. REPORTS

The full reports can be found in the Appendix at the end of the minutes.

18.1 Website/Facebook reports Cllr Smith/Clerk

18.2	Kent County Council	Cllr Hespe
18.3	FHDC Council	Cllr Martin
18.4	Stelling Minnis Tree Warden	Cllr Smith
18.5	The Minnis	Cllr Haffenden

19. AGAR & YEAR END ACCOUNTS 2024-25

- 19.1 Financial Policies for review
- I. Reviewed the SMPC Risk assessment
 - II. Reviewed the SMPC Fixed Asset register
 - III. Reviewed the SMPC Ear Marked Reserves
- 19.2 RECEIVED the Internal Auditors Report for 2024-25 and NOTED any recommendations thereon. There were no recommendations highlighted.
- 19.3 RECEIVED, CONSIDERED & APPROVED the AGAR for the financial year ended 31st March 2025
- I. SMPC Accounts 2024-25
 - II. The Annual Governance and Accountability Return for consideration by Cllrs and signing by the Chairman, Comprising of the;
 - I. Exemption Certificate
 - II. Annual Governance Statement
 - III. Accounting Statements

This was proposed by Cllr Watts, seconded by Cllr Hubble and AGREED. The necessary papers were signed by the Clerk and Chairman

20. FINANCE

- 20.1 NOTED receipts of income

None	0.00
TOTALS £0.00	

- 20.2 AUTHORISED PAYMENTS

Direct Debits to note

DD	Hugo Fox – monthly website fee May & June	23.98
DD	Unity Trust – account charge May & June	12.00
DD	ICO – Data protection fee	48.00

TOTALS £83.98

Payments for authorisation

CHQ525	Transfer of precept from Co-operative account to Unity account	4179.50
CHQ016	Cllr Day – reimbursement of expenses (refreshments for APM)	26.70
CHQ017	G Hubbard – Clerks reimbursement of expenses (MS Office renewal £84.99, postage £13.60, ink £36.27)	134.86
CHQ018	Lionel Robbins – internal audit for 2024-25	70.00
CHQ019	G Hubbard - Clerks salary June (to be paid 30 th June)	299.60
CHQ020	HMRC – 1 st QTR PAYE	224.60
CHQ021	SMS CIS Payroll – end of Qtr payroll services	36.00
CHQ022	Anthony Hadlow – strimming May	55.00
CHQ023	Hopkins – AED aftercare for 2 x defibrillators (1 st May till 31 st Dec 2025)	332.74
CHQ024	Anthony Hadlow – strimming June (dated 30 June)	55.00

TOTALS £1,234.50

The above payments were proposed by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Hubble and AGREED for payment.

20.3 RECEIVED the bank reconciliation to 31 May 2025.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.

Dates of future meetings: 10 September, 12 November 2025.

Signed..... (Chairman)

Date.....

SMPC REPORTS 18 JUNE 2025

PC Website

All currently up to date, year end and AGAR paperwork ready to be uploaded by 1st July to meet transparency requirements.

Gail Hubbard, Parish Clerk

Community Web Site

Community web site has been unavailable since late May 2025 – sever is down and no means of updating pages available. As an update the host server has been moved with the host to a new address, unfortunately the fibre cables providing the internet services have been damaged and to date BT have been unable to effect repair. I am assured once the service is restored the website will be up and running again.

I have put a notice on the noticeboards and will explain in the July magazine.

Nick Smith

Kent County Councillor Update Report

Following the County Council elections on 1 May 2025, I now have the great honour of representing the Elham Valley division on the County Council. It is a large area of some 20,000 people and 8,000 homes, with some of the loveliest countryside and villages in the South East. Firstly, may I offer my thanks to outgoing County Councillor Susan Carey, who many readers will recognise as a hard-working champion of our beautiful area.

Rest assured, I will endeavour at all times to preserve all that is best about the area, whilst seeking to ensure that any development is sensitive and fits with your neighbourhood plans. My priorities will always be Elham Valley, but I have also been given additional County-wide responsibilities, too. I am Deputy Cabinet Member for

Finance and Cross-Cabinet Activity, and I will be Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee.

The challenges for the new Reform UK administration in KCC are enormous. We have inherited a Council debt from the outgoing Conservative administration of more than £700 million, daily debt charges of £84,000 and there are significant 'in-year' savings to be made totalling tens of millions of pounds. But there is real determination to get the best for Kent's residents and businesses, achieve value for money, and 'do things differently' if it makes sense financially and in terms of service delivery. We have a number of proposals to make life a little better in Kent, and these will be announced over time, but we will of course prioritise the continued delivery of our statutory core services of Adult Social Care, Special Educational Needs, Highways and Education.

Local Elections

During the local elections in May 2025, which led to Reform UK taking control at County Hall, we pledged to address the **potholes**. I can say with confidence that we will be making a positive announcement shortly. We pledged to address **wasteful spending**, and to that effect we have established a team to ensure that taxpayer funding is spent wisely and to make savings wherever we can. We pledged to **help our communities** – our first action was to cut Councillor allowances and re-direct the money saved into the Community Grants programme for the voluntary sector. We pledged to **put Kent residents first** – we have scrapped driving lessons for asylum seekers and are working to stop funding 'English as a second language' classes.

Apart from inheriting a challenging budget, another 'big issue' on the horizon is **local government review**, with the prospect of the government potentially merging KCC and the district councils and dividing the County into three or four Unitary authorities. The new Leader of KCC, Linden Kemkaran, has stated that she is not convinced of the merits of splitting the County and has asked central government for more time for Kent to come up with its plans. She is determined that any new structures should have the backing of the public and not be simply 'done to Kent'.

In forthcoming months, Kent County Council will outline its position on a number of matters that will be of interest to residents of Elham Valley, including on the proliferation of proposals for excessively **large solar farms**; achieving good **community benefits** on the back of housing developments; the opportunities that should be presented through increasing **disposals of KCC owned properties**, and the opportunities for **procurement** to benefit local small businesses rather than the large, multi-nationals.

Small Member Grants

Let me know if you have a project, event or group activity which you would like to be considered for a small grant from KCC. This is for voluntary organisations with a bank account; usually constituted. Recipients could be clubs, societies, voluntary groups, church groups and not-for-profit organisations. Usual size of a grant is £250 to £500. It could even fund small highways projects, such as raising kerbs for wheelchairs or installing a new road sign. Should take 12 weeks maximum from you contacting me to us getting the money out of the door.

Highways Improvement Plans

KCC is encouraging Parish and Town Councils to produce Highways Improvement Plans. These plans will prioritise capital works in those areas. Those areas with plans are more likely to receive funding.

Adult Social Care Prevention Framework

A consultation has commenced on a new Framework, which was produced with partner organisations. The aim is to ensure that older people can stay healthy and independent as long as possible. Comments are welcomed before 14 July 2025 on kent.gov.uk/preventionframework.

Potential Port Delays

The EU Entry/Exit System is likely to come in to force at the Port of Dover in October or November 2025. This new scheme will require travellers to have biometric data eg face scanning and fingerprints, taken at the Port of Dover before French customs officials will allow travellers to cross the Channel. Although much of the information that will be required will be able to be uploaded from home electronically prior to departure, the Kent and Medway Resilience Forum fears that there may be significant delays at Dover, This may therefore necessitate Operation Brock being put in place, possibly for a lengthy period, as the Roundhill Tunnels can not be allowed to hold stationary traffic. Some time in 2026, the EU will introduce a further requirement known as ETIAS, which is effectively a visa costing approx. £7, which will be required for each trip to the EU.

Historic England Local Heritage Hub

Historic England has launched the 'Local Heritage Hub', which includes pages for every county, district, city, major town and national park in England. It allows users to explore aerial photos, listed buildings, archive material, videos, podcasts and local stories; all in one place. The pages can be accessed on historicengland.org.uk/local

Figures provided for the budget for windmill asset management:

25-26 £100,000

26-27 £186,000

27-28 £100,000

28-29 £122,000

29-30 zero

Carers

During Carers Week (9-15 June 2025), KCC is highlighting the vital role of carers in Kent and highlighting the support that is available to carers in East Kent. Visit 'Support for Carers – Kent County Council' online to find links to

- Carers Support East Kent
- 'Imago' for young carers
- Short breaks provided by 'Crossroads'.

Let's Talk Kent

KCC has a portal through which all major consultations will be posted to seek the public's views and comments. The public can sign up to be a consultee. Currently, 60,000 people have signed up to 'Let's Talk Kent', which now covers consultations on local schemes, county-wide budgetary proposals, priorities and savings proposals, public rights of way changes and highways matters.

Christopher Hespe
Kent County Council Member for Elham Valley

FHDC Cllr Report – Cllr Elaine Martin

Postal Vote Reapplication

From Wednesday 18th June F&HDC will be contacting voters that are currently registered for a postal vote to reapply for their postal vote. The process is going to take several months to complete. Electors that do not reapply for their postal vote by the expiry date will have their voting preference cancelled and they will have to attend a polling station to vote. If you receive an email or letter about this over the coming months, please respond to it as quickly as possible to ensure their postal vote is in place ahead of any pending election. However, if an elector has a postal vote in place and they do not receive an email or letter from F&HDC, they are not part of this phase of renewal. In 2022 the Election Act changed the way in which you vote and postal voters must now reapply up to every three years for their postal vote.

Asian Hornets

Asian Hornets have been found in the Romney Marsh area and now in Hythe. They pose a threat to honey bees and other pollinators. A key feature is the abdomen is also entirely dark apart from the 4th segment which is yellow. Please look out for these highly aggressive non-native predatory insects and report any sightings to alert_nonnative@ceh.co.uk.

Public Wellness Event

A free Public Wellness Event will be held on Wednesday 2 July at Leas Cliff Hall in Folkestone between 10am and 3pm. It will be focussing on welfare, mental health, housing and safety. The aim is to help residents who need to seek help and support from the council's community safety, environmental enforcement and welfare benefits teams, as well as local agencies including the Rainbow Centre, Kent Coast Volunteering, NHS, Age UK, Kent County Council and many more. No appointments are necessary. The NHS Public Health bus and Iris Mobile Sight Centre will also be parked outside the event for attendees to visit for a check up on a variety of health-related concerns.

Folkestone – A Brighter Future

With ongoing works to deliver the Folkestone – A Brighter Future project, various traffic management systems have been put in place by Jackson Civil Engineering, the project delivery contractor. Upcoming work during June will start to install traffic management at these new locations; Radnor Park roundabout, for the completion of the new cycle ways and Middelburg Square West, Middelburg Square East, Shellons Street Westbound, and Middelburg Square South for the concrete infill to the pedestrian subways. I will keep you updated with any changes that are reported to me.

Information panel at Folkestone's East Cliff

You can now learn about how the district's coastline was once connected to the French coastline on a new information panel installed next to East Cliff Sports. The panel has been erected by Kent Downs National Landscapes. The illustrated panel details the story of the huge megaflood around 450,000 years ago that swept away the chalk ridge that once connected Kent to northern France. Other panels have been installed at Farthing Common and elsewhere in Kent as part of the Kent Downs' Geodiversity project. The panels are funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the DEFRA to improve access and interpretation across the Kent Downs National Landscape. F&HDC are supporting Kent Downs to have the Cross-Channel Geopark, which celebrates the internationally important geology this part of Kent shares with the Pas de Calais region of France, in an application for UNESCO Global Geopark status.

Kent Enablement Service

Kent Enablement Service will be at F&HDC, Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, CT20 2QY every Monday for 2 hours, from 10am until Midday. The Help Desk is available for information and advice with letters, bills, activities, college, and education courses, paid

and voluntary employment, keeping safe, housing, health and wellbeing, benefits forms, etc. The Service is free, and no appointment is needed. Telephone: 03000 411345 or email KentEnablementService@kent.gov.uk

My Community Voice Kent

Please can I encourage you to sign up for the Kent My Community Voice notification service. They send regular emails with lots of useful information on things like current scams that have been reported around Kent.

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

Tree warden report

No issues reported.

Nick Smith

Dog Poo Bins (June PC meeting)

Having consulted with a number of regular dog walkers, a list of suggested locations has been submitted to John Haffenden. Locations are adjacent to Bossingham Road/Minnis Lane where people normally park to access the Minnis and walk their dogs in the areas that are grazed by the cattle.

Nick Smith

The Minnis

The cattle are all grazing happily on The Minnis. Thank you to Cllr Smith for information on bin locations. FHDC have said they will empty the proposed dog waste bins on The Minnis as part of their rounds.

Cllr Haffenden