

**STELLING MINNIS PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 NOVEMBER 2025 HELD AT 7.30PM IN
STELLING MINNIS VILLAGE HALL**

Present: Parish Cllr John Haffenden (Vice Chairman)
Parish Cllr Ann Day
Parish Cllr Nick Smith
Parish Cllr Robert Hubble
Parish Cllr Garry Watts

Gail Hubbard, Clerk to the Council
There were two members of the public present.

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

31. APOLOGIES, DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

- 31.1 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 from Cllr Max Couch, Cllr Sally Morley-Smith, FHDC Cllr Elaine Martin and Cllr Jenny Hollingsbee.
- 31.2 Declaration of changes to the Register of Interests. There were none
- 31.3 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.
- 31.4 Requests for Dispensations. There were none.
- 31.5 Declarations of Lobbying. There were none.

32. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 10 SEPTEMBER 2025

The minutes from the previous meeting on 10 September were proposed by Cllr Hubble, seconded by Cllr Day and AGREED as record of the meeting. The minutes were duly signed by the Vice Chairman.

ADJOURNMENT

There was none.

33. CORRESPONDENCE

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

- 33.1 KALC – Annual Kent Policing survey – circulated to Cllrs
- 33.2 KALC Shepway Area Committee -minutes of the last meeting on 16 Oct For future meetings clerk to circulate invite to all Cllrs and apologies to be submitted if no one wishes to attend.
- 33.3 KALC – latest Newsletter – circulated to Cllrs
- 33.4 FHDC – details of this year's free Christmas holiday parking days
- 33.5 FHDC – Environmental enforcement newsletter

34. PLANNING

- 34.1 RECEIVED updates on planning matters

Cllr Hubble reported to the council that the court date has been set for the Bower Farm enforcement case this will be 19th February 2026, venue TBA.

34.2	DISCUSSED new planning applications received		
	25/2943/FH	Erection of a replacement garage York Dene, Curtis Lane, Stelling Minnis CT4 6AE	No objection to be submitted by SMPC
34.2	NOTED decisions by the planning authority.		
	25/1703/FH	First floor extension and single storey front extension Brambledown, Bossingham Road, Stelling Minnis CT4 6AG	Approved by FHDC
	25/1575/FH	Listed building consent for replacement roof to cart shed Stelling Lodge Farm, Church Lane, Stelling Minnis CT4 5PS	Approved by FHDC
	25/1426/FH	Listed building consent for the partial reconstruction and repairs to cart shed, reconstruction of south and part of east walls, renewal of corrugated iron roof and addition of cast iron rainwater goods.	Approved by FHDC
	25/1506/FH	Conversion of existing detached garage into annexe. Yew Tree Cottage, Stone Street, Petham CT4 5PU	Approved by FHDC

35. VILLAGE MATTERS

REPLACEMENT BENCH

Cllr Smith gave a final update to Cllrs on the installation of the replacement bench that is now complete, and the bench is in use. Thanks to be recorded from SMPC to Mr Hadlow who installed the bench without charge and to Cllr Smith for all his work on this project.

WELCOME PACKS

The clerk updated that she had created a front cover page for the A4 printed version of the welcome pack. This has been uploaded in PDF format to the SMPC website for digital viewing. A number of printed copies has been given to Cllr Day ready to use when her current stock of glossy packs runs out. The clerk has re-registered with FHDC for monthly updates to the electoral register so will be able to inform Cllr Day of any changes.

Cllr Haffenden is to raise the New Residents Guide with the Minnis Managers as this is something that was produced by them, Cllr Day only had a few of these left too. Cllr Smith has a digital version of this which he will provide to the clerk so this can also be loaded onto the website to site with the welcome pack (this is already available on the community website).

36. REPORTS

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

36.1 Website report

Cllr Smith

36.2	Kent County Council	Cllr Hespe
Cllr Hubble raised concerns over the current state of KCC and the recent events at county hall, he hoped to be able to ask further questions of our KCC member at the next meeting.		
36.3	FHDC Council	Cllr Hollingsbee/Cllr Martin
36.4	Village Hall	Cllr Day
36.5	The Windmill	Cara Cooper
36.6	The Minnis	Cllr Haffenden
36.7	Highways	Cllr Hubble

37. FINANCE

37.1 NOTED receipts of income

FHDC – 2 nd precept payment 25-26	4179.50
TOTALS	£4179.50

37.2 AUTHORISED payments

Direct Debits noted

DD	Hugo Fox – monthly website fee Sept & Oct	23.98
DD	Unity Trust – account charge Sept & Oct	12.00
TOTALS		£25.98

Payments for authorised

CHQ033	Clerk's wages October plus backdated rise since 1 st April	366.80
CHQ034	Clerk's reimbursement of expenses (printer ink/stationary)	38.64
CHQ035	Clerk's wages November (to be paid 28 Nov)	309.00
CHQ036	Clerk's reimbursement for Norton – laptop antivirus protection (renewals on Clerks CC 29/11)	39.99
CHQ037	Parochial Church Council St Marys Stelling – CIL money grant towards kitchen	250.00
TOTALS		£1004.44

The clerk explained that she had now received confirmation from FHDC that the grant towards the church could come from CIL funds, they confirmed the spend on this project would comply with 2010 CIL Regulations. It was therefore proposed by Cllr Day that the grant come from CIL funding, rather than general reserves (as agreed at Sept meeting) this was seconded by Cllr Smith and AGREED.

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

37.3 RECEIVED the bank reconciliation to 31st October 2025.

38. AOB FOR INFO ONLY

Cllr Hubble reminded Cllrs that SMPC would be due some further CIL money shortly for the two properties behind St Bernadettes. No notification had been received to date.

Cllr Day reported she had received notification that some of the power in the village would be out next Thursday 20th November, this would include the village hall so it would be likely any activities would be cancelled.

The meeting closed at 8.14pm.

Dates of future meetings: 14 January, 11 March, 13 May Statutory Annual Meeting, 20 May Annual Parish Meeting, 8 July, 9 September, 11 November 2026.

Signed..... (Chairman)

Date.....

APPENDIX SMPC REPORTS 12 NOVEMBER 2025

36.1 Website/Facebook

Cllr Smith reported that the community website is up and running again and all pages updated. Please let Cllr Smith know if there is anything that needs further updating. SMPC site up to date.

36.2 Kent County Councillor Update Report – Cllr Chris Hespe

Local Government Reorganisation

The recent consultation on local government reorganisation has demonstrated that the public of Kent remain unconvinced about its merits, they recognise the benefit of strategic, county-wide services and the economies of scale that they bring and the need to keep the identity of Kent intact, but they also want local level involvement in decision-making. Only 17% of respondents didn't believe that cost should be a major factor in local authority structures. KCC is to submit its proposal to central government by 28 November 2025 for a single Unitary Council with three Area Assemblies. The model would be £325 million less expensive over 10 years than a three Unitary model being put forward by some districts, and more than £400 million less expensive than other options, with lower transition costs too. Known as option 1 (a), the KCC proposal would enable a mix of strategic capability and local accountability via the Area Assemblies and strong 'community engagement' structures, whilst causing minimum disruption and not causing major resilience problems in disaggregating people-based services such as Adult Social Care and SEND.

The government will outline its preferred option in early 2026, followed by a government-led public consultation before the final announcement in early Summer 2026. Any new arrangements would be in place in early 2028.

Strategic Statement 'Reforming Kent'

KCC has produced a strategic statement entitled, 'Reforming Kent' which sets the objectives and direction of travel for KCC and Kent for the next three years. Its overall aim is to enhance the health, wellbeing and quality of life of residents, whilst looking after the environment and supporting local businesses. This strategic statement will act as the overall plan for the administration's work.

Solar Farms

There are numerous proposals for solar farms in Kent currently, many of which are on high quality agricultural land and areas of landscape sensitivity. KCC has commenced work to produce an Energy Strategy which will support a mixed economy of provision, but which will take into account environmental matters, whilst objecting to excessively large solar developments.

International Rail Services

KCC gathered together all key stakeholders at Ashford International Station on 26 September in an effort to press for the reintroduction of international trains to stop again in Kent; a service that ceased in 2020. Following that event, the Office for Rail and Road has granted Virgin Trains access to Temple Mills International Depot, thereby bringing the potential reintroduction of the stopping service closer.

Budget

The KCC budget consultation attracted 56% more responses than any previous consultation. The starting position for 2026/27 will be with KCC having to find at least £50 million savings, with potentially more if the national Adult Social Care crisis is not addressed.

In the first six months of the new administration, KCCs debt has been reduced by £67 million, and £100 million of savings for the current financial year have been implemented, with a further £53.5 million future savings identified.

KCC has produced its first-ever Commercial Strategy, which should result in better value in contracts and procurement in months and years to come.

Funding for All

Any voluntary sector or charitable organisation seeking funding for projects can receive free advice from the charity 'Funding for All'. There is also excellent and useful information on its website at fundingforall.org.uk

There is still some funding available in the Member Community Grants Scheme administered by KCC. If you have a project or event that is seeking a small grant (perhaps £250 to £500), please email me with a broad outline to get the ball rolling on Christopher.Hespe@kent.gov.uk

Highways

KCC is implementing a £67 million investment into road repairs, to include the biggest pothole repair programme in the UK. In the past six months, KCC has filled 22,000 potholes, carried out 250,000 square metres of road patching (approx. 35 Wembley Stadiums in area) and resurfaced 210,000 square metres of road. Preparations for Winter travel have been made, with the stockpiling of 23,000 tonnes of salt, 60 gritter lorries and driver training being arranged.

'Brand Kent'

With partners, KCC has created 'Brand Kent'; an in-house solution for inward investment and the visitor economy, following the demise of Locate in Kent and Visit Kent.

School Crossing Patrols

The provision of 'Lollipop Men and Women' was scheduled to stop by the previous administration at County Hall. The new administration has decided to continue with the provision of this service.

Chris Hespe
9 November 2025

36.3 District Councillor Report – Cllr Jenny Hollingsbee

Otterpool Park – The District Council has, subject to no 'call in' agreed further collaboration with Homes England. From the outputs of the work to date a critical next

step is to secure full planning approval for Otterpool Park. It is proposed that the Council and Homes England enter into a further period of formal joint working to December 2026 through a Planning Agreement which will be focused on securing the outline consent and enabling the early delivery of new homes. Heads of Terms The Heads of Terms (HoT) which will form the basis for the detailed drafting / negotiation of the Planning Agreement can be found here Decision - OTTERPOOL PARK: PLANNING AGREEMENT WITH HOMES ENGLAND | Folkestone & Hythe District Council. The agreement will cover the period up to the grant of outline planning approval and completion of related work.

Folca (previously Debenhams) The freehold of the c.26,963 square foot space, known as Folca 1, is for sale with marketing agents Avison Young. Sited in a prime town centre location, the building could be suitable for a variety of uses – subject to planning permission. Folca 1 is currently detached from Folca 2 (the Art Deco section of the building) on the first and second floors. The connection between the two on the ground and basement levels will be separated by the council early next year prior to sale.

Folkestone Library – Creative Folkestone has recently announced a plan to work in Partnership with KCC and the Community. It is well known that the Central Library building is in need of extensive maintenance and repairs. Creative Folkestone said “a Significant capital investment will be required to realise the vision we have set out. The proposal to Kent County Council is to work together and apply for central government funding that will enable this important community asset to be brought back to life.”

Bus shelters along Middelburg Square - the new Folkestone Bus Station, have recently been installed. The temporary shelters have been sourced to protect passengers from the elements over the coming months. A delay in the supply chain has meant contractor Bauer Media Outdoor (BMO) is unable to install the permanent shelters until early 2026.

Remembrance Day – it was good to see so many services being held across our Ward for Remembrance Sunday. I attended All Saints Stanford with the service starting outside by the Memorial in quite warm and dry weather. It is good to be reminded of those who lost their lives in our Villages and eighty years after the end of the Second World War – ‘We will remember them’.

District Councillor North Downs West
Leader of the Conservative Group
Member Planning & Licensing Committee
Mobile 07887918458 Twitter @jennyhollingsbe

District Councillor Report – Cllr Elaine Martin

EES

The European Entry Exit system started on the 12th of October. It is going to be a phased implementation over 6 months from October 2025 to April 2026. The first time you cross to France you will need to provide your fingerprints and a facial scan for future facial recognition purposes. This will only happen the first time and will take a few extra minutes so there may be some hold ups at the crossing points, the Channel Tunnel and Dover. This should save time for future visits because your passport will not need to be stamped. In the meantime, the KCC website gives the latest - <https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/travelling-around-kent/eu-entryexit-system> and

there is an email where you can report any traffic problems - ees@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

Funding agreed to help homelessness

A £5m investment was agreed for F&HDC to purchase 20 more properties to be used for homeless households in the district. Using council-owned properties as temporary accommodation reduces the reliance on private, nightly-let temporary accommodation and is more cost-effective in the long term.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

District Councillors will be meeting on the 19th November to discuss the options that have been put forward for LGR in Kent. An extraordinary meeting of the full council is being followed by a meeting of the Council's Cabinet members to agree the District's preferred option for Kent. One or more proposals must be submitted by councils in Kent to central government by 28 November. Following this it is expected there will be public consultation on the recommended option(s) for Kent in spring 2026.

Rural reminder

As a result of central government funding F&HDC has £70,000 available to provide capital grant funding for businesses and community projects in the district's rural areas. More information can be found on the Folkestone Works website.

Zero hour

F&HDC has joined a campaign pushing for the Climate and Nature Bill to be enacted by central government. The campaign group, Zero Hour, believe this would address the full extent of the climate and nature crisis in line with the most up to date science. Almost 400 local authorities and 200 MPs have also signed up in support of the campaign.

Folkestone – A Brighter Future

Temporary bus shelters have been installed in Middelburg Square, Folkestone. Due to supply chain delays, the contractor Bauer Outdoor Media are unable to install the permanent shelters until next year. Work creating the rain gardens element of the project is underway. The gardens will collect run-off water and filter pollutants to water vegetation and provide a natural habitat for wildlife. Bouverie Square will have an underground filtration system to collect and reuse rainwater to water surrounding plants. Cheriton Road will have rain gardens and 18 new trees planted along the road.

Folkestone Central Library

A joint approach to bringing the library in Grace Hill, Folkestone, back into use as a multi-use centre is being made. Creative Folkestone and Sunflower House announced at the end of last month that they propose working together to secure central government funding. The vision is to create a multi-use space as a library alongside new areas for education, creative industries and community events in a repaired and restored building. Kent County Council put the building up for sale in the summer.

My Community Voice

If you have not already done so, please can I encourage you to sign up for My Community Voice. It is an email service run by Kent Police and regularly sends out updates such as fraud alerts.

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

36.4 Stelling Minnis Village Hall

Cllr Day reported that the committee have their next meeting coming up shortly and fundraising for the hall is ongoing. This Friday 14th November there is a bingo evening held in The Rose and Crown to raise funds. The hall are asking for FHDC Cllr funding for replacement of the lights in the main hall (these lights are old, new ones would be an improvement but will need scaffolding to reach).

36.5 The Windmill

Cara Cooper was present and gave an update on the Windmill. She had attended a meeting with KCC and the other seven windmills' representatives last week at Cranbrook. KCC Cllr David Wimble who is the Cabinet Member for Environment attended and explained that KCC are moving away from completely divesting of the windmills on the open market/giving away they are now focusing on 25-year repair leases and divesting in this way instead. KCC will be working with the mills going forward as they will need help on things like governance, health and safety and business plans. Timescales are unknown and with LGR in two years' time these mills could be then owned by several different unitary councils.

36.6 The Minnis

Cllr Haffenden reported that the working parties have started working through the tree survey report works. Some of the dead trees are often left on the Minnis to encourage lichen and insects. The cattle are back in the farm, and the dog bins are in hand and will hopefully be in place by the spring.

36.8 Highways

Cllr Hubble has made a third request to the KCC highway steward for the grit on Stone Street that covers the white lines by the Curtis Lane junction to be swept up. He will continue to chase for this to happen.