



## ACOL PARISH COUNCIL

The Village Hall  
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### **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2025 at 7.30pm, Acol Village Hall**

**Present:** Parish Councillors Richard Steel – Chairman [RS], Sarah Corby [SC], Gavin Winpenny [GW], Wendy Winpenny [WW], Kate Ruranski [KR]

**In Attendance:** Sara Archer – Clerk, PC Andy Howe, KCC Cllr Luke Evans, District Cllrs Abi Smith and Peter Evans, plus 4 members of public.

#### **29/25-26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies were received.

#### **30/25-26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No interests declared.

#### **31/25-26 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED:** To approve the minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

These were proposed by Cllr Ruranski, seconded by Cllr Corby, all were in agreement and therefore signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

#### **32/25-26 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Cllr Steel explained the experimental use of AI to produce minutes of the last meeting had not been effective, however, the function would continue to be explored.

The ANPR upgrade to the CCTV system has now been installed.

Cllr Steel reported he had been working on the website, to make improvements to the calendar of village events.

Residents were invited to publish their events on the website calendar which currently includes the dates of the 'Bites and Banter'.

A report regarding the Local Government Review would be included in the next Birchington community magazine. It is expected that the proposal will now have an impact on Parishes, therefore, community involvement as part of the consultation process was encouraged.

#### **33/25-26 CLERK'S REPORT**

The Clerk advised she had attended an online meeting with Cllr Steel and the Highways Community Engagement Officer to discuss the Highways Improvement Plan. The HIP had subsequently been updated.

A meeting was being arranged with representatives from Birchington Parish Council to discuss the Neighbourhood Plan process.

Grants for the 20mph traffic scheme were being explored, no success to date.

Quotes to renew older items of play equipment were being looked into with a view to applying for grant funding to update the play area.

Following the annual playground safety inspection, the initial installer of the roundabout had been contacted to address the entrapment issue.

The Clerk had attended a meeting with five of the other local Clerks, discuss the Local Government Review and other common issues, with a view to working more collaboratively together.

An invitation to attend the Manston PC meeting to receive a presentation regarding the proposed build of a Hydrogen Plant was circulated. Cllr Luke Evans gave a short overview of the proposal and suggested the presentation would be delivered at all Parishes. The Clerk would confirm this with a representative from the project.

An email enquiry regarding planting a tree at the Recreation Ground had been received. This was discussed and agreed in the first instance, to investigate the space available for the tree to be planted.

#### **34/25-26 COUNCILLOR'S REPORTS**

**Cllr Corby** reported that the Community coffee afternoon – 'Bites & Banter', had been well attended. The next date had been arranged for 4<sup>th</sup> October, and potentially incorporating the November date with the Village Table Top Sale. It was suggested a public consultation was explored, to receive ideas on how to improve the play area.

**Cllr W Winpenny** advised the fencing at the play area had been repaired by Cllr G Winpenny, however, it was in need of being replaced. Concern regarding the safety and security of the play area was raised, and suggested a lockable gate was installed, to ensure small children could be prevented from running into the nearby road.

Due to the safety concerns, it was discussed and agreed to allocate a budget of up to £200 for a gate to be installed.

**RESOLVED: To purchase and install a lockable gate at the play area, with a maximum budget of £200. This was proposed by Cllr G Winpenny and seconded by Cllr Corby.**

**Cllr Ruranski** thanked the groundwork team at Quex Park Farms for maintaining the footpath between the Village and Quex. A letter of thanks would be sent on behalf of the parish. The planters at the village hall had been well received, and the volunteers who helped to plant them up were sincerely thanked. Cllr G Winpenny would be building the 3ft X 3ft planters for the Nursery Fields green in the upcoming weeks.

**Cllr G Winpenny** confirmed the planter build was in hand and suggested bulk bags of topsoil were purchased. PC Howe advised that local farms may be able to assist with topsoil, enquiries would be made.

### **35/25-26 INDIVIDUAL OFFICER REPORTS**

a) **Cllr Luke Evans** apologised for his previous non-attendance at meetings, and offered his assistance with the tree planting at the Recreation Ground. Cllr Evans reported as per the attached appendix to the Minutes.

b) **Cllr Abi Smith** advised of the following:

- I continue to support local communities against several major housing developments in Monkton, Minster and St Nicholas at Wade.
- Also querying major renewable energy infrastructure developments in Minster, and I will meet the CEO of Hydrogen TE tomorrow, about the huge plant they hope to install at Manston.
- **Kent County Council's budget consultation:** KCC has launched a consultation on its budget for 2026/27, seeking people's views on:
  - how comfortable they are with reductions in spending across different service areas
  - suggestions for how to make further savings and increase income
  - Council Tax options.

Find the Consultation Document on the [KCC website](#). Deadline is 29th September.

- **Thanet Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (CWIP)** aims to create safe and easy routes for everyone to cycle and walk, connecting different areas across the district, to increase road safety, improve air quality and health, make places more accessible, boost the local economy and help us reach net zero goals. Please give your feedback before 30th September, at <https://yourvoice.thanet.gov.uk/en-GB/projects/cycling-and-walking>
- **Annual Canvass:** residents should know they may hear from TDC this month, asking them to confirm any changes to the people listed at their property for the Electoral Roll. See <https://www.thanet.gov.uk/info-pages/annual-canvass/> for details.
- **National Grid's Sea Link plans:** You can still register as an interested party, and make 'relevant representations' up until **18th August**.

**Cllr Peter Evans** was welcomed to the meeting. Cllr Evans advised that a community review regarding the Margate Town Council was taking place with a closing date of 28<sup>th</sup> September.

Contractors were in the process of removing the seaweed at St Mildred's and Botony Bay.

Ramsgate had secured regeneration funding of £20m to be received over a 10yr period.

c) **PC Andy Howe** reported as follows:

We still have no rolling year statistics on our system (they said they were updating it but that was in March) so I can't tell you how well we are doing on reducing crime and tackling anti-social behaviour at the moment.

Regarding the villages, we have seen some increases in ASB and domesticated incidents which are very much attributed to the large estates at Westwood Cross that sit within Thanet Villages Ward. I can't give you a percentage increase, but I am increasingly seeing these calls being attended by colleagues. My feelings are that the change to the boundaries for the Wards and the creation of a new Westwood Ward can't come soon enough as these types of crimes/offences are very hard to Police out, as they occur within the dwellings.

Also, the Manston Migrant Centre continues to generate crime statistics which are recorded in the UK but actually occurred in France.

Whilst we have not had too much vehicle crime on the Villages, there was a spate of theft of/theft from vehicles in Cliffsend which is being investigated. So just a reminder to ensure that you double check you have locked your vehicles and not left any valuables inside, especially over night.

Its also that time of year to remind everyone to close your windows at night and when you leave your premise. We have very low burglary levels and would love to keep it that way.

My activity (other than laying on a beach) has been mixed between assisting with the main towns and beaches call demand, to trying to keep an eye on the farm plant areas, as we did have an attempt theft of fuel at Manston.

I have been dealing with two nuisance youths resulting in home visits with early help officers and interventions in the Minster and Westwood areas.

There had been a positive outcome to the theft that occurred outside of the village hall. CCTV footage was supplied to the Police which assisted with their enquiries.

d) **Community Warden Gary Groombridge** was not in attendance and sent his apologies following the meeting.

### 36/25-26 HIGHWAYS

a) & b) A Highways Improvement Plan meeting had taken place with the Community Engagement Officer. The 20mph traffic scheme had been approved, a plan produced and costings shared. The total scheme, including the design fee and Traffic Regulation Order would have been estimated at £10,843.81 however, KCC offered to contribute to fund the TRO element of this and some of the project total, leaving a balance for Acol Parish Council to pay of £7124.00.

This was discussed and agreed to fund the remaining balance from Parish Council reserves. A vote was taken and all were in favour.

**RESOLVED: To approve the 20mph traffic scheme design proposal and to fund the remaining balance of £7124.00 from parish council reserves.**

**This was proposed by Cllr W Winpenny and seconded by Cllr Ruranski.**

The impact of the 1600 housing development proposal at Birchington was considered and had been included on the HIP for development consideration, primarily with a view to improving the pedestrian access between the two villages.

A commitment from KCC regarding the cleaning of the gullies had been sought at the HIP meeting. The Officer would liaise with the relevant department to make enquiries to resolve the problem. Cllr Luke Evans also volunteered to contact the department team leader to address the issue upon receipt of the postcodes of the affected areas in Acol. The North Thanet Link Road approval was noted. It was considered there may be access to strategic government funding following this decision.

### 37/25-16 FINANCE

a) The Clerk presented the monthly bank reconciliation between the cash book and bank accounts.

**RESOLVED: To approve the monthly bank reconciliation for June & July (Proposed: Cllr Steel, seconded Cllr Ruranski).**

b) The Clerk presented the monthly payment schedule which included the following payments:

Wingham Timber - Planter materials	£539.76
Hugofox - Website hosting fee	£11.99
Zurich Insurance	£398.93
T. Kilbee - Internal Audit fee	£100.00
Ionos - Email hosting fee	£3.00
Unity Trust - Service fee	£6.00
HMRC - Employee PAYE	
S. Archer - Clerk's salary & expenses	
Hugofox - Website hosting fee	£11.99
WJ Sunstone - ANPR Cameras	£1,060.78
RoSPA Play Inspection	£110.40
Ionos - Email hosting fee	£3.00
S. Archer - Clerk's salary & expenses	
R. Steel - Repayment Honors Board etc	£55.36
Hughes & Son - Grass Cutting	£192.00
KALC - Training fee	£60.00
Unity Trust - Service fee	£6.00

#### Receipts:

Unity Trust - Bank Interest	£108.39
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**RESOLVED: To approve payment of invoices included in the monthly payment schedule for August. (Proposed: Cllr Steel, Seconded: Cllr Ruranski).**

c) The Clerk presented the quarterly budget review with no significant areas of concern to note.

### 38/25-26 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2025, 7:30pm, Acol Village Hall. Cllr Steel offered his apologies for this meeting, Cllr W Winpenny would Chair in his absence.

The meeting was closed by the chairman at 20:55hrs