

Minutes of General Meeting at 7pm on Wednesday 10th September 2025 at Sturry Social Centre

Present:

Cllr John Hogben, Cllr Steve Birch, Cllr. Gill Betts, Cllr Anne Dekker, Cllr Kathleen Warner, Cllr Dil Rai, Cllr Heather Taylor, Cllr Ashley Bubb, Cllr Ann Davies and Cllr Chris Gartland
Ken Dekker Clerk, Ken Bullock Cemetery Superintendent, Alan Webster Caretaker and Roger Lithgow KCC Warden
3 residents in attendance

168-25. Apologies for absence.

KCC Cllr M Mulvihill. At Sessions House, CCC Cllr H McKenzie: At another meeting, CCC Cllr K Moses no reason and Cllr G Spence Family commitments.

Public questions.

None

169-25. To receive Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests and Voluntary Announcements of Other Interests on any agenda items and a reminder to think of any changes to the DPI register held at CCC, such as change of job or home.

None

170-25. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 9th July 2025.

Proposed by Cllr Gartland and Seconded by Cllr Hogben.
Abstentions Cllr Bubb and Taylor, remaining Cllrs in agreement.

171-25. Matters arising from minutes of the Parish Meeting on Wednesday 9th July 2025.

None

172-25. To approve the minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 6th August 2025.

Proposed by Cllr Warner and seconded by Cllr Rai.
Abstentions. Cllr's Hogben, Davies, Bubb, Taylor and Birch, remaining Cllr's in agreement.

173-25. Matters arising from minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Meeting on Wednesday 6th August 2025.

This item to be brought back to next meeting for matters arising to be discussed without press and public.

174-25. Chairman and Councilor's reports.

Cllr Taylor stated that she had attended the Coffee with a Cop at the new coffee shop on Buddies Park, including herself and Cllr Betts there were only three members of the public there. She also stated that she had attended the Maries Fun day which was well attended.

Cllr Davies stated that the Social Centre has been redecorated, and the floor had been sanded down and resealed.

She attended the CCC Cabinet meeting on the Local Plan online, she stated that we have 6 weeks to respond to the consultation and would welcome any thoughts from the Councillors so as to be able to send in any comments.

Cllr Bubb stated that there had been several vehicles taken and also items stolen from inside vehicles that had been left open, he asked that we be vigilant and keep vehicles locked at all times.

Cllr Gartland stated that payback have painted the bollards on Bakery Green.

Cllr Birch is looking into who owns the pond in Broad Oak.

Cllr Hogben read out the following letter.

Please, may I introduce myself. For the last six months I have been liaising with Mr. Ken Bullock and Mr. Ken Dekker, who are representatives of your Parish Council. The purpose of contact was that of my burial wishes, which were agreed with my family in order I could be "laid to rest alongside my father". Sadly, my disabilities have impacted on my well-being over a lengthy time and have now caught up with me, particularly my Alzheimer's and Vascular Dementia. The need and urgency was necessary to facilitate an inclusion in a new will.

Having sought their help both displayed an obvious desire to identify what steps needed to be taken. It is worthy of note, their charm and professional skills made me very emotional going above and beyond expectation, giving me their utmost care and attention at a difficult time.

It has been a long and complicated Transfer of DEED, through a number of reasons, misunderstanding, lack of written evidence, payment or parish entries. My first point of contact was made with a Mrs. Blyth on or around 14 August 1995, at the time of my father's

death. She informed me that Plot 8/512 had been set aside for me. This I understand was purchased on the same day as my fathers funeral and remained in my ownership until 2023 I know not why or by whom or when this plot was subsequently re-allocated.

Ken Bullock worked tirelessly to find out the history on plot B512 and whilst his endeavours were not precise or fulfilled it would now be useful for me to receive a written narrative as to your records and findings.

Throughout our engagement, with his determination and due diligence he has resolved a number of questions on plot number 8/511, where my father is buried. I am able to sit comfortably with the knowledge this Title Deed is now in my name.

These gentlemen are a credit to your organisation. Their commitment, dedication and their enthusiasm is deserving of the highest praise. They provided me with a highly efficient service and I am immensely grateful for their help, hence why I wanted to write in.

I ask that my letter be read out to your electors as a means of my appreciation due their understanding of what caring really means. They are ambassadors for your continued success.

The Chair also asked that as many Cllrs as possible could attend the funeral of Sandra Stannard's husband on 22nd September.

175-25. County and District Councilor's reports.

Councillors Harry McKenzie and Keji Moses

Broad Oak Reservoir

Harry is at the meeting of the Advisory Stakeholder Group this evening (the reason for apologies) and will report back to you at your October meeting on the outcome.

Draft Local Plan

On Monday, the Cabinet approved the next round of Regulation 18 consultation for the Draft Local Plan. There are no new proposals within the parish boundary of Sturry. However, there is one new proposal in Hersden on Bredlands Lane between the bus depot and Blengate Close. It is titled Land at Former Spires Academy and is a proposal for 37 new dwellings. We are speaking with Hersden Parish Council about this. We are in listening mode. These proposed changes will impact everyone regardless, so we encourage you to respond to the official consultation and let us know your thoughts as your ward councillors, as well. We cannot comment at this stage but will listen.

Local Government Reorganisation

A full council meeting in November will lead our submission on LGR. In order to represent you, we need to know your views. Please let us know the position of SPC on LGR before November so we can take it into account.

School safety meeting

We are in the process of arranging a meeting with the Head Teacher of Sturry Church of England Primary School. The Head Teacher and Cllr Connie Nolan who is the cabinet member responsible for enforcement and public safety have agreed. We also note several of you have expressed interest. We are just waiting on confirmation from the KCC councillor before we can finalise arrangements- he needs to be there due to the highways implications of this matter.

BESS letter

Following the public engagement event, we held in Broad Oak Village Hall in June to discuss the proposed BESS, we worked with attendees to co-produce a letter to the planning officer with members of the community that raises concerns about the proposal. That letter has been sent and acknowledged. A copy was sent to the Clerk.

Right to Grow

Following a successful motion to Full Council a while back, that we both supported, a pilot of the Right to Grow scheme has been launched. This initiative frees up council- owned land for community groups to grow food, gardens and support biodiversity. One of these sites will be on Sturry Highstreet under the care of SABORA later this year.

Missed bin refunds

We secured refunds for two households for missed waste collections.

Dengrove Park issues

Harry visited Dengrove Park alongside Sir Roger Gale MP to inspect and discuss issues on the site with parking capacity, disrepair and pitch fees. We are working together to take on this issue and seek clarity and solutions for the residents. Harry is pressuring the council officers and Sir Roger is pressuring the site owners.

Abandoned vehicle

We have arranged for an abandoned vehicle on Deansway Avenue to be removed.

Resident visit

Harry visited a resident on Meadow Road to inspect and discuss overgrown garages. Having made inquiries with the Clerk and CCC officers, the land is owned by neither but we have assisted the resident to identify the landowners and contact them.

The Clerk asked the Chair to talk to Cllr McKenzie and ask him what he has actually done for the residents of Sturry.

176-25. Community Warden report.

I have been working on finding out who owns the trees over hanging the garages on Sleigh Road.
Reported to Highways the large trees at Hoades Wood Road shops as they are overhanging the roads.
I have attended the coffee mornings at the church
I have arranged a scam talk in St Nichols Church on 17th September.10:45 am.
I have requested that the parking time be extended to two hrs.

177-25. Village Caretaker's report.

I have two months to report on, firstly I have managed to repaint the toilet doors and all new furniture installed, I have had to drive the minibus because the volunteer driver has now got full-time employment.
I have worked in the office changing the wiring around for the repositioning of the desks and also assisted in the building of the new desks.
I have cleared the yard at the office of all the vegetation.
I have been doing general maintenance in the cemetery and have prepared to walls ready to put the grills over the windows of the garage.

The Clerk thanked Alan for standing in for Sandra during the last two weeks.

178-25. Cemetery Superintendent's Report.

Admin Work:

We have dealt with numerous enquiries as usual.

Our new minibus driver has had to step down, as he has now taken full time employment. The second volunteer is still keen to take on the task but is still unable to start until his bad ankle is better. We have re-advertised for volunteers.

I have assisted with the re-organisation of the office, including moving the equipment & cables:

Cemetery Database:

I continue to identify missing or incorrect information in the database. I am updating the records as I go. So far, I have started adding in, where missing and where available, the "Officiating Minister" details. Ongoing task (108/1455).

Cemetery Burials:

Since my last report, we have had 2 full burials, 3 burials of cremated remains and one burial of a baby which sadly did not reach full term.

I currently have no other burials progressing.

I have completed five transfers of Exclusive Right of Burial, four via probate and one via grant of will.

I have closed 5 long standing memorial cases, where the updated or new monuments have now been completed. I however still have a further 6 memorial cases at various stages of completion.

Cemetery Repairs:

Despite me chasing our insurers, our claim had not progressed. However, I was contacted by the insurance assessor, who had only been passed the case from our insurers on 15th August, some 2 months after raising the case. I have met the assessor at the cemetery, explained the incident and shown him all the damage. I have also met a third contractor on site, and I now have three quotes for the repairs. These range from £8K to £21K. The lowest of the quotes does not include edging.

I have had a further request for information from the insurance assessor, which I have provided.

The three quotes mentioned above, do include a separate price as per the cemetery plan and as requested by the Council, for relaying and extending the car park area along the main drive at the Cemetery. The three quotes are £4,281 £6,700 £4,620 (Agenda Item).

Cemetery Other:

I have walked the Cemetery checking for glass ornaments. I found 13 plots, with glass items present. I have written to 9 owners, asking for the glass to be removed. A further 3 of the plots are in the name of the deceased and will require transfers of EroB if it is possible to contact a relative.

I have also placed 2 posters one in the notice board and one on the memorial wall, clearly stating that glass is not allowed.

I have simplified, tidied up and re-issued the notice of interment and permit for a memorial template and published both on our website.

179-25. Clerks Report.

General enquiries dealt with from residents.

I have attended all the extra committee meeting as scribe for the Council.

We have been working hard to rearrange the office space which now looks a lot more professional. All the metal filing cabinets and the stationary cupboard are upstairs; the filing cabinets will be used as archives and only relevant documents will be on hand in the office space.

The gas boiler and heating system has been serviced.

The replacement gym equipment has been installed in the playpark.

We have had our annual playground inspection done by ROSPA there are a few things that need attention.

I was asked by the Chair at one of the Staffing Committee meetings why the AC was not on, he said that this had been authorised at a past meeting, he recommended that we get quotes for fixed units, these will be presented at the agenda item later in the meeting.

Guardian Security visited the toilets to reposition the CCTV cameras after they had all been turned towards the walls by a group of youths. It was suggested to have tamper proof cameras fitted. This is an item later in the meeting.

Our insurance is due to be renewed at the end of the month; this is being re-evaluated because of the claim for the mortuary and the value of cover for the cemetery needs to be adjusted to cover for any damage. This will be with me in the next week.

I would like to ask the members of the Finance Committee to arrange a meeting so that they can discuss this years budget. This needs to be completed and brought to full Council at the meeting in December.

180-25. Outside Bodies members reports.

None

181-25. Events Committee report.

Cllr Gartland stated that the committee met and arranged for the quiz night at broad Oak Village Hall, we have a quiz master arranged. This will be held on 24th October, and the flyer has been posted for this event.

The Christmas Fayre was discussed, and we are getting ahead with that.

182-25. Finance.

a) Payments for approval.

Proposed by Cllr Bubb and seconded by Cllr Betts and all in agreement.
There was a discussion over the renewal of the insurance for the Council it was decided to go ahead and renew the policy.

Proposed by Cllr Bubb and seconded by Cllr Betts and all in agreement.

£33.65	Amazon	2 nd Class Stamps
£2027.12	Bourne to Garden	Grounds Maintenance
£57.02	Mustang Washrooms	Toilet Cleaning x two months
£180	Satswana	Data Protection Officer
£43.55	Viking	1 st Class large stamps and whiteboard pens

b) Accounts for approval and signature Signed by two Cllrs.

183-25. To Discuss and agree increasing the number of times the strimming is done around the graves in the Grounds Maintenance Contract (from 4 to 17).

It was decided to bring this back to the next meeting with the updated pricing.

184-25. To Discuss and agree hiring a contractor to finish the pathway in the dog walking area, quote provided.

There was a discussion on whether this should go ahead, Cllr Hogben stated that as the material has been donated to the Council with a saving of £2000, that this was the best option to getting the work completed quickly.

This was proposed by Cllr Birch and seconded by Cllr Gartland.
Abstained by Cllr Dekker and a no vote from Cllr Bubb, all other Cllrs in agreement.

185-25. To Discuss and agree quotes for Air Conditioning for the office.

There was a discussion on whether it was necessary to have a unit upstairs. This is to be brought back to next meeting with updated quotes for just one unit

186-25. To Discuss and agree quotes for new antivandal cameras for the toilets.

It was decided to bring back to next meeting once we have found out when the lease is due to expire.

187-25. To Discuss and agree new members on committees.

Due to a Cllr resigning from several committees, it is necessary to elect new members to these committees.
Cllr Rai was elected to the Events Committee.
Cllrs Betts elected to the Finance Committee
Cllr Taylor was elected to the Staffing Committee and Cllr Bubb as reserve

188-25. To Discuss and agree grant application.

The representative from the Church stated their case for the grant and the Council was in full agreement to give the full amount asked for of £2741

189-25. To Discuss and agree car park quotes for the cemetery.

The cemetery Superintendent stated that this item was no longer to be discussed as the work required new quotes to be submitted.

190-25. To Discuss and agree the purchase of Solar Powered Christmas lights for the tree in the cemetery.

This is to be brought back to next meeting with prices for the lights.

191-25. To Discuss and agree to purchase a blow-up Grotto.

This is to be discussed by the events committee at their next meeting.

192-25. To Discuss and agree Council Christmas Dinner.

To be brought back to next meeting.

193-25. To Discuss and agree to run another Defib and CPR training for the local businesses.

There was a discussion on how many times to run this again, the proposal was to run it twice more. Proposed by Cllr Birch and seconded by Cllr Davies and all in agreement.

194-25. To Discuss and agree recommendations on the last Office Fire Risk Assessment.

It was agreed to proceed with the high-risk items from the last assessment.

195-25. Planning application CA/25/01458

43 High Street Sturry Kent CT2 0BD
Application for Listed Building Consent for internal alterations including the addition of 2 internal doors to ground floor and removal of 1 wall to ground floor.

There is also a previous application for change of use.

No objections to this planning application.

Date for next meeting. 8th October 2025

DRAFT

Signed: Date: 8th October 2025