

Minutes of General Meeting at 7pm on Wednesday 11th March 2026 at Sturry Social Centre.

Present:

Cllr John Hogben, Cllr Steve Birch, Cllr Gill Betts Cllr Kathleen Warner, Cllr Dil Rai, Cllr Anne Dekker, Cllr Heather Taylor, Cllr Chris Gartland, Cllr George Spence and Cllr Ashley Bubb.
Ken Dekker Clerk, Ken Bullock Cemetery Superintendent and Alan Webster Caretaker

2 residents in attendance

41-26. Apologies for absence

CCC Cllr H McKenzie and Cllr A Davies

Public questions.

Before the remainder of the meeting, we will receive questions and statements from members of the public regarding items on the agenda. Any member of the public present at the meeting is entitled to speak for up to three minutes at this point.

The two residents wanted to ask questions about an item that was not on the agenda. The Clerk asked if they would like to come to the office where he would be willing to answer their questions

42-26. To receive Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and any 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

43-26. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 11th February 2026.

Proposed by Cllr. Birch and seconded by Cllr. Warner, Cllr Bubb abstained as he was not at the meeting all in agreement

44-26. Matters arising from minutes of the Parish Meeting on Wednesday 11th February 2026.

None

45-26 To approve the minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 23rd February 2026.

Proposed by Cllr. Spence and seconded by Cllr Birch, Cllrs Bubb and Gartland abstained as they were not at the meeting, all in agreement.

46-26. Chairman and Councillors reports.

Cllr Birch stated that he had changed the solid pole across the dog jump with a large rope and that payback had restarted the footpath work in the dog walking area.

Cllr Taylor asked several questions about items from previous minutes. Oct 25 regarding the pond at Broad Oak.

This should have been brought up at matters arising at the next meeting in Nov.

Nov 26 regarding the Staffing Committee meeting.

New Posts for the village signs.

Walk around with the tree surgeon.

Meeting with Velencia regarding the tip.

All of these should have been asked at matters arising in Dec meeting which Cllr Taylor was absent from.

The relevant Cllrs and the Clerk gave adequate answers to these questions.

Cllr Dekker stated that she had attended the Southeast Water presentation in regard to the reservoir at Sturry Social Centre and came away with a couple of good contacts

She also met with the local police officer who said that they were going to do a speed watch on Sturry Hill, it was suggested that this be done about halve way up and not at the bottom.

Cllr Betts stated that she had attended a course on Transfer of assets and asked if Cllrs would like a summary of the course for future reference. All agreed.

The Chair stated that the consultation on Westbere Butts by Hume on behalf of Bretts went well and that they would like another meeting with the Parish Council to go over the results. It was suggested that there be an agenda item on our next meeting so that Cllrs and residents can ask questions.

Cllr Betts asked if the Chair had sent letters to KCC regarding the meeting about the Library, Cllr Hogben stated that he had not done so.

47-26. County and District Councillors reports

CCC Cllr H Mc Kenzies report

Local Plan Reg 19

The final draft of the local plan has now been prepared and will be put to Full Council and Cabinet on 18th March to decide whether to submit it

for a Regulation 19 consultation and then submit it to the planning inspector along with the reg 19 consultation responses for further analysis and adoption. It has been stressed to us that this is a final draft and cannot be amended at this stage, it can either be approved or rejected for consultation in its current form. We are actively reading the draft plan and responses from the formal regulation 18 consultation that was done previously. If any parish councillors or residents want to ask any questions, we encourage them to contact us and we will do our best to answer those questions. If the plan is approved for the reg 19 consultation, we will do our best to encourage residents to respond to it.

Budget

At the last Full Council meeting we voted for the budget that we believe to be a common-sense budget that delivers for everyone across the district without bankrupting the council or emptying people's pockets. Harry could not vote on the general fund element due to a conflict of interest with his new job but voted on everything else involved in the budget. This budget lowers the cost of bulky waste collections to tackle fly tipping, provides £6.5 million to build/buy new council houses, raise them to the decent homes standard and fit disability adaptations and freezes parking charges in 80% of council-owned car parks among many other things.

Broad Oak Reservoir

South East Water have released a program of consultation events, the first occurred in February in the Broad Oak Village Hall. We will make an effort to attend these events.

Fence around The Woodlands

Planning have said that the fence is 2m high and so does not require planning permission – this is true. We are looking into other options to support the residents, but it is still unclear who exactly is responsible as all parties concerned are denying it.

Yard and Container Storage

A new open yard and container storage is being advertised on Staines Hill which residents are concerned about. We made inquiries and Planning say it is not a planning matter for them to investigate. We are actively reviewing the situation and options.

Canterbury Mototrials Park

A site visit has been conducted by a Planning Enforcement Officer on the Canterbury Mototrials Park to determine whether they have breached planning law. We are awaiting further details on this active planning enforcement investigation.

Vandalised Football Pitch

The Sturry Football Pitch was vandalised by motorbike users in February. We reported this to the police, and they are aware of it. Criminal Damage is monitoring this and other related incidents.

Dengrove Park

We are continuing to chase relevant officers for updates on enforcement action to be taken on Dengrove Park following the rescinding of the Compliance Order due to a legal challenge from the site owners. An officer is doing a site visit this month and Sir Roger and Harry are pushing for a briefing on the situation following that site visit.

Local Government Reorganisation

The government has launched it's formal consultation for LGR that can be responded to here: [Local government reorganisation in Kent and Medway - GOV.UK](#)

We are expecting a decision on what LGR will look like in Kent within months.

Meeting with Cllr Mulvihill re. parking outside the school.

On Thursday 5th March, we met with Mark to discuss progress with the parking situation outside the Sturry Church of England Primary School. It has turned out to be more of a KCC matter to consider due to the highways implications, so we are leaving him to it but are keeping in contact with him as it is an important matter that we should be working together on. Mark is looking into various options with KCC officers and will come back to us with a set of options – one of which could be a one-way system around that area.

Westbere Butts application

Bretts are looking to submit an application for a new development on the Westbere Butts along Island Road. It would include 100 new dwellings, 2 football pitches, a sports pavilion and a section of open space between Sturry and Hersden. Harry attended the public presentation on 16th February to hear what Bretts and residents had to say about the proposals, and we will continue to listen to the community until this matter is over. At this stage, we are in listening mode as we cannot predetermine ourselves.

Biodiversity and nature recovery strategy

We are consulting on our new Draft Biodiversity and Nature Recovery Strategy which you can read and respond to here: [Draft Biodiversity Strategy - Canterbury Newsroom](#)

Housing strategy

We are consulting on our new Draft Housing Strategy which you can read and respond to here: [Draft Housing Strategy – Canterbury Newsroom](#)

Annual Parking Review

The Annual Parking Review is on 24th March – this is where the proposals for changes to parking restrictions will be decided. Neither of us will be able to attend this meeting but we are going to send representations into the committee and officers ahead of the meeting to speak up for residents. Please let us know your views on the proposals in Sturry and Broad Oak, so that we can factor this into our written representations.

48-26. Community Warden report.

No report

49-26. Village Caretaker's report.

- Litter pick in the Playpark.
- Litter picked the footpaths in Sturry and Broad Oak
- Supermarket minibus runs
- Café Hope minibus run
- Looked after public toilets whilst S Stannard on leave.
- Cleared blocked toilet
- Took water meter readings as requested by the clerk
- Marked out graves with K Bullock
- Litter picked path along railway line

Used up last of my holidays before the new financial year

50-26. Cemetery Superintendent's Report.

Admin Work:

I have continued to support the resolution of general enquiries.

Cemetery Database:

I continue to update the Cemetery database. I have been entering the details of the clergy carrying out the service, where this is available. I have added 1219 names of clergy to the records. We have 169 individual names of Clergy in the database.

St Nicholas Churchyard:

I have started creating an electronic register of the graves in St Nicholas churchyard. This once complete will support the inspection and testing of the monuments in the churchyard.

Unfortunately, as the records only exist on paper, this is a laborious manual exercise. I have completed 200 out of approx. 500 records.

Cemetery Burials:

Since my last report, we have had one burial and no burials of cremated remains.

Cemetery Repairs:

I have written again to our insurers who have informed me the matter is now with the underwriters.

Cemetery Other:

I and Councillor Birch have been working with Payback in the Cemetery, where they have been levelling, topping up and tidying up some of the plots that required attention. We have received positive feedback regarding this work from members of the public.

I have updated the Cemetery improvement plan on our website. The latest version (Version 7) is a complete revamp of the plan. Each individual activity will be brought to the Council at the appropriate time.

I have produced a scale drawing of the proposed storage area next to the Cemetery garage. I will bring this to the Council once we have some costings.

I have loaded the updated Cemetery regulations to our website and had a new booklet produced as agreed at the last Council meeting.

I have approved 2 new monument applications, and one new monument has been installed.

51-26. Clerks Report.

General enquiries dealt with from residents.

I have completed most of the work on the Policies and Procedures, still must go over them to check that there are no mistakes in grammar and spelling. These will be brought to Council for adoption in small batches over the next few months.

I apologise for missing the last full meeting and would like to thank the Chair and Vice Chair for taking notes and recording the meeting for me to be able to formulate the minutes.

The school have agreed to the date of 22nd April for our Annual Parish Meeting; I will be contacting several of the Parish groups to come along and speak on what they do and what they are going to do in the future.

Usual administration duties.

I am now getting on with the end of year finance paperwork, and I am awaiting the AGAR to drop on my desk for this years external audit.

Set up revision first aid courses for two employees and one Cllr as these have now expired and set up a new first aid course for one Cllr. for the end of April.

The memorial bench has been ordered for Cllr Wenham, this will arrive in about three weeks' time, I have spoken with Cllr Birch, and the bench is being delivered to his address, we also agreed on how this was going to be secured to the ground and the location in the cemetery.

I have been in contact with CCC regarding setting up a meeting with them regarding the outcome from the extraordinary meeting held on 23rd February 2026.

52-26. Finance.

a) Payments for approval.

Proposed by Cllr. Hogben and seconded by Cllr. Warner, All in agreement

£2027.12	Bourne to Garden	Grounds Maintenance
£25.86	Amazon	Tape measure and marking flags
£288	Guardian Security	Call out for fault on camera at toilets
£48.70	Canenco	Toilet clean
£2616	Hart Lee	Tree removal in Centenary Woodland

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

c) Report from Chair of the Finance Committee.

In the absence of the Chair of Finance the Clerk stated that there would have to be a virements to two pay codes in the outgoing budget due to a slight over spend on these codes, he also stated that there would be a couple of code changes as well.

We are going to come in slightly under budget for this year.

53-26. To Discuss and agree promoting Councillor activity and responsibility.

Cllr Betts stated that she had to bring this back to get the views of more of the Councillors, she feels that we need a bigger presence in the community and also that she would like more input for the Linkup page as she cannot carry on doing it herself.

Cllr Taylor would like to reinstate the Parish Magazine again and explained what was usually in it.

Cllr Birch stated that it was costing the Council money.

There was further discussion on ways to make the Council more prominent in the community.

Several ideas were put forward, Meet and Greet and a better webpage.

Clerk to investigate making the web site better and more attractive to look at.

Cllr Betts stated would it be an idea to go back to Councillors having areas of responsibility in the village.

54-26. To Discuss and agree which Cllrs are to lead in the discussions with Canterbury City Council with reference to acquiring assets.

Cllr Dekker explained the need for several Cllrs to actively take this on and develop a good working relationship with CCC and possibly with KCC and other groups in the future to acquire said assets.

There should be at least three or four Cllrs working together on this and the following Cllrs stated that they would like to do this

Cllr Spence, Cllr Dekker, Cllr Warner, Cllr Taylor and Cllr Betts

All Cllrs agreed to this working group up.

55-26. To discuss the setting up of a working group to focus on LGR/Devolution.

Cllr Spence gave a break down on what this item means and what he would like to happen. He also stated that he would like to know of any courses that Cllr could go on for LGR.

Cllr Taylor requested that the Clerk posted every month any courses that would be of benefit to Cllrs.

The Clerk agreed to do this.

It was agreed to form a working group on this item, the following Cllrs agreed to be on the working group.

Cllr Spence, Cllr Birch, Cllr Bubb, Cllr Dekker and Cllr Hogben.

56-26. Update on the work in Centenary Woodland.

Cllr Birch stated that he has been working very hard in Centenary Woodland with Payback but after certain comments from a Cllr he is not willing to work with payback in the woodland at the present time.

Exclusion of the Press & Public, pursuant of section 1 of the public bodies (Admission to Meetings) act 1960.

57-26. To Discuss the concerns relating to Centenary Woodlands

Cllr Birch stated his concerns that if he and payback stopped working in the Woodland it will cost the Parish Council money to employ contractors to do the work. This has come about because one Cllr made several comments about the way the work has been done, this Cllr has not been in the woodland since the work started two years ago, and Cllr Birch does not want any involvement between this Cllr. and Payback going forward.

There was some discussion from the other Cllrs on what had gone on to upset Cllr Birch.

Cllr Hogben will visit the site with Cllr Birch to apologise to Payback, and he will also come into the office and draft a letter to the other Cllr.

Date for next meeting. 8th April 2026

Meeting closed at 20.47

DRAFT

Signed: Date: 8th April 2026