

**Minutes of General Meeting at 7pm on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2026 at Broad Oak Village Hall**

**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 Ann Davies  
Ken Dekker Clerk, Ken Bullock Cemetery Superintendent and Alan Webster Caretaker

1 resident in attendance

**58-26. Apologies for absence**

CCC Cllr H McKenzie and Cllr A Bubb

**Public questions.**

There were no questions from the public

**59-26. 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.**

Cllr's Davies and Warner have an interest in item 70-26

**60-26. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2026.**

Proposed by Cllr Gartland and seconded by Cllr Betts all in agreement

**61-26. Matters arising from minutes of the Parish Meeting on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2026.**

Cllr Taylor thanked the Clerk for correcting the minutes and stated that at a previous meeting it was agreed that Cllrs could ask questions regarding items at previous meetings.

**62-26. Chairman and Councillors reports.**

Cllr Warner stated that Café Hope was doing fine and that the first Tea dance was well supported and she also thanked Cllr Betts for all her help.

Cllr Birch stated that payback have been working on the two paths in the dog walking area and Centenary Woodland.

He also thanked Broad Oak Chapel for the donation towards some tools for payback.

Cllr Taylor stated that she had reported that a Beryl Bike had been found in the playpark to the Clerk.

She also reported to the Clerk that she had confronted a person in the playpark with a dog that this was not allowed. The Clerk has reported this to CCC.

Cllr Betts Stated that she had been helping at the school with the organisation of No Mow May.

She has also set up another Defib training course for local businesses, this is to be run on 18<sup>th</sup> May in the Social Centre.

Cllr Spence has been trying to organise the first meeting of the LGR working group.

Cllr dekker stated that she had sent the report to all regarding the Assets working group and that she would talk about this later in the meeting.

She stated that she had requested the Clerk contact CCC again regarding the meeting with them and the assets group.

Cllr Hogben stated that he had been contacted by Bretts in regard to Westbere Butts redevelopment. He asked Cllrs if they would like to come to this meeting which at present, he could not confirm a date. Cllrs requested that he let them know when this is to happen and who is going to be at the meeting.

## **63-26. County and District Councillors reports**

CCC Cllrs report

Draft Local Plan and Transport Strategy

The Draft Local Plan and Transport Strategy has been sent to a Regulation 19 Consultation before being sent to the Planning Inspector. We voted in favour of this action at Full Council because the plans deliver on all three of the pledges that we made to voters when getting elected. Please respond to the consultations here:

<https://news.canterbury.gov.uk/.../canterbury-district.../>

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Annual Parking Review

The Annual Parking Review occurred which has had mainly good outcomes for Sturry Ward fed into by residents as the consultation was clearly listened to.

Key outcomes: Free parking and pavement parking bans have been extended on Sturry High Street and the proposed double yellows on the junction of Park View and Broadlands have been amended to preserve

parking for disabled residents.

### Changes to Planning Committee speaking rules

At Governance Committee, it was agreed that a recommendation will go to Full Council to allow people to speak more than once on each item at the Planning Committee.

### Purchasing and protecting Old Park

Negotiations are underway for Canterbury City Council to purchase Old Park from the MOD to protect this precious green space into the future. We are monitoring this.

### New playground funding

The council has been awarded £280,000 from the government to create new playparks or improve existing ones. **Where do you think this funding would be well spent?**

### Council tenant engagement

Tenants of council homes are invited to an engagement hub in the Hersden Community Centre at 10.30am on Friday 1st May.

### Park and Ride over the Easter Holidays

Park and Ride services costs only £1 over the Easter Holidays.

## **64-26. Community Warden report.**

## **65-26. Village Caretaker's report.**

- Annual Leave from 2/3/26 to 5/3/26 returned to work on 9/3/26
- Litter pick in the Playpark.
- Litter picked the footpaths in Sturry and Broad Oak
- Notice boards
- Work in the cemetery
- Supermarket minibus runs
- Cemetery maintenance
- Café Hope minibus run
- Work in Park View
- Public toilets repaired door lock on gent's toilet
- Maintenance around parish
- Café Hop afternoon tea minibus run
- Looked after toilets for Sandra whilst on holiday

- Took minibus for MOT and service

## 66-26. 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 completed entering the details of the clergy carrying out the service, where this is available. I have added 1508 names of clergy to the records. We have 200 individual names of Clergy in the database.

### St Nicholas Churchyard:

I have created an electronic register of the graves in St Nicholas churchyard by completing the manual entry of 473 Burial (288 Monument) records. This will support the inspection and testing of the monuments.

### Cemetery Burials:

Since my last report, we have had no burials.

### Cemetery Repairs:

No progress, the matter is still with the underwriters.

### Cemetery Other:

The Law commission has published its final report (386 pages) following the conclusion of the public consultation into Burial and Cremation law reform. Some of the key findings is as much as they impact Sturry Cemetery are:-

- That every burial ground owner and/or operator should be required to maintain their burial ground in good order appropriate to its current use.
- The minimum depth of any 'full' burial be reduced to two feet, irrespective of coffin type and soil conditions. (*Currently 3 ft*)
- That 6" of separating soil between 'full' burials should apply across all burial grounds, with exceptions made where multiple burials are made at the same time. (*We already comply*)
- Burial and memorial rights to be made in writing on every occasion and provided within 2 months of purchase (excluding Churchyards). (*Will need to clarify if handing out our regs book meets this obligation.*)
- A statutory register of pre-24-week pregnancy remains for burial, replacing its current, non-statutory equivalent. (*Historically these burials were not recognised, but more recent ones have been recorded*)
- Both grave reclamation and reuse powers to be applied for via the Secretary of State or Welsh Minister, on a case-by-case basis following a prescribed plan and consultation on each occasion. (*Unlikely to impact us for decades*)
- A minimum period of 100 years (rising from 75) having elapsed in order for burial rights to be extinguished or grave reuse to be considered. (*Unlikely to impact us for decades*)

For clarity, the points above (and within the final report) are recommendations at this current stage. A draft Bill will follow in due course (2028+).

## **67-26. Clerks Report.**

General enquiries dealt with from residents.

The Smaller Authorities' Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP) has issued its 2026/27 edition of the Practitioners' Guide.

Please note that this edition applies to Annual Governance and Accountability Returns (AGARs) in respect of the financial year commencing on or after 1 April 2026 and ending on 31 March 2027.

This year's guide has a few changes which are detailed some are below.

- guide retitled as '2026/27' edition to reflect the financial year it applies to rather than the publication year
- an update to the definition of 'Smaller Authority' in accordance with The Local Audit (Amendment of Definition of Smaller Authority) Regulations 2025
- smaller authorities being able to submit their AGAR data electronically via a digital portal as of April 2027
- a new objective added within the Internal Audit checklist to state that during the year 'The authority complied with laws, regulations & proper practices relating to digital and data compliance.'

The school have agreed to the date of 22<sup>nd</sup> 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. I have a speaker pencilled in as well. I would like some Cllrs to assist with the refreshments.

Usual administration duties.

The AGAR has arrived and I will be starting work on this in preparation for our internal Audit on 16<sup>th</sup> April. I will be presenting the AGAR to the Council at the meeting in June. I can then return it to the External Auditors before the deadline of 30<sup>th</sup> June.

Two Cllrs and two employees will be attending First Aid courses in April

I have been in contact with CCC regarding setting up a meeting with them regarding the acquisition of assets, I am still awaiting a reply from them with a date.

## **68-26. Church Report.**

The Friends of St Nicholas are arranging a May Fair on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May from 1100 – 1500. Setting up from 1000.

This event is to celebrate the co-operation between the Church, Parish Council and members of local groups, in developing the Milner ground into a Community Orchard and peaceful area with emphasis on biodiversity.

All groups who have helped have been invited to have a stall and hopefully will help with the setting up etc.

In addition, on the Sunday afternoon Ian Swatman and Jonathan Duke are to present “The Sounds of Reeds”, a journey through light classics and jazz tunes. Tickets £10.00.

They will play from 3-3.40 and then have an interval commencing again at 4.10 – 4.40.

There will be a raffle at each of these events and raffle prizes will be appreciated perhaps you might be able to contribute a prize or two.

We wish to put on record our sincere and grateful thanks to Councillor Steve Birch who has been a powerhouse of ideas help and shoulders to the wheel stuff. He put up most of the bird boxes, sorted rubbish and dealt with people. Thank you Steve.

The glass doors have been fitted but will need to be replaced due to scratching within the glass.

No news of a new incumbent so far.

## **69-26. Finance.**

### **a) Payments for approval.**

Cllr Davies requested that the Clerk look at the grounds maintenance contract to see if the contractor is to cut the hedge at the Guides and Scouts boarder. She also raised the point that the weeding of borders has not been done correctly and that there was a question of whether they should be edging the paths.

If this work has not been done, then payments need to be adjusted at the end of the year.

£2027.12	Bourne to Garden	Grounds Maintenance
£830.40	British Red Cross	4 x First Aid Courses
£60	Sturry CE Primary School	Hall Hire
£252.85	Westleyhire	Toilet Hire Cemetery x 2
£40	PW Needham	Window cleaners x 3
£100	Canterbury City Council	License to use land of Mill Rd

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

**70-26. To Discuss and agree Grant application from SABORA.**

No representation from SABORA so this item was not completed

**71-26. To Discuss any ideas put to Cllrs at last months meeting on responsibilities.**

Cllr Betts explained why this had been brought back to Council and asked Cllr's if they have any thoughts on this and if this was an idea worth pursuing. Cllr Taylor stated that she thinks it would not work and requested that Cllrs on Outside bodies be resumed at next months meeting. She also stated that all Cllrs should have their personal telephone numbers and photos on the web site and on flyers in the notice boards. The Clerk said this can be done but Cllrs have to come into the office to have their photos taken.

**72-26. To Discuss and agree Quotes for dog walking area and park benches.**

Cllr Gartland explained that at the time when the dog agility equipment was orders they did not have the tunnel available to order and that there has been a space left for this to be placed in the with the rest of the equipment. He also stated that there was a need for more benches in the playpark, the Cllrs requested that there needed to be more research done on the type of benches needed. Cllr Gartland said that he would do this and also look into picnic benches as well.

The Council agreed to go ahead with the tunnel, this was proposed by Cllr Gartland and seconded by Cllr Warner, Cllr Taylor abstained and the rest agreed.

**73-26. Update from Assets working group.**

SPC Councillors on this Working Party

Cllr Betts  
Cllr Spence  
Cllr Dekker  
Cllr Taylor  
Cllr Warner

All Councillors present. Cllr Spence attended via Zoom.

Meeting began with accepting agreements to support Group terms of reference. As this is a WP no official T of R's are required but a short list of 'agreements' was suggested (see end of report).

All members accepted these agreements except Cllr Taylor who, as yet, has not confirmed her agreement.

The pros and cons of asset acquisition were discussed weighing up the benefits to the community and the financial implications of assets to secure funding from authorities against the costs to the Parish Council of maintenance, insurance etc. All community assets will not generate monies (therefore income to the PC) and currently it is unlikely CCC will 'offer' this funding commitment/interest of any asset to SPC.

It was agreed the Clerk should contact the relevant CCC officer to set up an informal meeting ref. suitable acquisition for SPC.

This was done on Tues 24<sup>th</sup> March.

We await a reply from CCC.

Agreement for WP on Assets and Acquisitions.

1. We agree that we will work together to identify possible assets
2. We agree that this WP will prioritise the needs of the residents and understand the financial implications of acquiring said assets
3. We agree that we will regularly report to full SPC on the status of asset(s) acquisition and progress made with the Authority or organisation
4. We agree that we will research and share any relevant information ref possible/ongoing assets
5. We agree that we will undertake any relevant training e.g. Asset Acquisition and Negotiation with arrangements for courses/seminars made via the Parish Clerk
6. We agree that we will attend as many meetings as possible and that records will be kept of each meeting for the sake of transparency, accountability and decisions made to be brought before SPC for agreement
7. We agree that each member of the WP will take an opportunity to lead a meeting and be responsible for reporting back to SPC
8. We agree that items to be discussed will be shared as early as possible with the rest of the WP so that any relevant preparation/research/reading can be carried out by participants.
9. We agree that all members of the WP will conduct business adhering to the Code of Conduct laid down for LG Cllrs.

Report date - 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026

Cllr Dekker also stated that the Clerk had again contacted CCC and that the following had been sent through from CCC:

I'm consulting with colleagues to understand any considerations, plans etc. from their relevant service perspectives.

Also, with it having recently been the end of the leave year here at CCC, a number of people have been/are on leave and furthermore, it is also the end of the financial year, so many people are focussed on end of year financial processes and close down.

As such, I'm still waiting on a number of responses. I'll chase those responses up now but would suggest that, to manage expectations, Councillors are advised that any meeting is likely to be towards the end of the month now I'm afraid.

**75-26. Are the Council having a table at the May Fair 9<sup>th</sup> May at the Church.**

It was agreed that the Council would have a table at the Fare.

**74-26. Planning Applications.**

**CA/26/00344**

**CA/26/00345**

**CA/26/00346**

**CA/26/00347**

Cllr Davies said that she would have a look at the planning applications and probably formulate a response. The Clerk informed her that the comments had to be in by 10<sup>th</sup> April.

**Date for next meeting.** 13<sup>th</sup> May 2026

The meeting was closed at 20:00