

**Minutes of General Meeting at 7pm on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 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 George Spence, Cllr Ashley Bubb and Cllr Ann Davies  
Ken Dekker Clerk and Ken Bullock Cemetery Superintendent.

3 residents in attendance

**75-26. Apologies for absence.** CCC Cllrs McKenzie and Moses and Cllr Gartland

**76-26. Election of Chairman of the Parish Council for the year**

Cllr Birch was proposed by Cllr Bubb and seconded by Cllr Taylor.  
The vote was as follows:  
7 For Cllrs Bubb, Taylor, Spence, Rai Warner Davies and Birch.  
3 Abstained Cllrs Hogben, Dekker and Betts.

**77-26. Election of Vice Chairman of the Parish Council for the year.**

Cllr Hogben was proposed by Cllr Taylor and seconded by Cllr Bubb.  
The vote was as follows:  
8 For Cllrs Taylor, Bubb, Spence Warner, Rai, Davies, Birch and Hogben.  
2 Abstained Cllrs Betts and Dekker

**78-26. Appointment of members to existing committees.**

**a) Members of The Planning Committee.**

Cllr warner  
Cllr rai  
Cllr Spence

**b) Reserve member of the Planning Committee (Optional).**

Cllr Bubb

**c) Chair to be elected at first meeting of committee.**

**d) Members of the Staffing Committee.**

Cllr Betts  
Cllr Spence  
Cllr Bubb  
Cllr Taylor  
Birch

**e) Reserve member of the Staffing Committee (Optional).**

Cllr Hogben

**f) Chair to be elected at first meeting of committee.**

**g) Members of the Finance Committee.**

Cllr Birch

Cllr Bubb

Cllr Spence

**h) Reserve member of the Finance Committee (Optional).**

Cllr Taylor

**i) Chair to be elected at first meeting of committee.**

**j) Members of the Events Committee.**

Cllr Birch

Cllr Hogben

Cllr Warner

**k) Reserve member of the Events Committee (Optional)**

Cllr Rai

Cllr Spence

**l) Chair to be elected at the first meeting of the Committee.**

**79-26. Review of the terms of reference for the following committees.**

TO NOTE none of these have changed since last year.

a) Finance Committee.

b) Planning Committee.

c) Staffing Committee.

d) Events Committee

These have all been reviewed and will remain unchanged

**80-26. Review of representation on external bodies and arrangements for reporting back.**

a) Ayre sur la Lys Twinning Association. This has been disbanded

b) Sturry Social Centre. Cllr Rai

c) Broad Oak Village Hall. Cllr Birch

d) Kent Association of Local Councils. Cllrs Hogben and Taylor

e) SABORA Cllr Betts

f) Sturry Church Cllrs Spence and Betts

g) Bloomin Marvelous Cllr Birch

**81-26. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the full council up to and including the next Annual General Meeting of full council.**

The meetings will be on the second Wednesday of the month with a break in August and they will alternate between Sturry Social Centre and Broad Oak Village Hall

**82-26. Review of the council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies.**

Annual membership of Society of Local Council Clerks for the Clerk. £240 for the year. Proposed by Cllr Davies and seconded by Cllr Betts with one abstention

Annual membership to ICCM for the Cemetery Superintendent. £110 Proposed by Cllr Bubb and seconded by Cllr Taylor with one abstention

Annual membership of KALC. This was proposed by Cllr Betts and seconded by Cllr Davies and would be acceptable as long as the cost is not more than a 5% increase on last year.

**83-26. To review and adopt the Financial Regulations and Standing Orders.**

- a) **Financial Regulations** – TO NOTE that there are no changes to the NALC Model Financial Regulations.  
Proposed by Cllr Hogben and seconded by Cllr Warner with one abstention
- b) **Standing Orders** – TO NOTE there are no changes to the NALC model Standing Orders  
Proposed by Cllr Taylor and seconded by Cllr Hogben with one abstention

**84-26 To review and adopt the following policies and procedures.**

**IT Policy**  
**Complaints Procedure**  
**Policy for dealing with the press and media**  
**Communications Policy**  
**Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy**  
**Dignity at Work Policy**  
**Appointment of Committees and Working Groups Policy.**

As several Cllrs have not read these before the meeting they will be brought back to the next meeting.

**85-26. To Confirm that arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks.**

Deferred till next month

**86-26. To review the inventory of land and other assets including buildings and office equipment.**

Deferred till next month

**Public questions.**

One resident spoke about the grant application later on in the agenda

The Chair moved forward to items 98.99 and 97 with the agreement of the Cllrs.

Cllr Bubb left the meeting at 19:54.

**87-26. 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.**

Cllrs Davies and Warner stated they had an interest in item 98-26

**88-26. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2026.**

Proposed by Cllr. Warner and seconded by Cllr. Hogben with one abstention.

**89-26. Matters arising from the minutes of the Parish meeting on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2026.**

Cllr Davies asked what had been done regarding the reduction of payments to Bourne to Garden for the missed work, the Clerk stated that he had contacted them regarding this matter, it was agreed by the Council to deduct said monies at the end of the year.

**90-26. Chairman and Councilors reports.**

Cllr Birch stated that he has been working with payback and that both footpaths are about 80% complete.

Cllr Warner stated that she has been busy with Café Hope.

Cllr Davies stated that she had attended the Church fete.

Cllr Betts stated that there is going to be a defibrillator course on Monday in the Social Centre

Cllr Taylor stated that she had attended the Church fete and was upset that only four Cllrs had turned up.

Cllr Dekker stated that she had attended a meeting at the Guild Hall with reference to CGR and LGR. She also has attended a training course on finance with reference to LGR

Cllr Hogben stated that he had attend a refresher First Aid course.

## 91-26. County and District Councilors reports.

### KCC

#### 1. Reform UK — First Year Delivering for Kent

As we reach the first anniversary of Reform UK Administration taking control of Kent County Council in May 2025, I am proud to report on the genuine progress our administration has delivered. We came into office with a promise to do things differently — to put Kent's residents first, deliver better value for money, and protect the services that matter most. After twelve months in office, we are delivering on that promise.

**Strong Financial Management** — In our first year we inherited the existing debt of £732 million in May 2025. I'm delighted to tell you that we have, in the course of our first year in charge, reduced KCC's debt by £142 million to £590 million, saving over £1 million in debt interest payments in revenue every year. We cancelled £39.5 million of future spend associated with Net Zero whilst setting a balanced budget with no extra borrowing and increased investment in Adult Social Care, Children's Services, and Highways. Our Council Tax increase of just 3.99% was lower than 86% of comparable councils across England.

**Protecting Community Services** — A third of our libraries were threatened with closure under the previous Conservative administration. We have saved every single one of them. Country Parks, Community Wardens and School Crossing Staff have equally been protected. These services were under genuine threat before Reform UK took control.

**Education Excellence** — 98% of Early Years settings in Kent are rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. 96% of pupils secured a place at one of their preferred schools. 48,000+ children with SEND are receiving support across the county.

**Supporting Kent Business** — We produced Kent's first ever Commercial Strategy, directed £55 million more in contracts to Kent companies, and provided enhanced support to 500 local supplier businesses. This is about keeping Kent's money working in Kent's economy.

## 2. Local Government Reorganisation

The Government's public consultation on LGR in Kent and Medway closed on 26th March 2026, with a decision expected during summer 2026 and new unitary authorities anticipated from April 2028. KCC's preferred option remains **Option 1A — a single unitary 'Kent Council'**, supported by three area assemblies. This delivers the fastest financial payback (3.3 years), annual savings of £69m, and cumulative savings of £457m over 10 years. It keeps Kent together and supports the less wealthy areas. There is a real risk with all the other options on the table that the east Kent coast will be split off from the rest of Kent and could face huge council tax rises to pay for the core services that residents depend on. I will keep all parish / town councils fully informed as the Government's response becomes clear.

## 3. Primary School Offers — Excellent News

Excellent news for Kent families — 98% of pupils have been offered one of their preferred primary schools for September 2026. This tremendous achievement reflects the hard work of KCC's Education team and the quality of our excellent Kent schools. Families who were not offered their first choice can join waiting lists by 30th April 2026, with appeals lodged by 18th May 2026. KCC will hold a second round of offers on 21st May 2026 for any spaces that become available.

## 4. Highways — New Contractor from 1st May

A significant milestone for Kent's highways took place on Thursday 1st May 2026, when Ringway Infrastructure Services officially began its role as KCC's principal highways contractor under a new Highways Term Maintenance Contract. This marks the start of a new era for Kent's roads and represents a major long-term investment in the quality, reliability and resilience of our highways infrastructure.

Ringway, a Kent-based business, replaces Amey, who have delivered highways services in Kent for over the past 12 years. Following a rigorous and competitive procurement process, Ringway was selected to deliver better workmanship, enhanced accountability, and improved value for money for Kent's council taxpayers. The new contract covers the full range of highways services including winter gritting, pothole repairs, bridge maintenance, drainage works, road markings, street lighting, and vegetation management across Kent's extensive 5,400-mile highway network.

### **Key improvements residents can expect include:**

**Faster repairs** — Streamlined processes mean potholes, drainage faults and other highway defects will be fixed more quickly, reducing disruption to road users and improving road quality across the county.

**Clear performance targets** — Ringway will be held to account against measurable performance standards, ensuring consistently reliable service delivery and genuine accountability to Kent residents.

**Better value for money** — Transparent pricing structures mean every pound spent on highways is tracked and focused on delivering visible results that residents will see and benefit from in their daily lives.

**24/7 emergency coverage** — Round-the-clock response capability for emergencies, severe weather events and urgent highway safety issues, ensuring Kent's roads remain safe and accessible at all times.

As we have Ringway as our new principal highways contractor, better weather for works to be carried out also funds available in our budget for highway repairs I urge you to report potholes and defects that require attention, to report highway defects at <https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-or-track-a-problem-on-the-road-or-pavement>

If any issue you have reported in our division is not being progressed promptly under the new contractor, please contact me directly with the relevant reference number at [linden.kemkaran@kent.gov.uk](mailto:linden.kemkaran@kent.gov.uk) and I will ensure it receives the attention it deserves.

## 5. KCC Services & Campaigns

**Forever Active Kent** — Launched 1st April 2026, helping residents aged 50+ stay mobile and independent. Community groups can apply for grant funding for activity sessions. **Mental Health Grants** — The 2026 Kent & Medway Better Mental Health Fund offers grants from £500 to £10,000. Email [suicideprevention@kent.gov.uk](mailto:suicideprevention@kent.gov.uk). **Family Hubs** — Free courses at <https://loom.ly/Kyd-Wbw>. **Mental Health Support (24/7)** — Text SHOUT to 85258 or call 0800 107 0160.

## 6. Canterbury Stroke relocation

I have been working hard with our public health teams and the HOSC committee members regarding the relocation of the stroke services at Kent and Canterbury being moved to William Harvey Hospital. Having gathered all the information that had been supplied most of which was outdated I worked with the HOSC team to produce a list of recommendations that they could use to put forward a motion. This motion was put forward and passed unanimously.

The HOSC committee has agreed that:

- Canterbury should be retained as the permanent East Kent HASU.
- NHS Kent and Medway and NHS England should publish clear evidence justifying any alternative model.

- A full equality impact assessment should be completed, with specific focus on Thanet, coastal East Kent, deprivation, and transport access.
- Side-by-side modelling should be published comparing Canterbury retention with the proposed alternative, including the impact on Ashford and Thanet.
- Independent assessment should be provided on travel time, ambulance resilience, and access to family support, rehabilitation, and discharge planning.
- The ICB should explain why an existing award-winning service in Canterbury cannot be retained as the permanent East Kent HASU.

Both I, the other East Kent Reform UK members, HOSC will continue applying pressure on the ICB on this issue and working cross parties with our local MPs. The full meeting is available to view on the KCC website.

### 7. A299 Thanet Way

The A299 Thanet Way will start having resurfacing works commencing on the 1<sup>st</sup> June through till the 21<sup>st</sup> July 2026, this will enable the 50mph to be dropped once the works are complete. This will involve road closures, but this will be over night to minimise disruption.

### 8. Shalloak Rd / Roadworks

Prior to the roadworks / road closure at Shalloak Road I was informed by highways that there were no “planned” roadworks due to take place, including the removal of the temporary traffic lights on the A28 Sturry Link Rd project. However, there is still a number of urgent works which have been taking place. I totally understand resident’s frustrations, but urgent works are outside of KCCs control. This does not mean the issues being created are being ignored and I am regularly highlighting the issues caused to the Highways team. Yesterday I had another meeting with the highways engagement team and have been assured that these concerns have been raised with the operations team. I am awaiting their response and will share with all Parish / Town Councils once I hear back.

**CCC**

### **Milner Court Crossing**

Harry attended Sturry’s Annual Parish Meeting and listened to what Network Rail had to say about their intentions to terminate the Milner Court Crossing. We won’t repeat what they said, as you were there, but we will outline what we are doing now.

We wrote to a colleague on KCC who provided us with the details that we sent to the Clerk recently, essentially saying that Network Rail does need to apply to KCC for the closure and that there will be a consultation. We are carefully considering next steps based on the information from KCC but will continue to oppose the closure because the residents have made it clear that is what they want and we are on your side. Any feedback or suggestions from the parish council is very welcome – let's work together.

### **Dengrove Park**

The previous Compliance Notice served on the owners of the site due to multiple failings on the site was withdrawn due to a legal challenge. We have received confirmation that a renewed Compliance Notice is being worked up, one that is legally airtight. There is also to be further site visits by one of the officers working on the case. We are working alongside Roger Gale MP to put consistent pressure on this issue.

### **Missed Bins on Shalloak Road**

Residents on Shalloak Road, including Bluebell Woods and Dengrove Park, have been concerned about how their waste will be collected during the two-month closure of Shalloak Road. We have made multiple inquiries with officers to no response for over a week, so it has now been escalated to the Cabinet Member and Director of Place for oversight, and we are hoping to be able to provide answers for residents promptly.

### **SOS Whitstable**

Harry attended the SOS Whitstable protest to join with colleagues, community groups and residents from across the Canterbury District and beyond to oppose the obscene level of pollution into rivers and the sea locally and call on Southern Water to clean up their act. There has been over 10 hours' worth of sewage discharged from the Wastewater Treatment Plant in Westbere and the Combined Sewer Overflow on Fordwich Road in Sturry so far this year. So, he went to speak up for local residents and nature.

### **Training on Sewerage and Wastewater Management**

The Leader of the Council and Head of Planning put together a training event for councillors to learn more about planning processes involved with sewerage and wastewater management. We both attended this training and learned about the process planning officers take when reviewing applications and how provisions in the Draft Local Plan will make a difference in terms of infrastructure delivery. This knowledge, as intended, will be taken into our roles when working on planning-related matters.

## **Housing Committee**

As a member of the Cabinet Advisory Committee on Housing, Harry reviewed the new Social Housing Consumer Standards Service Improvement Strategy provided by officers at the last meeting which has now been referred to Cabinet for approval. It is a robust strategy that meets the scale of the challenge as last year the Regulator of Social Housing downgraded CCC to C3 meaning we had serious failings in our social housing stock. We are determined to change this.

### **Relevant government policies:**

**Right to Buy** – the government is shaking up Right to Buy so that tenants now need to live in their council home for 10 years, up from 3, before they can buy it, new-build council homes can't be sold for at least 35 years and the discount to purchase a council home through Right to Buy has been reduced.

**Council Tax** – the government is introducing a new responsibility for councils to work with residents who fall behind on council tax payments to set realistic, and sustainable repayment plans rather than take overly harsh enforcement action. Also, council tax payments will be spread over 12 months but with the option to keep it spread over 10 months if residents prefer it that way.

### **92-26. Community Warden report.**

No report

### **93-26. Village Caretaker's report.**

- Supermarket run for the minibus
- Minibus tail lift inspection
- First Aid course
- Installation of new Cemetery Sign assisted by K Bullock
- 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
- Took minibus for a clean inside and out.
- Investigated fly tipping of green waste in dog walking area and removal of said waste.
- Maintenance around parish
- Café Hop afternoon tea minibus run

- Blocked of hole in fencing into dog walking area to stop dogs getting into the garden of a resident.
- Repaired leak on basin in public toilets.
- Litter picked Forge Green

## **94-26. Cemetery Superintendent's Report.**

### **Admin Work:**

I have continued to support the resolution of general enquiries.

### **Cemetery Database:**

After 3+ years of work, I have completed the creation of a complete electronic version of Sturry Cemetery's Grave Space, Grave Purchase and Burial registers. All previously missing database records that we hold in paper form have now been entered into the database. Whilst there is still missing detail on some records, that is because we do not have the data.

### **St Nicholas Churchyard:**

I have completed a visual inspection of St Nicholas Churchyard monuments. I have identified xx monuments that need further investigation and possible repairs.

### **Cemetery Burials:**

Since my last report, we have had no burials. I have one scheduled burial.

### **Cemetery Repairs:**

No progress, the matter is still with the underwriters.

### **Cemetery Other:**

As per our 5 year plan, a new Cemetery sign has been erected.

We have had to call in the tree surgeon to cut down a dead tree in the Cemetery, which posed a potential danger to the public.

## **95-26. Clerks Report.**

General enquiries dealt with from residents.

Usual administration duties.

Our APM was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> April with a very good turn out this year, we had one speaker and a representative from Network Rail also several of the groups from in and around Sturry spoke as well. I hope to try and do the same next year with possibly more of the local groups participating.

I have working on getting all the end of year paperwork ready for this meeting.

The annual inspections for the fire extinguishers and the PAT testing have been done. We will have to get a new fire extinguisher next year to meet requirements.

Due to personal reasons, I have had to have the internal audit moved to 5<sup>th</sup> June, this will still give me time to bring the AGAR to Junes meeting and submit it before the deadline of the 30<sup>th</sup> June.

I have completed most of the AGAR paperwork and will require the Finance Committee to meet before the meeting in June to go over the AGAR before it is presented to full Council

We now have three qualified first aiders on the Council, Cllr J Hogben, Cemetery Superintendent K Bullock and our caretaker A Webster.

## **96-26. Finance**

### **Presentation for approval**

- 1. End of year accounts 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2026.**
- 2. Balance sheet as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026.**
- 3. Income and expenditure sheet as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026.**

Cllr Davies stated that she would like a spread sheet informing the Council of were the monies had been spent across the area, she was happy with final figures that had been presented.

### **Payments for approval**

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

£2027.12	Bourne to Garden	Grounds Maintenance
£261.42	Westleyhire	Toilet hire for cemetery
£40	David Hards	Mole Catcher
£110	ICCM	Membership renewal
£21.98	Amazon	Football Goal Ties

**Accounts for approval and signature.** Two Cllrs signed

## **97-26. To discuss and agree on which Cllrs are to attend the meeting in the Guildhall on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2026.**

There was a discussion on who would be attending this with the following Cllrs going: Cllrs Spence, Rai and Warner.

**98-26. To Discuss and agree Grant application from SABORA.**

The representative from SABORA went through the application and several Cllrs asked her questions. It was agreed to give the grant of £500. This was proposed by Cllr Bubb and seconded by Cllr Hogben with one abstention

**99-26. To Discuss and agree Bretts proposal.**

The proposal was explained by Cllr Hogben which was to lease the land on a pepper corn rent for 50 years. It was proposed to agree to the lease subject to the terms of the lease being acceptable and the planning application being successful. This was proposed by Cllr Bubb and seconded by Cllr Taylor with one abstention and one Cllr not voting.

**Date of next meeting.**

**10<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

Meeting closed at 20:27

DRAFT