



DRAFT Minutes of the Full Council Meeting of Sturry Parish Council
which took place on Wednesday 9th September 2026 at the Sturry Social Centre.

Meeting opened at 7pm

- 134-26 To note those, present and record any apologies:**
Present: Cllr Steve Birch (Chairman), Cllr John Hogben (Vice Chair), Cllr Ann Davies, Cllr Chris Gartland, Cllr Gill Betts, Cllr Kathleen Warner and Cllr George Spence

Also In Attendance: Matthew J. Bridger (Locum Clerk & RFO), Alan (Caretaker), Ken (Cemetery Superintendent) and Cllr Mark Mulvihill.

Apologies: Cllr Dil Rai (work commitments), Cllr Ashley Bubb (no reason provided).

Resolved: That the reason for absence be accepted in accordance with Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 135-26 Notification of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI), Other Significant Interests (OSI's) or a Voluntary Interest:**
There were no Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI), Other Significant Interest (OSI), or Voluntary Interest made.
- 136-26 To consider and adopt the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 8th July 2026:**
The Council considered the minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 8th July 2026.

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 8th July 2026 be approved as a true and correct record for signing by the Chair, subject to an agreed amendment of Anne Deckker removal as attendee. (**Proposed:** Cllr Hogben, **Seconded:** Cllr Gartland) **Carried unanimously.**

Action: Clerk to publish signed minutes on the Parish Council website.
- 137-26 To consider and adopt the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on Monday 20th July 2026:**

Item Removed: Meeting was cancelled; no minutes to adopt.
- 138-26 Public Open Session:**
No members of the public wished to speak.



139-26 Monthly Reports.

The Council received and noted information and reports relevant to the Council:

1. Correspondence Received:

- **CPR & Defibrillator Training:** The Clerk presented correspondence regarding a free CPR and Defibrillator training session for residents offered by Kent Fire & Rescue Service. Agreed to organise a session for October/November 2026 and invite local businesses and residents.
- **Dignity & Respect Policy:** Noted that a review of the Dignity and Respect Policy was requested by Cllr Davies. **Review to be undertaken by Cllr Betts and Cllr Davies.**
- **Civility & Respect Pledge:** The Clerk presented correspondence regarding the Civility and Respect Pledge. **Resolved:** That Sturry Parish Council sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge. (**Proposed:** Cllr Warner, **Seconded:** Cllr Hogben) **Carried unanimously.**
- **Payroll Outsourcing:** The Clerk presented correspondence regarding payroll processing options and proposals to outsource to an external provider. **Resolved:** That the Council outsource payroll services and set up an account with DH Payroll. (**Proposed:** Cllr Spence, **Seconded:** Cllr Betts) **Carried unanimously.**
- **Council Logo Modernisation:** The Clerk presented a digitised, modernised version of the existing Council logo. **Resolved:** That the digital, modernised Council logo design be approved for official use. (**Proposed:** Cllr Betts, **Seconded:** Cllr Spence) **Carried unanimously.**

2. Clerk's Report: Submitted a written report (**taken as read**) (**Report attached to minutes as a supplementary document**)

3. Councillors Training / Courses attended: Clerk to circulate upcoming dates for 'Nuts and Bolts' training. Cllr Betts reported on Asset Management training, emphasising the need for effective long-term planning, Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) preparations, and budgeting for devolution and professional fees. **Action:** Clerk to include a £5,000 provision for devolution and professional fees as a draft line item for Council consideration during the 2027/28 budget planning process.

4. Chairman and Councillors reports:

- **Cllr Gartland:** *Reported on a school laser light event requesting Council lighting equipment (awaiting details); noted installation of new park benches and completion of the dog park (thanking Cllr Hogben for his donation).*



- **Cllr Warner:** Attended the Sabora summer event, AI site visit, library coffee morning at St Nicholas Church, attended the KCC Warden's meeting at the Coffee Corner, and a site visit to the bridge. Noted the Open-Air Cinema was very well received.
 - **Cllr Hogben:** Attending KALC meeting regarding Kent-wide parish twinning; reported on 1,000 tonnes of fly tipping in Sturry, which was investigated by the Environment Agency, traced locally, cleared, and the site reinstated to Type 1 with a warning issued to the landowner.
 - **Cllr Birch:** Thanked Community Payback for their ongoing work.
5. **County and District Councillors reports:** KCC Cllr. Mark Mulvihill submitted a written report (**taken as read**) and provided oral updates regarding Broad Oak bus service dates. (**Report attached to minutes as a supplementary document**)
- District Councillors Harry McKenzie and Keji Moses submitted a written report (**taken as read**); noted contact regarding proposed parish boundary changes with Fordwich, which Council unanimously supports. (**Report attached to minutes as a supplementary document**)
6. **Community Warden report:** Submitted a written report (**taken as read**) (**Report attached to minutes as a supplementary document**)
7. **Cemetery Superintendent's Report:** Submitted a written report (**taken as read**) (**Report attached to minutes as a supplementary document**)

8. **Report from Committees:**

- **Events Committee:** Report presented by Cllr Gartland and taken as read.

Council considered recommendations:

Outdoor Cinema 2027: Approved holding the event in August 2027 due to daylight constraints in earlier months. (**Proposed:** Cllr Hogben, **Seconded:** Cllr Betts) **Carried unanimously.**

Screen Upgrade: Reserved an upgraded 16m² screen for £2,600.00 with a £300 deposit, coded against **Account 4990 (SUNDRIES)**.

(**Proposed:** Cllr Hogben, **Seconded:** Cllr Betts) **Carried unanimously.**

Christmas Light Competition: Authorised Clerk to announce competition and allocate a maximum budget of up to £2,800.00 to be coded against **Account 4059 (CHRISTMAS LIGHTS)**, with any excess expenditure funded via **Account 4027 (CONTINGENCY)**. (**Proposed:** Cllr Warner, **Seconded:** Cllr Spence) **Carried unanimously.**

Grant Funding: Authorised Clerk to submit formal grant applications to KCC and Canterbury City Council for 2027. (**Proposed:** Cllr Spence, **Seconded:** Cllr Davies) **Carried unanimously.**



- **Staffing Committee:** Cllr Betts reported on summer recess meetings. Noted David was appointed as permanent Clerk but resigned after one week due to another job offer; Matthew Bridger currently acting as Locum Clerk. Official recruitment process to commence following the next Staffing Committee meeting.

140-26 Sturry Scouts Group Grant Application:

The Council considered the grant application submitted by Sturry Scouts Group.

Resolved: That the grant application from Sturry Scouts Group be approved.

(**Proposed:** Cllr Betts, **Seconded:** Cllr Gartland) **Carried unanimously.**

Action: Clerk to process grant payment to Sturry Scouts Group.

141-26 Council Laptop:

The Council reviewed quotations ranging from £149.99 (eBay) to £319.00 (Discount Laptops) for an unused council laptop requested for purchase by Alan (Council Caretaker).

Resolved: That the sale of the surplus council laptop to Alan at market rate (£150) be approved. (**Proposed:** Cllr Spence, **Seconded:** Cllr Warner) **Carried unanimously.**

Action: Clerk to arrange receipt of payment and transfer of hardware and then remove from asset register.

142-26 Document Archive:

The Council reviewed quotations for a fireproof document safe/filing cabinet for council archives.

Resolved: That the safe quotation be approved and purchased, to be allocated to budget line **Account 4031 (OFFICE EXPENSES)**. (**Proposed:** Cllr Davies, **Seconded:** Cllr Gartland) **Carried unanimously.**

Action: Clerk to place order for delivery.

143-26 Bank Account:

The Council considered updating bank signatories.

Resolved: That Cllr Steve Birch and Cllr George Spence be added as additional authorised signatories on the council bank account. (**Proposed:** Cllr Betts, **Seconded:** Cllr Davies) **Carried unanimously.**

Action: Clerk to submit updated mandate to the bank.



- 144-26 Cemetery:** The council considered and agreed the following;
- **Gravestone Safety Works: Resolved:** That the quotation from Richard Marsh for gravestone safety works at St Nicholas Churchyard be approved (**Proposed:** Cllr Hogben, **Seconded:** Cllr Warner) **Carried unanimously.**
 - **Cemetery Insurance Claim:** Update received. Noted that the cemetery is currently underinsured; Clerk is investigating insurance coverage. Claim settlement update noted.
 - **Skip Hire: Resolved:** That the hire of a Cemetery skip be approved to clear accumulated waste. (**Proposed:** Cllr Gartland, **Seconded:** Cllr Betts) **Carried unanimously. Action:** Cemetery Superintendent to ensure skip arrives, is filled, and removed promptly to preserve cemetery aesthetics.
 - **Topsoil Purchase: Resolved:** That the purchase of a 1-ton bag of topsoil for the Cemetery be approved. (**Proposed:** Cllr Warner, **Seconded:** Cllr Spence) **Carried unanimously. Action:** Cemetery Superintendent to issue work order to Richard Marsh, arrange skip delivery/collection, and order topsoil.

- 145-26 Website:** The Clerk provided an update on the current website and presented a report from 3 different suppliers with quotes for a new compliant website.

Resolved: That the proposal from Aubergine262 to construct a new compliant website and transfer hosting be approved, coded against **Account 4045 (IT)**. (**Proposed:** Cllr Warner, **Seconded:** Cllr Hogben) **Carried unanimously.**

Action: Clerk to proceed with Aubergine262 contract onboarding.

- 146-26 Council Office Bin Collection:** The Council discussed waste collection arrangements. **Resolved:** That the current office bin contract with BIFFA be cancelled and office waste disposal be consolidated under the existing Cemetery waste contract. (**Proposed:** Cllr Warner, **Seconded:** Cllr Spence) **Carried unanimously.**

Action: Clerk to issue formal cancellation notice to BIFFA.

- 147-26 Co-option:** The Council noted new vacancy on the Council. **Resolved:** To proceed with co-option to fill vacancies. (**Proposed:** Cllr Gartland, **Seconded:** Cllr Spence) **Carried unanimously.**

Noted that total casual vacancies currently stand at 2 spaces.

Resolved: To establish official Council social media accounts (Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook) to improve resident engagement. (**Proposed:** Cllr Betts, **Seconded:** Cllr Warner) **Carried unanimously.**

Resolved: To advertise casual vacancies via social media and physical noticeboards, with an application deadline of 21st October 2026. (**Proposed:** Cllr Hogben, **Seconded:** Cllr Warner) **Carried unanimously.**

Action: Clerk to publish vacancy notices across noticeboards and digital channels.



148-26 Finance:

1. **Receipts & Payments:** Deferred as Rialtas system access was unavailable.
2. **Payments for Approval:** Resolved: That the schedule of payments be approved. (**Proposed:** Cllr Davies, **Seconded:** Cllr Gartland) **Carried unanimously.**
3. **Purchase of Trees:** Council discussed the purchase of trees and types as well as the Woodland Trust Tree Scheme. **Resolved:** That 10 silver birch trees be purchased at £10.00 each (Total £100.00) for installation by Community Payback. (**Proposed:** Cllr Birch, **Seconded:** Cllr Gartland) **Carried unanimously.**

Action: Clerk to contact the Woodland Trust regarding free/subsidised tree schemes for 2027.

149-26 Procurement Arrangements for Tree Works:

Resolved:

1. To approve the use of Hart Lee Tree Surgery Ltd as sole supplier for tree work without obtaining three competing quotes for each instance, for a period of 6 months in reliance on Financial Regulation 5.13, due to demonstrated value for money, familiarity with council assets, reliability, and absence of viable local alternatives. (**Proposed:** Cllr Warner, **Seconded:** Cllr Gartland) **Carried unanimously.**
2. Noted Financial Regulation 5.13 justification requirements.
3. Noted mandatory £30,000 threshold under Financial Regulation 5.6 remains unaffected.
4. Agreed arrangement shall be reassessed no later than Full Council in March 2027 under Financial Regulation 5.1. (**Proposed:** Cllr Spence, **Seconded:** Cllr Davies) **Carried unanimously.**

Action: Clerk to circulate copy of the Tree Report to all Councillors.

150-26 Procurement Arrangements for Tree Works:

Resolved:

1. To authorise expenditure of £3,430.00 (+ VAT £686.00) with Hart Lee Tree Surgery Ltd across 5 sites (Sturry Anglican Methodist Union Church, Dog Walking Area, Sturry Cemetery, Forge Green, and Centenary Wood), coded against **Account 4023 (MAINTENANCE - GENERAL)**. (**Proposed:** Cllr Betts, **Seconded:** Cllr Gartland) **Carried unanimously.**
2. Noted urgent falling hazard posed by dead trees/limbs within 1-2 months.
3. Resolved under Financial Regulation 5.13 to waive 3 quotes requirement due to hazard urgency and mobilisation efficiency. (**Proposed:** Cllr Hogben, **Seconded:** Cllr Spence) **Carried unanimously.**

Action: Clerk to issue instruction to Hart Lee Tree Surgery Ltd.



- 151-26 Mill Road Bus Shelter:** The Clerk presented quotes for the demolition of Mill Road Bus Shelter.

Resolved: That DDS Group be appointed to carry out the demolition of Mill Road Bus Shelter, coded against Account 4023 (MAINTENANCE - GENERAL). (**Proposed:** Cllr Betts, **Seconded:** Cllr Gartland) **Carried unanimously.**

Action: Clerk to issue contract to DDS Group.

- 152-26 Appointment of Councillors to Committees:**

1. **Events Committee:** No new appointments.
2. **Finance Committee: Resolved:** To increase committee size to 6 members and appoint Cllr Betts, Cllr Davies, and Cllr Hogben. (**Proposed:** Cllr Spence, **Seconded:** Cllr Warner) **Carried unanimously.**
3. **Staffing Committee:** No new appointments.
4. **Planning Committee: Resolved:** That Planning reports be circulated to all Councillors; any items requiring full discussion can be requested for inclusion on the Full Council agenda. (**Proposed:** Cllr Spence, **Seconded:** Cllr Davies) **Carried unanimously.**

- 153-26 Items for inclusion on the next agenda:**

1. Pothole Self-Sufficiency Project

- 154-26 Date of next meeting:**

Wednesday 14th October 2026, 7:00pm at Broad Oak Village Hall

- 155-26 To exclude the public under Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings Act) 1960 and sections 100 & 102 of the Local Government Act 1972:**

Resolved: That under Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings Act) 1960 and sections 100 & 102 of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for closed session items. (**Proposed:** Cllr Birch **Seconded:** Cllr Gartland) **Carried unanimously.**

- 156-26 Westbere Butts:** The Council discussed draft terms of reference and legal requirements regarding land management.

Resolved:

1. That Council approve sharing the draft terms of reference with relevant advisors for review.
2. That expenditure of up to £2,000.00 be authorised to instruct legal counsel and professional bodies regarding the draft terms, to be coded against Account 4017 (CONSULTANCY/CONTRACTS). Three quotations to be circulated to all Councillors for final spending sign-off under delegated powers. (**Proposed:** Cllr Betts, **Seconded:** Cllr Davies) **Carried unanimously.**

Action: Clerk to progress legal review options and obtain quotations.



157-26 Insurance: The Council reviewed ongoing insurance renewal negotiations and asset valuation requirements.

Resolved: To delegate authority to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Council (Cllr Birch), to select and accept the best-value insurance quote prior to policy expiry on 30th September 2026 or convene an Extraordinary Meeting if required.
(**Proposed:** Cllr Spence, **Seconded:** Cllr Davies) **Carried unanimously.**

Action: Clerk to obtain up-to-date asset valuations for Council property and finalise insurance renewal.

23-26 Community Governance Review (CGR) and to consider grouping with a neighbouring Parish Council: The Council evaluated options, financial implications, and administrative impact regarding the Community Governance Review and potential grouping with a neighbouring Parish Council.

Resolved: That Sturry Parish Council does not proceed with a parish merger.
(**Proposed:** Cllr Betts, **Seconded:** Cllr Warner) **Carried unanimously.**

27-26 Close of Meeting.
The meeting closed at 7:51pm.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____



Supplementary Documents

Sturry Parish Council

Cemetery Superintendents Report

Parish Council Meeting 9th September 2026

Admin Work:

I have had to support the resolution of many more general enquiries than usual whilst we had no clerk.

Cemetery Database:

Each time I have to make a change or addition to the database for new work, I check the record concerned for accuracy and make any updates required at that time.

St Nicholas Churchyard:

I have received approval from the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) for the work in St Nicholas Churchyard. As part of this process, I had to write and submit a full proposal for the works, which has been accepted. There are still some hurdles to cross before the work can commence. Not least of which is approval of the Contractors quote (agenda item).

Cemetery Repairs:

I now have the final decision from the underwriters regarding our insurance claim for the damage to the Cemetery path (agenda item).

Cemetery Other:

I am continuing to work with councillor Birch and Payback to further tidy up the cemetery. Payback have cleaned up a significant number of old plots that had become overgrown. These were mainly plots where the owner is buried in the plot so the family cannot be traced. We have also removed two more of the Irish Yews. These were crowding out burials and getting in the way of new and old monuments. The tree survey carried out by the Council identified one tree to be felled and one tree to have a dead limb removed.

The Canterbury Ghurkha Nepalese Community will be placing their new sign for the Ghurkha area in the Cemetery on 7th Sept, as agreed by the Council.

Cemetery Summary:

Cemetery Report	2024	2025	2026	This Report
Burials	9	18	8	3
Cremated Remains	4	9	4	2
ERoB Transfers	3	17	5	2
Deed Purchases	8	9	5	0
Monument Applications	7	18	12	1

STURRY PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk's Report to Full Council

Wednesday 9 September 2026

I took up post on 18 August 2026, working two days per week. This is a summary of the work undertaken since then.

1. Bus Shelter Project (Mill Road)

- Currently writing a grant application to Kent County Council for funding towards a replacement bus shelter on Mill Road, following diagnosis of concrete cancer in the existing structure.
- Obtained quotes for demolition of the current shelter.
- Liaised with Building Control, Planning and Highways to confirm the works can proceed.
- Will speak to the neighbouring property owners on the evening of full council to advise them of the works and obtain contact details so they can be kept updated.

2. Public Footpath CB61 (Network Rail)

- Liaised with Kent County Council and arranged a meeting for councillors on Wednesday 24 September at 11:30am to discuss Network Rail's potential application to divert or extinguish part of Public Footpath CB61 at Sturry.

3. Finance and Payroll

- Ran August payroll and set up SAGE Payroll to issue payslips to staff electronically rather than by print, which has been well received.
- Calculated the 3.33% NALC/SLCC pay award backpay due to all staff, to be paid alongside their pay rise in September's payroll.
- In progress: being added as a signatory to the bank account to authorise payments.
- There is an ongoing issue accessing the finances via Rialtas, which means a bank reconciliation has not yet been possible. I have contacted Rialtas support, and I am treating this as a matter of urgency.
- Ken and I are meeting with Scribe to assess whether their software offers better cost and usability for finance and cemetery management than the system currently in use and will report back at October's meeting.
- Obtained an estimate of the current level of underinsurance and am arranging a new quote alongside renewal quotes from the existing insurer and two other insurance providers.

4. Health, Safety and Risk Management

- Working with Alan to resolve outstanding actions on the play park, playing field and office fire risk assessments.
- Progressing fire risk assessment actions, including ordering a fireproof letterbox with extinguisher, fire safety documentation and cabinet, and fire sealant for gaps around pipework in the office.
- Arranged site visits from three companies to quote for a fire alarm system, fire doors and other items identified in the risk assessment that cannot be actioned in-house.
- Tidied the downstairs office shelving to close out a related fire risk assessment action.
- Starting a Health & Safety audit to identify wider gaps including a lack of COSHH sheets for chemicals used, an accident book that has not been updated since 2004, no risk assessments for toilets, no information held on defibrillators, and no visitors/contractors sign-in book.

5. Governance, HR and Compliance

- Starting a HR audit. The staff handbook is dated 2016 and a number of policies are out of date or missing entirely, including a Lone Working Policy and a Sexual Harassment Risk Assessment, the latter being a legal requirement since 2024. Council should also note that most provisions of the Employment Rights Act 2025 are now in force or due to commence shortly, and the audit will assess our compliance position.
- Starting a Data Protection audit and begun reviewing file storage. Records exist for 2011 and from approximately 2021 onwards, but there is a gap from 2011 to 2021 where no risk assessments or other documents can be located.
- Working through the Council's policy list to check policies are current and correct.
- Working on an updated and accurate asset register with valuations.
- Located draft minutes that were missing from the website and ensured they are published, to meet the legal requirement to publish draft minutes ahead of their formal approval at a future meeting.

6. Communications, Website and Social Media

- Spoken with Ken regarding access to the Council's social media accounts and am in the process of restoring this, working with Facebook to regain access to legacy pages.
- Obtained quotes from website providers for a new, legally compliant Council website.
- Converted the Council logo into digital formats (including a white version for dark backgrounds) suitable for social media, the website and print.
- Forwarded key correspondence from the police, Trading Standards, planning applications and similar bodies to all councillors.

7. Community Engagement and Meetings

- Contacted Canterbury City Council to arrange an introductory call and explore any funding available for Council projects.
- Met with the KCC Community Warden and members of SABORA to begin building working relationships.
- Ordered a new Union Flag for the flagpole.
- Attended the Sturry Community Cinema evening to assist and take photographs on the Council's behalf, and to meet a number of councillors.
- Dealt with a range of enquiries from residents.
- Had a tour of the parish with Cemetery Superintendent Ken, covering areas maintained by the Council and local developments that will affect the parish.
- This will be my first full council meeting, having also attended my first Events Committee meeting on Monday 7 September.

8. Training and Development

- Booked Gill onto the KALC webinar on Asset Transfers in Kent in the context of Local Government Reorganisation.
- Arranged Rialtas software training.
- Completed Introduction to Local Council Administration (ILCA) Course and passed the qualification.
- Completed Financial Introduction to Local Council Administration (FILCA) Course and passed the qualification.
- Currently completing Principles of Internal Auditing Local Councils (PIALC) Course and on track for a pass.

K E N T C O U N T Y C O U N C I L

Councillor's Report to Parish Councils*September 2026***Community events**

Hersden 999 Day

I was pleased to attend Hersden 999 Day and to help by supplying an ambulance for the event. It was a shame that Kent Fire and Rescue Service were unable to attend on this occasion, but we all recognise how busy our emergency services are and I am grateful to everyone who made the day a success.

Sturry outdoor cinema

Despite the weather, residents still came out in good numbers to support Sturry's outdoor cinema. Two films were shown — Minecraft and The Greatest Showman. I was glad to help support the event through the Members' Grant and by arranging a medical team on site.

I am keen to support more community events of this kind next year. Events like these bring people together and strengthen local pride.

Bus services

The meeting originally planned with Stagecoach has had to be rescheduled. I am currently waiting on a new date from Joel so that we can discuss current services in more detail, including the new Broadoak service, and press the case for Hoath to be included.

In the meantime, I am pleased to report that Kent County Council has secured the future of two important bus routes in Thanet — the number 9 and the number 32.

KCC invests around £13 million each year to support approximately 150 bus routes which would not otherwise operate on a commercial basis. That investment is vital in keeping rural and semi-rural communities connected.

Highways and road safety

The A28 casualty reduction scheme is due to start in April 2027. I am fully supportive of this work. I do, however, want further information so that related works can be coordinated where possible. In particular, some stretches of the A28 need resurfacing, and the road island by Westbere should be addressed. It would be far better for residents if these could be delivered at the same time as the casualty reduction scheme, rather than as separate disruptions.

I have a meeting with Highways on 14 September to discuss these points, together with other local concerns. That includes the A291, following a further incident which required the attendance of the air ambulance. Road safety on both corridors remains a priority for me.

Digital connectivity

New technology known as Small Cells, designed to boost mobile phone signal in Canterbury, has been installed across the city centre. KCC is working with Freshwave and O2 to bring this enhanced coverage.

The scheme allows mobile network operators to use council-owned street assets to improve digital connectivity. Better signal in the city centre will benefit residents, visitors and local businesses alike.

Closing remarks

Please do not hesitate to contact me if there are issues you would like raised with Kent County Council, or if your Parish would welcome support for a community event in the coming year. I will continue to keep you updated as dates are confirmed for the Stagecoach meeting and following my discussion with Highways on 14 September.

Thank you.

Ward Councillor Report for Sturry Parish Council (09/09/2026)

Councillors Harry McKenzie and Keji Moses

CANENCO Depot Tour

Harry visited the CANENCO depot in Wincheap alongside other colleagues to tour the facility and hear from the Director of CANENCO about what our crews get up to. We also inspected new technology that has come in, including a new bin collection truck that sustainably runs on hydrotreated vegetable oil and displays a design that supports our armed forces community among a whole range of other net zero devices from gum removers to graffiti sprayers and remote controlled lawnmowers. We learned that our crews collect 10-12 items of fly tipping every day which is hard work.

Resident Visit in Broad Oak

Harry went to visit a resident in Broad Oak to inspect lots of debris littered along the footpath behind Dengrove Park and Bluebell Woods. We previously reported this as fly tipping, but nothing came of it. On further inspection, it looks like this could be a planning enforcement issue as people seem to be extending their gardens onto the footpath and leaving the debris and garden waste from doing so on the footpath and it is not clear whether they have the proper permission to do so. We have reported this to planning enforcement to be investigated.

Bus Shelter Advice

We have asked CCC officers to get in touch with you to offer advice on improving the bus shelter on Mill Road as requested by Steve at the last meeting. Let us know if we need to give them a nudge.

Keep the Taps Running Motion

We voted for the Keep the Taps Running motion in Full Council. It was a comprehensive motion with a length of text but to sum it up, it calls for greater transparency from South East Water on the causes of the recent water shortages and how they will be prevented in future, and it calls on the Cabinet to commission a report on phasing or pausing development until water infrastructure can keep pace with the rate of building.

Charter of Trustees Vote

As Local Government Reorganisation is set to abolish Canterbury City Council, we voted for a proposal to implement a for a Charter of Trustees in Canterbury which will ensure that the Civic Team, Lord Mayor and Sheriff roles are protected after the change.

Local Government Reorganisation

It has been announced by the government that option 4b was chosen for Local Government Reorganisation which means a unitary authority covering the existing council areas of Canterbury, Thanet and Dover will be created as Canterbury City Council and Kent County Council are abolished. At present, the warding arrangements in the new unitary authority will follow existing KCC division boundaries and have three councillors per division (subject to a boundary review). Shadow elections to the new unitary authority will happen next year and then vesting day will happen in 2028. There will not be any more full Canterbury City Council or KCC elections. While we voted for option 4d last year, we are satisfied with option 4b because it achieves pretty much the same outcome: truly local representation and efficiency in service delivery.

AI Data Centre

The planning application for an AI data centre on Shelford Farm went to the planning committee in July. Harry declared he was predetermined and removed himself from the vote because we have been publicly very critical of the proposal and he needed to protect himself from accusations of bias. He still had an opportunity to speak in that meeting, but all of our points were covered by other speakers, such as Cllr Beth Forrester and Peter Campell, who we have been working closely with on matters about Shelford. Harry did add concerns about road congestion and the size of vehicles on local roads on top of concerns about water and energy sustainability. We joined calls for a site visit that was approved at the committee meeting. This site visit is happening on 8th September which Keji is going to attend (Harry is unfortunately unable to attend). We will continue to work with other colleagues and monitor this proposal closely.

Faded Double Yellows off Herne Bay Road

Keji responded to a request from a resident and got the faded double yellows on the junction of Herne Bay Road and Deansway Avenue logged on the list for repainting.

Earlier Bin Collections

Bin collections will continue to be done earlier in the morning at 6am until the end of September and then they will be restored to 7am. This is because of extreme heat.

Funding for Community Waste Prevention

Community groups, charities, CICs, social enterprises, residents' associations, parish and town councils across Kent can apply for grants of £500 to £5,000 to deliver projects that help prevent household waste, promote reuse and repair, or encourage more sustainable behaviours. The first funding period closes 9 October 2026.

Network Rail Letter

After several incidents in July where the level crossing failed in Sturry which held up residents and emergency services for hours. We wrote to Network Rail, raising complaints for residents and seeking clarity on actions to prevent this happening again.

St George's Flag During the World Cup

During the World Cup, the government wrote to all local authorities asking us to fly the St George's Cross on as many council-owned properties as possible. Our council did so proudly throughout Canterbury and other parts of the district.

House Martins Support Letter

We were approached by Canterbury District Swifts and asked whether we would support their application for one of the council's biodiversity grants to implement artificial nest cups in Sturry for House Martins as there is a colony attempting to breed here. This is a declining bird species that has reduced by 80% in the South East over the last 30 years and we voted to declare a biodiversity crisis in 2023, so we honoured that commitment and have written to the grants panel to endorse this application.

Crisis and Resilience Fund

The Crisis and Resilience Fund is a new scheme funded by the UK government to help support residents on a low-income who are experiencing financial shock and/or activity that builds financial resilience. The following support is available to residents living in the Canterbury district: Oil Heating Grants, Home Essentials Scheme to help with carpets, white goods, children's beds and second-hand furniture, or support for people facing money worries, including benefits, housing support and debt advice.

26 Bus News

It has been confirmed that the 26-bus route will now travel through Broad Oak with the exact route to be declared closer to when it is launched on 28th September. The buses will leave Broad Oak at 10am and noon and return from the city at 11.40am and 1.40pm. We are very happy that a bus service has finally been returned to Broad Oak – this is progress! However, we are disappointed that it is not the original 7 route which excludes Babs Oak Hill and Hoath and we are disappointed by the timetable released which is not good enough. We are writing to Stagecoach to raise these concerns and push for improvements to this offer for the residents who will be using these buses.

Improved Street Lights in the City Centre

With support from the BID and Kent Police, Canterbury City Council has not implemented new and improved street lights in the city centre to make it safer.

Warden Report

During August I have conducted extensive Visible Presence across my two Ward areas of Sturry, Little Stour and Adisham -- including one day a week in Nailbourne until a new Community Warden is recruited.

Sturry Ward

The following are issues raised and highlights of the month.

Neighbours CCTV – a resident emailed me raising a concern about being overlooked by a neighbour. Action taken: I forwarded the Gov.UK webpage links to the resident and contact details for Citizens Advice Bureau and Kent Police.

Community event - Chill Out and Chat – KCC Community Warden Drop-In at Coffee Corner, Buddies Retail Park, Herne Bay Road, Sturry. Preparation and running the event every Wednesday 2pm- 3:30pm. Response has been excellent from the public. The aim is to raise community concerns or to have general chats about anything. And to build community cohesion, community resilience and hopefully friendships. It's an opportunity to help reduce isolation and loneliness and signpost residents to get support and connect with public services.

Scripture Union's Water Event in Minnis Bay – Myself and Canterbury and Thanet Community Wardens attended for the day, where we set up a KCC Community Warden Gazebo and Stall, interacting with parents and children – offering free footballs if they answer a water safety quiz. Wardens conducted traffic control discouraging parking around the event perimeter. Kent Police and Kent Fire Service also attended.

Butterflies (Bereavement Café) – Sturry Church – I attend the monthly event and spoke to the attendees.

Boys doing wheelies on bicycles - I spoke to two male teenagers in the car park near Coffee Corner and Tesco's doing wheelies on their mountain bikes, very close to parked cars and they left after being spoken to by me.

Referral received from a Sturry resident raising concerns about someone having a bonfire in their back garden. I visited the Sturry resident and spoke to them at length and gave advice about risks of fires in dry grass, then updated the caller that the matter had been dealt with.

Sturry Church Coffee Mornings on Wednesdays – I attended some of the time and spoke with residents. Out of general conversations one resident is considering purchasing an electric guitar online and asked if I would help him as he knows I play. I have agreed.

A Sturry resident approached about the constant rubbish and dog faeces where they live and felt unsupported by CCC, advice given. She advised she has contacted her local MP.

Flytipping Reference FLT023918 – rubbish reported left near garages opposite Copt Close Sturry

Flytipping reference FLT024028 – Flytipping reported to CCC in St Albans Rd, Hersden – duvet in black rubbish sack.

Information received from residents about e-motorcycles being ridden on Hoadeswood Rd, Sturry in the evenings. Kent Police Intel Report submitted.

Sturry Parish Councillor Betts raised a concern about a homeless male living in a tent in a field. I made enquiries and located the male and spoke to him and his family. I have referred him to one of KCC's specialist departments to offer him support re being rehoused. I also advised him of several community hubs to get support from Citizens Advice Bureau and help to fill out forms. I am currently keeping in contact with him.

Sturry – a resident asked for my advice about a very sensitive matter involving her son and not knowing his new address. Advice given how to get around the issue by using a solicitor.

I spoke to a Sturry resident about his health, as it had been noted something maybe wrong. I had to choose the appropriate time and place to approach subject, which resulted in me advising he should seek medical help from his GP.

Canterbury

Referral received to check on a homeless person in Canterbury – House to house enquires made and advice given to residents. I also established person was wanted by police for failing to attend court. I liaised with Kent Police regarding the matter, provided more information, and established police had dealt with the person the night before.

Swalecliffe (Whitstable) – I was asked to do a joint KCC Community Warden visit, with the Swalecliffe Community Warden, as there were concerns raised about a vulnerable adult possibly being cuckoo'd. Outcome: Indepth conversation was had with resident and we established he wasn't being cuckoo'd by criminals, and he had care support in place throughout the week, with enough people keeping an eye on him.

Nailbourne Ward

I have been involved in obtaining the second year of funding for the Chair Yoga event, which runs every other Thursday at Barham Village Hall. I needed to liaise with funding organisation, as this was initially arranged through the former Nailbourne KCC Community Warden, and needed to establish who was going to be project lead for submitting the yearly report and for receiving the money.

I regularly attend Coffee Stop at Barham Village Hall on Tuesday mornings to establish if there are any local issues of concern to deal with.

Other commitments

Funeral – I attended a Hoath resident's funeral, for someone I knew as their former Community Warden, and I had been keeping in contact with. I was there out of respect and to represent Kent County Council's Community Warden Service. My presence was appreciated by family and the residents of Hoath.

Roger Lithgow | Community Warden – Sturry Ward & Little Stour Ward including Adisham | Canterbury & Thanet Districts | Kent County Council Economy & Community Protection | Growth & Communities | Kent County Council | Mob: 07812 089485