

THE PARISH COUNCIL OF HARTLEY
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HARTLEY PARISH COUNCIL
HELD IN THE PAVILION, MANOR FIELD, CHURCH ROAD
14th JULY 2025 AT 7.30 P.M.

Present :

Cllr Larry Abraham
Cllr Penny Cole
Cllr Perry Cole
Cllr David Conroy
Cllr Lesley Driscoll
Cllr Laurence Glander – (*Chairman*)
Cllr Anne Oxtoby
Cllr Ian Ross
Cllr Vincent Sewell

In attendance:

Mrs Helen Boden - (*Clerk*)
Cllr Maxine Fothergill – (*Kent County Councillor*) - Arrived at 7.35p.m.
Cllr Shaun Fishenden – (*Chairman of Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council*)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Jim Colwell due to work commitments, Cllr David Graham due to family commitments and Cllr Vincent Sewell due to family commitments. RESOLVED: That, the absences of Cllr Jim Colwell due to work commitments, Cllr David Graham due to family commitments and Cllr Vincent Sewell due to family commitments, be accepted and approved.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Dispensations

There were no requests from Members for a dispensation.

4. Minutes

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the meeting of Hartley Parish Council held on 9th June 2025, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The meeting was adjourned at 7.31 p.m. to receive reports from the District and County Councillors.

The meeting resumed at 7.51 p.m.

5. Amenities & Open Spaces Committee

Cllr Oxtoby commented on minute item 9. Trees, (b) (ii), Gorse Wood 7 (b), on page 6 of the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held on 9th July 2025.

Cllr Oxtoby reported that a resident of Porchester Close had contacted the Parish Council regarding a tree located outside their property, in the corner of the car park.

The Tree Surgeon inspected the tree and advised that it was very large and would benefit from a reduction of 25%.

Following the meeting it transpired that the tree that was inspected was not the tree that the resident was complaining about.

The Tree Surgeon was requested to inspect the correct tree and has advised that there are no health and safety issues.

Members agreed that in view of the Tree Surgeon's advice, the resident should be informed that it is the Council's policy to only carry out works to trees posing a health and safety issue, but that the resident is at liberty to cut back any overhanging branches to their boundary at their own expense.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the above report be noted;

(2) the resident of Porchester Close be advised that it is the Council's policy to only carry out works to trees posing a health and safety issue, but that the resident is at liberty to cut back any overhanging branches to their boundary at their own expense and,

(3) the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held on 9th July 2025 and the recommendations contained therein, be received and, where necessary, approved and adopted.

6. Planning Committee

RESOLVED: That,

the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 4th June 2025 and the recommendations contained therein, be received and, where necessary, approved and adopted.

7. Neighbourhood Plan

RESOLVED: That,

the minutes of the meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group held on 12th March 2025 and the recommendations contained therein, be received and, where necessary, approved and adopted.

8. Scheme of Delegation

Members had been requested to consider a draft Scheme of Delegation.

The Clerk reported that she had produced a draft which she had sent to KALC to obtain their advice and that she was currently in the process of revising the draft to take in to account their comments.

RESOLVED: That,

the Clerk's report be noted and the matter be deferred until the next meeting.

9. Sevenoaks District Council – Land Disposal

At the meeting of the Parish Council held on 9th June 2025, an email received from Sevenoaks District Council, advising of its intention to dispose of several parcels of land located within the Parish, currently owned by the District Council had been considered by the Council.

The Clerk was requested to respond to Sevenoaks District Council to express the Council's concern about the possibility of the plots being sold off and to request that the green spaces should remain in the District Council's ownership and continue to be maintained by them.

In addition, the Clerk was requested to contact Sevenoaks District Council to query ownership of two of the parcels of land and to seek confirmation that no action would be taken in respect of the disposal of the land, until ownership has been confirmed.

The Clerk reported that to date, no response had been received from the District Council.

Cllr Perry Cole reported that the matter was due to be discussed at the SDC Cabinet meeting on 15th July and that he would query the lack of response and report back to the Council.

RESOLVED: That,
the above report be noted.

10. Community Warden Service Review

The Assistant Clerk reported that an email had been received on 11th July 2025 from the Head of Community Safety at Kent County Council containing the revised draft Warden Services Contract, for consideration by the Council.

At the meeting of the Parish Council held on 14th April 2025, it was agreed that upon receipt of the final agreement, the Clerk be requested to seek quotations from the list of Solicitors provided by KALC, and that delegated authority be given to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Council, to accept the most suitable quotation, and to appoint a Solicitor to review the agreement and make recommendation to the Council.

The Clerk reported that she had contacted Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council to ask whether, in view of the fact that the contract would be the same for both Parish Councils, one solicitor be appointed and the cost split between both Councils.

Members agreed that this would be the most cost effective solution. RESOLVED:

That, (1) dependent on confirmation from Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council that it is amenable to the suggestion that one Solicitor be appointed to review the draft agreement and the cost be split between the two parishes, the draft agreement be sent to the selected Solicitor for review and, (2) in the event that Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council is not amenable to the suggestion that one Solicitor be appointed to review the draft agreement and the cost be split between the two parishes, the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Council, be requested to make arrangements to accept the most suitable quotation, and to appoint a Solicitor to review the agreement and make recommendation to the Council.

11. Signatories

The Council noted that there are five signatories to the Council's bank accounts and each cheque/internet banking payment requires the signature/authorisation of two of the five signatories.

Members noted that the current signatories are Councillors Perry Cole, Glander, Graeme, Oxtoby and Ross.

The Clerk and the Assistant Clerk have limited and restricted access to the Council's bank accounts to obtain account information, make funds transfers between Barclays bank accounts held in the Council's name and to set up internet banking payments for Unity Bank.

Cllr Perry Cole requested to be removed from the Council's list of signatories and it was agreed that Cllr Conroy would replace him as a signatory.

RESOLVED: That,

the Council is satisfied with the current number of signatories to the Council's accounts and that the signatories will be amended to include Councillors Conroy, Glander, Graeme, Oxtoby and Ross.

12. Parish Office Computers

Members had been requested to review the current "back-up" arrangements for the Council's data.

The Clerk reported that the current method was that back-ups were taken on a daily basis, alternating between two external hard drives.

Members noted that there had recently been an issue whereby the back-ups hadn't worked, but that this issue had now been rectified.

The Clerk reported that arrangements had been put in place for the back-up drives to be checked on a weekly basis to ensure that the issue doesn't arise in the future.

The Clerk reported that the Council's IT provider had suggested that the Council may wish to consider cloud backup, as this would take regular backups throughout the day and could be run in conjunction with the Council's current system.

Members noted that there would be a cost associated with this.

RESOLVED: That,

1) the Clerk's report be noted and,

2) further information be sought from the Parish Council's IT provider with regard to using Cloud backups, to be considered at the

next meeting.

13. Local Government Reorganisation Survey

Members considered an email dated 16th June 2025, received from KALC, inviting the Parish Council to complete the Local Government Reorganisation Survey which aims to gather vital feedback from Town and Parish Councils across Kent.

The closing date is 21st July 2025.

RESOLVED: That,

the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, be delegated authority to complete and submit KALC's Local Government Reorganisation Survey.

14. Kent Pension Fund – Pooling of Town & Parish Council – Formal Consultation

Members considered an email dated 4th June 2025, received from the Kent Pension Fund.

In preparation for the 31st March 2025 triennial valuation results, the Kent Pension Fund (the Fund) is formally consulting with town and parish councils currently participating in the Fund and other interested parties (e.g. borough, district and city councils), on proposals to form a Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) funding pool (the Pool) specifically for town and parish councils as at 31st March 2025, with a possible universal LGPS pooled employer contribution rate for all involved, operative from 1st April 2026.

The consultation starts on 4th June 2025 and ends on 4th August 2025.

Members noted that in order to deliver greater stability of contributions for employers, as well as reduce the burden on the Fund, the proposal is to “pool” contributions for town and parish councils.

Members agreed that clarification should be sought as to the likely effect on the Parish Council's contributions.

RESOLVED: That,

- 1) the Clerk be requested to endeavour to obtain further information as to the likely effect on the Parish Council's contributions and,
- 2) the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, be delegated authority to complete and submit the Kent Pension Fund Consultation – Town and Parish Council Pooling – Formal Consultation.

15. Staff Consultation Meetings

Members considered a suggestion for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to hold monthly meetings with the Clerk, Assistant Clerk and Clerk's Assistant.

Members agreed that this would be beneficial to both the staff and the Council.

RESOLVED: That,

monthly informal staff consultation meetings be arranged with the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Clerk, Assistant Clerk and Clerk's Assistant in attendance, with the first meeting taking place on Wednesday 16th July 2025.

16. Review of Committee Membership

RESOLVED: That,

the membership of committees and advisory committees, as set out in **Appendix 1** to these minutes, be approved and adopted.

17. Speeding on Ash Road

At the Parish Council meeting held on 9th June 2025, members considered a report from a member of the public regarding speeding traffic on Ash Road.

It was suggested that a meeting be arranged with Members of the Council and Kent Highway Services.

A meeting was arranged for 9th July 2025.

The Chairman reported that the meeting had taken place and that speeding traffic and a number of other issues had been added to the Highway Improvement Plan, to be considered by Kent Highway Services.

Cllr Fothergill offered her assistance with the issues highlighted, should it be required.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Fothergill for her offer and the Clerk agreed to send her the relevant information.

RESOLVED: That,

1) the above report be noted and,

2) the relevant information be sent to Cllr Fothergill to enable her to assist.

18. Manor Field Pavilion – Utility Supply DDR

At the meeting of the Parish Council held on 14th October 2019, it was resolved that pursuant to Financial Regulation 7.9, payment of the electricity supply to the Pavilion, be made by variable direct debit.

Financial Regulation 7.9 states that *“the approval of the use of a variable direct debit shall be reviewed by the council at least every two years”*.

RESOLVED: That,

pursuant to Financial Regulation 7.9, payment of the electricity supply to the Pavilion, continues to be made by variable direct debit.

19. Parish Office Lease

At the meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on 7th May 2025, it was recommended that enquiries be made with Kent County Council and the Parish Council's Solicitor, with regard to arrangements for renewing the lease on the Parish Office, which is due to expire on 31st March 2026.

The Clerk reported that she had received an email dated 4th July 2025, from the Assistant Surveyor at KCC, advising that they had been assigned to handle the lease enquiry, but that no further communication had been received.

Cllr Fothergill offered to assist with the proceedings if required.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Fothergill for her offer, particularly as the agreement of the current lease had been particularly protracted.

RESOLVED: That,

1) the Clerk's report be noted and,

2) the Clerk be requested to continue to pursue the County Council with regard to renewing the lease on the Parish Office which is due to expire on 31st March 2026.

3) the relevant information be sent to Cllr Fothergill to enable her to assist.

20. Payments

RESOLVED: That,

(a) the payment of accounts for July & August 2025, attached as **Appendix 2** to these minutes, be approved.

(b) the Council detail report as at 8th July 2025, setting out actual income and expenditure against budgeted estimates be received and noted.

(c) it be noted that the bank reconciliations for the Council's four bank accounts for May 2025 had been verified by Cllr Graham and,

(d) it be noted that the bank reconciliations for the four bank accounts for June 2025 would be verified by Cllr Ross.

The meeting closed at 8.43p.m.

Signed:..... Date:.....

Chairman of Hartley Parish Council

HARTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Appointments to Committees and Advisory Committees 2025 – 26 (As approved at the Meeting of the Council held on 14th July 2025).

Chairman and Vice Chairman are ex officio members on all committees –

Chairman and Vice Chairman are marked with an * and shown in *italics*.

Amenities and Open Spaces Committee (8)

Cllrs Penny Cole, **Conroy*, **Glander*, Graeme, Malham, Oxtoby, Ramsay and Sewell.

Burial Grounds and Gardens of Remembrance Committee (7)

Cllrs Abraham, **Conroy*, Perry Cole, Driscoll, **Glander*, Ramsay and Ross.

Finance & General Purposes Committee (6)

Cllrs **Conroy*, Colwell, Driscoll, **Glander*, Ramsay and Sewell.

Personnel Committee (3)

Chairman of the Council, Vice Chairman of the Council and Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Planning Committee (9)

Cllrs Abraham, Colwell, **Conroy*, Driscoll, **Glander*, Oxtoby, Ramsay, Ross and Sewell.

Advisory Committees

Standing Orders Advisory Committee

Cllrs Abraham, Perry Cole and Oxtoby

**Appointment of representatives on outside bodies and joint
management committees**

(as approved at the Annual Meeting of the Council on 14th July 2025)

Organisation	Membership
Kent Association of Local Councils (2 representatives)	Cllr Perry Cole
	Cllr Penny Cole
Northfield Management Committee (the Constitution states that the Chairman of the Council and two other members will be appointed)	Cllr L Glander (Chairman) Cllr A Oxtoby Cllr V Sewell
Hartley Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (the Terms of Reference state that the Steering Group will be made up of 3 Parish Councillors, one of whom shall be appointed Chairman of the Steering Group, together with up to 9 volunteers)	Cllr Perry Cole Cllr J Colwell Cllr D Conroy Cllr I Ross
Footpaths Representative	Mrs J Rye

HARTLEY VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Cllr Penny Cole
Cllr Perry Cole
Cllr Laurence Glander
Cllr David Graeme
Cllr Mally Malham
Cllr Anne Oxtoby

plus three representatives from the main user groups of the Hall, i.e. Hartley
Women's Institute, Hartley Players and HGS Productions.

APPENDIX 2

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Schedule of Payments July 2025 - Paid by Internet Banking/DDR from Unity Trust Bank					
Ref:	Payment to	Particulars	Net	VAT	Total
DDR		Clearing centre charge	0.60	-	-
		Service charges 01/05/25-31/05/25	11.25	-	11.85
615493789		PAID 20/06/25 - Water at Pavilion 01/05/25-31/05/25	30.22	-	-
953998531		PAID 20/06/25 - Water at allotments 01/05/25-31/05/25	38.37	-	68.59
426113083		PAID 20/06/25 - Supply & fit new village green sign frame inv 7	480.00	-	480.00
730557639		PAID 20/06/25 - Fell & remove Cherry tree @ BHS inv 2955	300.00	60.00	360.00
643414107		PAID 08/07/25 - Payment of June statement	98.92	-	98.92
619365971		Salary 01/07/25 - 31/07/25 (previously approved)	2,897.82	-	-
		Reimburse re purchase of batteries for safe 17/06	4.99	-	2,902.81
866162087		Salary 01/07/25 - 31/07/25 (previously approved)	1,845.49	-	1,845.49
131316846		Salary 01/07/25 - 31/07/25 (previously approved)	869.21	-	869.21
150195542		Month 4 Employer & Employee NIC & PAYE	2,210.03	-	2,210.03
730260428		Employer & Employee pension contributions July	1,991.98	-	1,991.98
60634723		Dog bin emptying April - June inv 2098479	336.70	67.34	-
		Supply & delivery of 20 x garden sacks inv 2098529	440.00	-	844.04
304715247		Clean pavilion June inv 5806	248.66	-	-
		Unblock toilet @ pavilion inv 5806	20.00	-	-
		Install 2 no hand towel dispensers inv 5806	20.00	-	288.66
644000381		Training re reports 17/06/25 inv 32995	70.00	14.00	84.00
504060686		Toilet rolls HVH inv 97424	21.59	-	-
		Stationery inv 97424	10.99	2.20	34.78
993691791		Training CCTV 26/06/25 inv BK221778-1	30.00	6.00	36.00
687516530		Plumbing works re showers at Pavilion inv 1504	490.00	98.00	588.00
620701821		Reconfigure backup/check backup disks inv 223599	140.00	28.00	168.00
875630594		Grounds maintenance Inv 3853	594.16	118.83	712.99
632500383		Refund of HVH hire paid to HPC in error inv 09-25	45.00	-	45.00
606856646		Water @ Pavilion 01/06/25-30/06/25 inv 10007073947	23.72	-	-
468507336		Water @ allotments 01/06/25-30/06/25 inv 10007092076	38.16	-	61.88
181935192		P/copier chgs 01/04/25-30/06/25 inv KPS414502	196.01	39.20	235.21
651411268		Routine Maintenance Contract 09/06/25-07/07/25 inv 191	733.50	-	-
		Water flushing 09/06/25-09/07/25 inv 191	78.00	-	-
		Strim behind calor gas compound inv 191	6.50	-	818.00
17192710		Supply & delivery 20 x garden sacks inv 2098529	440.00	-	440.00

APPENDIX 2

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			14,750.02	433.57	15,183.59

Schedule of Payments July 2025 - Paid by cheque/DDR from Barclays Bank					
Chq No	Payment to	Particulars	Net	VAT	Total
DDR		Mixed Payment Plan charges 13/05/25 - 12/06/25	14.43	-	14.43
DDR		Electricity @ Pavilion 21/04/25-22/06/25	56.58	2.82	59.40
107073		Top up Unity Bank	40,000.00	-	40,000.00
			40,071.01	2.82	40,073.83

Schedule of Payments July 2025 - Paid by Barclaycard					
Ref:	Payment to	Particulars	Net	VAT	Total
		PAID 30/04/25 - Batteries re clock	5.45	1.09	6.54
		PAID 06/05/25 - Coffee cups re VE DAY	33.27	6.66	39.93
		PAID 16/05/25 - Wine & juice re APM	23.94	-	23.94
		PAID 16/05/25 Flowers for Chairman	40.00	-	40.00
		PAID 20/05/25 - 2 no bins re Pavilion changing rooms	9.98	2.00	11.98
		PAID 13/06/25 - 16 x 2nd class stamps	13.92	-	13.92
		PAID 30/06/25 - 1 bundle trade waste sacks	81.00	-	81.00
			207.56	9.75	217.31

Schedule of Payments August 2025 - Paid by Internet Banking/DDR from Unity Trust Bank					
Ref:	Payment to	Particulars	Net	VAT	Total
		Salary 01/08/25 - 31/08/25 (previously approved)	2,897.41	-	2,897.41
		Salary 01/08/25 - 31/08/25 (previously approved)	1,535.07	-	1,535.07
		Salary 01/08/25 - 31/08/25 (previously approved)	993.12	-	993.12
		Month 5 Employer & Employee NIC & PAYE	2,037.63	-	2,037.63
		Employer & Employee pension contributions August	1,904.30	-	1,904.30

APPENDIX 2

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6,470.12	-	6,470.12
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Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7.41 p.m.

Cllr Perry Cole reported that the Leader of KCC had written to the Government to request a 6 month extension to the deadline for submitting final proposals for local government reorganisation, pushing the date from November 28, 2025, to March 31, 2026. However, the Minister for Local Government and English Devolution has rejected this request. KCC will proceed with the original deadline, working to raise awareness and engage residents despite the rejection.

Cllr Glander reported that he and Cllr Conroy had recently attended a KALC meeting regarding the reorganisation, but that there is no further information at present.

Cllr Fothergill reported that the operation of the 489 bus has gone out for re-tender, meaning that the service will not be lost.

Cllr Fothergill reported that she has been working with local residents with regard to the selling off of green spaces by Sevenoaks District Council, as there have been issues in Fawkham and West Kingsdown.

Cllr Fothergill reported that she had spoken to 2 SDC Cabinet Members who had assured her that site visits would be carried out for all of the sites.

Cllr Fothergill reported that she has been appointed as Chairman of Regulations and that there had been 9 appeals in the last month with regard to home to school transport.

Cllr Fothergill reported that she had now attended two full council meetings, the last one being last week and reminded Members that reports of the meetings were published on the KCC website.

Members noted that it would be necessary for an £80 million saving to be made and that all new councillors has been asked whether they would consider a pay cut to enable the money to go back in to the Members Grant Scheme.

A 5% cut has been agreed, meaning that Member Grants for each Councillor will increase from £2,600 to £5,100.

Cllr Fothergill reported that one of the largest expenses facing the County Council is the home to school transport scheme, but that new ideas are coming up to endeavour to reduce the number of taxis being used.

Cllr Fothergill reported that KCC will be scrapping the Net Zero transitioning of the KCC vehicle fleet to electric vehicles, saving a further 7.5 million by 2030.

The Net Zero Renewable Energy Programme of property modifications will also be scrapped, saving £32 million over 4 years.

There will also be a stop on the proposed exit from and sale of Sessions House and the renovation and move to of Invicta House. This will avoid additional borrowing of £14 million.

The meeting resumed at 7.51 p.m.

