

**THE PARISH COUNCIL OF HARTLEY**  
**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON**  
**FRIDAY 15<sup>th</sup> MAY 2026 AT 7.45 p.m. AT**  
**HARTLEY VILLAGE HALL, ASH ROAD**

**Present:**

Councillor Penny Cole, (District and Parish Councillor) Councillor Perry Cole, (District and Parish Councillor), Councillor James Colwell (Parish Councillor)' Councillor David Conroy (Parish Councillor)' Councillor Laurence Glander, (Chairman of Hartley Parish Council) Councillor David Graeme, (Parish Councillor)' Councillor Anne Oxtoby, (Parish Councillor) Councillor Brian Ramsay, (Parish Councillor) Councillor Vincent Sewell, (Parish Councillor)

**In attendance:** Mrs Helen Boden (Proper Officer of the Council)

**Guests:** Mrs Jackie West, (KCC, Community Warden) Councillor Maxine Fothergill (Kent County Councillor) P.C. Weatherall (Kent Police)

There was 1 resident present and Cllr Shaun Fishenden (Chairman of Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council).

**1. Chairman's welcome**

The Chairman of Hartley Parish Council welcomed the guest speakers and introduced Members of the Council and the Clerk to residents.

**2. Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Cllr Larry Abraham, Cllr Carl Crane, Cllr Lesley Driscoll, and Tom Tugendhat (MP).

**3. Guest speakers**

**a) Jackie West – Kent Community Warden**

Jackie West presented a report to residents, set out below:

I have had a very active year in my areas of work.

Time has been spent adhering to Community Warden objectives.

The overarching objective has been to create safer and stronger communities by providing a visible, uniformed presence that focuses on prevention, early intervention and community engagement.

The four key areas are strengthening community resilience, supporting the elderly and vulnerable, fostering community cohesion and wellbeing and assisting with navigating community services.

I have continued to work independently, supporting individual residents with their challenges as well as referring to the most appropriate agencies for those needing more bespoke interventions.

This past year I have facilitated two multi agency information events to ensure that all agencies that support residents in our local areas are aware of what each individual agency is able to offer our communities.

This strengthens agency working and ensures we have a stronger working network.

My role continues to see me supporting those who are experiencing challenges including mental health, Dementia, addiction, loneliness and social isolation.

The groups I facilitate in New Ash Green and in West Kingsdown bring together the community to share in a love of singing, friendship and an opportunity for me to share local activities and Scam Alerts with those in attendance.

The Community Hub in New Ash Green continues to grow and is increasing in the number of attendees.

This past year we have welcomed agencies including Citizens Advice, SDC Hero Service, Compaid, Imago, Hi Kent, SDC and Kent Fire and Rescue Service.

All services have been attending to offer residents face to face support and guidance.

Myself and volunteers have also hosted two community parties for those who attend the hubs.

Included in those attending have been two local residential homes who I have also twice last year invited to join students at Longfield Academy for a morning of intergenerational activities in their Autism provision.

I continue to work with the Community Cupboard and each month facilitate a resident drop in service at their Hub at West Kingsdown where residents are able to visit and have face to face advice.

I am also able to sign post residents to the Community Cupboard where they are supported with food parcels if needed and also to an array of other services that hold drop ins monthly at the facility.

In July last year I hosted another Information Event for residents to attend which saw a good attendance from both residents and agencies to gain information on numerous subjects and information leaflets shared with those attending.

My time in area and working with support agencies has allowed me to be flexible in my working and to assist residents in a timely manner.

In February I had the pleasure to have been invited to Sessions House to the first GET Award ceremony. I had been nominated and shortlisted for a Community Award for outstanding contribution in going above and beyond to support the local community, fostering positive relationships and delivering meaningful outcomes. I was delighted to have won the category and was presented with an award.

I am looking forward to an upcoming initiative I hope to facilitate in Hartley bringing community members together once monthly to enjoy a meal and games.

I would like to thank the Community for their support to my role and for the amazing volunteers and local stakeholders for their continued support too.

I look forward to the coming year to enhance community wellbeing and bring about positive changes for those who need bespoke support.

### **Jackie West**

#### **KCC Community Warden**

The Chairman of the Council thanked Jackie for her work throughout the year and congratulated her on her award.

The rest of the Council joined the Chairman in his thanks and congratulations.

#### **b) P.C. Weatherall (Kent Police)**

P.C. Weatherall reported that he had taken over the Ward in December 2025, with P.C. Collins having previously been on the Response Team.

P.C. Weatherall reported that his role was to support the community and deal with any issues and that he would try to attend Parish Council meetings, subject to work commitments permitting.

P.C. Weatherall reported that currently, one of the main issues is nuisance motorbikes/ebikes and that as a result, he has been carrying out heavier patrols of the area, resulting in the rider of an off road motorbike, being stopped in Hartley Wood and issued with a Section 59 Anti-Social Behaviour Notice. This means that the vehicle may be seized if it is used in a similar manner again.

P.C. Weatherall reported that the gates were constantly being vandalised to allow access for the bikes and that he has been liaising with the Public Rights of Way Officer to seek a solution.

P.C. Weatherall reported that there has been a small spike in rural crime e.g. the theft of motorbikes/farm equipment/trailers etc.

Members noted that much of the crime is “border crime” originating from Dartford, Surrey and Met ground.

P.C. Weatherall reported that he would be attending a number of community engagement and drop in events coming up during the next few weeks.

P.C Weatherall concluded by thanking the Parish Council for its support and urged Members to encourage residents to report any issues.

Cllr Colwell commented on the issue of speeding traffic. He reported that the information obtained from the Speed Indicator Device highlighted an issue with

speeding traffic during unsociable hours. Cllr Colwell asked whether it would be possible for the Police to carry out speed checks outside of daylight hours.

P.C. Weatherall responded that the equipment wouldn't work in the dark, so this would not be possible.

The Chairman of the Council thanked P.C Weatherall for attending the meeting.

#### **4. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2025, were approved and signed by the Chairman of Hartley Parish Council as a correct record.

#### **5. Reports**

##### **(a) Annual Report 2025/26 - Chairman of Hartley Parish Council**

The Chairman of the Council reported on the activities of the Council over the previous year, as set out in the Annual Report for 2025/26.

Once again over the last financial year Hartley Parish Council has been successful in managing its business affairs, especially during these unstable and uncertain times.

During this last year we have seen the resignation of one of our Parish Councillors, Councillor Malham due to him moving away from the area, our Clerk's Assistant, Anne-Louise-Broome, also left the Parish Council and I would like to thank them both for their hard work and dedication to the Council and the residents of Hartley. Carl Crane has been co-opted onto the Parish Council to fill the vacant post of Councillor and we welcome Cllr Crane to the Parish Council.

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, made up of Parish Councillors and local residents, has been very busy compiling Hartley's Neighbourhood Plan and I would like to thank them for their hard work and commitment. You can find out more information about the draft plan on the Neighbourhood Plan's website [www.hartleynp.org.uk](http://www.hartleynp.org.uk)

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all our Councillors for their hard work on the Parish Council. Being a voluntary role it sometimes seems a thankless task, and I appreciate their commitment to our village.

Finally I would like to express my gratitude to our Clerk Helen Boden and our Assistant Clerk Jane Tyrrell, without their knowledge and professionalism the Parish Council could not efficiently function.

I commend the Committee reports to you.

##### **(b) Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee**

Councillor Brian Ramsay introduced himself as the Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Councillor Ramsay reported that the Precept had to be agreed in January, three months before the end of the financial year.

Cllr Ramsay reported that the 2025/26 budget should have been a "break even" budget, but that there had, instead, been a surplus.

Cllr Ramsay reported that there were a number of expenses coming up such as funding for a new youth worker, possible purchase of part of Woodland Avenue Recreation Ground which the Parish Council had been maintaining and managing for in excess of 50 years, but had recently been advised by the District Council that they own it. In addition, due to recent world events, contractors costs are increasing, which is being passed on the Parish Council. The heating and water systems at the Pavilion will also need attention in the coming year.

### **(c) Kent County Council – Maxine Fothergill**

Cllr Fothergill thanked the Council for inviting her to attend the Annual Parish Meeting and for the constructive way that it has worked with her throughout the year, making her feel welcome at its monthly meetings.

Cllr Fothergill reported that she had been working with residents throughout the year, with a range of issues such as potholes, drainage, road safety, fly tipping and highway maintenance issues.

Cllr Fothergill reported that she continued to support residents with individual casework issues such as school transport and that she remained involved with strategic issues such as supporting residents with regard to the proposed solar farm.

Cllr Fothergill also remains involved with the Local Government Reorganisation, which she does not support.

Cllr Fothergill thanked the Council for continuing to invite her to its meetings.

### **(d) Sevenoaks District Council**

Cllr Perry Cole presented his report to residents on behalf of himself, Cllr Penny Cole and Cllr Larry Abraham, as set out below:

Chairman, Fellow Councillors, invited guests and residents,

I am pleased to present a resume of the past year, May 2025 to date from Sevenoaks District Council.

The past year has not been without its challenges. Business as usual, as one would expect, has continued unabated, major cyclical events such as working towards developing our Local Plan (now rebranded as 2042) and the introduction of a revised and enhanced waste collection service have coincided, drawing many resources to manage each project.

Overarching these, looms the spectre of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) that all authorities across Kent are grappling to deal with. A scenario not helped by the fact that at present, the preferred geographies of the new Unitary Authorities is still yet to be decided. A decision from Central Government is expected around July this year, with legislation being introduced from September to enable the changes and the subsequent elections next year to elect members to the new authority.

Sevenoaks has argued that of the options designed and proffered to Central Government for consideration, Option 3A (comprising Sevenoaks, Tonbridge, Tunbridge & Malling and Maidstone Councils) provide the best opportunities for our residents.

Should LGR proceed to completion, elections will be held in May '27 with a 'Shadow' administration operating alongside the existing administrations until the handover is complete in May '28, when, after 54 years and 1 month, Sevenoaks District Council

will cease to exist, along with all other current authorities (Tunbridge and Malling Borough Council, Dartford Borough Council, Kent County Council etc).

Change to the new Unitary system will and is taking a phenomenal amount of work to implement and this workload will not reduce in order to secure as seamless a transition as possible. This will mean integrating services that historically have been provided by the 'Upper Tier' authority, in our case Kent County Council, into the new Unitary model. These would include, but are not limited to – Highways, Special Educational Needs & Disabilities provision and Adult Social Care.

All present in this hall this evening will hopefully be aware of Sevenoaks District Councils engagement with residents and Parish Councils in relation to our requirement to develop a Local Plan. A document designed to primarily identify housing need together with infrastructure and the promotion of economic growth.

Although it is labelled as Sevenoaks District Council Local Plan, what is often overlooked is the fact that in the vast majority of cases, plots of land are submitted by landowners or developers for consideration for adoption into the Plan. Comparatively very little land that appeared in the Regulation 18 consultation document as being put forward for consideration is owned by SDC. Local Authorities have a duty to assess each piece of land submitted for consideration and where there are no justifiable reasons to object to the inclusion of the land, they will find themselves included in the process up to either Regulation 19 where further assessment is made of the land included at the Regulation 18 stage and either approved or discounted at that stage. Even if adopted at this stage, there is still the planning process to contend with so planning permission is not guaranteed.

Central Government has imposed a housing target in excess of 17,000 units, some 63% higher than our previous target. Failure to deliver plans that show that every effort has been made to reach this target or at least to get close to it may result in Central Government intervention in determining how many and where developments are to take place.

Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, the guidance that underpins the whole planning process have been widely advertised. The most dramatic being perhaps the reclassification of Green Belt to Grey Belt unless certain criteria apply. For a district that is 93% Green Belt (the joint highest percentage in England) and 65% National Landscape (until recently known as AONB) these create additional pressures on not just where development can take place but the impact any development is likely to have on existing communities and infrastructure.

Other changes include the weighting that should be given to applications that provide alternative energy, solar arrays for example and about to be adopted if not already included is the requirement to report to the SoS any development of 150 units or more which is refused planning permission for a decision to be made centrally as to whether the development should go ahead or not.

### **Now perhaps for some better news? Food Waste Collection Services**

From the week commencing Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April, Sevenoaks initiated their first ever Food Waste Collection service. This is a weekly service (although it is not necessary for residents to place their caddies out for collection if only partially full if they choose not to).

As with every change of this scale, and let's not forget that there are more than 51,000 households in Sevenoaks District, teething problems were to be expected. Overall however, the introduction has been a great success. By Friday 01<sup>st</sup> May, the end of the first week of collection, over 50 tons of food waste had been collected and will be dealt with at an anaerobic digester plant rather than simply being incinerated along with other general waste. It is expected that this weekly tally will increase as residents become more familiar with the service. The new system is cleaner and the process not only helps to produce energy but also completes the energy cycle by producing nutrients that can be put back into the soil thus promoting further crop production.

Local schools were invited to take part in a competition to name the new food waste trucks and unfortunately, not only were Hartley schools unsuccessful in their entries, but my personal choice 'Puff the food waste Wagon' was equally dismissed (I suspect because I didn't qualify for age reasons!)

Direct Services staff worked additional hours alongside new and agency staff to implement the service with most reported incidents of non-collection being addressed the same or following day.

We recognise that in some cases things did not work as well as we would have liked and residents are encouraged to report missed collections to SDC as well as behaviour that they feel is below the standard expected e.g throwing caddies back into properties or repeatedly returning caddies to the wrong location etc. SDC cannot attend to issues unless they are aware of them.

It is important to note that the Food Waste collection, unless by sheer coincidence, is likely to take place separately from usual waste collection service. This means that if your waste has been collected but your food caddy has not been emptied, do not assume that it has been missed and take the caddy back indoors. As with conventional waste, please leave the caddy outside your property by 07:00hrs and do not take back indoors until after 16:00hrs.

### **Community Asset Transfers**

SDC embarked on a scheme called Community Asset Transfer last year. There is no requirement for SDC to do this and the principle is that certain SDC-owned assets might be offered to Town and Parish Councils at a less than market value price.

A very small number of plots of land were offered to Hartley Parish Council and only one parcel, a strip of land at the northern end of Woodland Avenue recreation ground was considered as being potentially beneficial to HPC and negotiations are still ongoing concerning this opportunity.

### **Local concerns**

Your local District Councillors have been active locally dealing with residents' concerns over housing, planning, traffic and anti-social behaviour issues.

We have secured through the landlord (a Housing Association) a completely new long fence run to provide privacy and security to tenants to replace one that had over the years begun to deteriorate and that in recent high winds several of its panels had collapsed leaving the tenants vulnerable.

Many residents have approached us regarding several interconnected issues with traffic on the Ash Road, principally but not limited to the section of road between St

Johns Lane and Castle Hill centring around the Post Office and Culvey Close. Issues include traffic tailing back due to parked vehicles, speeding vehicles, inconsiderate or dangerous driving, inconsiderate parking, concerns over the zebra crossing. A survey has been prepared and is being printed that will be hand-delivered by your local District Councillors to every household in Hartley over the next couple of weeks.

Councillors have informed residents of matters of local interest by a variety of means, principally through local newsletters, social media and micro-leaflets – where a small section of the community might be affected by an issue or a concern this has been addressed by hand-delivering letters to those addresses potentially affected.

We have been successful in setting up through Kent Police a Hartley Community Speed Watch scheme. Details are included on the aforementioned survey should residents wish to volunteer some time to help make our village a safer environment.

Cllr Cole reported that Cllr Penny Cole had recently been appointed as Vice Chairman of Sevenoaks District Council.

The Chairman and Councillors congratulated Cllr Cole on her appointment.

## **6. General Question Time**

Cllr Colwell reported that the Speed Indicator Device was currently up and working in New Ash Green.

A member of the public asked how they could sign up to “My Community Voice.”

P.C Weatherall offered to assist.

The Chairman thanked the residents for attending and  
closed the meeting at 8.39 p.m.

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

Chairman of Hartley Parish Council