

# Alkham Parish Council

## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday, 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2025 at 7:30 pm in Alkham Village Hall

Present: Alkham Parish Councillors: P Tapsell (Chaired the Meeting), S Edwards, T Johns, G Kaile.  
In Attendance: KCC Councillor D Beaney, DDC Councillor M Hibbert and 4 Members of the Public  
Irene Bowie – Parish Clerk

### 1. Apologies.

- 1.1 Apologies for absence received and confirmed by the Council Members who cannot attend a meeting shall tender their apologies to the Parish Clerk prior to the meetings, under Section 75(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, the members present must decide whether the reason(s) for a member's absence shall be accepted.  
**RESOLVED:** To accept the apologies and reasons given by Councilor C Webber, Councillor Bernard and Councillor Libaert. There were none
- 1.2 Declaration of Changes to the Register of Interests. There were none
- 1.3 To receive Declarations of Interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda. In accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 in respect of members and in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect of officers. There were none
- 1.4 Requests for Dispensations. There were none.
- 1.5 Declarations of Lobbying. There were none.

### 2. Public comments and observations. (Maximum 15 minutes)

The meeting will be adjourned to allow members of the public to speak. Individuals may speak for up to three minutes, at the discretion of the Chairman, on agenda items only. The minute book will be closed.

### 3. Reports from external parties (if present).

**KCC Councillor Beaney** reported on the Governments proposed Devolution for County, Borough and District Councils as described in the English Devolution White Paper. KCC and Medway had elected submit a registration of interest to be part of the first wave of the re-structuring. If accepted by the Secretary of State there would be a restructuring of KCC and Medway and all Borough and District Councils in Kent.

It was suggested that there could be 3 or 4 Unitary Authorities reporting to one Mayor for Kent. This would mean the abolishment of the Borough and District Councils. This would streamline functions, and additional funds would be made available for those in the first wave. If selected the County Elections in May 2025 would be delayed until the new Unitary authorities had been created. This could take 2-3 years.

A decision from the Government was expected on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> of January but this had been delayed.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Beaney for his report.

**DDC Councillor Hibbert. Written report at Appendix.**

There were no questions for Councillor Hibbert. The Chairman thanked him for his report.

### 4. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> of January 2025 were taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 5. Planning:

**5.1 To table planning applications received for consideration:** There were no applications to be considered.

**5.2 To Table and Validate Planning Applications, which have been dealt with since the last meeting.**

There were none.

**5.3 To table decisions by Dover District Council (DDC) since the last meeting.**

- 5.3.1 22/01625 Evergreen Slip Lane Alkham Dover CT15 7DA  
Erection of porch, raised terrace with balustrade, storage underneath dwelling and associated changes in ground levels, replacement cladding to elevations, erection of retaining wall and alterations to fenestration (retrospective) (amended plans, re-advertised)  
**Grant Planning Permission**
- 5.3.2 TC/25/00005 Greenwood Slip Lane Alkham CT15 7DA  
Proposal Work to trees in a conservation area  
**Withdrawn**
- 5.3.3 24/01254 Minnis Lodge Newcastle Lane Ewell Minnis Dover CT15 7DY  
Certificate of lawfulness (proposed) for the erection of a single storey rear extension and demolition of existing conservatory and erection of single storey rear extension on the same footprint  
**Split Decision (Part Approved, Part Refused)**
- 5.3.4 24/00855 The Old Rectory Slip Lane Alkham CT15 7DA  
Widening of existing vehicular access, erection of new wall and pier and removal of one tree, and new entrance gate (one existing wall and pier to be demolished)  
**Grant Planning Permission**
- 5.3.5 24/00856 The Old Rectory Slip Lane Alkham CT15 7DA  
Widening of existing access, re-use of the existing gate and re-positioning and re-construction of existing masonry walling and piers at the entrance to The Old Rectory, Alkham. Incorporating new pedestrian gate.  
**Grant Listed Building Consent**

**5.4 To Table late planning matters: There were no late planning matters**

**6. Finance:**

- 6.1 To receive and authorise payments listed on the schedule (to be provided at the meeting).

**RESOLVED:**

1. **The payments on the schedule were authorised.**
2. **The HMRC Payment and Staff Costs for February would be confirmed prior to payment.**
3. **HMRC Payments would be made monthly rather than quarterly.**

BACS	Irene Bowie	Staff Costs amended for December 2024 and January 2025	Confidential
BACS	Irene Bowie	Staff Costs February 2025	Confidential
BACS	HMRC Q3	Oct-Dec 2024	Confidential
BACS	HMRC	Jan-25	Confidential
BACS	HMRC	Feb-25	Confidential
BACS	Harmer	Invoice 24517 Hedge cutting Hogbrook Lane Play Inspections	£99.60

- 6.2 Late Payment Request/s to be discussed for approval and payment.  
There were no late payments.
- 6.3 To note receipts of Income.  
The receipts of income year to date were noted as £ 21,141
- 6.4 To receive the bank reconciliation.  
The combined bank reconciliation was received and noted as £41,385.01

**7. Parish Council Defibrillator at the Village Hall**

- 7.1 To receive the Governance report for the defibrillator. Not available.
- 7.2 To confirm the date for Basic Life Support and Defibrillator Training. Clerk to follow up with the VHM for dates in March 2025.

**8. To receive Reports and agree on actions if appropriate. Appendix 1**

- 8.1 Chairman's Report.
- 8.2 KALC Area Meeting Alkham Parish Council Representative.

Councillor Tapsell report on the most recent meeting, topics discussed included:

- The proposed KCC Devolution
- A presentation by DDC Climate Change Officer, explaining DDC actions.
- The impact of the Upper Thames crossing on Dover and the surrounding roads and communities.

8.3 Clerks Report (on matters not included in other agenda items)

The Clerk reported that:

- The Precept Form for 2025/26 has been sent to DDC
- The Parish Council Chairman and Clarks Board would be ready in time for the next meeting.
- Several grant applications had been made.

8.4 Councillors Report (on matters not included in other agenda items).

8.6 Flood and Drainage Warden

8.7 Footpath Warden. Councillor Tapsell to follow up with the PROW Manager regarding footpath 175 and also Pimlico Way. Complaints re off road vehicles and trial bikes using the PROW.

8.8 Village Organisations. No reports.

## 9. To receive reports and consider recommendations from the working groups. Appendix 1

9.1 Highways Working Group. There were no updates.

9.2 Communications and Community Involvement Working Group. There were no updates.

9.3 Parish Plan Evolution and Delivery Working Group. There were no updates.

9.4 Green Spaces and Environment Working Group.

The following were **AGREED** from the Working Group report:

- Strip of land at the bottom of "Access to The Anchorage" and a request for a working party to clear this. It is not owned by the Parish Council. The resident should contact the landowner.
- KCC Councillor Beaney had reported the overgrown vegetation on the Alkham Valley Road pavements.
- The Lime Tree was planted by the Cricket Club. It was noted that it is a cutting from the St Lawrence Ground Lime Tree and was planted in memory of Brian Luckhurst (Kent and England) who lived in Alkham for many years. Removal of the lower branches to be discussed at the next meeting.
- The Orchard on the Village Green is progressing.
- Councillor Johns to organise the spreading of the woodchips.

9.4.1 To receive and consider a resident request regarding the parish council-owned land at Newlyn's Meadow.

It was **AGREED** that representatives of the parish council would meet with the resident and report back to the next meeting.

9.4.2 To consider the purchase of a Springy Cow for the play area.

It was **AGREED** that further detailed clarification regarding installation was required. To be discussed at the next meeting.

## 10. To receive the Monthly Playground Inspection Report.

The report was not received in time for the meeting.

## 11. Correspondence:

11.1 DDC IMPACT festival - Youth Festival 29th March 2025

11.2 University of Kent, Canterbury are excited to introduce Space Week 2025

11.3 KALC Devolution information

All correspondence was noted.

## 12. Agenda Items for the next meeting: To be received by the Clerk no later than the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2025

### 13. Consideration of items to be taken in private (Exclusion of Public and Press):

There are only a few reasons as to why, legally, the public and press can be excluded from a meeting. The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Sec 1 (2) states "A body may, by resolution, exclude the public from a meeting (whether during the whole or part of the proceedings) whenever publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons stated in the resolution and arising from the nature of that business or of the proceedings; and where such a resolution is passed, this Act shall not require the meeting to be open to the public during proceedings to which the resolution applies." It is generally considered acceptable to exclude the press and public if the agenda item relates to the consideration of tenders, leases, purchases of assets, for matters relating to staffing covered by the Data Protection Act and to consider complaints against the council or a code of conduct complaint.

13.1 KALC Community Award

To be validated at the next meeting.

13.2 The Clerk gave an update on DDC Planning Enforcement matters

**14. Meeting Dates for 2025**

3rd March, 7<sup>th</sup> April, 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 7<sup>th</sup> July, 1<sup>st</sup> September, 6<sup>th</sup> October, 3<sup>rd</sup> November

12<sup>th</sup> May Annual Statutory Meeting of the Parish Council . 12<sup>th</sup> May Annual Village Meeting

**Councillor Standing Declarations of Interests.**

**Cllr Trevor Johns:**

Chairman of the Alkham Valley Society

Member of the Alkham Community Speedwatch Team

**Cllr Catie Webber:**

Vice-Chairman of the Alkham Valley Society

Bookings Clerk for the Alkham Village Hall Management Committee

Member of the Alkham Village Hall Management Committee

**Cllr Paul Tapsell.**

Trustee of the Alkham Village Hall (Charity number: 255919)

**Cllr Steve Edwards.**

Member of the Alkham Valley Society Management Committee

Member of the Alkham Community Speedwatch Team

***National rules about pecuniary interests are set out in Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011 and in secondary Legislation made under the Act, in particular The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012***

***These minutes are not a verbatim record of the meeting, but a record of resolutions made.***

There being no further business to be transacted, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8:10 pm.

Signed on behalf of the Parish Council

Signature:

Date:

Chairman: Please Print.

## **Appendix:**

### **3. Reports from External Parties**

#### **DDC Councillor Summary Report February 2025**

##### **Devolution**

Both KCC and DDC unsure of the way forward. Many unanswered questions as to final structure. Awaiting response from Gov. to invite both county and district councils to join Devolution Priority Programme. This will place them on a fast-track programme to deliver institution and possible Mayors elected in May 2026 or earlier. This may mean no KCC elections in May. Still uncertainty who will be tasked to do the preparatory work and what consultations will take place and at what levels. Business as usual during process, and this may take several years to deliver.

If selected the Gov White paper says:

1. All are expected to develop proposal for reorganisation within specified timeline.
2. Need to work together to develop proposals that are in the best interests of the whole area, rather than developing competing proposals.
3. Gov. will write to councils to formally invite councils to submit proposals.
4. Gov. will have a phased approach to delivering reorganisation – prioritising areas to set selection criteria,
5. Gov. will work closely with local leaders to support them in developing robust proposals. May include decision to postpone elections. Outline proposals feedback by May 2025. Very short timeline.

DDC will be informed by Gov. if they have been selected on Friday 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025. Good to note that NACL have published and circulated their response and guidance to the devolution white paper. As ever the devil is in the white paper details. I will try and keep you update as best I can.

##### **TAP**

Still waiting for a scheduled meeting with Mike Tapp MP. Some good news regarding the local signage issues at the Roundhill Tunnel and traffic diversions when TAP is activated. At a Dover Joint Traffic Transportation Board meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> of Dec 24 a KCC report was presented where it was noted under Appendix D - Externally Funded Schemes -23-DO-ext-27 funding had been appropriated for the provision of suitable designed signage. A request has been made for a representative from Capel councillors to be involved in the signage designs and proposed locations given their local knowledge and direct experience when rogue traffic impact on the local community. Tom Williams, KCC Highway Manager, Dover, is currently dealing with this request via the appropriate section and will update us on progress.

This work is important as there has been a significant increase in TAP activation during the last quarter of 2024. TAP was triggered 20 times in October 20 in November and 19 in in December. Over 226% increase on the previous year. KCC and Kent and Medway Resilience Forum intend to discuss this matter with Dover Harbour Board to seek answers.

##### **Improvement to M2, A2, M20, A20 and the two Roundabouts.**

No further information available.

## **Dover Fast Track**

Up and running from 17<sup>th</sup> Nov 2024. Currently running a service from 0700 to 1900hrs. Timetable will be expanded in Spring to manage first and last services of trains at Dover Priory. Currently still using diesel buses but electric vehicles expected later this year. Service uptake is currently around 400 journeys per day with an increase of passengers around 20% per week as public mixed reactions are overcome.

## **EES (European Entry and Exit system).**

Introduction date still in obeyance with several Schengen countries still dragging their heels on agreement. The delay has helped with DHB reaching an agreement with the French for both cars and coaches to be processed at the Western Terminal. They state that they have the needed infrastructure in place and are confident that they are able to manage the traffic controls effectively. Border Force are planning a similar system on the UK controls in Calais!

## **Quality Bus Partnership**

Moves a foot to bring this back to life in some form or other. There is an item on the next Cabinet agenda recommending the creation of a local bus focus group.

## **Port Health Funding**

Little change with DEFRA still paying monthly for the border check service at Dover. But there are still no checks taking place in Coquelles. However, Port Health report that the co-operation they receive from Border Force is useful and improving as they do not have the power to stop vehicles. This has resulted in Port Health officers during searching finding illicit goods and BF find illegally imported meat. The benefit of working hand in hand increasing seizures – a win, win outcome!

## **The Great British Spring Clean**

Project meetings are taking place and are considering the following possible approaches:

- hosted litter picks involving local communities and organisations.
- offering loan of equipment upon request
- return of REACH awards

Watch this space.

Cllr Martin Hibbert

1/02/25

## **8.1 Chairmans Report**

I've been through the filing cabinet in the VH store cupboard and also found two boxes of Parish Council stuff which I am now going through. Most of the documentation is pre 2017 there doesn't seem to be anything after that. When I'm done I'll produce a detailed report so that we can decide what needs to be kept.

I've applied for a grant for another defibrillator this time from the British Heart Foundation, if we're unsuccessful there are others we can try.

I'll be producing an article for the newsletter, web site and Alkham Village Residents FB page inviting applicants for our twelve free defib training course places which Irene will be booking for March.

Den

## **8.6 Flood and Drainage Wardens Report**

We finally got confirmation that the desilting work on the sump and hopefully drain clearing on Hogbrook Hill Lane will be carried out on the week beginning 10<sup>th</sup> February.

This is really good news and will help when we get heavy rain.

Den and I will meet them on that morning and ask them to take the silt they have removed away, rather than leaving it in an ever-growing hill by the side of the car park.

The ditch through the green also needs clearing of all the dead leaves etc from the winter.

I believe the parish council are the Riparian owners of the ditch, can we arrange for Harmers to clear this ditch at the end of November, beginning of December when the leaves have gone from the trees? This will help the flow of the water and stop the "dam" at the other end filling up with detritus.

#### **9.4 Green Spaces and Environment Working Group Report**

We have been asked to clear a strip of land outside Newlyns and a resident has offered to do this possibly with some help. The work needs doing before March due to bird nesting.

Strip of land at the bottom of a resident's driveway has a dead willow and bushes that need clearing and several sycamores seedlings. Who owns this and can we clear it with a work party?

Alkham Valley Road pavement is still overgrown near the garden centre and near the 30 sign. Can it be trimmed?

The orchard is still going ahead but no news of trees yet. Trevor is coordinating this.

Can the bit of hedge obscuring the view from Hogbrook junction with AVR be removed, again before March? We could put up orange plastic fence while we are waiting for the fence.

Can we get a quote from another fence supplier?

Can we put in a request to KCC to clear the rubbish on the road near Wolverton Hill. A resident has complained.

Can the lime tree by the village hall have the lower branches removed to improve line of sight for cars? Not sure who owns it.

Can a work party be organised to spread the wood chips asap?

The compost from the bins has been removed to nearer the village hall and will be used to fill the planters outside.