



Alkham Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 2nd March 2026 at 7.30pm in Alkham Village Hall

Present: Alkham Parish Councillors: D.Barnard (Chair), S. Edwards, T.Johns, G. Kaile, C.Webber, DDC Cllr Hibbert, KCC Cllr King.
Irene Barnard Took the minutes.

1. Apologies and Declarations.

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 reason from Cllr Libeart

1.2 Declaration of Changes to the Register of Interests.

Councillors are responsible for ensuring that their Register of Interests is up to date (within 28 days of any changes). 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 respectively for officers.

Reminder to Members to disclose either a Pecuniary Interest or Other Interest in any item on the agenda. The clerk cannot advise members on this, and members are personally responsible for declaring an interest. 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 was adjourned to allow members of the public to speak. Individuals are allowed to speak for up to three minutes, at the discretion of the Chairman, on agenda items only. The minute book is closed.

3. Reports from external parties .

Cllr Hibbert reported they are waiting for feedback for the Capel Truck Stop proposal and for further information on the AG Planning proposal. The deadline for considerations is Friday 6th March 2026. The Community Government review has been sent to the Chairman. Cllr King reported that the Environmental Regeneration Budget has been agreed, the Hougham Lorry Park is supported by KCC.

4. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 12th January 2026 will be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman when available. (One addition should read Cllr D Barnard offered apologies for absence) Cllrs to email the clerk with confirmation or any changes

5. Planning:

5.1 To table planning applications received for consideration: **There were none**

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

5.2.1 25/01307 Halfacres Short Lane Alkham Kent

Proposal Change of use of land to a gypsy/traveller site and the stationing of 2 additional static homes, 2 touring caravans and erection of 2 day rooms with associated hard and soft landscaping.

APC Objection. Resolved: Vote validated from last meeting

5.3 To table decisions by Dover District Council (DDC) since the last meeting. **There were none.**

5.4 To table late planning matters. **There were none.**

6. Finance:

- 6.1 To receive and authorise payments listed on the schedule (to be provided at the meeting) . **Cllrs asked to review list and reply to the Clerk.**
- 6.2 Late Payment Request/s to be discussed for approval and payment. **There were none.**
- 6.3 To note receipts of Income. **Cllrs to review and reply to Clerk.**
- 6.4 To receive the bank reconciliation. **Cllrs to review and reply to Clerk.**
- 6.5 To receive actual vs budget. **Cllrs to review and reply to Clerk.**
- 6.6 To receive any late financial matters. **There are none.**

7. To consider and review the AGAR Assertion 10 requirements.

There is a new assertion on this years AGAR. To answer yes we need to put a few extra things in place.

- 7.1 **IT Policy** We have to have this in place to be able to agree to the new assertion 10 for this years AGAR. I have chosen a simplified policy as we have most of the data protection matters covered in other policies. **Cllrs to review policy in the members area and reply to clerk.**
- 7.2 **Domain & Email Security.** It is recommended that we have a .gov.uk email address for the Clerk and Cllrs. The clerk has two quotes and is pursuing others.
- 7.2 **Website Accessibility: Ensuring websites meet WCAG 2.2 AA standards.** Our current system is compliant
- 7.3 **GDPR/Data Protection Review.** Ongoing

7.4 **To consider and resolve to purchase Parish Council-owned tablets for Councillors to use for official email and council business, to support compliance with Data Protection requirements.**

Decision held over to next meeting.

8. To receive Reports and agree on actions if appropriate.

- 8.1 Chairman's Report. The final two candidates for defibrillator training have been identified. The filing cabinet contents have been reviewed and removed where appropriate. The Village Hall payments will be a year in advance starting on 1st April. Speakers for the Annual Parish Meeting are needed.
- 8.2 KALC Area Meeting Alkham Parish Council Representative. No recent meetings held.
- 8.3 Clerks Report (on matters not included in other agenda items).
 - Lorry Watch dates for a meeting will be sent to the Clerk.
 - Additional quote being sought for Village Maintenance.
 - Two FOI Requests has been submitted
- 8.4 Councillors Reports (on matters not included in other agenda items). There were none.
- 8.6 Flood and Drainage Warden. Sewage repairs to be completed by March 11th 2026. The pipe relief proposal will not go ahead as it will not improve the flow of flood water onto the Football Pitch.
- 8.7 Footpath Warden. Bridge at the far end of the green needs refurbishment.
- 8.8 Village Organisations. Village hall improvements are progressing.

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

- 9.1 Highways Working Group. Cllr Johns reported on current situation regarding a strategic review of the Alkham Valley Road. See appendix A.
- 9.2 Communications and Community Involvement Working Group. The Parish Council website needs to be reviewed and regularly updated for eg meeting dates.
- 9.3 Parish Plan Evolution and Delivery Working Group. Ongoing. A review of the Community Led Plan progress needs to be reported and the Annual Parish Council meeting would be the best place to review.

9.4 Green Spaces and Environment Working Group. Very little needs doing on tree maintenance. Ten fruit trees have been installed as agreed following the Petanque planning application.

9.4.1 A proposal for a Table Tennis table on the Village Green was received from villagers Philip and Karoline Taylor. Fund raising and maintenance would be independent of the Parish Council.

Resolved : Agreed subject to investigation by the Clerk re Insurance , Planning Permission

10. To receive the Playground Inspection Reports.

Cllr Barnard reported that the comment regarding refurbishment of the bench nearest the climbing frame was a mistake confirmed by Harmers.

11. **Correspondence:** None

12. **Agenda Items for the next meeting:** None

13. The Chairman thanked Mrs. Barnard for standing in for the Clerk.

14. 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.

Meeting Dates 2026.

13th April ,11th May, 1st June, 6th July, 7th September, 5th October, 2nd November

Appendix A

Highways Update

March 2026

The Parish Council has reached a critical juncture in addressing the unsustainable traffic pressures on **Alkham Valley Road**. Having exhausted the standard **Highways Improvement Plan (HIP)** process without securing adequate safety measures, we have formally requested that **Kent County Council (KCC)** conduct a **Strategic Review** to ensure its current usage aligns with its intended local function and environmental protections.

What the HIP Process Has Delivered

Through the HIP process:

- The Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) at the western end of the village has been replaced.
- A short section of road to the east of the village has been reduced to 40mph.

While these measures are welcome, they do not address the core structural and safety concerns repeatedly raised by the Parish Council. We remain at an impasse on our key requests — particularly regarding effective speed reduction within the village core and measures to deter unsuitable HGV use through the narrow conservation pinch-point.

It is this unresolved position that has led us to escalate the matter.

Formal Actions Now Taken

To ensure transparency and proper scrutiny, the Parish Council has formally submitted:

- **A letter to KCC Councillor Paul King** requesting a Strategic Review of Alkham Valley Road.
- **A Request for Information (RFI) to Dover District Council Planning Department** regarding the proper Highways assessment of cumulative HGV impacts from AD plant application.
- **A Freedom of Information (FOI) / Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) request to KCC** seeking disclosure of traffic modelling, technical assessments, safety audits, and the evidential basis for rejecting previous safety interventions.
- **A Freedom of Information request to Network Rail** regarding the frequency and cost of bridge strikes at Kearsney Railway Bridge.

Our MP has been formally briefed on the cumulative traffic pressures, safety risks and policy inconsistencies identified by the Parish Council, and has been provided with supporting documentation ahead of further engagement with Kent County Council.

Why a Strategic Review?

Alkham Valley Road is experiencing increasing pressure from:

- Pressures on the A2/A20 corridor resulting in traffic displacement onto unsuitable rural routes.
- Construction and growth-related traffic associated with the Whitfield expansion and wider East Kent housing development.
- Rising HGV intensity on a route never designed for modern freight vehicles.
- Its location within the [Kent Downs National Landscape](#), where dark skies and tranquillity are protected qualities.

The narrow section near the Marquis of Granby represents a structural constraint incompatible with routine two-way HGV movements. The absence of continuous pedestrian provision — particularly through the pinch-point gap — and the crossing of bridleways and Public Rights of Way create an unacceptable risk environment.

Why Escalation Is Now Necessary

The HIP process has delivered incremental adjustments but has proven incapable of resolving:

- The structural unsuitability of the conservation pinch-point for modern HGVs.
- The need for proportionate physical calming to reduce gateway speeds.
- The absence of safe pedestrian continuity through the village centre.
- The cumulative impact of growth-related displacement traffic.

We believe road calming is essential both to reduce speeds and to reinforce that Alkham Valley Road is unsuitable for routine HGV transit. The continued reliance on procedural or technical interpretations to resist intervention has led us to seek full disclosure of the underlying evidence base.

Next Steps

If a transparent, evidence-based Strategic Review is not forthcoming, and the disclosure process identifies material gaps in the application of relevant regulations and policy, the Parish Council will escalate the matter through a statutory challenge and full public scrutiny.

We are concerned that the current approach may not adequately discharge duties relating to road safety, equality of access, and the protection of the Kent Downs National Landscape.

All correspondence and copies of submitted requests will be available on the Parish Council website.

Residents will be updated as soon as formal responses are received.