



# BOUGHTON-UNDER-BLEAN PARISH COUNCIL

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**Minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Parish Council held at St Barnabas Parish Centre on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2025 from 7:33pm to 9:14pm.**

**Present:**

Cllr T. Covell (Chairman), Cllr J. Muteham, Cllr S. Moakes, Cllr I. Linfield, Cllr P. Ray, Cllr A. Gould (SBC)

**Also present:**

Mrs S. Muteham (Clerk) and 4 members of the public

**289. Apologies**

- A. Apologies received from Cllr D. Clayson, Cllr R. Lehmann (SBC/KCC)
- B. Reasons for absence approved. **Resolved:** to accept apologies for absence from Cllr D. Clayson.

**290. Declaration of Interests**

None

**291. Minutes**

The minutes of the following meeting, having been circulated to all Members, were taken as read and confirmed by the chairman of the meeting:

- A. Minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025 (minutes 280-288)

**Resolved:** the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January were approved.

A report containing minutes of the following meeting was circulated to all Members:

- B. Draft minutes as a report of the Village Hall Management Committee meeting held on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2025

**Resolved:** to accept the report of the committee meeting held on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

**292. Public Participation**

Two attending members of the public spoke of their concern over the parish council's involvement in formulating Terms of Reference for the Neighbourhood Plan. One attending member of the public spoke of their proposal to adapt some of the dis-used space at the public toilets for a community project.

**293. Finance and Administration**

- A. Bank reconciliation - The bank reconciliation dated 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025 was circulated at the meeting and approved by those present. **Resolved:** the bank account balances and reconciliation were approved.
- B. Items for payment - All payments as detailed on the bank reconciliation dated 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025 were approved by those present at the meeting. **Resolved:** the payments as detailed in [Appendix A](#) were approved for payment.
- C. Matters resolved under the scheme of delegation - Members present reviewed the reported details of payments made under the Scheme of Delegation. **Resolved:** to accept the report.
- D. Reserves - Members present reviewed the council's financial reserves as detailed in [Appendix B](#) and raised no concerns. After consideration of the financial position, it was agreed at the

*Chairman's Initial*.....

start of the next financial year to move £6,000 from the play equipment budget to create an ear-marked reserve for play equipment. **Resolved:** to create an ear-marked reserve of £6,000 for play equipment.

- E. Asset Register - Those present reviewed the current asset register. **Resolved:** to accept the information as presented on the asset register.
- F. Internal Audit - It was noted that the Clerk had recently completed the interim internal audit for 2024/5 and the internal auditor's report had been circulated. Councillors present reviewed the report, commenting that it was a positive and detailed representation of the council. **Resolved:** to accept the report.
- G. SLCC Membership - The Clerk requested an additional element of membership with the Society of Local Council Clerks, which offers additional training benefits. Those present considered and approved the request. **Resolved:** to provide additional membership.
- H. Donation - The Clerk circulated a request for a donation to the Battle of Bossenden Wood memorial appeal. After much discussion, those present requested further information before making a decision at the next meeting
- I. Consultation - Details of the 'Strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities' consultation were circulated prior to the meeting. Members present considered the benefits of completing the consultation and agreed to make individual responses. **Resolved:** to make individual responses to the consultation.
- J. Devolution - Cllr P. Ray noted that he had attended the Local Parish Councils Liaison Forum meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> February, which focussed on devolution and provided a verbal update on the items discussed. This included details that Swale Borough Council would be feeding back relevant information to parish councils via their Clerks as devolution matters evolved.
- K. Events - Those present considered hosting community events in June 2025. After a lengthy discussion, it was agreed in principle to host a 'Big Lunch' lunch event on 8<sup>th</sup> June in the first instance. Cllr P. Ray agreed to investigate the matter before further consideration at the next meeting. **Resolved:** Cllr P. Ray to obtain further information.
- L. Christmas - The Clerk reported that members of the community were proposing to increase the number of Christmas lights located on Kent County Council's lighting columns in The Street. The parish council noted that it had previously paid for the electricity supply on festive lighting and agreed to continue to do so. **Resolved:** to pay for festive lighting.
- M. Insurance - The Trustee of Boughton under Blean Village Hall put forward a request to include the village hall on the parish council's insurance policy. After discussion, it was agreed that at the time of requesting quotes to renew the council's policy, the Clerk would also obtain quotes to include the village hall for further consideration. It was noted that if the village hall was to be included on the council's policy, the additional cost would be re-charged back to the charity of Boughton under Blean Village Hall. **Resolved:** to obtain insurance quotes including the village hall.
- N. Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) - Cllr I. Linfield noted that she had attended the joint HIP meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> January. Members discussed the benefits of a joint plan to save costs on any potential Traffic Regulation Order. Members present discussed and agreed in principle to progress options to install double yellow lines on Colonels Lane in the vicinity of Chestnut Court. The Clerk reported that she was awaiting further clarification on costs from KCC and advised that council should wait for further information before seeking to conduct an informal consultation on the matter. Consideration was also given to conducting an informal traffic audit, to highlight any traffic issues within the parish. **Resolved:** Cllr I. Linfield to conduct an audit.
- O. Grant Funding - The Clerk reported that KCC were again offering grants as part of the Parish Council Support Scheme, which supports the local community during the cost of living crisis. Those present considered the benefits to the community and agreed to apply for funding to be used to provide a series of social hubs. **Resolved:** to apply for £1,000 grant funding.

*Chairman's Initial.....*

- P. Presentation - Swale Borough Councillor T. Thompson had offered to give a short talk/presentation about reconnecting ancient woodland in East Kent. Councillors present considered the offer and agreed that the best time to conduct the talk would be at the Annual Parish Meeting in May, noting that an alternative would be to hold the talk immediately prior to the March full council meeting. **Resolved:** to invite Cllr T. Thompson to give a presentation.

## 294. Public Amenities Matters

### A. Bull Lane Recreation Ground

- 1) Fence - The Clerk reported that the boundary fence behind the oast houses was severely damaged in parts and needed replacing. After discussion, it was agreed to replace the fence as a matter of urgency. **Resolved:** to replace the fence.
- 2) Vegetation - It was noted that the Woodland Trust were offering free trees to communities in the UK. Members considered the merits of applying for hedging to be located adjacent to the boundary fence near access gates at the back of the oast houses and agreed to apply for the 'Wildlife' hedge pack. **Resolved:** to apply for free trees to make a wildlife hedge.

### B. Public Toilets

- 1) Use of building - A resident put forward a request for additional use of the public toilets building as a community hub. Cllr T. Covell noted that the building has a covenant restricting its use to being a public convenience. Members present discussed the proposal and agreed to explore the possibility of partially adapting the use of the premises. **Resolved:** the Clerk to investigate covenant amendments.

## 295. Planning

### A. Duchy Application

- 1) It was noted that several councillors attended a presentation by the Duchy of Cornwall for the proposed development known as South East Faversham. It was also noted that no discussions leading to decisions were made at the presentation.
- 2) Members present discussed proposals to put forward to Swale Borough Council as part of a Section 106 agreement. After consideration, it was agreed to put forward a request for support with the following projects:
  - Boughton under Blean Village Hall - new flat roof and associated safety railings, refurbishment of male and female toilet facilities, refurbishment of entrance foyer, renewal of exterior cladding, installation of new solar panels for roof, interior insulation.
  - Bull Lane recreation ground - refresh tarmac access road, refurbishment of car park
  - Public Toilets - full refurbishment of building
  - Highways - installation of highway kerbing on grass verge/banks on 'The Street'

- ### B. Neighbourhood Plan (NP) - Following on from a resolution by Dunkirk Parish Council, it was agreed that the Clerk (in conjunction with Dunkirk Parish Council's Clerk) would draft Terms of Reference giving clear guidance relevant to the Parish Council's involvement in the NP, and to subsequently work with the NP team to discuss the draft document before adoption. **Resolved:** the council to provide the Clerk's time to draft Terms of Reference documentation.

## 296. Councillors Reports

KCC Cllr R. Lehmann circulated the following report by email:

As you may be aware, the government announced last week that Kent was not going to be included as part of the Devolution Priority Programme, so we won't be seeing mayoral elections in May 2026. There are a number of pros and cons to this. The main (possible) downside is that Kent will miss out on the additional funding which has been promised to accompany those areas undergoing 'devolution'. The upsides include avoiding being guinea

pigs in a process which does not appear to have been thought through, and the fact that the Kent County Council elections will take place in May, as scheduled.

Although Devolution is not going ahead in Kent just yet, the wheels are still in motion on Local Government Reform. Kent, Medway, and all of the district councils were sent a letter on 5<sup>th</sup> February with a mandatory ‘invitation’ to submit interim plans for a preferred geographical makeup of Kent’s unitaries by late March, with final plans expected to be submitted by late November.

One key issue for Kent, and most acutely for our area, is the fact that Faversham and Swale East’s health boundaries do not align with the district boundaries. This means that if Swale were to be moved in its entirety into a North Kent authority alongside Medway, Gravesham, and Dartford, then Faversham and the surrounding villages would be under one geographical area for the primary healthcare and another for adult social care. And if Swale were to become part of an East Kent Authority, then the same disconnect would apply to Sittingbourne and Sheppey. Either the health boundaries need to be redrawn, or Swale needs to be split across two unitaries to avoid this mismatch. This appears to be yet another example of the government’s plans not having been fully thought through.

KCC currently has a consultation open on its draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). The strategy sets out Kent’s priorities for nature recovery and the recommended action to deliver the greatest outcomes for the country’s habitats and species.

The consultation is available online at <https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/nature-recovery> and will be available to respond to until 12 March.

#### **297. Chairman/Clerk’s Reports**

The Clerk’s report was received by those present and is detailed in [Appendix C](#). The Clerk also noted that the Parish Council would be hosting a Fraud Presentation/coffee morning on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> February in St Barnabas Parish Centre.

The next ordinary meeting of the Parish Council was scheduled for Tuesday 11<sup>h</sup> March 2025 at 7:30pm. There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed.

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Signed by the CHAIRMAN of the meeting

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## **APPENDIX A**

Castle Water (Public toilets) - (D/D estimate for information only)	£39.59
Castle Water (Cemetery) - (D/D estimate for information only)	£13.00
Castle Water (Allotments) - (D/D estimate for information only)	£168.46
Lloyds Bank (Chargecard/Service charge) - (D/D for information only)	£85.05
EDF Energy (Streetlighting) - (D/D estimate for information only)	£1,349.00
British Gas (Public toilets) - (D/D estimate for information only)	£18.56
Bk Tfr - P. Reynolds - Phone box cleaning	£5.00
Bk Tfr - M. Wellington - Litter picker (Jan)	£180.00
Bk Tfr - S. Morrow - Toilets - Cleaning (Jan)	£343.20
Bk Tfr - National Allotment Society - Annual membership	£85.00
Bk Tfr - Boughton under Blean Village Hall - Hall hire	£37.50
Bk Tfr - Streetlights - Maintenance contract - Q4 24/25	£984.79
Bk Tfr - April Skies - Internal Audit	£192.50
Bk Tfr - Northants CALC - Training	£50.40
Bk Tfr - Play Inspection Company - Operational inspections (Bull Lane)	£187.80

## **APPENDIX B**

<b><u>GENERAL RESERVES</u></b>		<b>£45,055.26</b>
<b><u>EARMARKED FUNDS/RESERVES:-</u></b>		
<i>Harry Wheeler</i>	<i>£2,500.00</i>	
<i>Defibrillator</i>	<i>£404.41</i>	
<i>Tarmac at Bull Lane</i>	<i>£10,124.20</i>	
<i>Football pitch upgrades</i>	<i>£3,200.00</i>	
<i>Cemetery legacy funds</i>	<i>£1,911.00</i>	
<i>Public Toilets</i>	<i><u>£4,000.00</u></i>	
		<b>£22,139.61</b>

## **APPENDIX C**

### **CLERKS REPORT**

#### **Summary of tasks completed**

##### **Public Amenities**

1. Routine inspection of public toilets, cemetery, allotments and recreation grounds
2. Ordered new bench for cemetery
3. Instructed removal and disposal of old cemetery bench
4. Requested change of location for allotments water meter (to be more accessible)
5. Reviewed contractor work for cleaning/repairs on play equipment at Bull Lane
6. Launched consultation on future of play equipment at Bull Lane
7. Requested soil top-up for sunken graves
8. Reviewed damage to boundary fence at Bull Lane

##### **General**

9. Kept website up to date with meeting agendas and minutes, road closures, news items
10. Kept facebook page up to date with meetings, road closures and news items

*Chairman's Initial.....*

11. Carried out monthly defibrillator check
12. Attended CIL/Section 106 training
13. Arranged 2 community Fraud Presentations
14. Updated joint Highways Improvement Plan (HIP)
15. Attended KCC/HIP meeting
16. Completed interim internal audit
17. Attended KALC Community Warden training
18. Attended SLCC Practitioners' Conference
19. Attended Parkinson Partnership VAT training

**Summary of tasks in progress**

20. Photo catalogue Garden of Remembrance (cemetery) plots
21. Reviewing cemetery headstone stability testing plots
22. Obtaining necessary permissions for replacement bench at Arthur Kennedy Close
23. Transfer of deeds for three cemetery plots (ERoB)
24. Researching planning permission regarding Section 106 monies
25. Researching funding opportunities for play equipment
26. Arranging joint Planning Process meeting

**Summary of tasks to be done**

27. Review all outstanding ERoB renewals on cemetery plots (Garden of Remembrance)
28. Attend Faversham Networking Group
29. Attend Duchy developer meeting
30. Attend National Highways roadworks meeting
31. Attend Local Councils Liaison Forum meeting
32. Attend Fraud Presentation/coffee morning
33. Complete bi-annual football pitch inspection (for grant funding)