

Birling Parish Council
MINUTES of the MEETING held on
Tuesday 17th March 2026 at 8pm All Saints Church, Birling.

Present: Cllr Westwood (chair); Cllr Hewett; Cllr Hirst; Cllr Nevill; Cllr Wright; Cllr Yates.

Also Present: J Miller Clerk; PCSO Jamie White; Cllr Bill Banks and Cllr Paul Boxall (Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council); Cllr Dodger Sian (Kent County Council)

133. Apologies for absence

There were none.

134. Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interest

Cllr Westwood declared an interest in Ley Farm Barn planning application. Cllr Nevill declared an interest in the sand quarry.

135. Approval and signing of minutes of meeting of 6th January 2026

It was **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the minutes of the meeting of 6th January 2026. The KALC Community Award submitted by the council was approved and the nominee will be met by Council Members on 25 March to advise of the award and the forthcoming presentation. A letter confirming the details will be provided.

136. Monthly Reports - County, Borough and Police Reports

(a) County Councillor Dodger Sian

Cllr Sian reported that a Kent Police Inspector has met with him and confirmed that patrol frequency is increasing; this has been noted by the Council. While crime levels appear to be decreasing, it was emphasised that all incidents should continue to be reported to ensure accurate data.

Members were advised that *My Community Voice Kent* is being relaunched, providing a platform for residents to log concerns and receive updates.

Potholes were discussed, and it was noted that from 6 April Cllr Sian will be reviewing the Highways Improvement Plan with a view to prioritising expenditure across parishes.

The Council recorded its thanks to Cllr Sian for securing funding for the parish noticeboard.

(b) Borough Councillors Paul Boxall and Bill Banks

Cllr Banks reported that there remains time to submit feedback on the Local Government Reorganisation consultation. It was noted that, under the proposed Medway boundary changes, there is a possibility that Leybourne and Leybourne Chase could be separated.

Oast Park was discussed. Members noted that the proposed relocation of the football pitch has been cancelled and that housing development proposals are currently under consultation. Concern was expressed that the site lies within designated Green Belt and National Landscape. An increase in fly-tipping incidents in the area was also reported; Cllr Boxall will provide further details, including any prosecutions, at a future meeting.

The temporary traffic lights on the A228, and the significant congestion caused, were discussed in the context of concerns regarding the suitability of the road network to support the proposed Oast Park housing development.

(c) Kent Police

It was reported that no crimes were recorded in Birling over the past month. The Police have conducted an operation on the A228, during which vehicles were seized and fines and warnings were issued in relation to anti-social behaviour.

Councillors were encouraged to sign up to *My Community Voice* alerts. It was also noted that Police surgeries are being held in the evenings, with further details available on the website.

Ongoing water drainage issues on Snodland Road were discussed and will be escalated to Cllr Sian for further action.

137. Open Forum – Public Participation Session - There were none.

138. (a) Matters arising and last month's circulation

i. Ryarsh School

To receive any update – there were none.

ii. Village Hall

To receive any updates on availability of hall.

The bins being left around the bench dedicated to Sid Furmer and the new flagpole were raised as being issues affecting the street scene, particularly in a conservation area.

iii. Horse Rider Safety

To note update from Cllr Sian – awaiting engineer update.

iv. Community Award

To note update on community award nomination.

RESOLVED to invite the winner to the pub to make the announcement on 25th March 2026 at 8pm.

(b) Matters for Information circulated to councillors

- 08/01 Kent Service changes – buses
- 08/01 Open letter to parish councils – NALC
- 08/01 KALC training bulletin
- 08/01 KALC Area meeting 15/01
- 13/01 E Watch 2355
- 13/01 KALC news January 2026
- 13/01 KALC Strategic engagement survey for KCC Highways
- 19/01 Open letter from Mark Williams East Peckham Parish Council
- 19/01 E Watch 2356
- 19/01 Southeastern Stakeholder update
- 19/01 Kent reserves and cadets event 24/02
- 19/01 KALC T&M info local plan
- 19/01 Chief executive bulletin
- 19/01 NHS Treatment Centre consultation
- 19/01 E Watch 2357
- 19/01 Latest Kent Trading Standards updates

19/01 KFR community resilience plan
 19/01 East Peckham Neighbourhood Plan
 26/01 Promoting men's health
 26/01 E Watch 2358
 26/01 Porchlight firewalk
 26/01 NALC chief executive bulletin
 26/01 KALC bulletin
 26/01 Key changes for TMBC planning portal
 26/01 E Watch 2359
 30/01 Oast Park status update
 04/02 TMBC s106 Parish Drop in
 17/02 E Watch 2365
 17/02 KALC Community Awards celebration evening
 17/02 E Watch 2364
 18/02 TMBC Parish Council drop in session s106
 18/02 Invite to tea and tour at The Children's Trust 14/05/2025 at 10am
 18/02 58 & 72 bus costs 2025
 18/02 KALC T&M minutes 15/01
 18/02 Chairs meeting notes – open letter to TMBC
 20/02 Chief Executive Bulletin
 20/02 KALC training bulletin
 20/02 E Watch 2367
 20/02 Bulletin
 20/02 News update TMBC
 23/02 Draft letter from chairs to TMBC
 24/02 Oast Park community engagement update
 27/02 Road safety and active travel group
 27/02 E Watch 2368
 27/02 Notes from Snodland Asphalt meeting 18/02
 27/02 E Watch 2369
 01/03 E Watch 2366
 01/03 Southeastern Stakeholder update
 06/03 E Watch 2371
 10/03 E Watch 2372

The Mark Williams letter regarding the National Planning Policy Framework was discussed and it was **RESOLVED** to send the letter to the Secretary of State on behalf of Birling Parish Council.

It was noted that a meeting will be held in the coming weeks.

139. Meetings

(a) Meetings attended on behalf of the parish council

i. KALC T&M Committee - 15/01/2026

Cllr Westwood reported on recent discussions regarding water supply issues, including concerns arising from tankers transporting water from the A20.

The Local Plan was also considered, with particular attention given to questions surrounding the consultation process.

Updates were provided on the TMBC Climate Action Forum and it was confirmed that the Birling plan had been lodged.

Additionally, funding gaps associated with Local Government Reorganisation were noted.

ii. John May Charity 29/01/2026
Cllr Hirst reported that it was agreed to disband the charity and donated the funds to the Community Hub. Work will commence with the Charity Commission forthwith.

iii. Parish Partnership Panel 05/02/2026
Cllr Westwood reported that discussions were primarily focused on Local Government Organisation.
It was **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council supports the proposal for three unitary authorities, aligned with current boundaries and existing infrastructure arrangements.
The Police also reported on the continued issues relating to the use of catapults.

iv. Snodland Asphalt Committee 18/02/2026
Cllr Hewett reported that there is a new site manager and that activity at the site has been relatively quiet. Working hours typically involve early starts and early finishes, with work largely consisting of local jobs. Saturday working is limited, generally concluding by 10:00am, and there are currently no out-of-hours jobs planned. It was also noted that Tesco has vacated the site, which has led to issues with fly-tipping while the premises remain unoccupied. The potential installation of a barrier to mitigate this was discussed.

v. Oast Park Obee Estates meeting 03/03/2026
Cllr Westwood and Cllr Hewett reported that the proposed development will comprise 320 units. There will be no relocation of the football club from Larkfield; however, a low-key football facility will be provided as part of the scheme. It was noted that Obee Estates advised that the land has been designated as grey belt by an officer in Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council. Should the planning authority fail to determine the application within the 13-week timeframe, it will be immediately be escalated by the Developer to the Planning Inspectorate for determination. A decision is anticipated prior to the adoption of the Local Plan.

(b) Future meetings
KALC T&M Committee – 23/04/2026

140. Parish Business for Decisions

(a) Oast Park Golf Course
i. To receive any updates
ii. To note update on response from TMBC regarding TPO application
This was covered earlier in the meeting.
Cllr Boughton had apologised that the TPO has still not been looked at.

(b) Highways Improvement Plan
i. To note update on annual review.
It was noted that the Highways Improvement Plan has been updated and Cllr Hirst will respond to the comments. It was noted that 20mph zones now appear to be more viable.
ii. To note lining of Bull Road referred to Cllr Sian.
This is being progressed in the Highways Improvement Plan.

- (c) **Local Plan**
 - i. To receive any updates.
Responses can be reviewed on the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council website.
- (d) **Community Transport Grant / Bus Services**
 - i. To receive update on KALC T&M parish council initiatives.
The annual report was circulated and it was noted that the grant will be applied for the forthcoming financial year.
- (e) **Jubilee and Coronation**
 - i. To receive update.
It was noted that the stone will be mounted on the base next week.
- (f) **John May Charity**
 - i. To receive update.
This was covered earlier in the meeting.
- (g) **Village Maintenance, Waste and Litter**
 - i. To receive any updates – there were none.
 - ii. To note forthcoming litterpick Sunday 22nd March 2026 – noted.
 - iii. To note new noticeboard order placed – noted.
- (h) **Focus Session on Long Term Vision**
 - i. To propose key priorities from the draft proposals.
It was agreed that the template has been prepared and a budget of £5,000 was agreed to employ a consultant to develop the plan.
- (i) **Annual Audit**
 - i. To appoint internal auditor.
It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Mulberry and Co on a three-year contract.
 - ii. To confirm the independence and competence of the internal auditor.
It was **RESOLVED** that the auditor is independent and competent.
 - iii. To adopt IT policy to satisfy assertion 10 of Annual Governance and Accountability Return
It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the IT Policy.
 - iv. To attend GDPR training to satisfy assertion of Annual Governance and Accountability Return – noted.
 - v. To review risk assessment.
It was **RESOLVED** to review the risk assessment.

141. Parish Business for Noting

(a) Website/social media update

- i. To note the following added to the website:-
 - Local Plan Consultation

(b) Parochial Church Council

- i. To receive regular update. It was noted that there is a churchyard tidy on 21st March.

(c) Resident Matters

i. To note any recent local issues raised – litter, anti-social behaviour and Oast Park have been raised. Thanks were noted to Craig for clearing the stream.

142. Correspondence

(a) Thank you letter from Ryarsh School pupils – noted.

143. Finance & Accounts

- (a) **To approve Bank Reconciliation February 2026**
Net Bank Balances as at 28/02/2026 £15,382.38
- (b) **To note budget position year to date February 2026**
- (c) **To approve PAYE record March 2026**
- (d) **BACS to be approved and signed:**

February:

Payee	Budget	Gross	Detail
KCC Laser	Streetlighting	£ 47.94	Streetlighting energy
Rose and Thistle	Reserves	£ 60.00	Memorial landscaping
Various	Staff Costs	£ 817.62	Feb staff costs
Unity Trust Bank	Bank Charges	£ 6.00	Bank charges

March:

Various	Staff Costs	£ 817.62	Mar Staff costs
Laser	Streetlighting	£ 24.95	Streetlight energy
JA Miller	Clerk expenses	£ 16.90	printer ink
JA Miller	Clerk expenses	£ 46.95	printer ink
JA Miller	Reserves	£ 364.18	reimbursement defib battery replacement

144. To review insurance policy coverage

It was **RESOLVED** to review the insurance policy coverage.

145. Roads

(a) To report any road issues

There were none.

(b) Road Closures

- i. To note temporary road closures affecting Birling. Birling Road, Leybourne.

146. Planning

(a) Applications to be considered

- i. **26/00116/NMA** The Cottage 30 Masters Lane Birling West Malling Kent ME19 5JP

Non- Material Amendment to Planning permission TM/20/02379/FL (re-submission of TM/20/00503/FL) - Add courtyard garden north of dwelling (further to moving the dwelling 3.5m southwards per NMA ref: TM/22/00206/NMA) Amend roof-mounted PV panel array to reflect as-built arrangement. Amend position and size of window to Bedroom 4 (east elevation). Omit French doors to Bedroom 4 (north elevation) in lieu of 2no. windows. Reduce window size to Bedroom 4 ensuite (west elevation). Amend window to Bedroom 3 (east elevation) Omit windows to Dining Area (east and west elevations) Add secondary emergency escape

stair to basement, to the west of Bedroom 2. Add garden retaining wall running southwards from dwelling, tapering downwards following the ground line to the west side of the wall
It was **RESOLVED** no comment.

- ii. **26/00246/FL** Ley Farm Barn Snodland Road Birling
West Malling Kent ME19 5JF

Removal of a boundary fence and replace with a 2.1m Flemish Bond, flush pointed Kingsley Weathered red brick garden wall. Works to include solid brown stained timber gates and piers with associated works
It was **RESOLVED** no comment.

- iii. **26/00247/LB** Ley Farm Barn Snodland Road Birling
West Malling Kent ME19 5JF

Listed Building Application: Removal of a boundary fence and replace with a 2.1m Flemish Bond, flush pointed Kingsley Weathered red brick garden wall. Works to include solid brown stained timber gates and piers with associated works
It was **RESOLVED** no comment.

- iv. **APPLICATION NO:** KCC/TM/0116/2025
PROPOSAL: Proposed quarry for the extraction of sand, alteration to an existing access, together with infrastructure including haul road, ancillary offices, weighbridge, attenuation pond, landscaped bunds and mineral processing plant. Restoration by means of backfilling with imported inert materials and reinstatement to agriculture and biodiversity enhancement works
LOCATION: Land west of Roughetts Road, south of M20, Leybourne Chase, ME19 5GX

It was **RESOLVED** to refer back to the original response and question why this is needed as there is a plan that allows for suitable resources. Cllr Hewett will circulate a response.

(b) Decisions by Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council

There are none.

147. **Matters for future meetings** – the usual substantive items, the community resilience plan and climate change plan will need check ins.

148. **Date of next meeting: Wednesday 22nd April 2026 and Tuesday 26th May 2026.**

Provisional dates for 2026/27:

Tuesday 9th June; Tuesday 14th July; Tuesday 8th September; Tuesday 13th October; Tuesday 10th November; Tuesday 8th December; Tuesday 5th January 2027; Tuesday 16th February; Tuesday 9th March; Tuesday 13th April; Tuesday 11th May.

Meeting closed at 22:05hrs.

Signed..... *Date*.....