

**Birling Parish Council**  
**MINUTES of the MEETING held on**  
**Tuesday 2nd September 2025 at 8pm All Saints Church, Birling.**

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

**Also Present:** J Miller Clerk; Cllr Bill Banks (Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council); Cllr Dodger Sian (Kent County Council); David Thornewell (East Malling and Larkfield Parish Council); two members of the public.

**52. Apologies for absence**

It was **RESOLVED** to receive and accept apologies for absence with reasons from Cllr Wlaker. Cllr Nevill was absent.

**53. Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interest**

There were none.

**54. Approval and signing of minutes of meeting of July 1st, 2025.**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the minutes of the meeting of July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025.

**55. Monthly Reports - County, Borough and Police Reports**

**(a) County Councillor Dodger Sian**

Cllr Sian advised that the Kent County Council Member's Grant has been increased and encouraged the Parish Council to submit a funding request. The re-lining of Bull Road was discussed, and it was noted that the works had not been fully completed. Cllr Sian recommended that the Council raise this issue with Highways. Cllr Sian submitted apologies for the next meeting due to KCC commitments.

**(b) Borough Councillors Paul Boxall and Bill Banks**

Cllr Banks reported that significant sums of Section 106 funding are available within TMBC for GP surgeries, with £250k capital funding currently unspent. He noted that a TMBC officer is seeking to secure these funds for revenue purposes. The online West Malling Practice GP booking system was discussed, and Cllr Banks highlighted the shortage of available appointments. He was aware that the WMP had suggested that Parish Councils could consider providing financial support. Cllr Westwood had attended the meeting at Kings Hill, and it was agreed to discuss this matter later in the meeting.

**(c) Kent Police – there was no report provided. It was noted that a crime was reported in the E-Watch however this had not been recorded in a report by the local PCSO.**

**56. Open Forum – Public Participation Session - There were none.**

Cllr David Thornewell provided an update on Oast Park. He reported that there are legal matters concerning certain parcels of land which need to be resolved separately from the planning process. Developers' solicitors met with him three weeks ago, but there has been no further update. It was reported that the developer may be reconsidering the project and has suggested that housing across the whole site might be more viable. It was thought that this proposal may have been submitted to TMBC for housing following the call for sites within the local plan process. Communication between the developer and the FC has now ceased. EM&L Parish Council are unlikely to release the site for development unless the FC can relocate to a new pitch. EM&L owns the land providing access to the site.

A member of the public reported that there are serious concerns about toxic waste on the land. Four FOI requests have been submitted to TMBC regarding historic illegal dumping. Although it was acknowledged at the time that the waste was unlawfully disposed of, no further action was taken due to legal complexities. Information is now available that may assist with further investigation. The developer has argued that the material is a bund; however, TMBC has confirmed it constitutes waste disposal and is a KCC matter. The Environment Agency holds no records beyond 15 years. It is believed that the land may be contaminated and that proper testing will be required. The current planning application remains live and has neither been withdrawn nor determined. Further investigations will be necessary once a revised plan is brought forward.

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

**i. Ryarsh School**

To receive any update – It was reported that the school has lost nine members of staff due to financial cuts and is seeking family support with the provision of basic supplies, such as pens and pencils.

**ii. Village Hall**

To receive any updates on availability of hall – there were none.

**iii. Horse Rider Safety**

Awaiting updates on signage from KCC – it was noted that Cllr Sian is dealing with this.

**(b) Matters for Information circulated to councillors**

01/07 KALC News July 2025  
 03/07 Chief Executives Bulletin  
 03/07 RSN Weekly news  
 03/07 Kent Bus Service changes  
 03/07 KALC Newsletter  
 03/07 E Watch 2300  
 03/07 Road and safety advice newsletter  
 03/07 E Watch 2299  
 03/07 E Watch 2303  
 11/07 Chief Executives Bulletin  
 11/07 Rural housing week  
 11/07 E Watch 2302  
 15/07 KALC T&M Area Meeting 17/07/2025  
 15/07 KALC Update bulletin.  
 15/07 Southeastern Stakeholder update  
 15/07 E Watch 2304  
 21/07 Presentation from KALC EGM  
 21/07 Help us improve service 101  
 21/07 Training bulletin  
 21/07 Chief Executive Bulletin  
 21/07 E Watch 2305  
 21/07 Community Development Grant Scheme  
 05/08 E Watch 2306  
 05/08 E Watch 2307  
 05/08 Parish bus shelter grant  
 05/08 E Watch 2308  
 05/08 Chief executive bulletin  
 05/08 KALC Training bulletin  
 05/08 KALC CILCA Training  
 08/08 KCC Official Opposition Letter  
 08/08 E Watch 2311  
 08/08 E Watch 2310

26/08 Call for motions KALC AGM  
 26/08 Minutes of Snodland Asphalt Meeting  
 26/08 E Watch 2312  
 26/08 KALC Annual Finance Conference  
 26/08 Chief Executives Bulletin  
 26/08 E Watch 2313  
 26/08 KALC Update bulletin  
 26/08 Temporary operational changes during asphalt plant maintenance  
 26/08 E Watch 2314  
 26/08 Events Newsletter  
 26/08 Chief Executive bulletin  
 26/08 E Watch 2315  
 26/08 TMBC Change to Planning Committee Speakers  
 26/08 E Watch 2316  
 26/08 KCC updated highway information pack  
 26/08 E Watch 2309  
 26/08 Remembrance 2025 – the event plan will be discussed at the next meeting.

## **58. Meetings**

### **(a) Meetings attended on behalf of the parish council**

- i. Access Hub Collaboration Meeting – 29/07/2025 – Cllr Westwood  
 The meeting was convened in response to a shortage of appointments. During the winter, the surgery had received extra funding to provide additional appointments, but this support was withdrawn in April. As a result, WM Group Practice is advising they have insufficient staff to meet patient demand. A proposal was raised asking whether parish councils might contribute towards the cost of employing two new GPs, estimated at £250,000. However, without data showing how patients are distributed across parishes, it is not possible to divide the cost fairly. Based on total patient numbers, the cost per parish could be very high. Further information on patient numbers is needed before the proposal can be developed. The powers required to fund such a proposal were also queried.
- ii. KALC T&M Area Meeting – 17/07/2025 – minutes were circulated.  
 Parish Partnership Panel – 28/08/2025 – Cllr Hewett provided an update on the Local Government Reorganisation. The potential establishment of Neighbourhood Area Committees was discussed. It was confirmed that the Local Plan will be considered at the next PPP meeting.  
 The 21-day rule for planning submissions was reiterated. While submissions received after this period must still be considered, there remains a risk that they may not be fully considered. A separate process is currently under discussion for larger applications. It was further noted that Tier 5 settlements will be required to accommodate additional housing in the Local Plan.

### **(b) Future meetings**

- i. Parish Partnership Panel – 20/11/2025
- ii. Snodland Asphalt Meeting – 26/11/2025

## **59. Parish Business for Decisions**

- (a) **Oast Park Golf Course**
  - i. To receive any updates – this was covered earlier in the meeting.
  - ii. To note no response from TMBC regarding TPO application, chase up emails have been sent – noted.
- (b) **Highways Improvement Plan**
  - i. To receive any updates  
It was **RESOLVED** to request an annual review of the Highways Improvement Plan. Cllr Hirst will follow this up.
  - ii. To note lining of Bull Road referred to Cllr Sian – noted.
- (c) **Local Plan**
  - i. To receive any updates  
The first draft of the Local Plan will be presented to the Scrutiny Committee on 21st October, followed by Cabinet consideration on 29th October. Regulation 18 consultation is scheduled to commence before Christmas.
- (d) **Community Transport Grant / Bus Services**
  - i. To receive update on KALC T&M parish council initiatives – there were no updates.
  - ii. To note letter received from Peter Osbourne to Cllr Sian regarding not funding bus 58 service – noted.
- (e) **Jubilee and Coronation**
  - i. To receive update – It was noted that Gallagher is awaiting the next phase of blasting to obtain a stone of sufficient size.
- (f) **Village Maintenance, Waste and Litter**
  - i. To receive any updates.  
It was noted that the bank requires further cutting back, and in Bull Road a significant amount of litter was in the vegetation. The Clerk will investigate when the vegetation will be cut back. and the extent of previous maintenance regarding the Bank. The bank also requires tidying, as there has been further slippage.
  - ii. To note remote survey to be undertaken for new noticeboard – noted.
- (g) **Focus Session on Long Term Vision**
  - i. To review session on future Long-Term Vision – this was deferred to the next meeting.

## 60. Parish Business for Noting

### (a) Website/social media update

- i. To note the following added to the website:-
  - Road Closures

### (b) Parochial Church Council

- i. To receive regular update.

### (c) Resident Matters

- i. To note any recent local issues raised. It was noted that anti-social behaviour of local children had been reported.

## 61. Correspondence

- (a) Email from anonymous resident from Leybourne/West Malling requesting that the Parish Council object to the Gypsy Traveller application on Birling Road. It was **RESOLVED** to not make a representation.
- (b) Message from resident regarding further development plans for Oast Park – noted.

## 62. Finance & Accounts

### (a) To approve Bank Reconciliation August 2025

**Net Bank Balances as at 31/08/2025 £13,388.91**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Bank Reconciliation as of August 2025.

### (b) To note budget position year to date August 2025 – noted.

### (c) To approve PAYE record September 2025.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the PAYE Record September 2025.

### (d) BACS to be approved and signed:

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the following payments:

Payee	Budget	Gross	Net	VAT	Detail
Various	Staff Costs	£ 921.85			Salary August and backdated pay
Laser	Streetlighting	£ 26.44	£ 25.07	£ 1.37	Streetlighting costs
Waveney IT	IT Costs	£ 63.65	£ 53.04	£ 10.61	Monthly Mailbox Costs
Waveney IT	IT Costs	£ 72.00	£ 60.00	£ 12.00	IT Support - mailbox issues
Waveney IT	IT Costs	£ 30.00	£ 25.00	£ 5.00	IT Support - mailbox issues
HugoFox	IT Costs	£ 11.99	£ 9.99	£ 2.00	Monthly website costs
Streetlights	Streetlighting	£ 228.00	£182.40	£45.60	Half yearly maintenance fees
J Miller	Clerk Expenses	£ 54.21	£ -	£ -	Printer Ink

### September

Various	Staff Costs	£ 817.62			Sept staff costs
Hugo Fox	IT Costs	£ 11.99			Monthly website costs

## 63. Roads

### (a) To report any road issues

It was noted that the 30mph sign had not been replaced although the pole had been reinstated. The Clerk will follow this up.

### (b) Road Closures

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

## 64. Planning

### (a) 25/01042/PA

Proposal: Section 73 application to vary Condition 5 (number of dogs) of planning permission TM/16/00003/FL from 5 including owners' dogs to 10 including owners' dogs

Location: LAND EAST OF LEGGE LANE AND OPPOSITE LANGOLD HOUSE, Snodland Road, Birling, West Malling

It was noted that this application had been approved.

### (c) Decisions by Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council

- i. To note Ryarsh Place Farm application withdrawn from committee – noted. It was reported that revised plans had been submitted on 2<sup>nd</sup> September.
- ii. To note appeal commencement for proposed Single storey side extension, conversion of double garage to study 5, Legge Lane, Birling, West Malling, ME19 5JH Planning Inspectorate's Ref: APP/H2265/D/25/3369031 – noted.

**65. Matters for future meetings** – the usual substantive items, including KCC Members Grant and arrangements for Remembrance Sunday. An update will be sought from Snodland Town Council regarding Paddlesworth.

**66. Date of next meeting: Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2025 followed by Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2025; Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2025; Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2026; Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2026; Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2026.**

*Meeting closed at 21:49pm*

*Signed.....*

*Date.....*