



Coxheath Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Coxheath Parish Council held on the 28th of January 2025 at 7.15 p.m. in the Small Hall of Coxheath Village Hall.

Present: Parish Cllrs: G Crickett (Chairman), G Down, N Gardner, K Laponder, C Parker, E Potts, S. Thomas.

In Attendance: Irene Bowie, Parish Clerk, KCC Councillor Simon Webb and a member of the public

The Chairman opened the meeting and explained that Councillor Elizabeth Potts had resigned from the Parish in December 2024. He asked all present to join him in recognising Elizabeth's longstanding service and commitment to the Parish Council and the Coxheath Community.

1/25 Apologies and absences:

- (a) 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 apology and reason given by Councillor D Carpenter.

Apologies were received from MBC Councillor Kehily.

- (b) Declaration of Changes to the Register of Interests. There were none.
- (c) 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. Councillor Parker declared an interest as a Trustee of the Village Hall Management Committee to agenda item 11/25/a
- (d) Requests for Dispensations. There were none.
- (e) Declarations of Lobbying. There were none.

2/25 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. The Minute Book was closed.

3/25 To receive written reports from external parties (if present).

KCC Councillor Webb gave his report. (Appendix 1)

4/25 CO OPTION of Parish Councillor/s: To consider candidates for co-option.

There were no candidates to be considered.

5/25 To Receive reports on matters not included elsewhere on the agenda.

- (a) Chairman of the Parish Council

Cllr Crickett

The Chairman reported on the following:

The Parish Council Christmas Lights switch on went very well. It was AGREED that the Media and Communications Working Group would investigate promotional materials for events. It was Agreed that an additional 5 Litre Thermos Flask would be purchased

Community forum meeting.

- Bunting had been stored in the Parish Council storage container.
- 8th May VE day celebrations, Beacon lighting. It was **AGREED** that :
 1. The use of LED lights in the Beacon would be investigated
 2. The Parish Council would work with other groups to ensure the event was recognised
- Women in War silhouette. It was **AGREED** that the Chairman would discuss this with the church.

Members of the Planning Committee met with the Developer re the Beacons Development
 Members of the Traffic and Community Safety Working Group met with KCC Highways to discuss the Parish Council Highways Improvement Plan.

- (b) Playground Inspection Reports Cllr Parker
 To follow. Clerk to follow up the purchase on end caps for the outdoor Gym equipment.

- (c) Councillors Reports All Cllrs

Councillor Parker:

- Proposed that the Parish Council invite the new Member of Parliament Katie Lamb to a Parish Council meeting and a Parish Council Surgery. This was **AGREED** by all. Clerk to organise.
- George VI Post Box. It was **AGREED** that Councillor Parker would contact the Post Office and request that the Post Box needed repaired and painting.

Councillor Down.

- Motorbikes damaging the Village Hall and Parish Council Fields
- MBC Litter bin at the bus stop is damaged and needs replace. Clerk to contact MBC

Councillor Bird.

- Motorbikes are damaging Huntington Green and the fields behind the Village Hall. Reported to the police. It was **AGREED** that the Clerk would obtain quotes for at least three metal signs “No Motorbikes or Vehicles allowed”
- Empty salt bins
- Fencing and planting of trees at Huntington Green.

- (d) Community Litter Pick Cllr Down

- Councillor Down reported that he was no longer the coordinator and provided the Clerk with the details of the new coordinator.
- Councillor Down gave the Clerk a poster to encourage members of the community to join the volunteer litter pickers. Clerk to copy and circulate for the Parish Council Noticeboards, website and Facebook.

- (e) Clerk’s Report on matters not included elsewhere on the agenda.

The KCC Parish Council Support Grant deadline had been extended.

RESOLVED: The Clerk would liaise with Councillor Crickett and an application for funds to support the Brew and Bite group would be submitted.

- (f) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests Clerk

It was **AGREED** to defer this presentation to the February meeting.

The Clerk reminded all Councillors present that:

- It was their personal responsibility to submit within 28 days of election of co-option a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest Form (DPI) to the Monitoring Officer of MBC.
- It was their personal responsibility to ensure that their register of DPI’s was updated within 28 days of any changes.
- They must not vote nor comment on any matters where they have a DPI.
- Councillors could contact the MBC Monitoring Officer for clarification if needed.

6/25 Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting:

It was **RESOLVED** that, the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 26th November 2025 were taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

7/25 Finance.

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

RESOLVED: To authorise the payments on schedule 1.

BACS	Vodafone	Parish Council Mobile January 2025	20.94
BACS	Ionos	Parish Council Emails January 2025	61.80
BACS	HP Instant Ink	January 2025	25.49
BACS	Adobe	Adobe Software January 2025	19.97

BACS	Irene Bowie	Salary December 2024	Confidential
BACS	Irene Bowie	Salary January 2025	Confidential
BACS	Forvis Mazars	External Auditors 2023/24 Audit	504.00
BACS	Gala Lights	Christmas Lights	13,406.00
BACS	Bartletts	Tree Works July 2024	240.00
BACS	Gavin Crickett	Refreshments Christmas Lights	74.30
BACS	HMRC	PAYE/NI Q3 2024 and January 2025	Confidential

- (b) Late Payment Request/s to be discussed for approval and payment.
Three payments to be discussed before agenda item 11/25/(a)
- (c) Banking Arrangements.
The Clerk reported that the Unity Account had been set up and the opening cheque of £75,000 had cleared.

RESOLVED:

1. **Former Councillor Mrs. E Potts would remain as a signatory on the NAT West Account until new signatories could be added.**
 2. **The additional Nat West signatories would be: Councillor C Bird, Councillor G Crickett, Councillor N Gardner and the Clerk Miss I Bowie**
 3. **The Clerk would progress the new mandate**
 4. **Current Standing Orders and Direct debits from the Nat West Account would be cancelled.**
 5. **New Standing Orders and Direct Debits would be set up from the Unity Bank Current Account**
- (d) To consider any grant or donation requests. There were none.
It was **AGREED** that Councillors would consider local charities and/or charities providing services that residents of Coxheath may benefit from for the next meeting.
- (e) To receive Quarter 3 budget Monitoring Report. Not available will be circulated for the next meeting.
- (f) To consider any late financial matters. There were none
- (g) To confirm the budget for 2025/26
RESOLVED: The budget was confirmed at £118,000 for 2025/26
- (h) To confirm the Precept Demand for 2025/26
RESOLVED:
1. **The Precept demand for 2025/26 was set as £99,569**
 2. **The Band D charge would remain unchanged from 2024 at £52**

8/25 Planning: To receive the decisions and recommendations from the Planning Committee.

(Councillors Gardner (Chairman) , Carpenter, Crickett, Laponder and the Parish Clerk)
The Chairman of the Planning Committee Councillor Gardner reported on a meeting held on the 7th of January 2025 with County House Homes regarding the Beacons Fields development.
Councillor G Cricket and the Parish Clerk were also present at the meeting.

9/25 Working Groups: To receive Updates and Recommendations.

- (a) **Recreation & Youth Working Group.** (Councillors Bird and Laponder)
- i. To elect a new member. Deferred to the next meeting.
 - ii. To ratify the decision to allow the Coxheath and Farleigh Football Club to use the Middle Field for some matches.
- RESOLVED:**
1. **That the football club can use the Middle Field for a trial period of six months with a review after three months.**
 2. **The Parish Council would reserve the right to suspend the agreement if the pitch is becoming too damaged.**
- (b) **Traffic & Community Safety Working Group.** (Councillors Bird, Down, Gardner and the Parish Clerk)
- i. Parish Portal Report. Noted
 - ii. To receive an update on the draft Highways Improvement Plan (HIP). Councillors Cricket, Gardner and the Clerk had a Teams meeting with KCC Highways to discuss a new HIP.
The group met on the 28th January to draft the new HIP. The Clerk to collate and circulate.

- (c) **Seasonal Events Working Group. Councillors.** (Councillors Carpenter, Gardner and Laponder)
The group would arrange a meeting.
- (d) **Environmental Initiatives Group.** (Councillors Bird, Crickett and Parker affiliate Mr. D Mann)
The Clerk will contact Bartletts and one other company to try and get the coppicing work completed before the end of March 2025.
The group would arrange a meeting.
- (e) **Pavilion Feasibility Working Group.** (Councillors Crickett, Gardner, Laponder and Thomas. Non-Councillors Mr. D Mann and Mr. N Hadley.
The group would arrange a meeting.
- (f) **Media and Communications.** Councillors Gardner, Thomas and Parish Clerk.
The group would meet before the next Parish Council meeting.
- (e) **Finance Committee:**
 - i. To elect a new member.

RESOLVED: To elect Councillor S Thomas as Member of the Finance Committee.

10/25 Correspondence:

- (a) To table items of late correspondence: There were none.
- (b) Items circulated:
English Devolution White Paper. Noted

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 because 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.

Councillor Parker having declared an interest left the room and did not vote nor comment.

- (a) To receive and consider Legal Advice pertaining to the Coxheath Residents Village Hall Management Committee.

RESOLVED: To instruct an additional solicitor. Delegated to the Clerk under the adopted Section 101 Scheme of Delegation

- (b) To authorise payments:

RESOLVED to authorise the following payments.

BACS	Coxheath Village Hall	Invoice Oct, Nov, Dec 2024	£197.25
BACS	Surrey Hills Solicitors	Legal Advice re Coxheath Village Hall	£384.00
BACS	Commercial Services	Village Hall Field Grass Cutting (July- September 2024)	£631.24

Meeting Dates 2025:

FULL COUNCIL : January 28th, February 25th, March 25th, April 29th, May 27th, June 24th, July 29th, September 30th, October 28th, November 25th.

April 15th Annual Village Meeting.

PLANNING COMMITTEE: 6.45 pm prior to the Full Council Meetings listed above.

Please note Planning Committee meetings may be cancelled if not required.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: 20th February

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 9:30 pm.

Signed :

Date:

Chairman : Please Print Name

Appendix :

3/25 KCC Councillor Webb

Tuesday 21st January 2025

Dear Colleagues,

Following the English Devolution White Paper, published on 16th December 2024 inviting councils to apply for priority status, Kent County Council and Medway Council have formally asked the government to be included in the Devolution Priority Programme.

KCC Cabinet decided on 9th January 2025 to proceed with a proposal for devolution with a combined authority for Kent and Medway, including an elected mayor. This followed an extraordinary meeting of the full council earlier that day, when the proposal was considered by KCC Members, after significant engagement with district and borough council leaders.

The government's devolution deal would give people across Kent a stronger voice in how national decisions affect them and let local councils make important decisions closer to where residents live and work.

The government says that the benefits of devolution would include:

- A stronger transport network based on local needs
- Investment to put priorities of local businesses first
- A skills base suited to business needs
- Development of more homes and infrastructure

Proposal for a combined authority and an elected mayor

Currently, the government plans are for a mayor and combined authority to lead on strategic issues including: -

- Transport
- Skills
- Housing
- Economic growth
- Environmental and climate change
- Health
- Public safety

Reorganisation of local government

In addition to devolution, the government has said it wants residents to be served by just one local council (known as a 'unitary council'). Kent currently, has a two-tier model with a county council (KCC) and 12 borough councils. Medway Council is already a unitary authority.

As well as the creation of a Mayoral Combined County Authority, local government across the area currently served by these councils would be reorganised into a number of unitary councils. We anticipate this to be three, however, this could be four.

What is the timetable?

We expect to know the decision from the government on accepting Kent and Medway on Devolution Priority Programme (DPP) before the end of January 2025.

There were 15 other County Councils and a number of unitary authorities who also requested change. It is increasingly likely that we will hear during the week on 27th January 2025. The ministerial decision concerning the May elections will be announced along with decisions on the DPP.

The government will bring forward a parallel process of local government reorganisation and ALL two-tier areas, whether part of the DPP or not, are expected to submit initial reorganisation plans by March and much more fully developed plans by the autumn.

It is expected that the government will consult all residents in Kent by the end of March 2025. Being mindful for a mayoral election in May 2026 and a full reorganisation by 2027 or 2028.

Warm regards

Simon

Simon Webb

Maidstone Rural West