

HILDENBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

Pavilion and Recreation Ground – Riding Lane – Hildenborough – TN11 9HY

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MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD

Wednesday 11th February 2026 19.30

Public Session

Ruth Ardrey, Headteacher at Hildenborough CE Primary School

Item 11.7

Parents and teachers have raised ongoing concerns about the safety of children and residents crossing Riding Lane, particularly during school drop-off and pick-up times. The combination of parked vehicles, speeding traffic, and multiple entrances to the three car parks creates significant risk. Although KCC has advertised for a Road Crossing Patroller, no applications have been received. As a result, Hildenborough Primary School is seeking HPC's support for a more permanent solution in the form of a zebra crossing.

Cllr Harry Rayner provided an update from a KCC perspective. He explained that a zebra crossing had previously been explored, but the layout of Riding Lane—including the positioning of entrances and the road indents—did not meet the required criteria for installation. Without closing or altering access to the car parks, he felt a zebra crossing remained unfeasible, which is why wigwags were installed instead.

He also highlighted wider challenges currently facing KCC, including staff retention issues linked to uncertainty around the transition to new unitary authorities, alongside reduced funding. Given these constraints and the expected timetable for structural changes, he considered it unlikely that a solution would be delivered within the next 18 months.

Nevertheless, Cllr Rayner recommended that the school governors write formally to KCC to apply pressure and noted that HPC could include the matter within its Highways Plan.

Cllr Mark Rhodes

Cllr Rhodes provide an update on three key areas.

- Cllr Mike Taylor confirmed that all Local Plan responses will be published to the Regulation 18 consultation in due course.
- Double Yellow Lines on the B245 are currently not enforceable due to highway diversions in place.
- Planning in principle application for 103 London Road is due before the Area 1 Planning Committee tomorrow evening where Cllr Rhodes plan to vote against the application.

Cllr Harry Rayner

Government consultation links will be circulated regarding the Unitary Authorities. Councillors can respond as a Parish Council or as individuals. KCC's preferred option is one unitary authority for Kent as this option offers the best value for money. Regardless of the outcome council tax is likely to rise. Planned road works will be taking place on Nizels Lane from 9th -10th March. Highways have also confirmed future works to the A21 which will result in diversion in place.

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Questions for the Councillors

Cllr Batchelor asked for an update regarding the recent email from a resident about Leigh Road / Stocks Green Road and what action had been taken.

Cllr Rayner confirmed that KCC currently has no evidence to support the suggestion of increased traffic in the area. He advised that, should the Parish Council believe traffic levels have risen, they may wish to commission traffic sensors to gather supporting data.

Cllr Batchelor also raised concerns about two recent road traffic accidents and asked whether KCC had been made aware of them.

It was agreed that the Parish Clerk would write to KCC to confirm whether the two incidents are recorded in their system and to request a copy of any existing traffic sensor data held for the location.

Council Members in Attendance:

Cllr Sklavenitis (Chair), Cllr Wynne (Vice Chair), Cllr McNeil (Finance Chair), Cllr Wills (Planning Chair), Cllr Haugh, Cllr Connor, Cllr Pereira and Cllr Batchelor

Other Persons in Attendance: Cllr Mark Rhodes TMBC, Cllr Harry Rayner KCC, Ruth Ardrey, Headteacher at Hildenborough CE Primary School and Louise Jenner RFO & Parish Clerk.

1. **Apologies and reasons for absence.** Cllr Gabriel, Cllr Gorman
2. **Declaration of Personal or Prejudicial Interests.** Cllr McNeil Interest in item 11.7, Cllr Sklavenitis declared at interest in one payment and item 13.2, along with a planning interest noted within the planning meeting.
3. **Declaration of gifts and hospitality.** – Councillors received 50% off food ordered at the Never Say Never Hilden Manor when they attended on 29th January 2026.
4. **Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 14th January 2026 for approval and signature, if a true record.**

Councillors agreed and approved.

5. **Co-option of new Councillor**

A written expression of interest was received from Mr Leeson

The applicant was unable to attend the meeting. Members considered the application and, decided to defer the item until the April Parish Council meeting so Mr Leeson could attend. The Parish Clerk will update Mr Leeson.

6. **Clerk's Report. – Noted**

7. **FINANCE**

- 7.1 **To receive, approve and sign a report detailing bank reconciliation prepared by the RFO for January 2026.**

The Council received, reviewed, and approved the bank reconciliation report prepared by the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) for January 2026.

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ACCOUNT BALANCES & PAYMENTS for

Jan-25 and February

Account Balances at: 31st January 2026

Account	Amount (£)
Unity Trust Bank	25,428.77
Unity Trust Savings	140,890.94
Business 95 Day Account	120,000.00
Total	286,319.71

7.2 To review and approve items of payments and receipts in January and February 2026

Councillors discussed the invoice for MPEC for the labour of a replacement parts under warranty. Cllr Haugh was concerned regarding other lights flickering in the gardening store and would write to MPEC regarding other possible faulty lights and the labour charge moving forward.

Councillors confirmed unexpected expenditure made by a councillor should be considered at a full parish council meeting before reclaiming the expense. Whereas the cost of authorised items or planned travel on behalf of the Parish Council can be presented direct to the RFO.

The Council reviewed and approved all items of payments and receipts for January and February 2026.

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Income received: Jan-25			
TMBC S106	Play equipment and Pump Cycle Track	£19,823.73	
Total		£19,823.73	
Payments made: Jan-25			
Bacs	SLCC Enterprises Ltd	Training Course	£144.00
Bacs	SLCC Enterprises Ltd	Clerk Membership Fee	£84.00
Bacs	SLCC Enterprises Ltd	Council Membership Fee	£169.00
Bacs	Hildenborough Village Hall	Room Hire	£416.50
Bacs	Microshade VSM	IT	£189.96
Bacs	Microshade VSM	Laptop Migration	£60.00
Bacs	Gaza Timber	Concrete fence spurs and bolts/screws	£483.60
Bacs	Stocks Green Preschool	\$137 Donation	£500.00
Basc	Hildenborough Primary School	\$137 Donation	£750.00
Bacs	Weld Done	Slide repair and goal capping	£438.00
Bacs	WWA	Planning Advice Local Plan	£6,360.00
BANK Trf	S Dill	Admin Support	£907.50
BANK Trf	R Pannett	Maintenance	£150.00
BANK Trf	A&T Boakes	Maintenance	£600.00
BANK Trf	Salary related	Salary related & HMRC	£3,436.99
DD	NEST	Pension	£164.94
DD	Unity Bank	Charges	£10.20
			£14,864.69
Payments for Approval: February			
Bacs	Microshade VSM	IT	£234.64
Bacs	WWA	Reg 18 Representation Local Plan	£5,724.00
Bacs	WWA	Professional advice Land West of 103	£1,590.00
Bacs	Kompan	Play equipment at Recreation Ground	£17,986.44
Bacs	Arnold Tarmac Limited	Phase 1 new pathway Recreation Ground	£35,538.00
Bacs	Business Stream	Waste services Oct 25- Jan 26	£56.37
Bacs	Online Playground	Shackles and Algae surface cleaner	£252.80
Bacs	Forvis Mazars	Audit Appointments end March 2025	£504.00
Bacs	Expense Claim Cllr Batchelor	Land Registry Title Deeds	£112.00
Bacs	MPEC Electric	refit for faulty light	£96.00
BANK Trf	S Dill	Admin Support	£892.50
BANK Trf	R Pannett	Maintenance	£250.00
BANK Trf	A&T Boakes	Maintenance	£650.00
BANK Trf	Salary related	Salary related & HMRC	£2,952.64
BANK Trf	HMRC	HMRC January payment	£980.61
BANK Trf	L Jenner refund	Expenses	£30.96
DD	NEST	Pension	£135.59
DD	Unity Bank	Charges	£8.10
			£67,994.65

- 7.3 To consider and approve temporary delegation of decision-making powers to the Clerk (in consultation with the Emergency Committee (Chair and Vice-Chair and Chair of Finance)) for urgent matters and payments arising during March without a scheduled Parish Council meeting.**

The temporary delegation to the Clerk (in consultation with the Emergency Committee) for urgent matters and payments arising during March: Approved

8. POLICY REVIEW

- 8.1 To review and approve Information and Data Protection Policy.**
- 8.2 To review and approve IT policy.**
- 8.3 To review and approve Accessibility Statement.**
- 8.4 To review and approve Data Protection Road Mapping.**
- 8.5 To review and approve Document formatting guide.**

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8.6 To review and approve Retention and Disposal Policy

8.7 To review and approve Subject Data Request Form

8.8 To review and approve Subject Internal Log Sheet.

8.9 To review and approve Councillor GDPR checklist.

All above policies listed as item 8.1 to 8.9 were reviewed and approved.

9. OPEN SPACES

9.1 Maintenance contractor update. – Within Clerks report. – Noted

9.2 To reconsider the quotations to cut back the hedgerow along the Leigh Road footpath by West Wood, the hedgerow and verge along B245 and additional work to the land adjacent to the Medical Centre entrance. Councillors reviewed the quotations and approved the quotation received from Landscape Services.

9.3 The Open Spaces Committee reviewed the annual quotations for the ground works contracts and makes the following recommendations to the full parish council:

- **Recreation Ground & B245 Hedge Works**

That the Parish Council proceeds with Landscape Service for the Recreation Ground contractual ground maintenance; plus, hedge cutting along the B245 parallel to West Wood for 2026.

- **West Wood & Village Green**

That the Parish Council proceeds with 3 Counties Maintenance for the West Wood and Village Green ground maintenance works for 2026

- **Recreation Ground Herbicide Treatment**

That the Parish Council suspend the Recreation Ground herbicide treatment for 2026. For the impact of omitting the treatment to be monitor and consider if required in future years.

Councilors agreed to proceed with the above recommendation received from the Open Spaces Committee.

9.4 To consider the quotations for further Ash Die Back works to West Wood.

Councilors agreed and approved the quotation received from Landscape Services. The Parish Clerk noted that work would take time before starting, due to the necessary permissions required because of the Tree Preservation Order.

9.5 To consider the installation cost for the picnic benches that were approved at the Open Spaces meeting.

Councilors approved the cost of £418.96 to cover the costs of the fixings required, cement and labour.

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- 9.6 To consider the installation costs for the bike storage rack that was discussed and reviewed at the open spaces meeting.**

Councillors approved the cost of £445 for the bike storage rack, fixings and labour.

10. PLANNING

- 10.1 To note all planning applications considered and commented on the Council's behalf from planning meeting held on Monday 2nd February 2025.**

Noted

- 10.2 To view Mike Taylors response regarding the notice provided to Parish Councils for Area 1 committees.**

Councillors reviewed the response from Cllr Mike Taylor and confirmed that only one week's notice would be given to parish councils to respond to Area 1 Committee matters. This would make it difficult for the parish council to provide representation, as its meeting schedule is unlikely to align with such short notice.

- 10.3 The TMBC Area 1 Planning Committee is scheduled to consider planning application 25/01693/PA (Land West of 103 Tonbridge Road) at its meeting on Thursday 12 February. In light of the significance of this application for our parish area, could the Parish Council confirm whether it intends to appoint a Parish Representative to attend the meeting and speak on behalf of the parish? If so, could the Council also confirm who will act as the representative and what key points will be presented to the Committee?**

Councillors noted that the planning permission in principle is recommended to be approved in principle by the planning officer. They considered that the issues raised in the WWA report would not be addressed until the technical details stage. Councillors agreed that if a HPC representative were to speak at the meeting tomorrow, the points raised would need to be confirmed this evening with full Parish Council approval.

Councillors confirmed that no representative would attend the Area 1 meeting. The Parish Clerk will notify the Area 1 Committee accordingly.

- 10.4 To consider the Governments proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system, including the merits of responding to the Government's Consultation which closes on 10th March 2026.**

Councillors noted that the proposal contains over 200 questions and agreed that the Parish Council should respond only to those relevant to its remit. Councillors further agreed to delegate authority to the Planning Committee to prepare and submit the response on their behalf. As the agenda for the next Planning Committee meeting has already been circulated, the item will be added to the agenda for the meeting on 2nd March.

- 10.5 WWA Feedback provided by Cllr Batchelor.**

Summarised changes in the NPPF and what effect that may have on Hildenborough. Further planned phone update with WWA scheduled for tomorrow.

- 10.6 To consider a framework enabling the planning committee to obtain timely professional planning advice during 2025/2026 in response to speculative or complex development applications.**

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Councillors agreed for the item to be placed on the next planning meeting agenda. Further advice would be sought by Cllr Batchelor from WWA on what their outline retainer charges and hourly rates were.

10.7 Local Plan update.

Councillors noted the updated Risk Register provided by TMBC and the new NPPF policies and how TMBC were needing to cover existing and emerging policies. Cllr Wynne referred to item 12.3 and the PPP video available online for all councillors to view. Regulation 18 responses are expected online in June 2026, with Regulation 19 now anticipated in September/October 2026, as TMBC faces increased risks to the Local Plan and a shortage of trained staff to complete the required work.

Councillors discussed the best use of public funds and whether continued expenditure on external consultants represents good value for the parish.

11. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

11.1 Councillors to consider insurance quotes with the new level of cover agreed at the last Parish Council Meeting.

Councillors reviewed the two quotations received and noted that prices were outstanding from Clear Insurance and James Hallam. The application for insurance quotations had been delayed at the previous Parish Council meeting due to the decreasing values within the asset register. The asset register was updated to include reinstatement values for items, which was subsequently approved at the January Parish Council meeting.

Councillors considered the quotations received and agreed to proceed with the three-year offer provided by Zurich Insurance.

11.2 To resolve that the Parish Council authorises the necessary payment to the approved insurer in February to ensure continuity of cover and prevent the existing policy from lapsing.

Councillors resolved to approve the additional payment not included in the current payment list for the insurance premium with Zurich Insurance.

11.3 To consider establishing a Community Engagement Committee and to note that Councillor Pereira will prepare draft Terms of Reference, necessary adjustments to standing orders and a social media and communications strategy, for presentation at a future Parish Council meeting.

Councillors supported the proposal and agreed, when time allows, further work will be made on drafting the documents.

11.4 To consider the publication of verified sewage-spillage information on the Parish Council website.

Councillors didn't agree on the use of the website due to the use of unsuitable emojis within the live mapping system. However, the councillors did agree that a link to the Environment Agency website would be agreeable.

11.5 To consider the contribution cost of Hildenborough Conservation Groups insurance premium.

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Councillors approved the cost of £241.94 for the insurance premium of Hildenborough Conservation Group. Councillors noted, with thanks, the group's contributions to the community and to the Woodland.

11.6 To consider adding the repainting of yellow road markings at either end of Nizels Lane onto the Highways Improvement Plan.

Councillors agreed that the above item be added to the Highways Improvement Plan.

11.7 In response to presentation from Ruth Ardrey, Headteacher at Hildenborough CE Primary School to consider adding Riding Lane Traffic Calming measures to the Highways Improvement Plan.

Further to the earlier public discussion, councillors considered alternative ways to improve public safety should a zebra crossing prove unfeasible. Even with the issues noted by KCC Cllr Harry Rayner the Councillors agreed the item would be added to the Highways Improvement Plan.

Councillors further discussed suggesting to Hildenborough Primary School that the vacancy be advertised in the Keys magazine. Councillors also considered whether a rota of parent volunteers or a member of school staff could operate the crossing.

11.8 To note the updating of contact information to the Flood Warden Emergency Plan.

Councillors noted the updated plan and that the council will look to expand on the current plan to create a resilience plan for the community.

12. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

12.1 Correspondence – Noted

- 27 Utility providers letters sent regarding the local plan.
- Go Coach – reply
- Southern Water – reply
- Southeastern Trains – Reply
- Granted Consent for West Wood tree works for Hildenborough Conservation Group.
- KCC Harry Rayners response to the safety concerns raised for Stocks Green / Leigh Road.
- Stock Green Primary School parking letter to parents.
- Matt Boughton TMBC reply to LGR.
- Road Safety and Active Travel newsletter from KCC.
- KALC February Newsletter.
- Speed Watch Results.

12.2 KALC T&M Area Committee Meeting - Kent Resilience Team Community planning presentation from the Thursday 15th January meeting- Noted.

12.3 Parish Partnership Panel – Thursday 5th February – Cllr Wynne Report: Noted

12.4 Village Hall representative – Cllr Haugh

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12.5 Police Report – December – PC Mead Report: Noted

12.6 Representative for Farmers’ Market – March 2026 – Cllr Pereira

12.7 Training - Clerks Report – ILCA Training Course 1 year

The Chair to move that the press and public to be excluded from the remainder of the meeting.

13. Confidential Items

13.1 Overtime approval for the Parish Clerk. – Approved

Cllr Sklavenitis left the meeting at 20.43

13.2 To consider the recommendation made by the employment committee for Permanent Assistant to the Parish Clerk & RFO.

The Employment Committee provided Councillors with feedback on the interviewees and noted that further clarification was required regarding how the formal appointment to the role would integrate with the existing workflow. The Committee also highlighted the need to consider how the Council’s requirements may evolve over the coming months, particularly in light of changes to the Council’s scope of work and the anticipated impact of the move toward unitary authorities on parish councils.

Councillors discussed the potential conflict of interest arising from one interviewee being related to the Chair of the Parish Council, and considered what risk assessments and safeguards would ensure openness and transparency throughout the process.

Councillors agreed to extend the existing admin support temporary contract for a further three months.

Furthermore, to review the staffing situation and consider how best to address the foreseeable increasing workload before re-advertising for a permanent position.

Meeting End 21.10.