HILDENBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD

Wednesday 11th November 2026 19.30

Council Members in Attendance:

Cllr Sklavenitis (Chair), Cllr Wynne (Vice Chair), Cllr Haugh, Cllr Batchelor, Cllr Gabriel, Cllr Leeson, Cllr Gorman, Cllr Wills, Cllr McNeil.

Other Persons in Attendance:

Louise Jenner RFO & Parish Clerk & Councillor Harry Rayner KCC

Public Session

Kent County Councillor's report – Cllr Harry Rayner (KCC)

Local government reorganisation

Cllr Rayner updated the Council on the position of the Secretary of State and the Minister for Local Government. The option for four unitary councils in Kent, previously paused, has now been abandoned. The Minister's intended approach is subject to consultation. One option is a single unitary council, and other options remain under which a West Kent authority is still possible.

On timing, the May 2027 elections (Borough and District) will go ahead, and the councillors elected will serve for two years. The new unitary authorities will come into place in May 2028, followed by a shadow year alongside the existing authorities, with a vesting date of 1 April 2029.

The Secretary of State has also raised the possibility of a mayoralty. A mayor would oversee the unitary authorities, of which there would need to be at least two. The mayoral authority would deal with large-scale housing development, police and crime, and public transport, in particular co-ordinating bus and train timetables so that buses link with trains through the new delegate powers given to mayors in recent statutory changes.

Highways

Cllr Rayner gave an update on Stocks Green School, parent parking and ongoing accidents.

Water supply and leaks

Cllr Rayner gave an update on the water leaks in Riding Lane and Stocks Green Road. Hildenborough sits on a clay subsoil, which gives it a high number of leaks compared with other areas.

KCC attended a water summit in early October, at which all water and wastewater companies were present. Cllr Rayner reported that:

- South East Water loses a quarter of its treated water through leaks. Capital investment has been insufficient, and its system is out of date.

- Kings Hill was built without a new reservoir and without additional capacity at the local reservoir, Bough Beech, which was built to serve only Mereworth and the surrounding villages. Supply regularly runs out, leaving many residents without water, including the elderly, children and people with health conditions.
- Many of the questions put to the water companies were about where they are when these failures happen.

Cllr Rayner had suggested that better use be made of existing facilities. The desalination plant at Beckton currently runs at only 12–15% of capacity. He asked why water is not collected and pumped into the plant to use its spare capacity. Existing pipework runs to Brixton and Bromley, so only a shorter new connection would be needed to reach the Bough Beech / Sevenoaks area.

Planning

Cllr Rayner gave an update on Great Hollanden Farm. The highways issue is ongoing. He noted that the Cabinet Member for Planning at Sevenoaks District Council is also a KCC member and that he has been in contact with him about the application.

Flood defences

Cllr Rayner attended the opening of the flood storage barrier at Leigh and questioned why there had been no opening of the Hildenborough Embankment Scheme. The Environment Agency indicated that it might offer this in January 2027.

Questions from members

Cllr Sklavenitis asked what the Parish Council could do about the water leaks. Cllr Rayner advised the Council to:

- Email him about the October water summit, asking when the next summit will be held and requesting that a representative of the KALC Area Committee attend on behalf of town and parish councils, which were not included.
- Write to Matt Boughton asking that Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council attend the next summit. A seat was reserved for TMBC at the last meeting but no one attended, although water is one of the main grounds of objection to the Regulation 19 Local Plan.

Cllr Batchelor asked what could be done about Stocks Green School. Cllr Rayner asked the Council to email him requesting an update on the improvements requested at the HIP meeting, which would enable him to pursue the matter with the relevant KCC departments.

Cllr Rayner left the meeting at 19:58.

Actions:

1. Email Cllr Rayner about the water summit (date of next summit; KALC Area Committee representation).
2. Write to Matt Boughton, TMBC, requesting TMBC attendance at the next water summit.
3. Email Cllr Rayner requesting an update on the Stocks Green School improvements raised at the HIP meeting.

HILDENBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

1. Apologies and reasons for absence.

Cllr Gorman (work commitments)

2. Declaration of Personal or Prejudicial Interests.

Cllr Sklavenitis item 8.1 and 8.2, Planning as per previous planning minutes.

3. Declaration of gifts and hospitality.

None were declared.

4. To co-opt a Member onto the Parish Council.

There were no members of the public present for co-option.

5. Extraordinary Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 21st October 2026 for agreement and signature if a true record.

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chair of the Council.

6. Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 14th October 2026 for agreement and signature if a true record.

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chair of the Council.

7. Clerk's Report, Open Space project updates, maintenance work and Woodland Management Plan.

Received and noted. – Village Green planting day Thursday 19th November from 10am Councillors welcome to join in the planting.

Councillors raised the following points:

- **Recreation Ground car park:** sight lines when exiting the car park are restricted. Suggestions included:
    - installing mirrors; and
    - reducing the height or size of the hedge.
- **Doctors' surgery:** sight lines are also restricted for vehicles turning right out of the surgery.

These points were noted and will be delegated to a future meeting of the Open Spaces Committee for consideration.

8. <u>FINANCE</u>

8.1 To receive, approve and sign a report detailing bank reconciliation prepared by the RFO for October 2026.

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

ACCOUNT BALANCES & PAYMENTS for Oct and Nov

Account Balances at: 31st October 2026

Account	Amount (£)
Unity Trust Bank	3,371.69
Unity Trust Savings	135,317.46
Business 95 Day Account	123,354.65
Total	262,043.80

8.2 To review and approve items of payments and receipts in October and November 2026.

The Council reviewed and approved all items of payments and receipts for October and November 2026.

	Income received:	**October**	
	Total		**£0.00**
	Payments made:	**Oct**	
DD	Microshade VSM	IT Services	£246.06
Bacs	Nadine and Amanda	Pavilion Cleaning	£50.00
Bacs	Arnold Tarmac	Footpath	£66,942.00
Bacs	WWA	Planning Advice contract	£1,272.00
Bacs	N W Landscaping Construction	Concrete base for bike rack	£1,700.00
Bacs	Royal British Legion Trading Ltd	Poppy Wreath	£23.00
Bacs	GTA Civils & Transport	Transport Statement	£1,440.00
Bacs	Hildenborough Village Hall	Room hire	£237.00
Bacs	Online playgrounds	Play Ground Parts	£1,454.91
Bacs	HAGS	West Wood Trapeze handles	£1,417.20
Bacs	Jonathan Leeson	Refund of CAD drawring for conservation area	£335.27
Bacs	KALC	Planning Conference Ticket	£84.00
Bacs	Forvis Mazars - Invoice 2761132	Audit & AGAR	£756.00
Bacs	Kent Playing Field Ass	Membership	£20.00
BANK Trf	S Dill	Admin Support	£976.00
BANK Trf	R Pannett	Maintenance	£375.00
BANK Trf	A&T Boakes	Maintenance	£1,058.00
BANK Trf	Salary related	Salary related & HMRC	£3,021.51
BANK Trf	Expense	LJ refund	£46.90
DD	NEST	Pension	£139.93
DD	Unity Bank	Charges	£9.70
DD	EDF energy	Electric	£37.44 new
DD	BT	VH Wifi	£41.04 new
DD	Lloyds	Credit Card	£177.57 new
			£81,860.53
	Payments for Approval:	**Nov**	
DD	Flotek / Microshade VSM	IT Services	£246.06
Bacs	Commercial Services	Landscape Services	£2,051.81
Bacs	R P Bayliss	Wet Pour Repairs Recreation Ground	£1,176.00
Bacs	Girl Guides War Memorial	Planting Miss S L Roberts	£150.00
Bacs	WWA	Planning Advice contract and Reg 19	£4,452.00
Bacs	GTA Civils & Transport	Transport Statement	£420.00
Bacs	Earth Anchors Ltd	Picnic Tables	£1,593.60
Bacs	8th Tonbridge Scout Group Hildenbor	S137 Donation Shelters	£600.00
Bacs	Bourne To Garden	Verti Drainage and Sanding West Wood	£1,110.00
Bacs	Colin Coley	Pest Control	£285.00
BANK Trf	S Dill	Admin Support	£960.00
BANK Trf	R Pannett	Maintenance	£375.00
BANK Trf	A&T Boakes	Maintenance	£843.99
BANK Trf	Salary related	Salary related & HMRC	£4,384.74
BANK Trf	Expense	LJ refund	£72.60
DD	NEST	Pension	£225.33
DD	Unity Bank	Charges	£10.45
			£18,956.58

8.3 Recommendations from Finance Committee

- **Draft budget for 2027/28 to be agreed including future projects.**

Councillors reviewed the 2 draft budgets put forward by the finance committee for 2027/28, noting that staffing costs, pension contributions, projects and planning would all affect the budget for the coming year.

Members discussed the projects and staffing hours required under each option and what these would mean for the community. They noted that one of the main constraints on the

Council is staffing capacity, with one employed full-time employee. Both budgets would allow the Council to employ a second part-time member of staff one on 15 hours or one on 30 hours. This would enable the Council to serve the village more effectively, completing current projects while taking forward new areas of work such as resilience planning and communications, where the Council wishes to do more work. This work requires meetings and public engagement beyond the capacity of a single employee.

Both budget options release the Pavilion earmarked reserve. Without this, the increase in the precept would be considerably greater. While the Pavilion renewal building is in the long-term plans of the council the funds required are substantial and the current ear marked reserves could better serve the community with projects that are deliverable in the short term.

The two options considered were:

Option	Increase	Additional cost per Band D household per year
1	8.4%	£5.48
2	13.2%	£8.63

Members recognised that any increase would have an impact on residents. They considered that the larger option remained a small uplift per household, and that it would allow the Council to continue delivering services to the community and maintain the level of work achieved over the last two years.

RESOLVED: That the Council approves the budget for 2027/28 as set out in Option 2, including the release of the Pavilion earmarked reserve, and sets the precept for 2027/28 at £173,104, an increase of 13.2%, equal to an additional £8.63 per year for a Band D household.

Proposed by Cllr Sklavenitis, seconded by Cllr McNeil. Unanimous votes for.

- **Donations listed in Finance Committee Minutes for agreement.**

  Agreed and approved.

  Kent Air Ambulance - £300
  The Hygiene Bank West Kent - £300
  Hospice in the Weald - £600
  West Kent Mediation - £300
  Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services - £300
  Hildenborough Conservation Group (Insurance cost) – Budget - £300
  Hildenborough Litter Picking - £300

- **Level of charges for use of Recreation Ground for 2027**

  Councillors have agreed and approved the below rent increase for clubs that have not received one in the past three years.

  Cricket Club - £300
  Stall ball Club - £300
  Fitness Group - £300
  Tennis Club - £1000

It was felt necessary to increase fees for clubs and groups due to the increasing cost of pavilion cleaning which is not covered by the income from the existing rents.

- **Bank signatories for 2027/28 for agreement**
  Agreed and approved.
  Bank Account Signatories will remain the same for 2027 – 2028
    - Unity Trust Current Account
    - Unity Trust Savings Account
    - Nationwide Savings Account
      Ioannis Sklavenitis, Cathy Wynne, Andrew McNeil, David Haugh
- **Bank accounts and reserves for agreement**

  Councillors reviewed the bank account balances and reserves. These were agreed and approved.

  Actions (Clerk/RFO):

    - An additional savings account to be sought.
    - The Reserves Policy to be updated to reflect the agreed 2027/28 budget, which releases the Pavilion earmarked reserve.
- **Noted approved updated Financial Regulations at October Parish Council Meeting.**
  Noted
- **Approval of updated Risk Assessment**
  Agreed and approved.

8.4 PRECEPT 2027/28
To consider the budget and resolve the amount of the precept to be requested from Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council for 2027/28

That the Council approves the precept for 2027/28 at £173,104, an increase of 13.2%, equal to an additional £8.63 per year for a Band D household.

Action: Clerk/RFO to submit the precept request to Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council by the required deadline.

8.5 To consider and approve the formal resolution for Hildenborough Parish Council to become a participating employer in the Local Government Pension Scheme (Kent Pension Fund).

a) designate the Parish Clerk & RFO as entitled to be a member of the LGPS from 11th November 2026;

b) accept the employer contribution rate of 19.2% certified by the Fund actuary, which will be reviewed every three years at the triennial valuation;

c) authorise the Chair and Vice Chair to sign the resolution in ink on behalf of the Council.

Formal resolution of the Hildenborough Parish Council Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) – Kent Pension Fund

The Hildenborough Parish Council hereby resolves that –

We wish to be a participating employer in the Local Government Pension Scheme (i.e. the Kent Pension Fund administered by Kent County Council), as permitted under the LGPS 2013 Regulations Schedule 2, Part 2 Number 2 and,

Hildenborough Parish Council are designated to having an entitlement to be members of the LGPS, from 11th November 2026

The Fund actuary has certified a contribution rate of 19.2% which we agree to pay and accept that this will be reviewed every 3 years in line with the Funds triennial valuation.

We wish for our participation in the Kent Pension Fund to be closed to new members and understand the implications of this decision. [If it is to be closed to new members, please specify the person who has an entitlement to be in the LGPS or the job role itself, if it is open then all staff regardless of position or will be eligible to join under this resolution. – The Parish Clerk and RFO, Louise Jenner

In making this resolution Hildenborough Parish Council understands it is resolving to be bound by the statutory provisions of the LGPS and all of the obligations under such, including early retirement strain costs and exit liabilities.

9. COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Terms of Reference and the Communications and Social Media Policy were adopted on 14 October 2026. To:
(a) appoint at least three councillors to the Communications and Public Engagement Committee, to hold office until the Annual Meeting in May 2027;
(b) appoint the Chair of the Committee or: confirm that the Committee will elect its Chair at its first meeting;
(c) set the dates of the Committee's ordinary meetings until the Annual Meeting in May 2027;

The Council noted that the Terms of Reference and the Communications and Social Media Policy were adopted on 14 October 2026 (minute ref. 8.2).

(a) Membership

Resolved: That Councillors Sklavenitis, Wynne, and Haugh be appointed to the Communications and Public Engagement Committee, to hold office until the Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2027.

Resolved: That the Committee elect its Chair at its first meeting.

Resolved: That the ordinary meetings of the Committee until the Annual Meeting in May 2027 be held on 16th December 2026, 17th February 2027 , 21st April 2027, 16th June 2027, 18th August 2027, 20th October 2027, 15th December 2027 at Hildenborough Village Hall, commencing at 7.30pm.

Proposed by Cllr Wynne; seconded by Cllr Sklavenitis.
Vote: All for

10 OPEN SPACES

10.1 To receive the minutes of the Open Spaces Committee meeting held on Wednesday 28th October.

Received and noted

10.2 Recreation Ground Pathways

To consider the recommendation from the Open Spaces Committee that the Council approves the resurfacing of the internal pathway of the play area at the Recreation Ground Park and the pathway leading to the play area, and:

a) accepts the quotation from Arnold Tarmac of £12,072.00 plus VAT; and

b) authorises the Clerk to place the order.

Councillors considered the recommendation from the Open Spaces Committee to resurface the internal pathway of the play area at the Recreation Ground and the pathway leading to the play area. The Committee had considered three quotations before making its recommendation to full Council.

APPROVED unanimously: That the Council approves the resurfacing of the internal pathway of the play area at the Recreation Ground and the pathway leading to the play area, and:

a) accepts the quotation from Arnold Tarmac of £12,072.00 plus VAT; and

b) authorises the Clerk to place the order.

Action: Clerk to place the order with Arnold Tarmac.

10.3 Funding for Recreation Ground Pathways

To consider the recommendation from the Open Spaces Committee that the cost of the works at Item 10.2 is met by virement of unspent funds from the Pond and Tree budgets, as set out in the Clerk's report.

Councillors considered the recommendation from the Open Spaces Committee on funding the works approved at Item 10.2.

APPROVED unanimously: That the cost of the works at Item 10.2 is met by virement of unspent funds from the Pond and Tree budgets, as set out in the Clerk's report

11. PLANNING

11.1 To note all planning applications considered and commented on the Council's behalf from planning meeting held since the last full parish council meeting.

Cllr Wills, Chair of the Planning Committee, updated councillors on the three Planning Committee meetings held since the last Parish Council meeting. The Committee had:

- objected to the application at 27 Brookmead;
- objected to the application for nine dwellings on land north-east of Foxbush, because of its Green Belt location and other matters; and
- submitted comments on applications for a lodge at Nizels Lane and a property on Noble Tree Road.

The update was noted. Further details are outlined in the relevant minutes of the Planning Committee whihc have been circulated to councillors and published on the Parish Council website.

11.2 TM/26/01554/FL - Erection of two storey rear extension. Orchard House London Road Hildenborough. Deadline Date 19th November 2026.

This application was placed on the Parish Council agenda because the consultation period was too short for it to be considered at a Planning Committee meeting.

Councillors noted that amended drawings had been submitted, with a 14-day consultation period. The main change was the shape of the extension, which was now wider instead of longer. The Parish Council had originally commented on the application in September. Parish Council has no objection in principle subject to a Natural England Licence for the bat roost, the comment still stands.

AGREED: That the application be left to the discretion of the planning officer.

Action: Clerk to submit the Council's response to Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council.

11.3 Local Plan update. – Noted

- **RT HON MATTHEW PENNYCOOK MP Letter to Council Leaders**
- **RT HON MATTHEW PENNYCOOK MP Letter to Cllr Boughton**

11.4 Local Government Reorganisation update.

As per the updated provided by Councillor Harry Rayer (KCC)

12. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

12.1 Leigh United Charities: Request to Relinquish the Right to Appoint a Trustee

To consider a request from the Clerk to Leigh United Charities (LUC) that Hildenborough Parish Council relinquishes its right under the Deed of 1901 to appoint one of the four trustees of LUC, and to confirm its decision in writing.

Leigh United Charities ("the Charity") is governed by a Deed dated 1901 ("the Deed"). Under the Deed, Hildenborough Parish Council ("the Council") has the right to appoint one of the four trustees of the Charity. By email dated 28 October 2026, the Clerk to the Charity asked the Council to relinquish this right, so that the trustees may seek the consent of the Charity Commission to amend the Charity's governing document. The Council resolved to relinquish Hildenborough Parish Council's right under the Deed of 1901 to appoint a trustee of Leigh United Charities.

The Chair to write to Leigh United Charities to inform them of this resolution.

13. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

13. Correspondence

- **People's Emergency Briefing –** Hildenborough Village Hall film showing Tuesday 1st December – Councillors welcome to attend. Booking via QR code
- **Email update from WWA Planning –** Confirmation regarding Regulation 19 deadline date for submission.
- **Violence Prevention Network information (KCC)**
- **Road Safety & Active Travel Newsletter**

13.1 KALC T&M Area Committee Meeting – Cllr Wynne + Cllr Sklavenitis

The Chairman, Cllr Sklavenitis, attended the recent KALC meeting, where he presented the idea of Parish's employing a shared planning officer. The minutes of that meeting are awaited.

Shared planning officer

Cllr Sklavenitis has contacted all of the local parish councils to discuss the proposal, including the five largest by precept. Most reported that they would have no scope within their budgets to commit funds to planning. The only council to indicate a figure was Hadlow, which would be willing to consider a contracted approach, but wouldn't wish to commit to an employment arrangement. Cllr Sklavenitis will follow up with any parishes who have not responded.

Cllr Rayner asked that the matter be raised at the forthcoming Parish Partnership Panel (PPP) meeting. Cllrs Sklavenitis and Wynne will attend, Cllr Sklavenitis will present the information.

Police Independent Advisory Group (IAG)

The IAG will meet on 10 December at 7pm at Tonbridge Baptist Church. Any councillor who wishes to attend is welcome. Cllr Sklavenitis & Wynne will be in attendance.

13.2 Parish Partnership Panel – Cllr Wynne

The next PPP meeting is due on 19 November, where Cllr Sklavenitis will speak about a shared planning officer. The PPP agenda also includes an update on changes to planning legislation, how the changes will affect parish and town councils. Including how parish and town councils will communicate with planning officers at Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council. The details will be circulated to councillors after the meeting.

13.3 Village Hall representative – Cllr Haugh – Air Conditioning upgrades continue. Nothing else to report.

13.4 Police Report – October – Noted

13.5 Representative for Farmers' Market for December 2026 – Cllr Leeson

13.6 Training

- Grant Funding for UK Local Councils – Clerk

- Planning Conference – Faversham – Clerk + Cllr Wynne

Action – Parish Clerk to circulate training options email

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

14. Confidential Items - None

Meeting End: 21.03