

ORLESTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Orlestone Parish Council's Meeting held on Monday 3rd March 2025 at 7pm in Hamstreet Sports Pavilion, Pound Lees, Hamstreet.

Present: Parish Councillors: Andy Othen (Chairman), Mike Wady (Vice-Chairman), Dave Farrell, Sid Gittens, Basil Smith, Mags Wellsted-Boorman, David White and the Parish Clerk (Sue Stiffell).

Also Present: Borough Councillor David Ledger and Jemma Thompson - Chair to the Hamstreet and District Sports & Leisure Association (HDSLA)

1. **Apologies:** Apologies were received Steve Newton (prior engagement) and Sadie Michell (working). Those present agreed these apologies be accepted. Apologies had also been received from Kent County Councillor David Robey and Borough Councillor Aline Hicks.

2. **Declarations of Interest:**

Declarations of Pecuniary Interest (relating to items on this agenda made in order to comply with the Kent Code of Conduct): None were made at this point from Councillors present.

Declarations of Significant Interest (relating to items on this agenda made in order to comply with the Kent Code of Conduct): None were made at this point of the meeting.

Those present agreed to bring Agenda Item 6 forward as Jemma Thompson had to leave the meeting early.

6. **Partnership with HDSLA: Including Discussion on Formal Agreement Between Both Parties:**

The following was noted:

License Between OPC and Ashford Borough Council: The existing agreement between Ashford Borough Council and OPC stated that permission is required if OPC wish to 'sub-lease' the field (Pound Leas Recreation Ground – original field). Official permission had been sought from ABC.

Agreement Between OPC & HDSLA: The Parish Council's solicitor had reviewed the existing License between ABC and OPC and the draft agreement between OPC and HDSLA for the use of Pound Leas Recreation Ground and the new field. He will put together an agreement between both groups once permission is granted from ABC that OPC can sub-lease the field.

Responsibilities For Pound Leas Recreation Ground: It was noted that currently -

i) The HDSLA:

- Undertook the responsibility for maintaining Pounds Leas Recreation Ground and the buildings on it. This included all repairs and replacements to the sports pavilion, MUGA and playing field, including any work necessary to the fixtures and fittings to the pavilion.
- Responsible for making sure that that they had the necessary insurance/permissions/licenses in place to run and maintain Pound Leas Recreation Ground. They were responsible for insuring the contents of the pavilion.

ii) Orlestone Parish Council:

- Undertake the provision of insurance for the pavilion building and the MUGA.
- Took responsibility for the welfare/maintenance of the trees.
- Took responsibility for the car park
- Took responsibility of the fencing in the car park.

With these responsibilities there are associated costs.

Currently all grants and income raised from the pavilion, MUGA and grounds are collected by the HDSLA and used to maintain Pound Leas Recreation Ground and the buildings on it with some funding being set aside for future projects.

The Parish Council currently use approximately 60% of their income from the Precept to cover costs relating to Pound Leas Recreation Ground: repayment of the loan for the new field and insurance cover.

During discussion it was noted that the HDSLA were seeking a grant from the Football Foundation for the purchase of five storage containers which would be locked and monitored by CCTV. Those present agreed to support this application and a letter of support for the project would be provided.

Representatives from the HDSL A would be meeting with the Football Foundation to about discuss future grants and their requirements.

The next meeting of the 'Action Group for The New Field' would be taking place on Thursday 13th March.

It was agreed that minutes from both the Parish Council and the HDSL A would be circulated to enable openness and transparency. *Following discussion Jemma left the meeting.*

- 3 **Minutes From OPC's Meeting Held on 3rd February 2025: To Be Authorised as Being A Correct Record:** Mike Wady proposed that the minutes from the meeting held on 3rd February 2025 be accepted as a correct record of the meeting and signed/authorised by the chairman. Mags Wellsted-Boorman seconded this proposal which was agreed by those present.

3. **Matters Arising From Minutes of The Meeting Held On 3rd February 2025.**

- Alleyway from Ashford Road To Footpath to The Pippins: The Clerk had reported that had been no upgrading/improvement to the footpath/track. The matter had now been passed to the planning enforcement team to investigate.

4. **Reports/Updates From Representatives of the Community Including Kent County Councillor David Robey & Borough Councillors**

Kent County Councillor David Robey: had provided a report which had been circulated to members prior the meeting.

Borough Councillor David Ledger: reported that Aline was currently on compassionate leave and any issues be addressed to him for the time being. He had spoken to a representative from Southern Water and requested a site meeting to discuss various issues including the waste treatment works in Warehorne Road. As soon as a meeting is organised, he will inform the parish clerk.

During discussion, the Chairman said that he would investigate the possibility of their being some type of surveillance camera which could log how many trucks were visiting the works each day.

5. **Reports/Updates Received From Parish Councillors Including Highways Update:**

Highway Issues: Mike highlighted that he had some 15 items ongoing; these included blocked drains, water leaks, potholes and the breaking up of the road outside the bus stop in Ruckinge Road. He was extremely frustrated with the lack of action. It was agreed that the Clerk would ask Cllr David Robey to set up a site meeting with a representative from KCC Highways.

Sid highlighted how the footpath that run from Lancaster Close to the train station on the right of Ashford Road, was extremely narrow due to vegetation growing over it. The Clerk is to put in a request to KCC Highways that it be cut back.

Chairman: reported that the gardener employed to look after Johnsons Corner had been clearing moss of the paths and would be undertaking some required painting work at the site. The gardener was now also looking after the three flower beds opposite the War Memorial and would be asked to cut the grass in this area. Two American Flags are to be purchased for Johnsons Corner.

Road Signage: The clerk was asked to make enquiries about the provision of a 'deer crossing' sign between Church Lane and the crossroads.

6. **Highways Including Discussion on the Parish Council's Highways Improvement Plan (HIP):**

Highways: Following the last meeting the Clerk had chased for a response regarding the installation of a promised 30mph sign in Ashford Road near the primary academy. Not response to date.

HIP: the current HIP had been circulated to members via email. It was agreed that any comments be sent to the Clerk who would update the HIP. During a brief discussion it was noted that the HIP was more of a wish list that would require funding.

7. **Waste Water Works in Warehorne Road:** No further discussion was held.

8. **Dedication Service at the New War Memorial & Annual Assembly: Discuss Arrangements For 7th April 2025 at 6.30pm.** Dedication Service: Would commence at 6.30pm, representatives

Annual Assembly: would take place in the Pavilion following the service. Mags had made arrangements for refreshments which would be provided by the Cosy Kettle and the HDSLAs.

<u>No 2024/2345</u>	Orlestone Grange, Church Lane, TN26 2EN
Proposal:	Erection of a single storey rear extension, portico to the front, erection of a detached garage and annexe building, creation of new driveway entrance gates.
Decision:	Approved by ABC (with conditions)
<u>No 2024/2248</u>	2 Rectory Walk, Cock Lane TN26 2HU
Proposal:	Detached open cart lodge to replace temporary 'Clarke' Garage
Decision:	Approved by ABC (with conditions)

- Various circulars, bulletins and fraud notices had been circulated to members via email.
- Minutes From the Friends of St Mary's Church: These had been circulated prior the meeting and copies were made available. It was noted that the minutes referred to:
 - i) Section 106 Funding that was available from The Pippins development.
 - ii) Quotations had been sought for work that was required in the churchyard.
 - iii) A 'Request for Funding' form had been completed; this had been circulated to members of the parish council via email.

- Insurance: A renewal questionnaire had been received. This had been circulated to members. The Clerk is to ask for further details regarding the playground cover. It has been recommended that the Pavilion be re-valued for insurance purposes.

Budget Review/Update: had been circulated to members prior the meeting.
Authorisation of Cheques: The following cheques were authorised for signature with the Chairman having delegated authority to approve cheques if required before the next meeting.

[REDACTED]

Annual Assembly: Monday 7th April commencing at 6.15pm by the new war memorial

Chairman's Signature:

Report Provided by Kent County Councillor David Robey.

On 5th February, we heard that we were not going to be allowed onto the Devolution Priority Programme (DPP), leaving us as the only County Council in the South East not on it. This is a decision that does not make sense, and which we are pursuing, but which will not change in the short term. It means that Kent residents will not get the benefits of Devolution as quickly as many other areas, which is very disappointing. As a result of this, the KCC Elections in May 2025 will go ahead and we are preparing accordingly.

The Government is still looking for outline proposals to split Kent geographically into three or four Unitary Councils, and wants these by 21st March 2025. They are hoping for a consensus on this from KCC, Medway and the 12 Kent District Councils, but I think that this will be difficult to achieve. Final proposals are required by 28th November 2025. The Government has made it clear that they wish to go down this route, and will mandate it if there is no agreement.

On 13th February, we had the KCC Full Council Budget Meeting, which was a stormy affair. We have a Balanced Budget, remain solvent and under good financial control, and in a much better position than many other Councils. However, the pressures due to Social Services remain a factor, and impact all aspects of what KCC does, especially in areas like potholes, and Highways generally.

We have been given about £10m by the Government for potholes and will be restarting the Pothole Blitz, once the weather improves. We are looking for another £10m and I put our chances of getting this as 50:50.

The Government has set up a Transport Select Committee on Roadworks and KCC has made a Submission to this Select Committee, on which I have had considerable input. The Submission makes some radical suggestions on how the current unacceptable situation can be improved, and I just hope that the Committee considers these seriously. Katie Lam is on the Committee, and I will be briefing her personally. We have also written to all the Kent MPs about it, as I believe that our proposals could command cross party support.

We managed to save the Route 2A Bus Service for a year, using Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) Funding, and also the Kent Travel Saver, which provides a heavily discounted bus pass, to allow children to get to school on the bus. What happens at the end of the year depends on the stance the Government take on BSIP, and we will have to cross that bridge when we come to it.

I hope that you have managed to sort out the 30 mph Traffic Sign with Toby Butler, and if I can help, then please let me know.

Similarly, if you need support on your HIP, then please let me know.

David Robey 3rd March 2025