

**HIGH HALDEN PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting**  
**held on Monday 10 March 2025 at 7pm in the Memorial Hall**

**236/24 Administration:** Fire Exits, Fire Meeting Point, Mobile Phones. The Clerk confirmed that there has been no requests to record the meeting.

**237/24 Present and Apologies**

**Present:** Cllr. Wheeler (Chairman), Cllrs Mrs. P. Amsler, Mr. T. Haigh, Mrs. K. Hoath and Ms. J. Morgan.

**In Attendance:** Mrs L Goldsmith (Clerk), Ward Member Alan Pickering, 7 members of the public.

**Apologies:** There were none.

**238/24 Declarations of Interest:**

Cllr. Haigh declared an interest in agenda items 245/25, 249/25 – PA/2024 and agenda item 253/24 /24-5.

**239/24 Minutes of meetings**

**Resolved:** That the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 10 February 2025 be approved and confirmed as a true record.

**240/24 Report from the Clerk (information purposes only):**

VAT Claim: The Clerk has submitted a VAT Claim for VAT paid from the 1 April 2024 – 31 January 2025.

**241/24 Ward Member Report**

Ward Member Alan Pickering reported that ABC has increased the Council Tax for the next financial year by 2.99% which equates to a total of £5.62 a year for a Band D property. ABC is looking to put in cameras to provide an overview of the Hatchentan site and is keen to install large concrete blocks at the entrance, provided legal challenges can be overcome. One of the owners has now been identified and has been fined.

**242/24 Open Session:**

A member of the public expressed concern about the suggestion diversion route for vehicles unable to access Church Hill which was recently closed for road works. A further road closure is planned and concern was expressed about the fact cars are being forced to go down to Martens Lane which is not suitable.

Ward Member Alan Pickering shared some concerns about the cost of developing a Neighbourhood Development Plan and the experience of Bethersden Parish Council.

A member of the public asked for an explanation as to why the precept has been increased.

A member of the public reported that the link on the website with an option to request electronic communication from the Parish Council does not seem to be working.

A member of the public expressed their concern about the ongoing number of applications, such as PA/2025/0254, for the change of use of barns into residential dwellings. Concern was expressed about the ecological impact of these proposals and an increase in vehicle movements on lanes that were not designed for cars.

**243/24 Highway Matters**

**Public Footpath AT151:**

It was noted that Cllr. Morgan and the Clerk met with a PROW Officer on the 21 February 2025 to discuss the public footpath AT151 which passes through Jubilee Park. Cllr. Morgan had raised concerns about the condition of the sleepers and the footpath in the far corner of the recreation ground and the Clerk has received reports of walkers slipping on the path. Cllr. Morgan was delighted to report that PROW has agreed to remove the sleepers and install a compacted 1.5m wide stone footpath with timber edging, running from the existing sleeper bridge for 14m along the alignment of the footpath, to the top of the small rise. The Clerk advised that the works are due to take place before the end of April 2025.

**Annual Review of the Highways Improvement Plan.**

The Clerk advised Members that the Community Engagement Officer has requested that the Parish Council submits a list of priorities which will be discussed at a virtual meeting. It was agreed that the Clerk should set up a virtual meeting with Members to discuss and agree the required list of priorities.

Initials: .....

**Faults:**

AT135: The stile at the entrance to the footpath opposite The Little Silver Country Hotel is damaged. The Clerk to report.

*Standing Orders were lowered to allow a member of the public to speak.*

*The meeting resumed.*

Verges in Hookstead: In response to concerns expressed by a member of the public the Clerk was asked to report that the lorries delivering materials to the works taking place in Hookstead have mounted and damaged the verges. The Clerk was asked to request that the verges are reinstated and that the mud is cleared off the road.

**244/24 Kent Police/Community Warden**

*Cllr. Wheeler read out the following report from Richard Sinden, the Community Warden.*

I have continued to be a visible presence around the village. Hopefully more residents will stop and chat as the weather improves. I am also attending the Friday coffee mornings.

Along Ashford Road between 00.30 and 03.00 on Saturday 1st March a resident had a bedroom window smashed by a ball bearing. The ball bearing remained between the panes of glass. At least three tiles on the property were also hit and chipped. I have visited the owner of the property and given advice and reassurance. In the early hours of Saturday 1st March, a property along Ashford road had a window smashed. There is a ball bearing stuck between the double glazing. Unfortunately, the owner did not see who did this. If you have any security cameras or a camera doorbell, could you please check the footage for the hours between midnight Friday 28th February and three am on Saturday 1st March. I am hoping someone picked up some images of people out and about carrying either catapults or BB guns.

There has also been a minor issue with some youths in the church porch (a glass bottle was smashed). It appears some youths were meeting in the evenings, in the porch as the alarm was switched off due to building work. The alarm is now back on, and the youths have dispersed.

I will be on annual leave from Monday 10th March and also Monday 24th March for five days.

Members discussed their concerns about the fact that catapults and BB guns are present in the village. The Clerk reported that at the recent KALC Ashford Area Committee Meeting Acting Inspector Jason Bushell advised that he has tasked PC Laker, the Beat Officer for the Rural South Area of Ashford, to plan and manage a day of action around catapults, looking to utilise data received to proactively target areas that are being subjected to criminality with the use of these items. Kent Police hope to run a campaign to target crime with catapults.

*Standing orders were lowered to allow a member of the public to speak.*

*The meeting resumed.*

It was noted that Peter New, Kent Police Volunteer & Neighbourhood Watch Co-Ordinator, has been promoting a petition to the House of Commons to make the sale of catapults and the carrying of catapults illegal. Details about the petition have been posted on Facebook. The Clerk will try and obtain some promotional material on any campaign to stop catapulting.

**245/24 Community Orchard**

*Cllr. Haigh declared an interest and did not participate in any discussion during this agenda item*

**Orchard Planting:**

The Clerk reported that twenty of the fruit trees have been planted on land adjacent to the allotments. In between meetings ABC had agreed to the planting of the remaining ten fruit trees on Hookstead Green and these have also been planted. The Clerk has thanked all the residents and Members that came to help plant the trees. Some of the trees have been adopted and the aim in the future it to hold communal pruning and harvesting events.

*Standing Orders were lowered to allow a member of the public to speak.*

The Clerk explained that the orchard at the allotments can be accessed by the public.

*The meeting resumed.*

Initials: .....

**Fencing:**

It was noted that sheep continue to use the land occupied by the orchard and concerns have been expressed about the trees being damaged. In between meetings the Clerk had obtained quotes for stock fencing and a gate. Members discussed the quotes and the perceived need for fencing. Concern was expressed about the cost of this unbudgeted expenditure and that reserves will need to be used. The Clerk suggested and it was agreed that the proposed fencing could be reused to enclose the pathway and tap area on land leased by the Parish Council when it is not required for the orchard.

**Resolved: To accept a quote of £1,487.00 (excluding VAT) for the fencing from Tompsetts Landscaping and for a gate to be installed, (carried 3 in favour, 1 abstained).**

**246/24 No 2/2A Bus Service**

As requested at the last meeting the Clerk has contacted the Planning and Operations Manager at KCC to find out if the No 2 and 2A bus services were going to be stopped. The Planning and Operations Manager has advised the Clerk that the No 2 and 2A services were due to be withdrawn by Stagecoach from March 2025. This followed a review of their Ashford operation which identified a number of services that were no longer financially viable owing to rising costs and reduced bus usage since the pandemic. The services are currently unfunded and have historically been able to operate without subsidy i.e. for the passenger fares alone. KCC Highways has advised that fortunately, as these and some of the other at risk services were identified as critical for users and communities, KCC have been able to use Bus Grant funding provided by the Government to intervene and are in the process of awarding contracts that will enable the services to continue to operate for the next twelve months at least. The contracts for replacement services have been won by Stagecoach so there should be no noticeable difference for users.

**247/24 S106 Update**

The Clerk had circulated a copy of a spreadsheet showing all the S106 allocations from each development and giving details of what has been already spent, currently available and not yet received. The Clerk explained that there is a substantial sum of money already available to use to install a MUGA on Jubilee Park but that ABC has asked the Parish Council to wait until the S106 funds from the Hope House development for the provision of a MUGA are received otherwise they will be returned to the developer. The Clerk reminded Members that all of the S106 allocation for the provision of allotments has been spent but that more will be available from the Hope House development. The Parish Council may be able to make a claim for the fencing to be installed adjacent to the allotments. The Clerk explained that the Parish Council has spent a considerable amount of money on drainage on the recreation ground in the last 3 years and that approximately £10,000.00 of S106 funding remains.

**248/24 Drainage works for the recreation ground**

Members noted that Brewmaster Football Club has asked if the Parish Council can repeat the drainage works to the football pitch that were undertaken last year which cost approximately £11,000.00. It was noted that there is just over £10,000 S106 funding left for drainage works on the recreation ground. Members requested to see a copy of the works that were carried out last year and it was suggested and agreed that the Clerk contacts a couple of companies for some advice on the condition of the pitch and any works required. Cllr. Haigh suggested that the remaining S106 funding for drainage works should be used on the whole recreation ground and not just the adult pitch. The Clerk will check on the restrictions of the remaining S106 allocation and will also look into other funding sources such as the Football Foundation.

*Ward Member Alan Pickering left the meeting.*

**249/24 Planning**

**Planning applications**

**PA/2025/0165: Silver Oaks, Ashford Road, St Michaels**

Proposed detached double garage, boundary treatments, and the creation of a new access.

**Resolved: No objection.**

Initials: .....

**PA/2025/0245: Quince Tree Orchard, Ashford Road, High Halden**

Proposed new crossover to create an entrance/exit driveway.

**Resolved: No objection.**

**NOT/2025/0254: Marten Farm, Martens Lane, High Halden**

Prior notification for the change of use of 2no. barns and land within their curtilage to 2no dwelling houses and associated operational development.

**Resolved: Object** We are concerned about the increase in traffic/vehicles on this single-track access road.

**We consider this proposal to represent an overdevelopment of the site. We are concerned about the effect of the proposal on the ecological status of the site and the effect on the environment (concerns about asbestos on site).**

**NOT/2025/0215: Land approx.: 400 meters Northeast of Rawsley Farm, Cripple Hill, High Halden**

Prior notification for agricultural storage building.

**It was noted that ABC has refused this proposal.**

**PA/2025/0366: Beale Farm, Cripple Hill, High Halden**

Outdoor tennis court with perimeter fence.

**Resolved: No objection.**

**Planning applications received after the distribution of the agenda:** None received.

**Decisions from ABC:** *Response from HHPC in italics.*

**Approvals:**

**PA/2024/2224: Portkiln Oast, High Halden**

Erection of purpose-built holiday let with parking, associated garden and landscaping enhancements, following the demolition of the existing stables and outbuildings.

*Resolved: Support.*

**PA/2024/1584: New Barn Farm, Ashford Road, High Halden**

Change of use and conversion of agricultural barn with associated parking area to provide a mixed use facility including agricultural storage, community function room, retail, office space.

*Resolved: Support. The Parish Council has an interest in the site as it leases the land currently used for allotments. We are concerned about the capability of the existing access in terms of the volume of traffic.*

**Refusals:** None to consider.

**Other Planning Matters**

**Enforcement Case: Hatchentan, alleged illegal dumping of waste:**

As agreed at the last meeting it was noted that the Clerk had reported this site to the Environment Agency and has also undertaken a land search to establish ownership. The Environment Agency is going to liaise with ABC and discuss what action can be taken.

**AP- 90723: Greenluck Farm, Harris Lane:**

2 bedroom log cabin style dwellings with associated parking and garden areas. Appeal in progress.

**AP- 90688: Appeal Homestall Farm, Ashford Road, PA2024/0799:** Appeal in progress.

**Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP):**

The Clerk has contacted Alison Eardley, who is the retained planning consultation for KALC, to request a virtual meeting to discuss the process of developing a NDP. It was agreed to meet virtually with Alison Eardley on Thursday 3 April at 4pm to discuss the process.

*One member of the public left the meeting.*

Initials: .....

## **250/24 Training**

### **Planning Enforcement Training:**

Cllrs. Hoath, Morgan and the Clerk attended a Planning Enforcement Training session organised by the KALC Area Committee and held in the Council Chamber at ABC on the 5 March 2025. The Planning Enforcement team gave presentations on the challenges they face and on the newly adopted Enforcement Plan. Cllr. Hoath advised Members that one of the challenges is that the Enforcement team is relatively small and has to cover the whole of the Borough. The team very much relies on Parish Councils/Councillors to be the eyes and ears for potential planning breaches. The Clerk will circulate a copy of the presentation documents.

### **Code of Conduct Training:**

In response to an increase in the number of complaints about Councillors KALC has teamed up with the Monitoring Officer at ABC to hold a training session on the Code of Conduct. The event will be held in Appledore village hall from 6.30pm to 8.30pm on the 10 June 2025. Cllrs. Hoath and Wheeler will be attending.

### **Training Courses in General:**

The Clerk has circulated information about all the training currently been offered to Councillors by KALC. It was noted that Cllrs. Hoath, Haigh and Morgan will be attending a virtual KALC course on the 'nuts and bolts of a parish council' on the 28 April 2025.

## **251/24 Annual Parish Meeting 2025**

Members discussed the possible format of the Annual Parish Meeting due to be held at 7pm on the 14 April 2025 in the Memorial Hall.

**Resolved: The Clerk to invite all the local organisations to the Annual Parish Meeting to either give or submit their annual reports and for parishioners to be invited to arrive from 6.30pm for light refreshments and to meet their Councillors.**

## **252/24 Policies:**

### **Social, Media and Electronic Communication Policy**

**Resolved: To adopt a Social, Media and Electronic Communication Policy noting that all Councillors will only use generic email addresses for all Parish Council correspondence.**

## **253/24 Financial Report:**

### **/24-1 Asset Register.**

**Resolved: To adopt the Asset Register prepared and circulated by the Clerk.**

### **/24-2 Bank Mandate**

The Clerk reported that an application to add Cllr. Morgan as a signatory to the Unity Trust bank account has finally been processed. In between meetings Cllr. Hoath had decided not to be added to the bank mandate. It was agreed that another signatory needs to be added to the bank mandate.

**Resolved: To add Cllr. Haigh as an additional signatory to the Unity Trust bank account.**

### **/24-3 To receive the updated accounts for 2024/2025**

Members received the updated accounts for 2024/2025

### **/24-4 To receive a bank reconciliation as at the 10 March 2025**

Members received the bank reconciliation as at the 10 March 2025

**Resolved: Cllr. Morgan to sign the bank reconciliation in accordance with the Financial Regulations.**

### **/24-5 To agree payments in accordance with the Budget:**

Cllr. Wheeler checked the invoices against the payment schedule and it was and it was **resolved** for Cllrs.

Morgan and Wheeler to authorise the payments online. Cllr. Wheeler as the Chair, initialled the payments list in accordance with the adopted Financial Regulations.

**Receipts:** None received.

## **Balances as at 10 March 2025**

**Unity Trust Current Account: £13,662.18**

**Unity Trust Savings Account: £23,705.80**

**Total: £37,367.98**

Initials: .....

**Payments :**

Reference	Payee	Invoice	Description of Transaction	Gross
21/25	Louise Goldsmith		Expenses	64.25
22/25	Ashford Borough Council	85866098	Grounds Maintenance 2024-2025	5958.11
23/25	M I Payroll		Payroll Services	25.00
24/25	Npower	IN12568813	Sports Pavilion Electricity	219.45
25/25	Aquavale	INV-0044	Allotment Renewal Rent	400.00
26/25	Barrie Croucher		Caretaking Services	45.76
27/25	Mint Fresh	183FEB25	Bus Stop Cleaning	51.48
28/25	Louise Goldsmith		Land Registry Search Refund	39.95
DD	Unity Trust		Monthly Charge	6.00
DD	Hugo Fox		Website	2.99
DD	Google Cloud	5190497604	Gmail Account	29.14
SO	HMRC		Clerks Tax and NI	247.26
SO	Louise Goldsmith		Salary	850.80
		<b>Total</b>		<b>7940.19</b>

**254/24 Information items:**

**/24-1 HHVEC Update:**

Cllr. Hoath reported that a new member has joined who will assist on the treasury side of HHVEC. A VE Day 80th Anniversary celebration is planned for Thursday 8 May 2025 with the lighting of the beacon on the green. A Proclamation is to be read out by local celebrity, Linda Bassett, followed by a sing song and a pop-up choir. The pub will be serving fish and chips throughout the day. Cllr. Hoath is kindly organising an exhibition of memorabilia to be displayed in the pub. HHVEC is planning on holding a Boot Fair on Jubilee Field on Bank Holiday Monday, 26 May 2025. Saturday 28 June 2025 from 12pm-5pm has been earmarked as the date for the summer event on the village green. The theme will be a 60's summer party. There will be live music, dancing groups, a dog show and a tug of war.

The Clerk will ask HHVEC to submit a request to the Parish Council for permission to use the village green and recreation ground for these events along with a full risk assessment and a copy of the insurance policy.

**/24-2 KALC:** There has been no meeting.

**/24-3 Devolution Paper**

Members noted a joint update on Devolution from the Leader and Chief Executive at ABC which the Clerk had circulated. It was agreed that the Clerk should place a copy of the update on social media and the website.

**255/24 Items for the next Parish Council meeting:**

Community Emergency Planning; Local Plan Consultation; Saturday Surgeries; Christmas Tree.

**256/24 Confidential Items:**

None to consider.

**257/24 Date of the next meeting.**

**Annual Parish Meeting: Monday 14 April 2025 at 7pm**

**The next Parish Council Meeting will be held after the Annual Parish Meeting.**

With no further business to transact the meeting closed at 8.55pm

Signed: .....

Date: .....

Initials: .....