

POSTLING PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of Postling Parish Council meeting held at Postling Village Hall on Tuesday 28 January 2025 at 6.30pm

1. Attending: Chairman Frank Hobbs, Cllrs Helen Calderbank, Christine Hobbs, Rob Lye, Parish Clerk Clare Hamilton, County Cllr Susan Carey, District Cllr Jenny Hollingsbee (arrived late after earlier meeting).
Apologies: Cllr John Patrick, Cllr Dan Shaddick, Cllr George Burgess, District Cllr Elaine Martin.
2. **It was resolved** unanimously to accept the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2024.
3. There were no Members' declarations of interest on Agenda items.
4. Public Participation session not required.
5. Matters arising not included on the Agenda
Cllr Helen Calderbank attended the North Downs Forum on the theme of mental health and loneliness in rural areas. South Kent Mind aim to establish wellbeing groups in rural locations.
6. Planning Applications received since last meeting, circulated to Councillors for comments, outcomes of those deliberations, and to consider any applications received since this agenda was published:
 - a. **24/1711/FH Pent Villa, The Street, Postling CT21 4EU**
Works to tree in a Conservation area - Ash to be removed (ash dieback)
FHDC: No objections
 - b. **24/1484/FH/TCA Court Cottage, The Street, Postling CT21 4EX**
Works to trees in Conservation area comprising removal of overhang of trees/bushes/hedges by 3metres
FHDC: TPO made.
Applicant appealed to FHDC and understands a decision will be made by 28 May.
Work to trees in a conservation area, including trimming overhang, must be approved by FHDC.
 - c. **FH/24/1363 (KCC/FH/0115/2024) Land adjacent to Ashford Road/A20 Westenhanger CT21 4HU**
Regulation 3 Application for the erection of a waste transfer station, together with an enhanced site access to the A20, amenity blocks, staff and commercial vehicle parking, weighbridge and fuelling areas plus landscaping/ecology areas and SUDS.
Changes were submitted in response to consultation: Odour will be minimal. Colour of structure was originally proposed to be grey but KDNL Unit has requested olive green. Longer operating hours (Mon-Fri 6am-6pm, Sat-Sun 7am-1pm) have been requested.
 - d. **24/1111/FH The Manor House, The Street, Postling CT21 4EX**
Listed building consent for replacement first floor window
FHDC: Approved.
 - e. **24/0719/FH Ash Wells, Pilgrims Way, Postling CT21 4EY**
Proposed Barn for the stabling of horses, (to consist of six stables, two tack rooms and one wash room), following demolition of existing stables
Parish Council Objects. Awaiting FHDC decision.
7. Highways
 - a. Pentland development at Lyminge: concerns were raised at the previous meeting re. possible use of Sandling Road by heavy construction traffic. This was reported to Pentland and FHDC planning department. Pentland requested the parish council supply vehicle company names in order to check if they are their suppliers. An email was circulated to parishioners and two company names have been noted. However, it is difficult to prove if these vehicles are bound for the housing

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development or elsewhere. HGV movements on Sandling Road appear to be lower now the housing development is underway.

- b. Staple Lane, Postling: Part of Staple Lane, Postling, closed 23 January 2025 for works by Openreach.

8. Finance

- a. Balance of account at 28 January 2025: £4,648.51.

- b. Payments and Receipts since last meeting

Payments:

C Hamilton	Salary Oct Nov	452.40	
C Hamilton	Salary backpay 1Apr-30Sep	63.00	
C Hamilton	Travel exp Nov meeting	7.20	
HugoFox	Website hosting Nov	11.99	
HSBC	Bank charges Nov	8.00	
HSBC	Bank charges Dec	8.00	
HugoFox	Website hosting Dec	11.99	
Spearpoint	Tree removal from VH	675.00	

Receipts: None

- c. Expenditure due before next meeting:

HSBC	Account charges Jan Feb	£ 16.00	
HugoFox	Website hosting Jan Feb	£ 23.98	vat £4.00
C Hamilton	Salary Dec Jan	£ 452.40	
	Travel exp Jan meeting	£ 7.20	
KALC	Vice-Chair's attendance at Chairmanship Conference	£ 84.00	vat £14.00

It was resolved to approve expenditure. Proposed by Cllr Christine Hobbs, seconded by Cllr Rob Lye, all in favour, approved by the Chairman.

9. Reports from District and County Councillors: see Appendix

Councillors' reports provide information on the Government's devolution proposals and details of the proposed replacement of County/District Councils with new Unitary Councils and a directly elected mayor.

10. Website

Email received from our website host on 27 January informing that our .gov.uk domain is now live. Previous .co.uk domain expires in Feb and will not be renewed. Clerk will inform regular website users of the change. Initial grants of £100 for a change to .gov.uk email addresses are fully allocated and no longer available, therefore the current email address will be retained for the foreseeable future.

11. Highways Improvement Plan (HIP)

It was resolved to canvas parishioners for suggestions of what could be included in a HIP. Communication of what is achievable is essential due to budget restraints, eg. resurfacing work is not included.

12. Otterpool Park Working Group

The planned January meeting has been rescheduled for February.

13. For Information

- KALC Community Award: A nomination will be submitted by the deadline of 7 February.
- Government's Civility and Respect Pledge and Standards Consultation: Response to be drafted.
- Next meeting: 25 March 2025 (*meeting dates 2025 - 25 Mar, 27 May, 29 July, 30 Sept, 25 Nov*).
- Meeting closed at 7.30pm.

Signed..... Cllr Frank Hobbs, Chairman, 25 March 2025

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Appendix Reports from District and County Councillors

District Councillors Jenny Hollingsbee and Elaine Martin

We decided to do a joint report this month on the very important decision taken by KCC and Medway Council that will completely change our electoral landscape.

Devolution and Local Government Re-organisation

On 10 January 2025, Cllr Roger Gough, Leader of Kent County Council and Cllr Vince Maple Leader of Medway submitted an expression of interest to the Government asking that Kent and Medway be considered as a priority area for Devolution. The decision to put Kent forward was taken by KCC Cabinet Members at a meeting on 9 January.

Big changes lie ahead for local government in our area. Under the proposals there will be a directly elected mayor and all 14 councils in Kent will be abolished and replaced by a small number of much larger unitary authorities. The exact detail of what will come next is still to be determined. Although the Leader and Chief Executive of FHDC have attended many meetings, the decision to put Kent & Medway forward to the DPP programme was out of our hands.

Joining the Priority Programme could mean that this May's Local Elections will be postponed. In his letter of 16 December, Jim McMahon MP, Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution, stated that to deliver both devolution and reorganisation according to the exacting schedules of the Devolution Priority Programme he was minded to lay secondary legislation to postpone local elections from May 2025 to May 2026. Acceptance on to the Devolution Priority Programme will commit Kent and Medway to elections to a new Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA) in May 2026 and implementation of local government reorganisation by either April 2027 or April 2028. It is understood that the Government will notify the Leaders of KCC and Medway by the end of January as to whether or not they have been selected for the Devolution Priority Programme.

It is expected that the Government will ask the 14 Kent Councils collectively to submit one (or more) schemes for the local government re-organisation. An indicative proposal will need to be submitted in March with a confirmed version in the autumn. At this point there will be a formal consultation with residents.

Reading the Devolution White Paper, we can only find one reference to Town and Parish Councils which is as follows - "We know people value the role of governance at the community scale and that can be a concern when local government is reorganised. We will therefore want to see stronger community arrangements when reorganisation happens in the way councils engage at a neighbourhood or area level. We will also rewire the relationship between town and parish councils and principal Local Authorities, strengthening expectations on engagement and community voice."

This is just the beginning – there will be so much work to do. Please watch this space as we will provide regular updates on the situation. To view the KCC Full Council and Cabinet Meetings see [Webcast library - Kent County Council Webcasting](#) for the Devolution White Paper [English Devolution White Paper - GOV.UK](#)
Contact jennyhollingsbee@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk
elainemartin@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

Age UK Hythe Lyminge & Ashford – I have been contacted by many residents over the last month concerning the closing of the Centre in Lyminge. I have again, been in contact with Officers at the District Council as I am well aware that the Lyminge Community are keen to retain space for a café and a social space. The District Council own the building and are looking to create housing units for local people and are still considering the next stage for Everist Court. I have asked that the Community be consulted before any decision is finalised.

Housing targets – at a recent Planning Briefing, we were informed that the Government housing target for our District has been increased from 735 per annum to 859 per annum! Currently the District is far below the target and has been for quite a few years. There has been a 'call for sites' and the Government is asking for Local Plans to be revised.

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County Councillor Susan Carey

As I know your district councillors will report on the Government's devolution proposals, I will add just a few details about the proposed replacement of County/District Councils with new Unitary Councils and a directly elected mayor.

The Government has indicated that there will be incentives (extra devolved powers and funding) for councils that apply to join the Devolution Priority Programme. To be part of the Devolution Priority Programme, plans for new unitary councils and a mayoral authority need to be made in outline by mid-March 2025 with a view to introducing the new set up within 1-2 years. Any councils that don't opt for the Devolution Priority Programme will still be reorganised but follow about a year later. There is great pressure to make this major change as quickly as possible.

We are told the new unitaries should serve populations of at least 500,000 people but larger will also be considered. Kent and Medway could be divided into three, two or one unitary. The new council/s would offer the same services as present and the mayor would have extra powers over (potentially) strategic planning, transport, education, police and fire services. There will definitely be fewer councillors and possibly fewer council staff.

In contrast to the haste for the change in local government organisation, the Government has also announced the setting up a commission to examine Social Care which will report in 2028. This is disappointing as this is an urgent problem which has had many past reviews and, if not resolved, has the potential to bankrupt local government before any reorganisation is in place. Social Care consumed a third of KCC's spending twenty years ago but now takes two thirds which means all other KCC services are deprived of funding.

KCC's Public Health team have issued a warning about an outbreak of bird flu just over the Kent border in Rye. All bird keepers are reminded they must register their birds, maintain high biosecurity standards and immediately report signs of bird flu to help slow the spread of the disease. Please report (but don't touch) dead wild birds, particularly large numbers in one spot. Use the [online reporting system](#) or call the Defra helpline 03459 33 55 77.

KCC has launched a scheme to target help to pensioners no longer eligible for the Winter Fuel Allowance. Called (imaginatively) the 'Pensioner Just Missing Out Scheme' it offers pensioner households on low incomes a voucher for £200 to be used for fuel, food or both. Details are on the KCC website where's there's also information on other schemes for those facing financial problems. Look for 'KentTogether' online or ring 03000 41 92 92.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Kent & Medway is now available for public consultation at [Let's talk Kent](#) and everyone is invited to give their views on what's now proposed following much work including workshops across Kent and the opportunity for both individuals and organisations to contribute. Called 'Making Space for Nature' this policy will be crucial for identifying the land that's available or needed for nature and how we will measure success. Please give your views.

As a rural area I know many of our residents are aware of the impact the changes to Agricultural Property Relief (aka the Family Farm tax) will have on the viability of family farms, the rural economy and the environment. At the meeting of the Full Council at KCC on 19 December we debated a motion condemning the Government's Family Farm Tax. I spoke in the debate and I'm pleased to report that the motion passed with no votes against with just the Labour Group abstaining. Nearly every County Council has now passed a similar motion which helps show the support British farmers have from their local communities.

The plans for the proposed new Waste Transfer Station near Junction 11 of the M20 in Postling Parish have been reissued with some changes in response to consultation responses. There was a suggestion that the roof of the building be curved like National Highways' salt barn the other side of the junction. This has been rejected as it would preclude the use of solar panels and these are considered integral to making the project sustainable. The colour of the building was originally proposed to be a grey chosen from the Kent Downs National Landscape guidance but the KDNL Unit has asked for olive green and this has been accepted. There is a detailed report on potential odour effects which are regulated by the Environment Agency. These are considered to be 'not significant' but the odour suppression system required by the Environment Agency will further reduce any potential for impact. There is also a very detailed (and fascinating) heritage impact assessment with lots of information on local history and a conclusion

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that the benefits of unearthing any archaeological finds on the site would outweigh any potential harms. Please advise me of any concerns so I can raise these with the planning officers at KCC.

To end with some unalloyed good news. Several teams within KCC have been externally assessed as providing exceptional service including our Library Service, our Audit Team and the Road Safety Team which won the Prince Michael International Road Safety award for outstanding achievement and innovation. Amidst all the challenges we face, it's good that KCC's staff have been recognised for some exceptional work.

Susan Carey

Member for Elham Valley, Kent County Council