

POSTLING PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of Postling Parish Council meeting held at Postling Village Hall on Tuesday 25 March 2025 at 6.30pm

1. Attending: Chairman Frank Hobbs, Cllrs Helen Calderbank, Christine Hobbs, Rob Lye, John Patrick, Dan Shaddick, George Burgess, Parish Clerk Clare Hamilton, District Cllr Elaine Martin, District Cllr Jenny Hollingsbee, County Cllr Susan Carey.
2. **It was resolved** unanimously to accept the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2025.
3. There were no Members' declarations of interest on Agenda items.
4. Public Participation session not required.
5. There were no matters arising not included on the Agenda.
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. **25/0370/FH Land North Junction 11, M20, Stanford Intersection, Stanford**
Lawful Development Certificate (existing) for the confirmation of lawful implementation of approved planning permission 89/0349/SH.
FHDC: Lawful.
 - b. **25/0424/FH/TCA Court Cottage, The Street, Postling CT21 4EX**
Situating in a Conservation area - annual trim of boundary hedge up to a height of around 3 meters.
Parish Council: Approve.
 - c. **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.
FHDC: Approved with conditions.

7. Highways

- a. Pentland development at Lyminge: named HGVs using Sandling Road reported to Pentland for investigation. No response received.
- b. Roadworks
 - Farthing Common: 12-16 May 2025, closed between the junctions of B2068 Stone Street and Brady Road. Original diversion route included Staple Lane; Chairman requested this route is not used and a change to the diversion route has been announced.
 - Sandling Road, Postling: 9 April 2025, closed for works by Openreach.

8. Finance

- a. Balance of account at 25 March 2025: £4,262.19
- b. Payments and Receipts since last meeting:
Payments

KALC	Chairmanship Conference	84.00
C Hamilton	Salary Dec Jan	452.40
C Hamilton	Travel exp Jan meeting	7.20
HSBC	Bank charges Jan	8.00
HugoFox	Website hosting	11.99
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HSBC	Bank Charges Feb	8.00

Receipts

VAT refund	01.04.24-28.02.25	£ 147.26
PNVH	Annual hall lease	£ 50.00

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c. Expenditure due before next meeting:

HSBC	Account charges Apr May	£ 16.00	
HugoFox	Website hosting Apr May	£ 23.98	vat £4.00
C Hamilton	Salary Feb Mar	£ 452.40	
	Travel exp Mar meeting	£ 7.20	
	Annual sundry expenses	£ 59.32	

After payments authorised above, end of year balance at 31 March will stand at £3,743.27.

It was resolved unanimously to approve expenditure. Approved by the Chairman.

d. End of Year accounts to be prepared after 31 March and Internal Audit arranged.

9. Reports from District and County Councillors - see Appendix

Cllr Jennifer Hollingsbee acknowledged the work Cllr Susan Carey has done over her 26 years as District Councillor and 20 years as County Councillor also. The Chairman thanked Susan for all her support with various local matters over the years and presented a card signed by the parish council.

10. Devolution

FHDC has submitted to the government the Kent Interim Plan for Local Government Reorganisation.

11. Kent County Council Elections 2025

County Councillor Susan Carey is retiring and KCC elections will be held on 1 May.

12. Training

Cllr Helen Calderbank, Vice Chair, attended the KALC Chairmanship Conference on 27 February.

At the conference, playground equipment safety was covered and inspections of the swing at the rear of village hall were queried. It is inspected informally (future inspections dates to be logged) and the Risk Assessment and insurance policy will be checked to see if an external annual safety inspection is needed. Crimestoppers are looking for volunteer ambassadors.

13. Website and email addresses

Although the £100 government grants for .gov.uk email set-up are no longer available to new applicants, it has now been confirmed that we have qualified for the grant for a 10 months free email package of up to 5 addresses. Thereafter the cost is £9.99 per month, as budgeted for 2025/26.

14. Highways Improvement Plan (HIP)

A letter was emailed to the parish contact list outlining what can be achieved with a HIP and asking for suggestions from parishioners for improvements to the parish roads. Following receipt of and discussion of suggestions, **it was resolved** to prepare a draft Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) to discuss with KCC.

15. Otterpool Park Working Group

A meeting was held in mid-March. The planning application for the waste water plan has been submitted to KCC for consideration. The solar farm proposal will be submitted. Homes England appear to be on board but nothing is yet finalised.

16. For Information

- Kent Interim Plan for Local Government Reorganisation: circulated to councillors
- FHDC Call For Sites: poster for noticeboard
- Next meeting: 27 May 2025 - Annual Meetings: 6.30pm Annual Council Meeting & Ordinary Meeting, 7.30pm Annual Parish Meeting
- Meeting closed at 7.30pm.

Signed..... Cllr Frank Hobbs, Chairman, 27 May 2025

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Appendix Reports from District and County Councillors

District Councillor Elaine Martin

Local Government Reorganisation

An interim submission to the Government was made by KCC and all the Districts in the county on the 21st March. The submission sets out KCC and all of the Districts proposals to divide into either three or four Unitary Councils. Some preliminary work has been done by Price Waterhouse Cooper but the final submission will be prepared and delivered to the Government on the 28th November this year.

If you were unable to attend the Public Meeting held on the 17th March you can still submit any questions you have by emailing them to committee@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

If requested by the Parish Council, the Leader of F&HDC, Cllr Jim Martin, has offered to come and speak at your meeting to answer any further questions from Councillors.

Lyminge Age UK

The Lyminge Age UK building is to be handed back to F&HDC at the end of this month. F&HDC's surveyors will then assess the building and the works required to bring the building into a regulatory condition. F&HDC have appointed City Guardians to provide security to prevent squatting, vandalism and theft from the building whilst it is empty. F&HDC are considering all options and no final decision has been made about this. City Guardians work by letting out rooms on a rolling monthly contract so the council can get the property back at very short notice. Guardians have to be over 18 years old and are vetted by City Guardians before they are registered as guardians and able to rent rooms from any of the properties they manage.

Otterpool Park

It is hoped that the collaboration agreement with Homes England will be signed this week. On signing the agreement Homes England will pay F&HDC the money it owes towards the planning permission obtained on the site. Homes England own 10% of the land at Otterpool. The start of the Collaboration agreement will be backdated to the 1st February and run until August with a possible three month extension until November. The purpose of the collaboration agreement is to allow negotiation time for Homes England to become F&HDC's strategic partner.

Green Grants

F&HDC have launched its Green Grants scheme. The application form and details of who and how to apply can be found on the Folkestone Works website. From 6pm on the 1st April there will be an in person forum held at The Workshop in Tontine Street to help and assist with applications. Questions about the scheme can be sent to Green.Grants@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

Tourism website

The revamp of the District tourism website <https://www.folkestoneandhythe.co.uk/> has gone live. The North Downs are featured on the website, including The North Downs Way, but it still needs to have some work done on it. They are hoping a map to include the villages in the North Downs area will be produced shortly.

Geopark

Geosites are sites of geological interest across the aspiring UNESCO Cross-Channel Global Geopark, where people can visit and interact with our geological heritage. The first two interpretation panels at some of the Geosites in the district will be erected shortly at Farthing Common on the North Downs and the East Cliff, Folkestone. The East Cliff panel is of particular interest as it focuses on the mega flood that cut Britain off from mainland Europe many thousands of years ago.

Verge cutting

The verge mowing contract in the district has been handed back to KCC due to the excessive cost of our grounds maintenance team undertaking this work for F&HDC. A new contractor has now been appointed by Kent County

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Council for both urban (inner 30mph verges) and rural verges. Any enquiries regarding verge mowing should now be directed to KCC through its 'Report A Fault' function.

Council Tax

Unfortunately, the average council tax to finance Folkestone & Hythe's net spending plans in 2025/26, including special expenses, is to be increased by 2.99%. Town and parish precepts form part of the council tax requirement.

Contact: Elaine.Martin@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

District Councillor Jenny Hollingsbee

Budget 2025/26

The current Administration agreed the budget for 2025/2026 on 26 February 2025. This budget increases Council Tax by 2.99% - an increase of £8.85 on a Band D Property. Fees and charges were also increased. My group abstained from voting because we are concerned by the decrease in assets of £17.2m due to the land held for the Princes Parade Project being revalued as amenity land instead of residential development land. We also asked a question on provision of leisure facilities within the District (including a swimming pool) as there is no immediate funding shown in the budget. There is an additional expense regarding the increased Employers' National Insurance contributions of about £250,000 as the Government promised re-imbursement only covered half the cost and this is only for this year!

Age UK Hythe Lyminge & Ashford

Along with other District Councillors', I received the proposed plan for The Lyminge Community Hub at Everist Court. I had a discussion with the Director of Housing and Operations who said that the Leader of the Council was considering the proposal and would be responding in due course.

Call for sites

FHDC re-opens the call for sites on 13 March and will run for 6 weeks closing at 5 pm on 24 April. The Council are seeking land for several uses, the main one being housing (including plots for Gypsy and Travellers and self-build) but also for employment and community uses. For further information, please see the FHDC website.

Local Government Re-organisation

The Government has asked for interim plans on Local Government Re-organisation by 21 March. This involves the creation of a one tier system across Kent. By the time you read this, proposals for the number of unitary Councils for Kent and Medway will have been submitted to Government. There are likely to be four Models submitted.

Model 1 is a three unitary model which has FHDC with Ashford, Dover, Thanet and Canterbury

Model 2 is a four unitary model which has FHDC with Dover and Ashford

Model 3 is a four unitary model which has FHDC with Ashford & Swale

Model 4 is a four unitary model which has FHDC with Thanet and Dover

FHDC have agreed to do some analysis on the models with a view to assessing which is the best model for the District. This is additional work for Officers and is likely to increase the Council's cost.

Government have promised feedback on the initial proposals to the District Leaders and it is expected that a full detailed proposal will need to be submitted by 28 November 2025. However, if there is no overall agreement by District Leaders, the Government could impose a model on us!

The view of my group is to go for Model 1, merging with Ashford, Dover, Thanet and Canterbury. Although this seems very large scale it is very much in keeping with the Government criteria in that a Unitary should have a minimum of 500,000 (Model 1 would be about 650,000) population. Other models have at least one unitary less than the 500,000 population.

However, watch this space! **Update:** the Kent & Medway letter has been sent and has been acknowledged by the SoS stating that feedback will be received during the week beginning 28 April.

Finally our County Cllr Susan Carey is standing down as a Member of Kent County Council as at 1 May 2025. She has been our Kent County Councillor for 20 years and I would like to put on record my personal thanks and also that

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of many many residents of the Elham Valley Division. Her kindness, expertise and willingness to help and support residents over the years has been exceptional. Personally, I have worked with Susan for 26 years as previously she was also my District Colleague for North Downs West. I will certainly miss such a wonderful friend and colleague and wish her and her husband John, all best wishes for their retirement.

Jenny Hollingsbee
District Councillor North Downs West
Email: jenny.hollingsbee@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk
Mobile 07887918458

County Councillor Susan Carey

KCC has now sent out offers for Secondary School places for pupils starting this September. 21,767 applications were made and more than 96% have been offered one of their four preferred schools with 81% offered their first choice (up from 79% last year). KCC is now helping find places for those who did not receive a place (usually because not all four preferences were used) in a second round of offers on 24 April.

One of the many duties KCC undertakes is the Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme which started in March 2022. Kent saw one of the largest numbers of householders offering accommodation to Ukrainians who had fled the invasion of their country by Russia. That scheme was closed in February 2025 but many Ukrainians are still based in Kent and KCC itself has a Memorandum of Understanding to develop and deepen co-operation with Chernihiv, one of the regions in Ukraine. There are plans this year for community and educational links as well as joint work on veterans' policy and links between respective chambers of commerce and industry. Support for Ukraine remains strong in the County.

KCC has won the Local Authority Energy Efficiency Award for the Southeast with its solar farm at Kings Hill singled out for praise. This site was a redundant pig farm and now generates three million kWh of electricity a year reducing KCC's energy costs and carbon emissions. As someone deeply involved in winning the grant funding for this project and the work involved to deliver it, I am delighted it has now been cited as an example for other councils to follow.

KCC is waiving road closure fees for street parties to celebrate VE and VJ Days. Details on how to apply are on the website www.kent.gov.uk

KCC has submitted evidence to the Transport Select Committee about the problems caused by utility companies digging up our roads to install, repair or maintain their services such as water, gas, electricity and broadband. Such works account for the majority road closures in Kent and KCC has very limited powers to control them especially if the utility companies describe them as 'emergency works'. KCC is recommending that the legal definition of 'emergency works' is amended and that there should be greater use of specialised traffic planning technology to reduce the time that roads are occupied. My KCC colleague, Neil Baker has now been invited to give verbal evidence to the Select Committee.

We all hate potholes and each Spring there's usually a Government announcement of extra money to fix them. We welcome this but it's always well short of what's actually needed to tackle the countrywide maintenance backlog. The recent report from Asphalt UK estimates that an extra £17 billion is needed to fix the black holes across the UK. Asphalt UK is calling for a complete overhaul of Government road funding so that councils can plan large-scale, long-term road maintenance. Asphalt UK have an obvious interest in more asphalt being used but they are also right that the present system of relatively small dollops of extra funding is not working and KCC supports their call.

Locally I have been in touch with Cllr Frank Hobbs about a proposed diversion route along Staple Lane from 12 – 16 May whilst part of Farthing Common is closed. There is no 'good' alternative but we were agreed that Staple Lane was not practical and I've asked for Loughborough Lane and Sandling Road to be used instead.

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As many people know, I'm standing down from KCC after 20 years as County Councillor for Elham Valley. From 01 May you will have a new County Member. My association with Postling dates back further still as I was elected (with Jenny Hollingsbee) to represent you at District Council in May 2003 until I retired in 2023. Postling has always been blessed with excellent clerks and good leadership. I have only happy memories of my time with you and I wish you all the best for the future.

Susan Carey

Member for Elham Valley, Kent County Council