

POSTLING PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of Postling Parish Council meeting held in Postling Village Hall on Tuesday 27 January 2026 at 6.30pm

1. Attending: Chairman Frank Hobbs, Councillors George Burgess, Helen Calderbank, Christine Hobbs, Rob Lye, John Patrick, Parish Clerk Clare Hamilton, District Cllr Jenny Hollingsbee.
Apologies: Cllr Daniel Shaddick (work commitment), District Cllr Elaine Martin (Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting).
2. **It was resolved** unanimously to accept the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2025.
3. There were no Members' declarations of interest on Agenda items.
4. Public Participation session, not required.
5. Matters arising from last meeting not included on agenda:
Waste bin emptying and purchase of printer for clerk's use was approved by councillors by email.
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. **25/1942/FH Tulips, 7 Orchard Field, Postling CT21 4EE**
Lawful Development Certificate (proposed) for the installation of Solar PV panels to the detached garage.
F&HDC: is Lawful. Parish Council: No objection.
 - b. **25/2074/FH Postling Village Hall, The Street, Postling CT21 4EU**
Installation of solar panels to side roof slopes.
F&HDC: Approved. Parish Council: No objection.
7. Highways
 - a. Highway Improvement Plan (HIP)
 - Consultation on the reduction of 30mph limit to 20mph:
A Consultation document was circulated to parishioners via email and with the Lyminge Newsletter and a deadline of 19 January was set for replies. Chairman and Clerk met to compile responses on 21 January and a summary document was circulated to Councillors prior to this meeting. This will be submitted to KCC for consideration.
 - Lorry Watch:
Following a parishioner volunteering to help with Lorry Watch on Sandling Road, it was agreed the Clerk will contact KCC for further information about the process.
 - b. Advertising van on bridge over M20: Ref 892178, status remains as 'Enquiry under investigation'.
 - c. Horses in field crossed by PROW: Ref 251242754 'Allocated awaiting inspection'. Walker's report of feeling unsafe with horses in field crossed by PROW.

Chairman Frank Hobbs

Parish Clerk/RFO Clare Hamilton | Highfield, High Street, Elham CT4 6SX | 01303 905073 / 07890 248601

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8. Finance

- a. To note Balance of account at 27 January 2026: £4,214.39
- b. To note Payments and Receipts since last meeting

Payments:

C Hamilton	Salary Oct Nov	466.96
HugoFox	Website hosting	11.99
F&HDC	Waste bin emptying Nov-Mar	97.45
Hopkins	Defib infant electrodes	135.42
HugoFox	Email hosting	2.99
HugoFox	Website hosting	11.99
C Hamilton	Printer reimbursement	102.75
C Hamilton	Email hosting	2.99

Receipts:

Nursery	Defib infant electrodes	135.42
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- c. Expenditure due before next meeting:

C Hamilton	Salary Dec Jan	£ 466.96
HugoFox	Website hosting Feb Mar	£ 19.98 vat £4.00
	Emails hosting Feb Mar	£ 5.98 vat £0.50

It was resolved to approve expenditure, proposed by Cllr Christine Hobbs, seconded by Cllr Helen Calderbank, and approved unanimously.

- d. To note Precept 2026/27 request of £4,957 applied for on 9 December 2025.
- e. To note VAT reclaim iro £206 to be submitted in March.

9. Reports from District and County Councillors - see Appendix

10. Local Government Reorganisation

Waiting for Government to decide which option to approve.

11. Defibrillator

Infant/Child Reduced Energy Electrodes have been paid for by the nursery and have been fitted.

12. Waste bin

Emptying every 4-6 weeks now set up with F&HDC/Veolia. New liner fitted.

13. Otterpool Park Working Group

District Cllr Jenny Hollingsbee understands there is another collaboration agreement with Homes England on setting up a joint Planning Group to finalise the reserve matters that are still outstanding.

14. Assertion 10

Assertion 10 is a new declaration that councils need to make from the 2025/26 AGAR onwards.

Clerk to check that all requirements are being met and to review relevant policies.

15. For Information

- KALC Community Awards: deadline 30 January.
- KALC Area Committee representative: replacement councillor needed.
- Fly tipping: on private land on Pilgrims Way, approx. 150yds before Stone Street. Cllr to inform landowner.
- Report ref 931861, Pilgrims Way/Stone Street corner: displaced building hoardings are obscured by hedges in Pilgrims Way and Stone Street posing a potential danger to passing vehicles if a car was to pull in.
- Internal auditor: Clerk to make enquires about new internal auditor.
- 2026 meeting dates: 24 March, 26 May, 28 July, 29 September, 24 November.
- Next Parish Council meeting: 24 March 2026.
- Meeting closed at 7.35pm.

Signed..... Cllr Frank Hobbs, Chairman, 24 March 2026

Chairman Frank Hobbs

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Appendix Reports from District and County Councillors

District Councillor Elaine Martin

Firstly, I want to wish you all a Happy and Prosperous New Year. My apologies for being unable to attend this evening.

New Skills Program

A skills programme to strengthen the local economy and support small business growth across the district has been launched. Independent businesses and hospitality venues as well as rural enterprises across the North Downs will receive support. As part of the Folkestone & Hythe District Council's newly-launched [High Streets Connect and Grow Rural initiatives](#), both are funded through the government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund. There will be two complementary strands: the first focuses on helping high street businesses to adapt, grow and attract new customers and the second supports rural enterprises, makers, farm diversifications and home-based ventures to build business confidence, digital capability and sustainable growth

Folca update

Significant progress continues to be made behind the scenes on the future of the Folca building in Sandgate Road that includes a new medical centre at its heart. A full business case for the redevelopment of the Art Deco section of the building (Folca 2), along with final recommendations, will be presented to councillors – proposals of which, set out plans for a commercial, mixed-use development. NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board (ICB) - the body responsible for planning and funding local NHS services - has confirmed its support for the medical centre, and staff from the council and the ICB will now work together to develop the formal NHS business case. The proposed medical centre would replace two existing surgeries at Guildhall Street and Manor Road, providing modern facilities for more than 23,000 patients. The development is expected to increase GP capacity, improve access to healthcare, and deliver a significant economic boost to the surrounding area. If the mixed-use scheme with a medical centre cannot be delivered, the council would go ahead as a commercial-only development instead. In either scenario, essential construction work will be required: this includes separating the connection between Folca 1 and Folca 2, with works scheduled to take place between February and July 2026.

Cliff work to begin in coastal park.

The stabilisation work required above the play area in the Lower Leas Coastal Park in Folkestone is due to begin this month. The cliff will need to be shored up following a landslide last year. Once complete, the work on the fun zone's £750,000 refurbishment can begin. This will see new equipment and an exciting layout and is due to be ready for summer this year. Meanwhile, KCC have announced the funding has been found to commence works on the Road of Remembrance in Folkestone to clear the trees and repair the road that were damaged during the landslide that happened 2 years ago.

Youth Forum

A new group of students is helping shape the district's future as members of the council's youth forum. Young people from The Beacon, Brockhill Park, EKC Folkestone Junior College, Folkestone School for Girls, The Harvey Grammar School and The Marsh Academy visited the Civic Centre in December. The group learned about local government and discussed a variety of topics including solar farms, the refurbishment of the Lower Leas Coastal Park play area and the council's use of social media.

Support for community

District Councillors agreed at the end of last year to reaffirm its commitment to local volunteers and community groups supporting residents. There was unanimous support for a motion brought to full council to continue to back the services helping people with cost of living issues.

If you know a community hero who dedicates their own time and skills on behalf of others, we want to hear about them. [The Folkestone & Hythe District Excellence in Volunteering Awards](#) celebrates the efforts of residents who go above and beyond to make residents' lives better and support communities across the district. Nominations are now open and include individual, group and environmental categories. We want to encourage as many people as possible to consider volunteering by sharing the stories of those already doing so, who gain as much from the experience as those their volunteering helps. The awards ceremony takes place on Thursday 4 June and all nominees will be invited to the event. The deadline for nominations is **Friday 17 April 2026**. Information on how to enter can be found at the [Kent Coast Volunteering website](#).

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

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District Councillor Jenny Hollingsbee

Government Re-organisation – A lot of time has been spent on considering Local Government Re-organisation. There was no overall consensus of the 14 Council leaders. At Folkestone & Hythe District Council, each Councillor was given the opportunity to vote on their preferred model and the result was overwhelmingly in favour of 3a - which was then ratified by Cabinet and taken forward by the Leader. Model 3a is the three unitary option consisting of Dartford, Gravesham, Medway and Swale in the north; Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells in the west and Ashford, Canterbury, Thanet, Dover and Folkestone and Hythe in the east. Ashford on the other hand put forward 4d as their preferred option. This would reorganise Kent and Medway into four new unitary councils but would divide Folkestone & Hythe into two. Other Kent Councils voted for different Models and these submissions were made to the Minister on 28 November. It will be Spring before we get a decision on how Kent and Medway will be organised.

Recently we had a briefing from the ex-Chief Executive of Cumbria County Council. He took us through the process of where we are now in terms of Local Government re-organisation up to vesting day and beyond. It looks likely from what we know and from what he says that current Members will be expected to do another year until May 2028 : some will decide to stand for the Shadow Body which will be elected in May 2027.

Storm Goretti – The District Council worked closely with Kent County Council to re-open Sandgate Esplanade after strong and forceful winds overnight caused damage to the sea wall and railings and beach-huts. Diggers are clearing the back of the sea wall to allow water to drain from the road, while teams are re-siting beach huts where possible and beginning to clear shingle from promenades. Many benches were blown away or destroyed, however, the Deputy Leader has confirmed that they will all be replaced.

Otterpool Park - I continue to question the Leader on Otterpool Park. We now understand there is another collaboration agreement with Homes England on setting up a joint Planning Group to finalise the reserve matters that are still outstanding. This apparently, runs until December 2026 so we will be watching closely!

Rural Prosperity Fund – in the recent round of allocations, in our Ward, the application from Wild & Wise Collectives at Bodsham to provide equipment to allow Kombucha business to upscale was successful. The fund is still open to expressions of interest but you will need to act fast as all projects must be completed and grants paid out by the end of March 2026.

Napier Barracks – The District Council has just been advised that all asylum seekers accommodated at Napier Barracks have now been moved on. The Barracks will now be handed back to the Ministry of Defence who will pass it on to the Developers.

If there is an issue you would like more information on, do please let me know.

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Kent County Councillor Christopher Hespe

May I take this opportunity to wish every resident of Elham Valley a lovely New Year.

Council Tax

For each of the past 12 years, the previous administration at KCC increased Council Tax by the maximum amount allowed, which is currently 5%. The new administration is breaking that mould and has announced an increase of 3.99% for 2026/27. Although the Reform-led Council inherited a dire financial position, prudent management of the finances has allowed the authority to stabilise finances. Although a greater reduction in the amount sought would have been ideal, the authority has to maintain its statutory services and ensure the budget is balanced and sustainable. The administration is working towards potentially making further reductions in the 'ask' for future years.

We inherited a £732 million debt, daily debt interest payments of £84 million, a £20.1 million overspend, £121 million savings target for the year and a ballooning Adult Social Care budget. In nine months of the new administration, £100 million of savings have been achieved, debt has been reduced by £67 million and nearly £40 million of future spend re-profiled, enabling the lower-than-expected Council Tax demand.

International Rail

KCC continues to lobby government and other stakeholders hard for the return of international stopping rail services to Ashford and Ebbsfleet. Further to KCC's major event some months ago, Ashford BC ran a local event in Ashford to further push the concept on 8 January.

Supplier Conference

KCC has produced its first commercial strategy, to ensure that it gets best value for residents from every pound spent and that Kent-based companies benefit from the annual £1.4 billion KCC procurement each year. In the past six months, there has been a significant growth in the number of Kent companies winning contracts. KCC is organising a Supplier Conference at The Showground, Detling on 27 January for suppliers to learn more about winning KCC contracts. To date, 600 have signed up to attend the free event.

Community Wardens

KCC has been expanding the number of Community Wardens and now enables Parish and Town Councils to pay for new posts. KCC would welcome discussions with any Parish or Town Council interested in exploring this further.

Environment Tax on Foreign Lorries

Kent's roads are damaged by large vehicles. KCC is pursuing vigorously the concept of charging foreign lorries being charged for use of Kent's roads. I would be happy to update via this Parish newsletter as this develops.

KCC Highways

Since taking control of KCC in May 2025, 6,500 gullies have been drained and 35,000 potholes filled (already more than in the whole of last year). KCC Highways has recently been shortlisted for the 'most improved performance' award by the Local Government Association; although KCC is adamant that further improvements will always be sought, as it attempts to manage Kent's 5,500 miles of roads.

Nuclear and Energy

KCC's stance is not anti-solar, but anti solar developments on high grade agricultural land. KCC has been leading on work to secure new nuclear provision at Dungeness. This is a long-term project, but a high priority for KCC, which has had a series of meetings with Westminster and major companies. There is significant support from the locality.

Chris Hespe

Kent County Councillor for Elham Valley

and Deputy Cabinet Member for Finance and Cross-Cabinet Activity

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