Minutes of Postling Parish Council meeting held in Postling Village Hall on 29 September 2026 at 6.30pm

1. Attending: Chairman Frank Hobbs, Councillors George Burgess, Helen Calderbank, Christine Hobbs, Rob Lye, Parish Clerk, District Cllr Jenny Hollingsbee, County Cllr Christopher Hespe.
   Apologies: Cllr John Pattrick, Cllr Daniel Shaddick, District Cllr Elaine Martin.

2. **It was resolved** unanimously to accept the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2026.

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. 26/10/28/FH Douglas Farm, Cuckoo Lane, Postling CT21 4ET
   Erection of single and double-storey side and rear extensions with terrace and balustrade to rear, following demolition of garage.
   F&HDC Approved. PPC No objection.

   b. 26/1562/FH/TCA 1 The Terrace, The Street, Postling CT21 4EX
   Works to trees in a Conservation Area comprising of T1 Sycamore reduce by 5m in height and 3 meters off lateral limbs and remove any dead wood or structurally damaged branches.
   Comments to FHDC by 13.10.26. PPC No objection.

   c. FHDC Planning Forum meeting 28 Sept: meeting slides re. National Scheme of Delegation circulated to councillors.

7. Highways
   a. Highway Improvement Plan (HIP)
   - Consultation on the reduction of 30mph limit to 20mph
     Cllr Chris Hepe contacted the Highways Officer who has progressed this and requested an estimate for the works which we will receive in due course.
   - Lorry Watch
     A reminder will be sent to the Lorry Watch team.

   b. Sandling Lane: Emergency Road Closure,16 September 2026 for up to 15 days, between Ashford Rd (A20) and Cuckoo Lane for Affinity Water drainage works for burst water main.
   A drain cover over top of the Affinity Water pipe is owned by KCC and discussions were taking place at the time of this meeting as to which party is responsible for road repair works. Now resolved and work complete.

   c. Cllr Chris Hespe reported that 80% of Kent road works are utility company requests, many with short notice. Penalties are in place for contractors who over-run their time frame and were enforced to late running works on Longage Hill.
   A county wide water resilience forum has been set up to monitor matters and address issues.

8. Finance
   a. Balance of account at 29 September 2026: £6,003.83.
   b. **It was resolved** to accept the annual Local Government Services Pay Agreement 2026/27 SPC6 increase to the clerk's salary, backdated to 1 April 2026.
   c. Payments and Receipts since last meeting
   Payments:

Parish clerk	Salary June July	466.96
HugoFox	Web hosting	11.99
Hopkins	Bleed Kit	45.00
HugoFox	Email hosting	2.99
HugoFox	Web hosting	11.99
Hugo Fox	Email hosting	2.99

   Receipts: None
   d. Expenditure due before next meeting

Parish clerk	Salary Aug Sept	£ 466.96	
	Backpay 1Apr-30Sept	£ 46.80	
HugoFox	Website hosting Oct Nov	£ 19.98	*vat £4.00*
	Email hosting Oct Nov	£ 5.98	*vat £1.00*

   It was resolved to approve expenditure, proposed by Cllr Christine Hobbs, seconded by Cllr Rob Lye and approved unanimously.
   e. Banking
   An HSBC security review was carried out via email. Clerk called HSBC to check that this was a genuine request before proceeding. HSBC have since confirmed by letter that the Safeguarding Review is now complete.

9. Sojan Joseph MP and Southern Water Community Engagement Meeting
   Cllr Helen Calderbank attended the meeting to represent Postling PC and reported that in answer to the Parish Council's questions:
   1. If tanker use is needed in future, can Postling Parish Council be reassured that tankers will not use Sandling Road again? - the answer was 'Yes'
   2. Has Southern Water funded KCC Highways' costs for repairs to roads and verges damaged by tankers? - the answer was 'Partially'.

   Southern Water representatives at the meeting explained that tankering is an essential mitigation to reduce the risks of property flooding, pollution, and a loss of facilities. If nothing was done, there would be sewage risks to the Nailbourne, Seabrook Stream, other protected chalk streams, and possibly to drinking water. From spring 2027, more that £7m is ringfenced for sealing the drainage pipe network in Elham, Ottinge and Lyminge to prevent infiltration from rain soaked fields overwhelming the pumping stations.

10. Reports from District and County Councillors - *see Appendix*

Cllr Jenny Hollingsbee encourages comments on the Local Plan consultation, deadline 16 October www.folkestoneandhythelocalplan.co.uk

Cllr Chris Hespe highlighted the following additions to his report:
- Kent Active Travel Business Grants of up to £5k each small business and not-for-profits.
- Parish Bus Stop Shelter Grants (PBSSG): groundwork, permissions and costs required to make a site ready for a bus shelter installation will be the responsibility of the Parish Council. Eligible Parish Councils can apply for match grant funding covering up to 50% of the cost of a new or replacement bus shelter, with a maximum value of £4000.00 available per request.
- Kent community waste prevention fund Open to community groups, not-for-profits, and local organisations committed to waste reduction and sustainability.
- Member community grants are available.
- Solar farms and battery storage units: a policy is in place to prevent large scale solar panels on sites of high

landscape value. New nuclear at Dungeness and hydroelectric power is being encouraged. Other smaller sites for solar encouraged. The Government have the final say in large scale solar proposals.
- Kent's first ever fly tipping conference was held in July to investigate how to prevent tipping. An action plan is being developed.

11. Local Government Reorganisation
On 7 September the Government announced that LGR is now on hold. KALC is working towards LGR eventually going ahead.
Cllr Chris Hespe reported that some county councils, including Kent, have submitted a letter to government requesting financial recompense for the delay. KCC is supporting a Mayoralty approach if devolution goes ahead. A Government White Paper is due on Devolution this autumn.

12. Otterpool Park Working Group
Next meeting is on 30 September.

13. Defibrillator
Community Trauma Bleed Control Kit is now in place in defib cabinet.

14. Dog fouling
Two parishioners reported that there has been an increase in dog fouling on Postling Downs. We were informed that in recent years at least one cow has lost a calf from a disease transmitted in dog faeces.

A parishioner has been in correspondence with the environmental officer at F&HDC who visited and put up a warning sign on the gate.

Waste bins can be funded through grants from District Councillors if their budgets allow, and the cost of emptying bins must be met by the Parish Council via a charge to parishioners on the precept. The cost to empty the waste bin by the phone box is just under £100 per annum and is only emptied every 6 weeks approx. Dog walkers currently use this bin to dispose of poo bags which often sit there for several weeks until the next collection round.

Parishioners will be contacted with information about the dangers to other animals from dog poo and the law about picking up after their dogs, and asked to dispose of poo bags in their own home bins whilst enquiries are made with KCC and FHDC councillors to see if they will fund the purchase of two bins and the collection of waste.

See information on reporting Dog Fouling from F&HDC's website in the Appendix below. You can report dog fouling to F&HDC at this link

15. For Information
- Next Parish Council meeting: 24 November 2026. Budget setting meeting.
- Meeting closed at 7.35pm.

Signed…….…….…… Cllr Frank Hobbs, Chairman, 24 November 2026

Appendix

Information on Dog Fouling from F&HDC's website:

Dog fouling

We want everyone to be able to enjoy open spaces in the district and to walk in our streets without fear of treading in dog waste.

Dog fouling is not only deeply unpleasant, it is dangerous. Whilst rare, contact with dog excrement can cause toxocariasis - a nasty infection that can lead to dizziness, nausea, asthma and even blindness or seizures.

Under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 1995 it is your responsibility to clean up after a dog you are walking, whether a bin is available to deposit the waste in or not. You can use a dog or litter bin to dispose of the waste. If there is no bin available in the immediate area, please take it home and dispose of it. It is not acceptable to leave bagged dog waste hanging in a nearby tree, this is an offence.

Anyone who fails to clear up after their dog can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice of up to £100. If the case goes to court this could cost the owner or person in charge of the animal up to £1,000. The law states that being unaware a dog has fouled or not having a suitable bag is not a reasonable excuse.

We encourage residents, visitors and those who work in the district to take a zero tolerance approach to irresponsible dog owners who let their pets foul in public areas.

Don't let it happen. Make a note of their details and let us know.

If you know a particular person with a certain breed of dog who visits an area or park at a regular time of day give us the details. We can then assign our enforcement officers to visit at that time.

Reports from District and County Councillors

District Councillor Jenny Hollingsbee

Government Re-organisation – on 6 September there was a Ministerial Statement advising that Re-organisation in Kent has been paused for the decision to be reviewed! Apparently there was concern about the legality of the situation. It was also confirmed that the normal cycle of local elections will take place next May. I have submitted a motion for full Council to discuss on 7 October. This can be viewed on the website from 1 October.

Local Plan Scoping Consultation - FHDC is preparing a new Local Plan and is inviting comments from local people. Details can be found on a new dedicated webpage at www.folkestoneandhythelocalplan.co.uk There is, in addition, a Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report on which the Council is also seeking comments. Comments can be made on both consultations via the website. The consultation ends at 4pm on Friday 16 October.

Folca 2 – FHDC has submitted a planning application aimed at preparing the Art Deco section of the building to become an active mixed-used building with commercial units and a medical centre. Subject to NHS approval, two GP practices will occupy the upper floors, while retail and commercial tenants will be located on the ground and basement levels. Comments are invited on this application 26/1453/FH via the planning portal by 8 October 2026.

Eurostar - Residents are being asked to participate in a survey to help demonstrate the level of demand for the return of international rail services to Kent. No international trains have stopped in Kent since 2020, when Eurostar withdrew services from Ashford during the Covid pandemic. The survey has been created by campaign group Bring Back Euro Trains. You can complete the questionnaire here

In the last month I attended the farewell service for Rev Carol Bates at Elham as she moves on from the Elham Valley Group of Churches Benefice to a new church in Wigan. I also attended the September Parish Council Meeting.

Contact: jennyhollingsbee@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

District Councillor Elaine Martin

Grand Burstin Fire
Following the fire at the Grand Burstin Hote,l Council Officers have worked to support residents who were evacuated in Folkestone. Structural specialists are carrying out an investigation into the structure of the building following the fire. All tenants living in the neighbouring Pavilion Court flats have been relocated to alternative accommodation and have been provided with welfare support and most local businesses are operating as usual. Kent Police have published updates regarding the investigation into the cause of the fire. They now think it is suspicious and have arrested two people.

Your District Today Magazine
There is lots of news and information in the latest edition of Your District Today magazine, out from this week. The magazine can be found online and a print edition is being delivered across the district from this week. The free publication celebrates the successful opening of the new Lower Leas Coastal Park play area and Folkestone & Hythe District Council being recognised as one of the country's best performing council housing landlords. There is an article about the progress of development projects including Folca, Folkestone – A Brighter Future, Changing Tides and Otterpool Park, as well as proposed leisure improvements at Hythe Swimming Pool and Martello Lakes. The magazine also has updates on local wellbeing initiatives, and the UNESCO geopark application.

Play area in Folkestone
The new play zone in Folkestone town centre has been agreed by the council's planning and licensing committee members. The Bouverie Square area is to have a range of play equipment including a substantial climbing structure and a wheelchair-accessible roundabout. The main play structure will be made of highly sustainable material and have tube slides, a series of different climbs and a chill zone.

Official opening of Changing Tides
The beach huts at the new attraction on Coast Drive, Greatstone have now opened. The area also has public toilets and a remodelled car park. A seasonal watersports centre with access to showers, changing facilities and an education/training room is also planned. Solar panels, a green roof system and suitable planting are part of the development, and information boards that highlight the importance of the area as a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest are being installed.

Breakwater damaged by Storm Goretti.
Folkestone & Hythe councillors have agreed a budget of £200,000 to mend the damaged concrete sections of Folkestone's Mermaid Beach breakwater. The damage was cause when the coastline was battered by the fierce winds of Storm Goretti in January.

Appeal for help for flood in Nepal
There is an appealed to the district to support those affected by the flooding on the Nepal-Tibet border. Local support for the British Red Cross Nepal Floods Appeal is being coordinated by the Folkestone Nepalese Community. Folkestone has a strong links with the Nepalese community, including its role as regimental home of the Gurkhas. Donations can be made via the Folkestone Nepalese Community website.

Local Plan
The Local Plan guides decisions about where new homes, employment space and community facilities should be developed, while helping to protect the environment and respond to climate change. Preparation of a new Local Plan for the district has begun and residents, businesses and local communities are being invited to get involved. This first stage consultation is open for six weeks and closes by 4pm on the 16th October. Feedback received in this first stage will then inform the next stage of preparing the draft Local Plan. There will be further public consultation in 2027 once this draft is prepared. Visit the Local Plan microsite to find out more.

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

County Councillor Christopher Hespe

Briefing for Parishes on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and Devolution, 11 September 2026

Background
Following my very recent briefing for Parishes issued less than one week ago, the surprise government announcement made on Monday 7 September 2026 means that I feel compelled to produce this additional note.

KCC has not been a fan of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), believing that it was unnecessary, would lead to increased cost and bureaucracy, whilst the identity of the County would be diminished. However, we complied with the government's wishes, working with districts and Medway Council to meet all deadlines and make submissions to government as appropriate, The cost to KCC has been in the region of £1 million to date, with considerable staff time and disruption ensuing from the government's desire to reorganise local government in Kent and Medway.

KCC submitted Option 1A in November 2025, which would have provided for sustainable services at the least cost to the taxpayer and with minimum disruption during transition.

The Government's 16 July 2026 Announcement
The government's announcement on 16 July that Kent and Medway would be divided into four new Unitary authority areas, rejecting Option 1A, was a major concern to KCC due to potential loss of strategic capacity for the County; the difficulty it could bring in securing best value from contracts; the threat to services from disaggregation; the potential for East and mid-Kent Unitaries to be poorer than in West Kent, and the concern that cost of the selected four Unitary model was significantly greater than the KCC option.

KCC, along with all the district councils in Kent, would have been disbanded, and therefore its services would have to have been disaggregated, with huge resilience risks associated with services such as SEND, Children's Social Services and Adult Social Care.

A number of legal challenges were submitted to government, primarily by Reform UK Councils, seeking judicial review of the processes

KCC questioned the government via sending three letters, on matters including strategic transport management, the method of appraisal used by government and why the government hadn't selected KCCs option that had been shown by independent consultants to provide the best savings and shorter payback time. We received no response from government.

The Government's Latest Announcement, 7 September 2026
On Monday 7 September, the government announced that LGR was to be put on hold and reviewed to ensure that in light of the government having taken legal opinion, it would provide what the new government wished to see and in a lawful way.

There would be no Shadow Unitary Authority elections held in May 2027, but rather district and borough elections would proceed. The term of office for elected Members is an assumed full term, but it is possible that it could be shortened if LGR was resurrected.

There was no mention made in the Secretary of State's announcement regarding Parish Councils and the government's previously-stated desire to see Parish Council elections run co-terminously with Unitary Authority elections.

Implications

Along with local authorities throughout England, Kent is now in a difficult position, not knowing whether LGR has disappeared from the government's agenda completely, or whether it will be resurrected and when. One assumes the immediate implications are that all local authorities will scrap the delivery 'machinery' built for reorganisation (eg Programme Board, Service and Thematic Leads and proposed Joint Committees), pause Committees that allowed for sound governance on LGR matters; re-introduce medium-term financial planning for periods beyond the proposed vesting date for the Unitaries of April 2028; re-appraise the planning for assets that would have been transferred; re-appraise debt and borrowing levels, etc.

Devolution

The government is still proposing to issue a White Paper on Devolution this Autumn, which it is assumed will contain more detail on Mayoral Strategic Authorities. A letter was written to government following the 16 July announcement and prior to the 7 September signed by all Kent's local authority Leaders and Chief Executives, expressing keenness for Kent and Medway to have a Strategic Mayoral Authority, with devolved powers and funding from central government. It is possible that in the next few weeks, we will hear if the government is receptive to this in Kent and what the timescale and process should be, including the timing for Mayoral elections.

Chris Hespe
Kent County Councillor for Elham Valley, and Cabinet Member for Local Government Efficiency and Reorganisation