



BRENCHLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Matfield Pavilion, The Green, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7JU

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MINUTES of a meeting of Brenchley and Matfield Parish Council held on Monday 2nd March 2026 at 7pm at Matfield Pavilion, The Green, Matfield, TN12 7JU

Present: Councillors J. Buttery (Chair), E. Akenhead, C. Anderson, C. Churchill, A. Dewdney, N. Race, J. Reynolds, A. Stout, N. Thompson, C. Brooks (Clerk)

In attendance: Cllr Mark Munday (Kent County Council (KCC)), Cllr Thomas Mobbs (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC)) part, three members of the public

1. To accept apologies for absence

None.

2. To approve the Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the meeting of 2nd February 2026 were approved as an accurate record and were duly signed by the Chair.

3. To note Declarations of Interest

Cllr Churchill declared a perception of bias interest in planning application 25/01013/FULL and on Agenda item 16.2 as a Trustee of Brenchley Memorial Hall and did not participate in nor vote on these matters

Cllr Akenhead declared a pecuniary interest in planning application 26/00220/FULL and left the room when the matter was discussed

Cllr Thompson declared a perception of bias interest in Agenda item 14 and did not participate in nor vote on the matter

Cllr Anderson declared a perception of bias interest on Agenda item 16.2 as a Trustee of Brenchley Memorial Hall and did not participate in nor vote on the matter

4. To adjourn to allow public participation

The residents affected spoke regarding Agenda item 14.

5. Borough and County Councillors' Announcements

Cllr Munday advised that KCC have approved their budget with a 3.98% increase with significant funds allocated to address climate change issues. He outlined that Paddock Wood Town Council have also raised significant concerns about the Badsell Road proposals particularly with regard to a safer crossing to Mascalls and the impact of traffic lights. A further survey is planned in the summer relating to the impact of enlarged Mascalls intake.

Despite the many months since first raised he has not been able to ascertain who at KCC is dealing with the Bassetts Farm planning application and the Council requested that this is provided as soon as possible.

Cllr Mobbs outlined that option 3A of the Local Government Re-Organisation consultation is preferred by TWBC.

6. Chair's Announcements

- Finance Committee meeting is on Wednesday 18th March
- Wheelwrights PROW diversion application has been made and the Clerk has responded in support
- The project to install a diverted overflow drain from the pond, prepared last year, will be re-visited as the owners of Masters do now wish it to be installed and updated costs and permissions will be sought for the Council to review.

7. Planning

1. Confirmation of planning comments submitted – to note

25/02566/LAWPRO Morello Cottage The Green Matfield Tonbridge Kent

Lawful Development Certificate (Proposed) - Stationing of caravan for purposes ancillary to Morello Cottage

The Council noted the recommendation under the s.101 delegated authority which had been submitted due to TWBC timeframes.

2. Planning Applications – to consider

- **25/01013/FULL Bramleys, Beech Lane, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7HG**

Self-Build - Demolition of existing dwelling and outbuilding & replace with new dwelling with annex & associated work

RESOLVED to recommend: APPROVE

However, the Parish Council (PC) would like confirmation that there have been no other changes to the proposed plans for the new buildings other than the removal of the driveway to the originally proposed parking and basement level car-port area, as well as the car-port itself.

The PC also shares the concerns of some residents as to how the excavated soil and substrate resulting from the excavation of the basement will be dealt with. The current plans are vague as the Agent's response to the Planning Officer states that some will be used for landscaping and some sent to landfill. There is no landscaping plan, and the latest Proposed Plan simply shows an area of new hedging/planting along the proposed driveway. We would not wish the applicant to use the spill around the site, altering levels and affecting water run-off to neighbouring properties NDP D8 Surface Water Management. Therefore a condition is required.

We are concerned about the potential lack of parking/turning for a 4-bedroom house with a 1-bedroom annex in this proposed new layout. As Beech Lane is not suitable for on-road parking or for reversing out onto, a plan showing the layout of the proposed 3 parking spaces should be required.

Given the extent of the development on this site in the HWNL LP EN19 The High Weald National Landscape we would request that if TWBC is minded to approve the application, then Permitted Development Rights be removed and a condition imposed for the use of the Annex to remain ancillary

- **25/02384/FULL Matfield Lakes, Petteridge Lane, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7LP**

(Retrospective) Change of use of machine shed to fishermen's resting place, including addition of solar panels and external lighting; creation of outdoor seating area; addition of fishing lodge, storage shed and pump store.

RESOLVED to recommend: REFUSE

Like the Landscape and Biodiversity Officer, the PC is concerned about the size and scale of the actual and proposed development and the excessive lighting in this remote rural area of the HWNL. The cumulative effect is to suburbanise this area instead of conserving and enhancing it. The PC notes that the current buildings on site provide approximately 250m² of rest space for the club members, storage and office space (excluding the space in the shed and pump house). The PC questions the requirement for this accommodation, especially as the applicant states that 4-5 of the membership of 40 would be fishing on site at any one time. The PC notes that a successful

fishing club has operated for many years at Furnace Pond on the boundary of this parish with Horsmonden without requiring any buildings.

The approval granted for 20/01852/FULL granted permission for one storage container to be positioned on site (although the approved plans did not show its location), but there are currently two positioned near to the existing and dilapidated caravans on site. The current retrospective application does not seek to regularise the positioning of an additional container on site.

The PC notes that the approval granted by TWBC for 20/01852 was on the basis that: *"The buildings hereby approved shall be used solely in association with the fishery business and for no other purpose unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority."* (condition 8). The applicant has recently received a permit from the Forestry Commission to coppice the 25 acres of woodland to the east of the fisheries, and the PC understands that some of the existing buildings will be used to support this business as well as the fishery. The coppicing will mean that the site will become very much more visible from the public right of way.

There is a considerable amount of plant and equipment stored on site, either adjacent to the originally approved machine shed, or in the field next to Lake 4. The PC questions why so many buildings have been constructed for the visitors to the site and its management, and none for the storage of the heavy equipment operated on the site..

With respect to the Pump House, The PC recognises the requirement for the pumps to be operated in a protected environment, but does not consider that the corrugated clear plastic extension added to this building is appropriate for its setting in the HWNL.

The relevant policies guiding our decision are the following:

LP EN9 Biodiversity Net Gain.

LP EN19 The High Weald National Landscape

NDP LE1 Conserving and enhancing the AONB

NDP LE6 Biodiversity

NDP LE8 Dark skies

NDP D2 Local Architectural Style

If, however, TWBC is minded to approve this application, or an amended version of it, this should be conditional on the removal of the derelict caravans, removal of the shipping containers, a reduction in exterior lighting and on the removal of permitted development rights.

- **26/00128/FULL Land Adj. Hazeldene, Hatmill Lane, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7AE** (Self-Build) Conversion of barn to a residential dwelling/live-work unit including single-storey extension, roof extension and associated alterations; erection of detached garage

RESOLVED to recommend: REFUSE

The PC is concerned about the impact that the 12 external lights to the residence and garage in a remote rural setting (none controlled by sensors or timers) will have on NDP LE8 Dark Skies. Should TWBC be minded to approve the application we would like to have informatives on blinds for the proposed skylights.

The PC is concerned about the parking arrangements for Hazeldene, adjacent to the proposed site, which does not have access to off-street parking along this narrow country Lane. We note that the Landscape and Biodiversity Plan shows a picket gate to neighbouring Hazelden from the driveway, which implies that the residents would continue to have access to the site for parking. Whilst the two properties are owned by the same person this may work, but we think TWBC must consider the parking provision for Hazelden as part of this application as parking on Hatmill Lane is not an option. NDP AM3 Parking, LP TP3 Parking standards

The PC also questions the requirement for the proposed removal of the 3 beech trees on the perimeter to the northern edge of the barn as these do not appear to impact the building and questions whether they are being removed merely to ease the construction process. They should be retained as beech trees are relatively rare within the parish and they would provide some screening of the building from the Lane and neighbouring properties. NDP LE7 Trees and Hedges.

- **26/00162/FULL Stocks Hill , Brenchley Road, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7PP**

Part demolition of garage & addition of open log store; garage conversion; single-storey link between main house & garage; infill first-floor extension; removal of chimney; alterations to fenestration & flat roof; installation of PV panels & porch

RESOLVED to recommend: APPROVE

However, the PC is concerned about the size of the proposed large sky-lantern and if TWBC is minded to approve the application we would request an informative on the use of a blind for the sky-lantern and 6 additional roof-lights to protect dark skies in the HWNL NDP LE8 Dark Skies

- **26/00167/SUB Tong Farm Marle Place Road Brenchley Tonbridge Kent**

Submission of Details in relation to Condition 8 - (storage details & refuse screening); Condition 12 - (landscape scheme); Condition 27 - (LEMP) of 24/03204/FULL

RESOLVED to recommend: REFUSE

The PC is concerned that whilst the applicant has set out a proposed Landscape and Ecological Management Plan for the site (LEMP), it has not specified what entity would be responsible for implementing and providing finance for that plan as regards the common and public areas. In this respect it fails to meet the requirements of Condition 27 for the LEMP to set out "Details of the body or organisation responsible for implementation of the plan, which is to be overseen by a Steering Group" and "Details of the legal and funding mechanism(s) by which the long-term implementation of the plan will be secured by the developer with the management body(ies) responsible for its delivery".

The LEMP states that it would be implemented by the "residents and the local community (supported by specialist contractors and advisors)" but does not state which legal entity (be that a freeholder or resident association?) will own or be responsible for the common areas. This is unacceptably vague.

The PC wishes to state that it shall not be responsible for managing or maintaining these areas.

- **26/00171/FULL Crittenden House , Crittenden Road, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7EN**

Variation/removal of Conditions 2, 9 & 10 of Planning Permission 24/01111/FULL - (Installation of solar panels; erection of a shed; alterations to the external fenestration)

RESOLVED to recommend: REFUSE

Planning permission 24/01111/FULL was permitted as an amendment to 21/02470/FULL (the construction of a new dwelling in place of a previously permitted barn conversion), which had been granted permission on appeal. That appeal decision stated "A restriction on permitted development is imposed in order to be able to properly control development on the site, which is in a sensitive rural location".

As part of this application, the applicant is seeking to re-instate permitted development rights for the site. We think that this would be contrary to the Inspector's intent when granting the appeal and therefore object to the application as is. Should this element be removed then the PC would be minded to approve the proposed alterations.

- **26/00220/FULL Meadow Cottage , Crook Road, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7BL**

Removal of the existing porch; replacement of the porch; and front and rear single-storey extensions, widening of dormer window; addition of new rooflight to rear elevation; alterations to fenestration.

RESOLVED to recommend: APPROVE

- **26/00239/FULL Beecroft , Crittenden Road, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent,TN12 7EQ**
Demolition and replacement of rear extension

RESOLVED to recommend: APPROVE

The PC requests an informative on providing blinds for the proposed sky-lantern.

- **26/00246/FULL 1 Windmill Cottages, Windmill Hill, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7NP**
Replacement summerhouse

RESOLVED to recommend: NEUTRAL

While recognising that the site is within the LBD the PC is concerned that this site is becoming intensively developed and does not conserve the HWNL. If TWBC is minded to approve the application for this larger and taller summerhouse, which will be more visible from the road than the present one, the PC recommends that permitted development rights should be removed in order to control any further development.

3. Appeal - 25/01441/FULL - OS Plots 3100 & 3600, Crittenden Road, Matfield– to note delegation

The Council agreed no further response would be submitted.

8. Traffic

1. School Crossing - update

Cllr Reynolds advised that the Road Safety Audit had been completed and that the results would be presented when available.

2. Rural Parish Grant outcome - update

The Clerk advised that the Council's application was submitted on 3rd February. Cllr Mobbs advised that some of the applications required further information which had been sought from KCC. A meeting would be held to determine the outcome and Parishes would be advised as soon as this was complete. The original guidance that the funds would be paid to the Parish Council had been changed and these would be reimbursed to KCC direct from TWBC on completion of the projects.

3. Badsell Road – to note comments submitted

The Council noted the comments submitted and the responses thereto.

4. KCC Gritting Route – to consider requesting additional roads

The Council considered additional roads to be gritted at the PC's expense by the KCC contractors, in order for this to be proposed to KCC and costed in time for winter 2026. There is no guarantee that this will be possible but an early approach is warranted so that provision could be made in the 2027-28 budget. It was agreed that the Clerk would share the proposed routes with Paddock Wood Town Council and Horsmonden Parish Council as parts of the routes proposed would be in their parishes. On receipt of responses the Clerk would pass the proposed routes to KCC.

Action Clerk

5. Speed Camera Nationwide Project – to consider supporting

The Council considered a proposal calling for a Nationwide Speed Camera project and noted the Government criteria for the use of speed cameras and that there is an inquiry into the Road Safety Strategy with a call for evidence to be submitted by 13th March.

The Council agreed that the Clerk would respond to support the initiative in principle and draw attention to the Government strategy.

Action Clerk

9. Local Government Re-Organisation Consultation – to consider response

The Council noted the consultation deadline of 26th March and agreed that Cllr Buttery would draft and circulate a response for submission on behalf of the Council addressing issues related to Neighbourhood Area Committees and that Parishes should be consulted at all stages. It was agreed that the Council supported Option 3A of the possible unitary authority boundaries.

Action Cllr Buttery

The Clerk would publicise the consultation to residents.

10. Brenchley Recreation Ground Bandstand – to consider feedback

The Council considered the proposal to instal a large open bandstand/shelter at Brenchley Recreation Ground but agreed not to pursue this for the time being however Cllr Anderson would look further into options for providing shade.

Action Cllr Anderson

11. Brenchley Noticeboard – to consider

Following the Council's preference for Option 1 of those offered at the February meeting, full costs for this were outlined and were noted to be in budget. Permission has been obtained from the Landlord of the Old Palace that the Council may continue to use the wall for this noticeboard.

RESOLVED to purchase and install a new oak noticeboard in Brenchley from Earth Anchors in the sum of £2029 ex-VAT

12. Bus Shelter refurbishment and repair – to consider

The Council reviewed photographs of the bus shelter at Marchants which is in a very poor condition and missing tiles from the roof of the bus shelter opposite. It was noted that there was no specific budget for bus shelters but a sum of £1337.32 was available from the accidental damage budget and the Council had significant reserves to absorb these costs.

RESOLVED to undertake a refurbishment of Marchants bus shelter, in dark green paint, to a sum of £860.18 ex-VAT

RESOLVED to undertake repairs to the roof of the Ebenezer bus shelter in the sum of £385 ex-VAT

13. Hanging baskets – to consider

The Council had budgeted £3000 for the coming financial year, and progress has been made to obtain quotes for large 4-tier planters, which would require significant concrete bases, together with contractor for planting and watering. However given the lead in time to make arrangements an alternative has been suggested to instal hanging baskets around the village sign posts. This proposal was not agreed however hanging baskets would be added to Matfield Pavilion.

The proposals for more substantial planters would be reviewed in the autumn for installation in 2027.

Action Cllr Buttery

14. Allotment boundary trees – to consider request to lop

The Council considered a request from residents of a property adjoining the allotments for some work to be carried out on trees and hedging. The Council noted that the budget for work at the allotments is fully committed and agreed the following:

1. A quote to be obtained to reduce the number of saplings, clear some ivy and reduce the hedge height to just above the fence along the boundary on the allotment side
2. Once this work is agreed (residents to absorb the costs) the work can be diarised with reference to bird nesting season (1st March to 31st July) and access granted to the allotment site
3. The trees will be surveyed at the end of the summer to ascertain if they can safely be reduced to the height requested for the Council to re-consider. If the oak tree is dead the Council will remove it at its own cost.

Action Clerk

15. Work at Matfield Pavilion – to agree use of S.106

The Clerk outlined that there is no remaining budget in the financial year for the Pavilion but there is a sum left in the s.106 of £5592 and items for refurbishment of the Pavilion, such as shelving, have been identified which would comply with the drawdown criteria.

RESOLVED to undertake projects at Matfield Pavilion in the sum of £429.31 to be drawn down from S.106 funds available

16. Clerk's Report with works list

- The Spring PC Newsletter has been published.
- Contact made with KCC re Tong Lane/Cuckoo Lane
- British Aquacare undertaking first pond/fish test on Friday 13th March
- Lime tree replacement in the gap along the Avenue has been completed
- Allotment season starts 1st April – no plots available (3 new tenants) and a short waiting list in place
- Litter pick is 2nd March to 15th March
- The managing agent for the Fernham site has agreed to cut the boundary hedge every other year
- Police have provided guidance re signage/dummy CCTV at Matfield toilets
- Adjustable bung for Matfield Pond has been agreed in advance of revisiting the drain project
- Toilet cleaning schedule is now 5 days instead of 6 per week saving approx. £650 per annum
- The two-way direction mirrors have been put up opposite the allotment exit to provide safety
- The three bins on Matfield Green have been reported to TWBC for repair
- 6th June – party for JVMG volunteers – small amount costs to be borne from Chairman's Allowance

1. Correspondence – Donation request - Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services

The Council noted that the budget for donations for this financial year has £450 left and there is £1500 for 2026-7.

A request for a donation for DAVSS, who had not previously applied for a donation was considered.

RESOLVED to allocate a donation of £150 to DAVSS

2. Correspondence – Donation request – Brenchley Memorial Hall Charity for community event

The Council considered a request for a donation to fund the Children's entertainer at the community picnic at Brenchley Memorial Hall, taking place in September, the Council had supported the previous event.

RESOLVED to allocate a donation of £410 excluding VAT towards the Children's Entertainer for the Community Picnic

17. RFO's Report with budget monitoring

1. Accounts payable

3736	HMRC	Tax and NI Feb 26	£819.68	£819.68
3737	C. Brooks	Feb 26 mileage £45	Salary Balance £45.85	£90.45
3738	Waste Way	Jan 26 bin collect	Porters Wd and Brenchley Rec	£96.00
3739	Capel Groundcare	Brenchley Playground repairs - part 3		£480.00
3740	Capel Groundcare	Playground Inspection	Monthly premium Feb 26	£288.00
3741	Capel Groundcare	SIDs Monthly contract	Feb 26	£182.22
3742	Capel Groundcare	Brenchley Playground repairs - part 2a		£237.00
3743	Capel Groundcare	Brenchley Playground repairs - part 2b		£290.64
3744	Forvis Mazars	2025 External Audit Fee		£504.00
3745	Microshade	Software support	Jan 25	£216.94
3746	A Castro-Edwards	MP Cleaning	1 hour	£17.00
3747	KALC	Cilca Training – Clerk		£360.00
3748	ICO	Annual Data Protection Fee		£52.00

3749	Landscape Services	Mowing Oct 25	£1,379.78
3750	Silva Woodland Mngmnt	Lime tree replacement Matfield Pond	£480.00
3751	KnockOut Print	Annual Parish Assembly Boards	£108.00
3752	GardenProud	Jack Verrall Gdns Maintenance Jan 26	£129.90
3753	KALC	Planning Training Cllrs Anderson, Race	£120.00

Payments by Credit Card Jan expenditure (total DD £19.00)

3754	NALC Training	Online Planning Training 19	£13.33
		Monthly credit card fee	£3.00

Standing Orders and Direct Debits For Information

3755	SO C. Brooks	Salary Feb 26	£2,119.82
3756	SO Sarah Castro-Edwards	Salary Feb 26	£721.04
3757	DD Smart Pension	Feb 26 Pension Payment	£953.33
3758	DD EDF Energy	Pavilion Electricity Jan 26	£146.44
3759	DD EDF Energy	Electricity Brenchley Toilets Jan 26	£24.29
3760	DD EDF Energy	Electricity Matfield Toilets	£72.69
3761	DD Smart Pension	Jan 26 Pension admin fee	£26.40
3762	SO Churchill Group	Feb 26 Toilet Cleaning services	£927.65
3763	DD SSE	Streetlight electricity Jan 26	£130.78
3764	DD Everflow	Water Charges 22/03 - 21/04	£92.80
3765	DD First Com Tec Works	Monthly Phone and Broadband Service Mar 25	£197.73
3766	Unity Bank	Monthly Service Charge Feb 26	£10.20

The RFO having provided invoices for scrutiny the accounts were approved for payment and would be authorised by Cllr Reynolds and Cllr Stout.

18. Meetings attended and reports by Councillors

Cllr Churchill had attend a Patient Participation Group (PPG) meeting and noted a new practice manager at the Surgery.

19. Date of next meeting: Tuesday 7th April 2026, 7pm, Matfield Pavilion