



BRECHLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL
Matfield Pavilion, The Green, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7JU
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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF BRECHLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 3rd NOVEMBER 2025 AT 7PM AT MATFIELD PAVILION

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

In attendance: Cllr Tom Mobbs (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC), Cllr Mark Munday (Kent County Council (KCC)), 1 member of the public

1. To accept apologies for absence

None.

2. To approve the Minutes of the last meeting

The Minutes of the meeting of 6th October 2025 were approved as an accurate record and were duly signed by the Chair.

3. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Akenhead and Cllr Reynolds declared a non-pecuniary perception of bias interest in item 8.3 due to connections to the School.

Cllr Thompson declared a pecuniary interest in application 25/02369 and did not participate in discussions nor vote on the matter.

4. To adjourn to allow public participation.

A resident made comments, both as a neighbour and on behalf of the Village Hall Committee, raising some issues on the detail of the play area design as part of the Clarendon Development. These were noted and would be added to the Council's conversations at the meeting on 5th November.

5. Borough and County Councillors

Cllr Munday confirmed that he continues to seek assurances that the patches on Maidstone Road will be repaired.

Cllr Mobbs advised that the Local Plan would be going to the Council on 10th December and that with the 3a model for proposed new Unitary Authorities there would be a plan aligned with TWBC until 2032 when the Unitary would have their own. It was noted that the figures in the proposed TWBC Local Plan would provide protection against windfall applications but that if the five year completion rate was insufficient this could also have an effect.

6. Chair's Announcements

- Remembrance Sunday 9th November Cllr Churchill would lay the Brenchley wreath and Cllr Race would lay the Matfield one.
- Interim Internal Audit is on 4th November
- Bike Rack at Brenchley toilets agreed as a good idea, grant funding opportunity would be sought
- Brenchley Xmas Lights Switch on 6.30pm, Friday 28th November

7. Cooksfield – to note completion of sale

The Council noted that completion was effected on 24th October with the net proceeds of sale (after VAT reclaim) totalling £24,505.

8. Traffic

1. Highways Improvement Plan – to consider additional items

The meeting with KCC is on Tuesday 11th November and the Council agreed to add additional items:

Unsuitable for HGVs signage for Petteridge Lane

Unsuitable for HGVs/Narrow Lane ahead signage for Foxhole Lane

Cllr Munday commented that the Council could consider positive direction signage for HGV routes rather than only advisory ones to avoid routes.

The Council discussed requesting a short extension of the 30mph on Maidstone Road and it was agreed that this would be raised with KCC initially.

2. Rural Traffic Grant - update

The application for £25k funding for two items already on the HIP has been made. Schemes are being costed and KCC will confirm this by the deadline of the end of December so that the Council can submit the application to TWBC in the New Year.

3. School Crossing – update

Cllr Reynolds confirmed that quotes for the Traffic Survey and separately for a Road Safety Audit, for the scheme as planned, are being considered by the Tenax Board in December.

It was agreed that the matter would be raised at the HIP meeting but that given the scheme design may be amended following the Survey and Audit, there would need to be further discussion by the Council before any final proposal can be considered.

Action Cllr Churchill

9. Planning

1. Planning Applications

25/02369/FULL Four Wents, Brenchley Road, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7PT

Single-storey rear extension; addition of two rooflights to front elevation; roof extensions to create two hip-to gable extensions and two dormer windows

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE

The proposed volume increase from the original house appears to be greater than 50%. Unlike the previously approved application 25/00282/FULL, the proposed development for this house in the High Weald National Landscape is not in keeping with the local architectural style, particularly as regards the rear elevation. It therefore conflicts with Policy D2 of the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Unlike the previous application, no plans or elevations have been provided showing a fence between this and the neighbouring property. This part of the Brenchley Road is an area where cars often exceed the speed limit and where cars parked on the road cause difficulties. If TWBC is minded to approve the application, the Parish Council recommends a condition either removing permitted development rights or requiring submission of details of parking and turning space and of any new boundary fencing, to ensure that sightlines are maintained, that cars can safely enter and exit this and the adjacent properties, and that the development will not lead to more on-road parking.

25/02380/FULL Herrings Mill House, Bramble Reed Lane, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7ET

Closure of existing vehicular access & creation of new vehicular access and driveway

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE

The creation of a new vehicular access and its visibility splay while maintaining a vehicle parking space in the original access will neither conserve nor enhance the landscape in this rural lane in the High Weald National Landscape. Nor will the removal of 3 roadside trees. The proposal will conflict with Policies LE1 and LE7 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Although the Planning Statement says that the primary reason for the proposed new access is for

safety, the Transport Technical Note states that the main reason is that the applicant has a large family of teenagers that have purchased their own cars and the existing hardstanding and access arrangements are too small to accommodate the growing demands. The Parish Council does not consider that the proposed new access will be any safer than the existing access, and questions why the existing hardstanding area close to the house could not be increased somewhat instead of creating a whole new access off the rural lane.

2. 25/02268/LDCEX The Allotment Gardens, Part OS Plot 9527 Tibbs Court Lane Brenchley Kent TN12 7NB – to confirm comments submitted under delegated powers

Due to TWBC deadline, the Council noted the comments submitted on the application.

3. Proposals for the play area, parking and s.106 for the Clarendon Development – to note information in advance of meeting

The Council noted some documentation provided by Clarendon, including the play area design and the draft lease, and some comments were noted that would be raised in the meeting with them on 5th November.

10. Jack Verrall Gardens – project update including costs

The Council noted the project was nearing completion of the new planting and that of the original £10k limit (with £7800 being budgeted and the rest from reserves), approximately £1k remained.

11. Mowing Contract 2026-2028 – to consider quotes

The Council considered three quotes for the contract together with references and previous experience of work completed by the companies quoting.

RESOLVED to contract Landscape Services for the Council's mowing for the calendar years 2026-2028 in the sum of £12,651.90 for year one with uplift for years two and three.

12. Pond contract 2026 – to consider quotes

The Council discussed outcomes of the contract for the management of the pond including reporting of work undertaken in 2025. Further quotes for separate aspects of the work required, namely the water and fish health and, separately, the vegetation work, were considered. It was noted that there would be no further volunteer sessions as this was becoming difficult to manage. The total implication on the budget would be £2570 plus the cost of dye and pollarding of the limes.

RESOLVED to engage British Aquacare to undertake quarterly water/fish health checks in the sum of £150 per visit.

RESOLVED to engage Bobby Underdown for four days (two Spring and two Autumn) in the sum of £1520 for work on vegetation around the pond and one session to clear under the lime trees in the sum of £450

13. Streetlights – to review maintenance contract and consider utility provider

The Clerk outlined that an anomaly had been identified in the documentation for streetlight maintenance and that significant correspondence with the current contractor had not been effective. It was noted that there are few companies providing services for streetlight maintenance and that, with only eight streetlights, the Council was not at significant risk. Confirmation would be sought that the contract included some inspection of structural integrity.

RESOLVED to contract Streetlights to maintain the Council's streetlights for a three-year contract commencing 1st April 2026

The Council further considered the two quotes for the contract for streetlight electricity which similarly was limited as there are few companies offering unmetered supply.

RESOLVED to enter a fixed price contract for three years with SSE for the supply of streetlight electricity

14. Toilet Roof - to consider works

The Council noted photographs and a quote for repairs to the roof of Matfield toilets, predominantly clearing moss and branches. The Clerk outlined that the budget was already overspent due to significant repairs to the door lock, fuseboard and plumbing as well as higher costs for water and electricity, although these were estimated and the RFO had claimed refunds. The Clerk commented that the Council had a duty to maintain the buildings for insurance purposes.

RESOLVED to engage Gareth Till to complete work on the refurbishment of the roof of Matfield toilets in the sum of £575 to be taken from reserves.

15. Clerk's Report with works list

- Knotweed has been inspected on the Green and by the pond – eradication treatment continues to be monitored
- KCC have installed two bollards on the verge opposite the entrance to Bass Orchard to prevent parking
- Permission was given – via a majority by email – for CCTV to be erected on the Scout Hut
- The entrance at Porters has been completed (funds obtained from s.106)
- Application for bus stop grant has been submitted and the work is imminent
- A mirror will be put up opposite the exit to the Allotments to further assist sight lines
- The Scout Hut Lease has been signed by all parties
- Allotment hedge work instructed and due end November
- 49 Ash trees have been felled at Cinderhill
- Clerk attended SLCC event on how the LGR will affect Parish Councils and Clerks in particular
- Clerk and RFO attended training regarding Assertion 10 and Clerk attended KALC training on Website Accessibility

16. RFO's Report with budget monitoring

1. Accounts payable

3613	HMRC	Tax and NI Oct 25	£792.22	£792.22
3614	C. Brooks	Oct 25 mileage	£41.40	Salary Balance £140.07
3615	Waste Way	Sept 25 bin collections	Porters Wd and Brenchley Rec	£172.80
3617	Knock Out Print	Signs for Bark in playgrounds		£60.00
3618	Capel Groundcare	Playground Inspection	Monthly premium Oct 25	£288.00
3619	Capel Groundcare	SIDs Monthly contract	Oct 25	£182.22
3620	Capel Groundcare	Grounds Maint : Allotment Hedge	(Autumn 25)	£53.53
3621	Microshade	Software support	Oct 25	£209.28
3622	Invicta Weed Control	Knotweed Assessment		£150.00
3623	Clear Council insurance	Annual Premium	Nov 25-Nov 26	£2,342.25
3624	Landscape Services	Mowing charges	Jul-Sept 25	£3,363.56
3625	TWBC	Cinderhill Lease	Rent	£55.00
3631	Streetlights	2nd half of streetlights maintenance	contract 2025	£288.00
3632	The Living Forest	Tree Felling due to Ash Dieback,	Cinderhill	£4,248.00
3646	Wasteway	Bin emptying	Jun 25	£163.20

Payments by Credit Card Sept expenditure (total) DD £398.00

3627	The Poppy Shop	Wreaths	£40.00
	Cornilleau	Table tennis corners	£13.00
	SLCC	Membership Renewal	Clerk £300.00
	NALC	NALC Training - Alternative Income Sources	£42.00
	Lloyds Bank	Monthly Fee	£3.00

Interim Payments made (IR denotes Income Received)

3628	CCLA	Income reinvestment to Public Sector Deposit Fund	£20,000.00
3626	Underdown Landscapes	Porters Wood Entrance Works Oct 25 (IR s106)	£3467.75
3629	Provender Nurseries	Planting for JVMG	£2422.86
3630	Provender Nurseries	Planting for JVMG	£1,677.49

Standing Orders and Direct Debits for Information

3633	SO C. Brooks	Salary Oct 25	£1,979.75
3634	SO Sarah Castro-Edwards	Salary Oct 25	£721.04
3635	DD Smart Pension	Sept 25 Pension Payment	£1,228.79
3636	DD EDF Energy	Pavilion Electricity Aug 25	£115.31
3637	DD EDF Energy	Electricity Brenchley Toilets Sept 25	£25.67
3638	DD EDF Energy	Electricity Matfield Toilets	£72.69
3639	DD Smart Pension	Sept 25 Pension admin fee	£26.40
3640	SO Churchill Group	Oct 25 Toilet Cleaning services	£927.65
3641	DD SSE	Streetlight electricity Sep 25	£74.47
3642	DD SSE	Streetlight electricity Aug 25	£64.96
3616	Tecwork	10 hours support	£960.00
3644	DD First Com Tec Works	Monthly Phone and Broadband Service Nov 25	£197.73
3645	Unity Bank	Monthly Service Charge Oct 25 TBC	£11.00

The RFO having provided invoices for scrutiny the Council approved the accounts for payment and these would be authorised by Cllr Stout and Cllr Akenhead

17. Meetings attended and reports by Councillors

Cllr Buttery had attended the TWBC Parish Chairs briefing on the Local Plan

Cllr Akenhead attended a remote meeting regarding the Bockingfold solar farm

Cllr Buttery and Cllr Dewdney attended meeting of Parish Chairs regarding the Local Government Re-organisation

18. Date of next meeting: Monday 1st December 2025, 7pm, Matfield Pavilion