BRENCHLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL
Matfield Pavilion, The Green, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7JU
Tel: 01892 723586 Web: www.brenchleyandmatfield-pc.gov.uk

MINUTES of a meeting of Brenchley and Matfield Parish Council held on Monday 5th October 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

In attendance: C. Brooks (Clerk), Cllr D. Knight Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC), Cllr Mark Munday Kent County Council (KCC), 3 members of the public

1. **To accept apologies for absence**
   The Council accepted apologies from Cllr Stout who is away on holiday and Cllr Thompson for personal reasons.

2. **To approve the Minutes of the last meeting**
   The Minutes of the meeting of 7th September 2026 were approved as an accurate record and were duly signed by the Chair.

3. **To note Declarations of Interest in any item on the Agenda**
   None.

4. **To adjourn to allow public participation**
   At the Chair's discretion, 15 minutes will be set aside for questions from members of the public each one of whom may speak for a maximum of 3 minutes in total relating to items on the Agenda or about issues of local concern. Members of the public are not permitted to participate in the meeting after this agenda item, without prior invitation from the Chair.

   Residents spoke on Agenda items 13 and 14.

5. **Borough and County Councillors' Announcements**
   Cllr Mobbs had circulated a general update and Cllr Knight provided some background on changes to the planning process at TWBC.

   Cllr Munday advised that he has requested a number of meetings with KCC Highways regarding the impact of changes to the Badsell Road junction in Paddock Wood and that he has requested delivery of the Digital WigWags at the School earlier than the planned date of summer 2027.

6. **Chair's Announcements**
   - Policy and Management Committee meeting date October 14th JR JB CA AD
   - Re-dedication of St Lukes Sunday 18th October 10am
   - Enquiries are ongoing with TWBC regarding the potential transfer of ownership of the car park at Brenchley
   - 178 responses have been received for the Housing Needs Survey, the closing date is 13th October

7. **Planning**
   1. **Planning Applications – to consider**
   - **26/01935/FULL 29 Oakfield Road, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7LB**

Demolition of rear porch and erection of first floor extension
RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: NEUTRAL
The Parish Council is concerned about the lack of parking for this house and consequently the effect that adding a 4th bedroom would have on an area that already suffers from parking stress.
This house, like many of those on Oakfield Road, appears to have no allocated parking spaces, although some road planings or similar appear to have been placed on the wide grass verge outside the house's garden to enable some parking. The verge is presumably owned by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council which developed the Oakfield Road estate.
Local Plan policy H11 permits extensions where the proposal retains usable and reasonable external space for the parking and turning of vehicles to meet the continuing needs of the dwelling. Paragraph 6.571 of the text accompanying Local Plan (LP) Policy TP3 states that it will apply to the extension to an existing dwelling that requires full planning permission and LP Policy TP3 requires a 4 bedroom house in the rural area to have 2.5 parking spaces plus 0.2 visitor spaces, i.e. effectively 3 parking spaces. Oakfield Road is identified as an area of parking stress in paragraph 6.137 of the Brenchley and Matfield Neighbourhood Development Plan, and Neighbourhood Development Plan Policy AM3 makes the same requirement for parking spaces as the Local Plan. The proposed addition of a 4th bedroom therefore now requires more than 2 parking spaces to be provided, so the proposal fails to meet LP H11, LP TP3 and NDP AM3 as regards parking.

- **26/02031/FULL, Hopbine Inn, Petteridge Lane, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7NE**
  Removal of condition 4 (use of fire escape for emergency purposes only) of 18/03016/FULL
  RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE
  Providing TWBC includes in its decision letter a condition requiring appropriate measures to prevent obstruction or loitering on the fire escape, as suggested by the applicant in paragraph 7.2.10 of the Planning Statement.

- **26/02070/LBC Church House , High Street, Brenchley, Kent, TN12 7NJ**
  LBC: replacement window & doors, insulation and internal alterations to outbuilding
  RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE
  However, the Parish Council agrees with the Conservation Officer's recommendation that any insulation is natural and vapour permeable to minimise the risk of trapped moisture and condensation, thereby protecting the building fabric from potential long-term deterioration. The PC therefore recommends a condition to ensure this.
  The PC would also prefer to see the UPVC windows replaced with metal ones rather than UPVC again.

- **26/02012/SUB OS Plot 6860 West Side Of Maidstone Road, Matfield,**
  Submission of details for condition 9 (renewable energy) of 22/00757/FULL
  RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: NEUTRAL
  The Design and Access Statement submitted with 22/00757/FULL, which informed the committee decision to grant planning permission, said "Fast Charging EV Points (smart) would also be provided to every home aiding in the shift towards the use of electric vehicles". This proposal now is for slow 3kWh chargers instead. The Parish Council questions whether this complies with Local Plan Policy TP2: they will be much less likely to encourage the transition to electric vehicles than the more normal 7.5 kw chargers that are installed these days. Given the ubiquity of 7.5KWh EV points on even listed buildings these days, little weight should be given to the argument that they will be less visually intrusive if some of them are mounted within the car ports.

- **26/02094/FULL Woodside, Watermans Lane, Paddock Wood, Kent, TN12 6ND**
  Erection of 2 dwellings. Existing dwelling: single storey side extension, addition of front dormer, fenestration & roof changes, access & landscaping alterations
  RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE

The Parish Council is concerned about the effect on the rural landscape of having three separate accesses in quick succession onto this rural lane, and about the effect on the safety of vehicles using the narrow lane given how close to the junction the additional new access would be. Waterman's Lane is not suitable for on-street parking and KCC parking standards for 4-bedroom houses (2025) state a minimum of 3 spaces for suburban for rural locations. TWBC Local Plan policy TP3 and Policy AM3 of the Neighbourhood Development Plan call for 2.5 parking spaces per 4-bedroom house, plus 0.2 visitor spaces per house. The proposed 2 parking spaces per house clearly fail to meet these standards.
The proposed housing mix, with two four-bedroom houses, does not assist in meeting the need for smaller dwellings in the parish (paragraph 6.21 and figure 15 of the Neighbourhood Development Plan).

2. Engagement with Matfield Village Hall concerning triangle of land adjacent to new Play area – to note

Cllr Buttery outlined a meeting he had had with the Chairman of Matfield Village Hall, held on 15th September 2026, which sought to review the possible inclusion of the triangle of land currently owned by MVH as part of the new play area. This had not resulted in agreement at this stage.

Clarendon advised that the transfer of the land to them freehold (rather than the planned leasehold) will be completed in the next few weeks and they will revert to the Parish Council then to amend the agreement relating to the play area.

3. Call for Sites – to note extension and consider delegation for response

The Council noted that the Call for Sites has been extended again to 26th October and that there will be engagement between TWBC and the PC when they have completed their initial assessment of the sites. The timeframe is not yet known and the Council agreed that one or more of the Planning Committee would attend such a meeting on behalf of the PC and report back to the Full Council .

8. Traffic

1. Rural Parish Grant – update

The Council noted that no response had been received to the letter sent in July to Mike Martin MP regarding the removal of the funding. TWBC have now advised that funding was now secured but that both the projects in our parish were allocated in Tranche 3, that is to be delivered in Summer 2027 however KCC have been asked to deliver the Digital Wig-Wags at the earliest opportunity.

2. Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) – to consider amendments

The Council noted the list of possible additions to the HIP, which stemmed from requests made by residents, and Cllr Churchill commented that many of the items on the existing HIP were in the process of delivery and therefore would be removed. KCC had advised that the HIP meeting would not be until the New Year and therefore progress on these items could not be ascertained until then.

The matter would be discussed again at the next meeting of the Parish Council.

3. KCC Gritting Route – to note winter gritting route

Following the PC initiative first raised by the Clerk in January, KCC have agreed to add the two extra gritting routes to the contract, to be reimbursed by the PC. These are Blind Lane through Pixot Hill, Crook Road and Yew Tree to Maidstone Road in Horsmonden and then Windmill Hill through Pixot Hill and Mile Oak to Church Road in Paddock Wood. So they join up existing main road routes.

The Council noted that the costs for this year were unbudgeted and would be in the region of £5k, based on the average gritting frequency in the last 5 years, and this sum would be added to the budget for 2027-28.

9. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) Notice of completion of 2025-26 External Audit - for information

The Council noted the External Audit report (including the Conclusion of the 2025-26 Audit Notice) and that it has been published on the website per the statutory requirements. The Interim Internal Audit is on 4th November.

10. Draft Budget 2027-28

The Council considered the initial draft budget and noted that further detail will be added on the working tab with up to date figures on anticipated spend to make this more accurate. The Finance Committee will refine this at their meeting in November and a "final" version will be made available to the Council in December – by this time the tax base should be known. Any final adjustments can be made at the January meeting if absolutely necessary as the deadline for submission to TWBC is late Jan/early Feb.

Councillors were asked to comment on any further expenditure requested (at least one quote needed) by the end of October latest.

11. Toilet cleaning contract 2027-28 – to note termination of contract

Following difficulties with the administration of our current toilet cleaning contract consideration has been given to an alternative provider given that the current contractor is unwilling to reduce the frequency to three times per week instead of five.

To ensure that future service is in place and at a level the Council requires, the contract would need to be cancelled within the specified timeframe and agreement had been reached via email. Alternative quotes to be assessed in due course in the light of the response from the current contractor on which advice is being sought.

12. Pond drain project - update

There has been a delay in the achievement of the easements and the Council's solicitor is working to achieve an outcome so that the work can be diarised soon. The contractor and the resident, whose garden is affected by the drain, are aware.

13. Christmas – to discuss

A resident made a proposal for the lights along the pond in Matfield to be extended around to the beacon and for a Christmas Tree to be sited there. The Council asked for more details on the proposal, given the location, to ensure that the installation would be safe and not damage the Green.

The Council briefly discussed the Carols event in Brenchley and agreed that Cllr Buttery and Cllr Anderson would speak to the current organisers (a community group) to establish if some changes could be made to the event to reduce the impact on the large numbers attending.

Action Cllr Buttery, Cllr Anderson

14. Tree donation – to consider

A resident spoke regarding her offer to donate a handkerchief tree to be planted on the Green to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of St Lukes Church, which was accepted and much appreciated by the Council. The Council considered its duties to consider biodiversity in this matter.

It was agreed that the Clerk would arrange for the tree, and a plaque, to be sited in a suitable location on the Drying Ground.

15. Clerk's Report with works list

1. PC phone – to note unbudgeted expenditure

The Clerk outlined difficulties with the current phone including being unable to update the operating system, sending photographs to the Council email and updating the Facebook page. Several options

were considered and the Council agreed that expenditure, including the configuration and setup by Tecwork, was unbudgeted and would be in the region of £700.

RESOLVED to purchase a suitable mobile phone for the Clerk.

- Willow on pond Island is not being reduced, small willow and a conifer have been removed instead
- Poor road surface in Cuckoo Lane reported to KCC
- The internal hedge at the allotments and the roadside hedge are diarised for cuts in October
- A date for the white carriageway relining around the Green has been requested from KCC
- The water testing of the pond is still required and was completed on 25th September
- The limes along the pond are being pollarded in October
- Second treatment of jimsonweed at allotments completed
- Landscape Services are treating the grass at Matfield War Memorial which has a lot of weeds
- Reports have been made to KCC to cut back foliage obscuring signs and the WigWags at the school
- Data has been drafted on the services in each village, to inform TWBC's (Settlement Role and Function Study (SRFS).

16. RFO's Report with budget monitoring

1. Accounts payable – to approve

3976	HMRC	Tax and NI Sept 26	£834.37
3977	C. Brooks	Sept 26 mileage £52.20 and salary balance £60.63	£112.83
3978	S Castro-Edwards	Salary Balance £40.03 (New salary - SO amount)	£40.03
3979	Waste Way	Aug 26 bin collections at Porters Wd and Brenchley Rec	£153.60
3980	Capel Groundcare	Playground Inspection Monthly premium Aug 26	£306.00
3981	Capel Groundcare	SIDs Monthly contract Aug 26	£194.35
3982	British Aquacare	Water Testing Sept 26	£150.00
3983	A Castro-Edwards	MatPav Carpet Cleaning 2 hours + 1 clean 25/09	£59.50
3984	Horsham Wldife Rescue	Donation fish removal from Matfield Pond	£200.00
3985	CPRE Membership	Renewal fee	£60.00
3986	Silva Woodland Mngmt	Tree work (Tebay IR) and Matfield Pond	£1,020.00
3987	GMT Property Mngmnt	Water Butt and Matfield Pavilion Doors (IR)	£232.62
3988	Complete Weed Control	Jinsomweed 2nd treatment Allotments	£168.00
3989	Complete Weed Control	Japanese Knotweed Treatment Matfield Green	£300.00

Payments by Credit Card Aug 26 expenditure (total) DD			£405.21
3990	Ideal Garden	Mats for Bike rack (IR) £318.25	
	Screwfix	Bike racks x4 (IR) £83.96	
		Monthly card fee £3.00	

Standing Orders and Direct Debits For Information

3996	SO C. Brooks	Salary Sept 26	£2,180.45
3997	SO Sarah Castro-Edwards	Salary Sept 26	£761.07
3998	DD Smart Pension	Sept 26 Pension Payment	£1,052.03
3999	DD EDF Energy	Pavilion Electricity Aug 26	£106.39
4000	DD EDF Energy	Electricity Brenchley Toilets Aug 26	£24.66
4001	DD EDF Energy	Electricity Matfield Toilets	£29.35
4002	DD Smart Pension	Apr 26 Pension admin fee	£26.40
4003	SO Churchill Group	Sept 26 Toilet Cleaning services	£913.46
4004	DD SSE	Streetlight electricity Aug 26	£98.33
4005	DD Everflow	Water Charges 22/10 - 21/11	£103.51
4006	DD First Com Tec Works	Monthly Phone and Broadband Service Sept 26	£197.82
4007	Flotek (was Microshade)	Sept 26 Software support	£242.62

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

17. Meetings attended, reports by Councillors and urgent business

Cllr Churchill attended the IAG meeting with the Police and the PPG meeting
Cllr Buttery and Cllr Akenhead attended the TWBC Parish Chairs meeting
Cllr Buttery attended the KALC Chairs Meeting in Goudhurst

The Council briefly discussed concerns raised about a camping exemption licence at a site in Pralls Lane and would look into the matter with a view to responding to the consultation advertised.

The Council noted that due to Ash dieback a further 20 trees would be felled at Cinderhill, this is an unbudgeted expense.

18. Date of next meeting: Monday 2nd November 2026, 7pm, Matfield Pavilion