



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 6th July 2026 at 7pm at Matfield Pavilion, The Green, Matfield, TN12 7JU

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

In attendance: Cllr Mark Munday (Kent County Council (KCC)) part, 4 members of the public

1. To accept apologies for absence

The Council accepted apologies from Cllr Dewdney who is on holiday.

2. To approve the Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the meeting of 1st June 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

Cllr Thompson declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda item 9 and did not participate nor vote on the matter.

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 the matter under Agenda item 9.

5. Borough and County Councillors' Announcements

Cllr Munday was asked to raise concerns about the Royal Victoria Place car parking closing times.

6. Chair's Announcements

- Matfield Music weekend enquiry liaising with BMH
- No meeting in August and the next full meeting of the PC is 7th September
- Staff Appraisals to be held in August

7. Planning

1. Confirmation of planning comments submitted – to note

- **26/01146/SUB OS Plot 6860 West Side Of Maidstone Road, Matfield, Kent**
Submission of details in relation to Conditions 4 (biodiversity mitigation & enhancement), 5 (landscape scheme) & 20 (tree protection details) of 22/00757/FULL

REFUSE

Landscape plan for the housing development:

It appears that, as the Parish Council (BMPC) pointed out in objecting to 26/01076/SUB,

Submission of Details in relation to Condition 22 - (surface water drainage scheme) of 22/00757/FULL, some of the hedge at the front will indeed be where the drainage plan shows a crated soakaway. Presumably either the hedge will fail to thrive or its roots will get into and fill up the soakaway crates so that they would no longer function properly.

The recently submitted Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy Report states that the site is not at risk of pluvial flooding. However, while BMPC accepts that the site itself may not be at risk, this is not the case for the road outside it. BMPC is aware that in recent years there have been several occasions when the B2160 Maidstone Road has flooded immediately outside the site during periods of high rainfall. The proposal in paragraph 4.1 of the report that "If the ground is saturated, water will flow overland and drain onto the Highway where it will be collected by a series of road gullies that discharge to the ditch running along the western side of Maidstone Road" is therefore unacceptable. Not only could it disrupt traffic but it could cause the properties on the other side of the road to flood.

The Landscaping and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP):

While the map of the LEMP area to be managed by the Private Management Organisation (PMO) clearly includes the car parking area on BMPC's land, and paragraph 2.5 states that the landscape proposals include the car parking near the Village Hall, the only ornamental trees proposed to be managed by the PMO are the trees along the access road and the only ornamental planting proposed to be managed is the ornamental planting at the entrance to the development adjacent to plot 1 and plot 11. Responsibility for the maintenance of the parking area near the village hall, its trees and planting needs to be clarified.

Hard Landscape plan for the driveway and parking spaces to serve playground

Although the parking spaces and their landscaped areas are on land owned by BMPC, BMPC was not consulted by the applicants or their consultants about the proposals for this area before this application was submitted.

The driveway and parking spaces are shown on the plan as tarmac. The Brenchley and Matfield Neighbourhood Development Plan Policy D8 Surface water management states "Parking surfaces should be permeable". The plans do not specify whether the proposed tarmac will be permeable. Whether the surfaces are permeable will be important since no drainage details were provided for this area under application 26/01076/SUB, so presumably no drainage measures are proposed. Tarmac is suitable for this area but a hard wearing and porous specification should be required. BMPC notes that the proposed widths of the parking spaces comply with KCC's minimum parking standards but would prefer the widths to be a little more generous, so as to accommodate the increased width of many modern cars, especially as in this hilly rural parish many residents have large 4-wheel drive vehicles. This increased space would reduce the risk of damage being caused as the cars manoeuvre in and out of the parking spaces. It could be achieved by somewhat reducing the size of the three landscaped areas in the car park area. Paragraph 95 of KCC's parking guidance states that "the provision of larger spaces would be strongly supported".

Planting plan for BMPC-owned area

The landscaped areas between the parking spaces and between the parking spaces and the toilets are proposed to be planted with three *Prunus Avia Plenum* which grows to 10-12 metres tall. Although the three trees appear to be shown on just the central planting area, presumably one tree is proposed for each of the planting areas. BMPC would prefer to have a smaller, easier to maintain tree specified, such as *Prunus Subhirtella Autumnalis*, or one of the *Sorbus* or *Amelanchier* varieties.

The proposed shrub varieties to be planted under the trees would provide flowers and berries, giving year-round interest. The total number of plants proposed seems quite high, a total of 93 shrubs for one space, 100 shrubs for the central space and 83 shrubs for the space closest to the toilets - 276 plants in total. While this number will provide fairly instant ground cover, the plants will presumably need to be thinned out as they grow, and will need regular pruning, especially to prevent them from obstructing the parking spaces. BMPC would prefer maintenance tasks to be fairly minimal once we take over management. Therefore BMPC questions the number of plants proposed, particularly in view of our recommendation that the landscaped areas are narrowed to accommodate slightly widened parking spaces.

- **26/01103/SUB OS Plot 0078 Petteridge Lane Matfield Tonbridge Kent TN12 7LP**
Submission of details in relation to Condition 4 (Biodiversity enhancement scheme) of 25/02384/FULL

NEUTRAL

The applicant should be required to replace the removed planting with the native species specified

2. Planning Applications – to consider

- **26/01144/FULL Land Adj. Hazeldene, Hatmill Lane, Brenchley, Kent**
(Self-Build) Conversion and extension of existing barn to a live-work unit; detached garage

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE

While the removal of the skylights in this revised application does address some of our concerns about Neighbourhood Development Plan Policy LE8 Dark Skies, the Parish Council does not consider that provision of a one-room office as part of a live-work unit, with no evidence that the building has actually been advertised for the necessary period for business, leisure or tourism use, is sufficient for compliance with Policy ED5a of the Local Plan, or Policy BE1 of the NDP. Nor do the limited changes to the application appear to be sufficient for the building to comply with Local Plan Policy ED5b and Policy LE1 of the NDP.

The Parish Council wishes to remind TWBC of its decision in relation to nearby Tong Farm in June last year (25/01404/FULL). In the original approvals for the site, it had been proposed that one dwelling would be an office building and a second one developed as a “live/work” unit. 25/01404 sought to change the use of these two buildings to residential. The applicant had appointed Bracketts to market the properties in January 2025 and in its letter dated May 21, 2025, Bracketts stated that:

“with regard to live/work opportunities these are extremely rare, and we would question whether the whole concept is a relic from a previous era. Home and hybrid working is now mainstream and essentially relies on a phone, laptop and a WiFi connection. We simply do not receive enquiries for live/work properties ... and cannot recall the last time that we received instructions to market a live/work building”.

TWBC then approved the application to change the buildings’ use to residential.

It therefore seems likely that the proposal for a live-work unit would prove to be merely a stepping stone towards full residential use.

- **26/01233/HYBRID Land At Badsell Farm, Badsell Road, Maidstone Road, Paddock Wood**
Hybrid Planning Application - Full Application for 272 dwellings and access from Badsell Road and Maidstone Road. Outline Application (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved) for approximately 248 dwellings , inclusive of associated infrastructure including a local centre, play areas, network of new roads, surface water drainage features, car and cycle parking, open space and associated

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE

The Parish Council (BMPC) recognises that this is a site allocated in the Local Plan. However, BMPC has major concerns about the implications of this application.

Transport

A large proportion of the vehicles from the outline development and all of the vehicles from the full development will exit onto Badsell Road. Traffic heading to the A21 southbound, and indeed any that is heading to the A21 northbound after dropping children at school or when the A228 is congested, will obviously turn left out of the site onto the Badsell Road and then use the B2160 Maidstone Road to access the A21. This will have significant effects in the village of Matfield, where there are no zebra or signal-controlled pedestrian crossings and where the road is insufficiently wide to accommodate pedestrian refuge islands. Also, when vehicular traffic finds the B2160 Maidstone Road severely congested it will tend to divert onto the rural lanes of the parish. Many of these lanes are the historic routeways which are a key characteristic of the High Weald National Landscape (HWNL) and some of those that are outside

the HWNL have biodiverse verges that need to be protected. Despite our raising this in our response to the EIASCO application, no provision has been made in this application to address the problems of severance, driver delay, non-motorised amenity and delay, fear and intimidation and road safety in our parish that will result from the proposed development cumulatively with other development in Paddock Wood and Horsmonden.

To mitigate the expansion of vehicular traffic, the applicants propose a contribution to a bus service within Paddock Wood (an area where cycling and walking are said to be a reasonably realistic proposition), but no contribution is proposed to enhance the bus services from Paddock Wood to Tunbridge Wells and Hawkhurst, where walking and cycling are far less likely to replace use of the private car. In order to reduce the traffic that will be directed through Matfield and Brenchley, any decision to approve this application should include a condition requiring a contribution to improve the frequency of the bus services from Paddock Wood to Tunbridge Wells and Hawkhurst.

The fact that the planned improvements to the Mascalls Court Road/B2160/Badsell Road junction have had to be scaled back and that the Badsell Roundabout, Colts Hill and Pembury Road upgradings have yet to materialise is a further cause of concern, particularly in relation to the chaos that is likely to occur on the B2160 during construction of these road changes.

The proposals in the Transport Assessment and the Travel Plan must include monitoring and dealing with the effects on roads in Brenchley and Matfield parish as well as in the immediate vicinity of the site and on the strategic road network.

Water

There have been multiple water main failures along the B2160 since the water pressure was increased to serve the new housing that has recently been built at Paddock Wood. Residents of Matfield have suffered not only the loss of their water supply, sometimes for days on end, but also flooding to properties along the road, significant traffic disruption and diversion of school buses leading to loss of education time for children from this parish. Without significant new investment to renew the whole water main, the further increase in housing at Paddock Wood that is proposed in this application is likely to lead to further serious water and road failures in Matfield. Moreover, the drought restrictions and hosepipe bans that have now become a regular feature in this area indicate that the water supply needs to be increased before new housing should be authorised.

- **26/01311/SUB Marle Place Farm, Marle Place Road, Brenchley, Kent**
Submission of Details in relation to Condition 8 - (landscaping); Condition 9 - (Biodiversity Enhancement Plan) of 25/01127/FULL

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE

When permission was granted for the stables on the site (20/01863/FULL), a new hedge line between the stables and the hardstanding area was to be planted to soften the view from the public footpath and Condition 3 of the permission specifically required this. If the Planning Officer visits the site he will see that this condition has not been complied with.

The delegated report for 25/01127/FULL stated "Although the sand school would be highly visible within the immediate locality due to the open nature of the area and from the Public Right of Way that runs along the southern boundary of the open grassland, the implementation of an appropriate landscaping scheme would be able to reduce the visual impact of the proposal within the vicinity". Condition 8 was designed to achieve this. The Parish Council considers that in order to achieve the intention of this condition, the hedgerow required under 20/01863/FULL should again be required to be planted and that a new hedgerow should also be required to be planted alongside the sand school and adjacent to, but at least one metre from, the public footpath.

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- **26/01347/FULL 8 Foxhole Lane, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7ER**
Single storey side/rear extension

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: NEUTRAL

The Parish Council has concerns over the effect on the dark skies of the High Weald National Landscape (Neighbourhood Development Plan Policies D1 and LE8 and the High Weald National Landscapes Dark Skies Planning Advice Note) of the proposed rooflight over the kitchen/dining room, which is likely to be illuminated for lengthy periods. However, if TWBC is minded to approve the application, an informative concerning a blackout blind or shutter should be attached.

- **26/00748/LBC and 26/00747/FULL The Old Vicarage, High Street, Brenchley, TN12 7NQ**
2no. proposed rooflights & woodburning stove; alterations to existing rooflights; exposure of rafters

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: NEUTRAL

The Parish Council supports this revised proposal for the proposed 90° access rooflight to improve access to the roof gully in order to prevent water ingress, but queries the necessity for the second additional rooflight in this Grade II* listed building. However, the Parish Council will defer to the Conservation Officer on this.

3. Delegation of planning application recommendations in August – to note

Pursuant to the Council’s adopted S.101 Scheme of Delegation, Planning application comments will be circulated via email by the Planning Committee Chair and will include a suggested Refuse/Approve/Neutral given that no discussion in person will occur. On receipt of majority of responses received within a specified timeframe, the Clerk will submit recommendations which will be reported to the September PC meeting.

4. Aligning Parish and Town Council Elections with a new Unitary Authority – to note submission

The Council noted the text, following majority approval of draft via email, submitted on 8th June 2026

5. Public Consultation on the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Draft Local Validation Checklist – to note submission

The Council noted the text, following majority approval of draft via email, submitted on 9th June 2026

6. Local Plan Scoping Consultation – to consider delegation

The Council noted the timetable for the Local Plan review and agreed that Councillors would review the scoping document and provide comments to the Planning Committee so that a draft response could be circulated in time for the submission deadline of 11th August.

8. Traffic

1. Speed Camera on Maidstone Road – to consider

The Council discussed options for a more effective deterrent to stop speeding on Maidstone Road, particularly given the increase in development in Paddock Wood. It was acknowledged that the Parish Council does not have authority to issue fines and that an official fixed speed camera usually requires a proven history of fatalities or severe speeding. It was agreed that Cllr Churchill would investigate the matter further and report back.

Action Cllr Churchill

9. Boundary land between Bass Orchard and Allotment site – to consider correspondence

The Council considered approaches from the owners of 4 and 5 Bass Orchard to amend the position of the enclosure of their properties on the boundary with the Allotments. This was discussed at length and it was agreed that the historic hedge line is the correct boundary and that the residents would, if they wished, establish a boundary enclosure in that location.

It was agreed that the work on this would include a site visit with the Clerk to agree the location and that work on the hedge/enclosure on the section at number 5 Bass Orchard would be undertaken by the owner.

10. Log of Parish Infrastructure issues – to consider

The Council, having recently submitted a response to Kent County Council's Short Focused Inquiry (SFI) to examine the causes, handling and impact of recent water supply failures, agreed that a form of log to record various infrastructure, incident and emergency issues would be helpful

Categories including RTAs (Road Traffic Accidents), water outages, significant road disruptions would be included, to record dates and a general outline of the experience which could be used to demonstrate concerns about local resilience. A log would be drafted by Cllr Thompson to be added to the shared drive so that all Councillors could add information.

Action Cllr Thompson

11. Cinderhill Management Plan 2025-2035 – to consider proposal

The Council noted the plan which is based on the current agreed SLA including winter works and looks ahead to 2035. The management plan is a framework which helps KHWP to ensure they have plenty of time to programme long term works and it can be reviewed throughout its duration, so that management can change based on budgets and needs for the site, it allows for grant funding to be assessed too. Our current lease expires in 2029 and there is no obligation to renew the lease even if the Management Plan is in place.

12. Bike Rack – to consider purchase

The RFO had applied for several grants to fund this project and the KCC Member's Grant had awarded a sum of £600 towards it for which the Council was grateful. The location of the rack would be agreed on site so as not to impact on any other access requirements and it was noted that the grass-crete is permitted development and not permanent with the railing already having an opening.. The Council considered two quotes for this and the cost would be allocated from the available Traffic budget. Savings would be made from the quote of £1,981.35 if the Council placed the order and re-claimed the VAT.

RESOLVED to engage GMT Property Management to install a base and bike rack outside Brenchley toilets

13. Clerk's Report with works list

1. Re-siting of bollard at Porters Wood – to note unbudgeted expenditure

Due to safety concerns over a resident parking on the footpath access to the PC's land the bollard is being moved, permission has been given by KCC as a bollard is already in place via a Section 115

agreement. The cost, to be taken from general reserves (i.e Porters Wood cost centre but unbudgeted) will be £614 plus VAT.

2. Tree work at Jack Verrall Garden – to note unbudgeted expenditure

Due to a request from the adjoining neighbour at the Old Palace, and per the Council's Tree Policy, it has been necessary to contract work to remove overhanging branches. The cost, £300 plus VAT, to be taken from general reserves (i.e JVMG cost centre but unbudgeted), permission has been sought for this work from TWBC.

- Permission has been given for a Survey of Pond for Great Crested Newts
- Pond water test was carried out on 12th June and vegetation removal in progress including the fallen tree on the large island
- Concerns have been raised with the Police about ASB at the Viewpoint
- Additional memorial plaque on JVMG bench has been agreed and will be of a standard format
- Sign and closer are being added to ensure both gates are closed at the main entrance to the Rec.
- Our mowers have apologised for knocking into two of the post on the Green and will be repairing these.
- Annual full RoSPA play inspections booked for the playgrounds in August
- KCC are progressing the reinstatement of the white lines around Matfield Green
- The Oak Noticeboard is up in Brenchley, some adjustments have been made to prevent swinging in the wind, a key is held at the Post office for community notices.
- The electrical installation tests for the Pavilion and the toilet blocks have been completed and are satisfactory. Some requirements at the Pavilion related to emergency lighting are being costed (to be paid for from s.106 funds remaining)
- A site meeting took place on 1st July for the design of new railings at Brenchley toilets which have permitted development rights and will comply with the public building balustrade criteria
- KCC are looking at the verge at the top of Bramble Reed to see if it can be improved to provide parking for St Lukes.
- Town and Country have been asked to attend to a tree in Oakfield Road which has large boughs breaking off.
- The signs at the Viewpoint appears to have been stolen, they will be replaced.
- Kent Fire and Rescue have done a spot check on the Pavilion and will be providing some comments and advice
- KCC have been informed about the damage to the white post at the bottom of Blind Lane and Coppers Lane

14. RFO's Report with budget monitoring

1. Accounts payable

3878	HMRC	Tax and NI June 26	£819.68
3879	C. Brooks	June 26 mileage £36.00 Salary Balance £45.85	£81.85
3880	Waste Way	Allotment Clearance (2 trips)	£806.82
3881	Waste Way	June 26 bin collects at Porters Wd and Brenchley Rec	£134.40
3882	Capel Groundcare	Playground Inspection Monthly premium June 26	£306.00
3883	Capel Groundcare	SIDs Monthly contract June 26	£194.35
3884	Microshade/Flotek	June 26 Software support – new payment amount for this month only	£267.16
3885	A Castro-Edwards	MP Cleaning x2 15/06, 29/06	£51.00
3886	GMT Property Mngmnt	Installation of Brenchley Noticeboard + extra materials	£310.00
3887	Christine Churchill	Reimbursement of travel expenses	£15.90
3888	Garden Proud	JVMG Gardening, hose, hedge feed, plants	£288.33
3890	Capel Cottage Nursery	Hanging baskets and plants	£100.00
3891	British Aquacare	July Water testing	£150.00
3892	Knock Out Print	Close the Gate signs	£96.00
3893	Tim Lane Electrical	EICR, PAT Testing and Emergency Lighting test	£950.00
3894	Will Oakes	Strimming at allotment	£400.00

3895	Charlotte Anderson	Expenses for JVMG party 11.96, 130.76	£142.72
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Payments by Credit Card May 26 expenditure (total) DD £239.08

3896	Gardenscape	Composted Bark	£149.10
	Amazon	Counter Clicker Speedwatch	£6.99
	Ebay	Hanging Basket watering can	£29.99
	Weald Kent Prot Soc	Annual membership fee	£50
		Monthly card fee	£3.00

Standing Orders and Direct Debits For Information

3897	SO C. Brooks	Salary June 26	£2,119.82
3898	SO Sarah Castro-Edwards	Salary June 26	£721.04
3899	DD Smart Pension	June 26 Pension Payment	£953.33
3900	DD EDF Energy	Pavilion Electricity May 26	£120.44
3901	DD EDF Energy	Electricity Brenchley Toilets May 26	£24.66
3902	DD EDF Energy	Electricity Matfield Toilets	£35.00
3903	DD Smart Pension	Apr 26 Pension admin fee	£26.40
3904	SO Churchill Group	June 26 Toilet Cleaning services	£913.46
3905	DD SSE	Streetlight electricity May 26	£92.77
3906	DD Everflow	Water Charges 22/07 - 21/08	£250.81
3907	DD First Com Tec Works	Monthly Phone and Broadband Service July 26	£197.73
3908	Unity Bank	Monthly Service Charge June 26	£12.70

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

15. Meetings attended, reports by Councillors and urgent business

Cllr Churchill attend the Patient Participation Group (PPG) meeting and the Kent Police Independent Advisory Group (IAG) Meeting
Cllr Buttery attended the TWBC Parish Chairs Meeting

16. Date of next meeting: Monday 7th September 2026, 7pm, Matfield Pavilion