



BRENCLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL
Matfield Pavilion, The Green, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7JU
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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF BRENCLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 7th JULY 2025, AT 7PM AT MATFIELD PAVILION

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

In attendance: Cllr Mark Munday (Kent County Council (KCC)) part, Cllr Tom Mobbs (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC)) part

1. To accept apologies for absence

None

2. To approve the Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the meeting of 2nd June 2025 were approved as an accurate record and were duly signed by the Chair.

3. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Churchill declared a pecuniary conflict of interest in planning application 25/01133 and left the room when it was discussed

Cllr Stout also declared a pecuniary conflict of interest (he is the applicant) in planning application 25/01133 and left the room when it was discussed

Cllr Reynold declared her position as Vice Chair of governors and attached to PTFA in relation to item 8.4

4. To adjourn to allow public participation. At the Chairman'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 Chairman.

None.

5. Borough and County Councillors

Cllr Munday outlined current aims of the Kent Fire Authority to encourage and support Councils in compiling an Emergency and Resilience Plan. Cllr Buttery confirmed that this has been drafted and more work is planned.

Cllr Mobbs outlined concerns that the TWBC Parking Strategy may result in a review of charges for rural car parks. There is only one that is owned by TWBC but no levies are charged, i.e. the car park in Brenchley. The Council noted this but also that there is no specific reference to this eventuality in the current Strategy and the Council would strongly oppose any such suggestion.

6. Chair's Announcements

- No applicants had been received for the Councillor Vacancy, it will therefore be re-advertised as an open advertisement (no closing date)

7. Local Government Re-Organisation (LGR) – to discuss

Cllr Buttery and the Clerk had attended the KALC EGM on 19th June, and there was some discussion, with Cllr Munday, on the current thinking about LGR. The Clerk advised that she had attended a Parish Clerks meeting with TWBC on this issue and it was noted that, at present, there is no change envisaged to the role and responsibilities of parish councils.

It was agreed that Cllr Buttery would draft the response to the KALC survey on the issue and circulate it to the Council in time for submission by 21st July.

Action Cllr Buttery, Clerk

8. Traffic

1. Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) – update

The Council noted the up-to-date copy of Brenchley & Matfield Parish Council's HIP.

A funding opportunity up to £25k via the Parish Road Safety Grant is available until 31st October but costed projects must be already listed on the HIP. It was agreed that the Clerk would request costings from KCC for elements of the speed limit scheme at Crook Road (item 1 on the HIP), which had been progressed by KCC but did not have a costed proposal to enable it to be used for applying for this grant. This project, together with the delivery of the digital WIGWAGs at the School (item 3 on the HIP), which had an indicative cost of £3-£9k, would form the projects applied for under this grant opportunity. Decisions would be made by early 2026.

Action Clerk, RFO

2. Speedwatch – update

Cllr Churchill and Cllr Akenhead had attended a speedwatch conference in June and noted that there were now more speedwatch administration staff which will mean more letters will go out to drivers and there will be national and Kent speedwatch days. Cllr Churchill had arranged a further session for the Police to engage with residents but this was unfortunately not well attended.

3. TWBC Parking Strategy - update

The Council noted that the TWBC Cabinet Meeting of 26th June approved the Parking Strategy 2025-2030 and, despite requests made to remove reference to there being no parking issues in Brenchley, this was not taken forwards and it was adopted unamended.

4. School Crossing survey – to note and consider progress

Cllr Reynolds, who underlined that she is part of the working group in a community capacity, outlined the methods of communication for the survey seeking views on a proposed design for a zebra crossing at the school, which concludes at the end of July. The results of the survey would be collated over the summer and a report into outcomes and next steps would be produced, which would be shared with the Parish Council. If the project was generally met positively, including by the Parish Council, the working group would proceed to obtaining costs for commissioning surveys and audits required to underpin the project proposals. Some of these design costs may be provided at no cost and it was reiterated that at present this is not a Parish Council project given that amendments to the HIP would not be possible until the annual KCC meeting in November.

It was agreed that Cllr Reynolds would continue to update the Council regularly.

Action Cllr Reynolds

9. Planning

1. Planning Applications

25/00672/FULL Barn north of Boundary Farm, Marle Place Road, Brenchley, Kent TN12 7HS Barn Conversion into live/work unit with associated garden land, parking, landscaping & biodiversity enhancements (self-build)
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No response necessary

25/01066/FULL Blue Boys Oast, Hastings Road, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7HE
(Retrospective) Demolition of raised footpath & replacement with tarmac surface.
Construction of free-draining gravel surface & replacement of fence with gates

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: NEUTRAL

The Parish Council would like to point out that the tarmac square to the east of the property (that could allow vehicles to exit the southbound A21 and then turn to allow access to the new parking area to the west) has a five bar gate to the driveway between the house and the A21, and is divided by a fence. The actual situation is not shown on the Existing Plans but TWBC may wish to confirm that this area will be cleared if it is minded to grant permission.

25/01133/FULL Woodlands Farm Short Lane Brenchley Tonbridge Kent
(self build) Change of use of an agriculture barn to residential use

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE

The Parish Council believes that the Block Plan, Site Location Plan and Proposed Block Plan and Parking, posted on the TWBC Planning Portal, do not reflect the actual access to the site, which is via a gate on to Short Lane much closer to the driveway of Woodlands Farm than shown on these diagrams.

The Public Footpath WT305 is immediately adjacent to the barn, running along a track between the barn and a pond. The Parish Council is concerned that the proposed curtilage of a newly residential building should be specified now, and any impact on the Public Right of Way be addressed to protect that access. The red-lined area (which we have assumed is the proposed curtilage for the residential dwelling) on the above mentioned plans does not show other existing buildings on the site close to the barn, nor how the proposed curtilage may impact access to them. We had spoken to the planning officer with respect to proposed parking for the dwelling, and subsequently the applicant posted a revised Proposed Block Plan and Parking drawing on 2 July 2025. However, this plan does not specify whether there would be parking for one or two vehicles, nor any details on space for turning.

The Parish Council notes that the existing 6 skylights to the barn will be removed in the new dwelling, but a large amount of new fenestration is proposed for the residential dwelling, which would not comply with our NDP policy LE8 Dark Skies without mitigation measures. No details of external lighting (eg between the proposed new parking area and the dwelling entrance) have been provided.

25/01275/FULL Evelyn Bungalow, Brenchley Road, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7PT
Replacement single storey rear extension

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE

25/01294/SUB Crittenden House, Crittenden Road, Matfield, Kent TN12 7EN
Submission of Details in relation to Condition 4 - (External materials details); Condition 6 - (External lighting details); Condition 7 - (Landscaping details); Condition 8 - (Biodiversity enhancement scheme); Condition 11 - (Tree protection details) of 24/01111/FULL

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE

The Parish Council questions whether the requirement for 9 external Passive Infra-Red (PIR) lights to the outside of the dwelling is necessary, or desirable for a building so close to woodland. In addition no details of the proposed light equipment have been provided, nor beam orientation, mounting height or aiming angles, all of which are required by the condition 6 to the planning permission granted by TWBC. An additional "4 external lights on each corner" of the outside seating area have been identified in the layout drawing, but,

again, none of TWBC's additional requirements have been specified. The relevant NDP policy is LE8 Dark Skies.

25/01327/LBC Burtons, Crook Road, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7BU

Listed Building Consent - Alterations to roof pitch & amended to zinc-coated metal; rear gable brickwork to be Flemish bond with blue headers; smaller rear extension to be skew; amendments to window material to side of dining room; sliding door added between kitchen & dining room; changes to oak beams in dining room (Alternative to 22/03233/LBC)

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE

25/01404/FULL Tong Farm, Marle Place Road, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent

Erection of two dwellings with associated parking spaces in-lieu of the office units & live/work unit granted permission under 22/02640 (as amended by application 24/03204).

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE

The TWBC Conservation Officer, when consenting to this proposed development, gave considerable weight to the fact that the proposed site would be mixed use. Specifically: *"a considerable improvement, in my view – it allows for some informality, provides a mix of units..."* and *"The mixed use arrangement is more typical of what has grown up in the area as farmsteads diversify"*. In assessing the principle of the development the delegated report stated *"it does largely comprise PDL and the development would maintain/provide employment opportunities within this rural locality along with the creation of a modern employment facility. The proposal would also provide a modest contribution to boosting the housing supply and a small contribution to the boroughs self-build housing supply. The proposed development also provides economic and employment benefits through the introduction of an office building, providing two office units."*

The evidence presented by the applicant as to the non-financial viability of the two units is a marketing report prepared by Bracketts Tunbridge Wells (the Agent) dated May 21, 2025 and appointed in January 2025. The Parish Council is surprised that the applicant only sought to commence marketing of these properties so long after gaining planning permission, and as recently as December 2024 did not suggest any amendments to the use of these buildings when applying for 24/03204/FULL (objected to by the Parish Council but approved by TWBC).

To date there have been no comments on this application from the TWBC Conservation Officer and we would be interested to see their views, now that the proposed development will not be Mixed Use but all residential (like application 21/01144/FULL for this site that was refused by TWBC). The fact that the applicant does not believe that these units would be financially viable should not outweigh the reasons for which the original application was granted permission.

25/01453/FULL Highlands, Chantlers Hill, Paddock Wood, Kent, TN12 6LU

(Self Build) - Demolition of detached garage & erection of new dwelling, with hard & soft landscaping.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: NEUTRAL

Given the growth in size of the building, from a one-bed studio granted in 24/01577/FULL, to this application, we estimate that the volume of the proposed dwelling is now approx 50% higher than the original garage and dilapidated stable buildings to the rear of the garden. Therefore we would like to have confirmation that the existing stabling buildings have been demolished and recommend that Permitted Development Rights be removed from this site.

2. Delegation of Planning Responses for August – to agree

The Council noted that there was no meeting in August and that comments and recommendations would be drafted and circulated.

RESOLVED to delegate to the Planning Committee to respond to planning applications before 1st September.

3. Planning comments submitted – to confirm

Due to timeframe for submission, the Planning Committee had agreed the response for application 25/01227/AGRIC, which was noted by the Council.

4. Meeting with Matfield Village Hall Committee regarding Clarendon Development – to note

Cllr Buttery advised that a meeting was held on Wednesday 18th June with Cllr Akenhead and the Clerk together with representatives of Matfield Village Hall. There had been some exchanges of correspondence between the Council and James Chapman, which had been circulated to all Councillors. It was agreed that as a response was awaited from Mr Chapman on a number of critical issues no matters were currently outstanding that required the Council to make a decision.

Cllr Buttery would continue to seek responses and had reiterated to Mr Chapman the requirement for the full Council to resolve its position in a meeting setting.

5. Right of Way at Wheelwright Arms – to discuss further response

The Council considered submissions from other parties on the appeal, and considered a further BMPC response which had been drafted by Cllr Akenhead.

RESOLVED to submit the response on the appeal submissions for the Definitive Map Modification Order application at the Wheelwright Arms as drafted

6. Housing Needs Survey (HNS) – to consider commissioning

The Council briefly discussed the need to commission a Local Housing Needs Survey in the 2026-7 financial year. Cllr Akenhead outlined that the latest Forward Plan suggests that the Local Plan may be adopted by October in which case there will be a call for sites in the New Year and therefore the date of obtaining an HNS may slip. An indicative cost had been obtained.

It was agreed that a contingency amount of £3,000 would be added to the 2026-27 budget for this eventuality.

Action RFO

10. Cooksfield – to consider sealed bids

The Council considered a report from Lambert and Foster including an outline of the bids received. The TPO was granted and all bidders are aware of this. Overage was agreed at 30% for 30 years from the date of completion, payable upon implementation of any planning permission, or a sale of the land, whichever is earlier. It was agreed that the income would be shown in a separate income cost centre so that it could be identified, given the intended terms of the bequest to provide social housing.

RESOLVED to accept a bid of £30,000 for the sale of land at Cooksfield, Sophurst Lane, Matfield to include an overage clause at 30% for 30 years.

11. Scout Hut Lease – to consider extension

It was noted that the Scouts had returned more queries on the Lease and that these would be progressed via the Council's solicitor to obtain an engrossment for signature for the Council to agree on 1st September.

RESOLVED to extend the Scout Hut Lease to 5th September 2025

12. Cinderhill – to consider works to trees

Cllr Akenhead outlined a report from KHWP on a large number of diseased ash trees that need felling at Cinderhill. Several quotes for this work had already been obtained and it was noted that the work would likely be more than is currently budgeted for by approximately £2,000 but that decisions would need to be made for sustainability and health and safety reasons.

RESOLVED to proceed with necessary work to address ash dieback disease at Cinderhill and to delegate management of this to Cllrs Stout and Akenhead with the Clerk.

13. Porters Wood Entrance – to consider quotes

The Council noted that following a very wet winter and spring the entrance to Porters Wood was impassable for many weeks and this created a boggy area extending around 10m into the field due to the water running into the entrance area. This made access to the field, and therefore the children's play equipment, very difficult. Three costed options to remedy this were considered, two further contractors declined to quote, with the cost likely to be obtainable from s.106 funds available for children's playgrounds. A diagram detailing the design and products chosen was agreed.

RESOLVED to instruct Underdown Landscapes Ltd to provide an area of landscaping at the entrance to Porters Wood in the sum of £3467.75

14. Projects Update

1. Posts on Matfield Green

The posts order being in this month's accounts payable an estimated installation date of early August was noted. The Clerk had twice written to the TWBC Conservation Officer to confirm these works but had not received a response. It had been agreed that this was expected to be a formality as the posts are a replacement in size, height and number.

2. Jack Verrall Memorial Gardens

Two further memorial benches and two picnic benches have been installed and tree work has been diarised for September. The Council noted an update on project spending to date.

15. Storage Trailer behind Pavilion – to consider purchase

Following the cancellation of the project to install a permanent shed to store items from the Pavilion, the Council considered the option of a moveable trailer. This would not be pursued but it was noted that the cricketers cupboard inside the Pavilion should be cleared to ensure that the fire route is unobstructed and the Clerk would ensure this aspect is communicated to the cricketers for actioning after this cricket season.

16. GDPR Compliance toolkit – to consider expenditure

Cllr Buttery outlined that from the 2025/26 AGAR, Parish and Town councils will be required to complete a new Assertion 10 as part of its Annual Governance Statement. This new requirement goes beyond the previous expectations as Parish councils will have to confirm their compliance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act, and other digital governance obligations as part of their Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

A toolkit was available to assist the Council in compliance and it was noted that this expenditure could be allocated to the Council's training budget.

RESOLVED to purchase the bronze level GDPR toolkit and guidance service in the sum of £495

17. Clerk's report

- The Clerk had circulated two "Advice from the Clerk" emails concerning declarations of interest/pre-determination and the methods of Council decision making.
- A pond Report had been received however a more detailed version has been requested.
- A meeting was held on Monday 16th June to consider forming an Allotment Association, this would not be progressed at this time

- KCC have repainted the Matfield Gateway and post and the same had been requested for the Brenchley Gateway
- A UKSPF Climate grant application has been submitted for £850 for IPC water storage at allotments
- S.106 funds have been received for playground repairs
- Table Tennis Table bases have been rectified and the tables installed, boxes for bats and balls are being sought and publicity out on FB.
- Two Flags have been bought for VJ Day 15th August – a note will be put on FB to acknowledge the date.
- Clearup behind and to the sides of the pavilion completed
- Electrical testing has been completed at Pavilion and at Toilet blocks (required every 5 years)
- Repairs to Pavilion posts, clearing of moss and gutters and some repainting and other repairs inside are in progress
- Annual RoSPA playground inspections are booked for July/August.
- Complaints have been raised with KCC about the melting/destruction of the surface of Maidstone Road.
- It was noted that the Cricketers licence would be offered for 3 years, 2025, 2026 and 2027 and that clarification on their adequacy of their insurance would be sought beforehand.
- A UKSPF grant application has been submitted for the fence at the Rec (by Scout Hut). Whilst this is not a Parish Council project, three quotes had been obtained and the Council agreed that Elm Fencing would be instructed, given that the Council applied for this grant.

1. Donation Request – to consider

The Council considered a request for a donation received from the School PTFA towards a BBQ to be used for community events, with reference to the remaining budget, with the expectation that it would be purchased in this financial year.

RESOLVED to donate a sum of £250 to the School PTFA towards the purchase of a BBQ

2. Allotment Tenancy amendments – to consider.

The Clerk had provided suggestions for amendments to the Allotment Tenancy agreement. Charging an extra fee for plots without a water butt and amendments regarding hosepipe bans as well as an amendment to require Public Liability insurance of not less than £5m were approved for new tenancies and would apply for current tenants from April 2026.

Action Clerk

18. RFO's Report

1. Delegation of Bank Authorisation in August – to agree

It was agreed that accounts payable will be circulated to all Councillors on Tuesday 29th July, queries can be raised with the RFO on Wednesday 30th July and they can be authorised on Monday 4th August by Cllr Dewdney and Cllr Buttery.

2. Grants applied for – for information

The RFO has progressed a number of grant applications and these are being recorded for ongoing reference as to which are successful.

3. Accounts payable

3475	HMRC	Tax and NI June 25	£712.41	£712.41		
3476	C. Brooks	May 25 mileage	£57.60	Salary Balance	£61.24	£118.84
3477	Sarah Castro-Edwards	Salary bal June 25	£22.42	+ Expenses	£8.50	£30.92
3478	Waste Way	May 25 bin collect at Porters Wd and Brenchley Rec				£115.20
3479	Chloe Shackle	Mat Pav Cleaning 29/05, 13/06, 26/06				£108.00
3480	KnockOut Print	Matfield Fete Banner				£120.00
3481	Capel Groundcare	Chambers Bench Base groundworks				£153.12
3482	Capel Groundcare	Chambers Bench installation				£96.00
3483	Capel Groundcare	Playground Inspection Monthly premium June 25				£288.00

3484	Capel Groundcare	SIDs Monthly contract June 25	£182.22
3485	Capel Groundcare	Allotment Hedge (Autumn 25)	£53.53
3486	Microshade	Software support June 25	£209.29
3487	Shelia Harris	Taxi cost for Beacon Lighting	£90.00
3488	Joe Clark	Bench Fixing JVMG	£53.98
3489	Rialtas Training	System Tidy Up RFO 19/06/25	£102.00
3490	Capel Groundcare	Table tennis table installation	£1,301.71
3491	ILG Business Limited	Matfield Pond Maintenance Mar-May 25	£600.00
3492	Future Form Benches	2 round picnic benches for JVMG	£687.60
3493	Kedel Limited	Fence Posts for Matfield Green	£7,290.07
3494	Underdown Landscapes	Clearing path/Tidy rear MP	£320.00

Payments by Credit Card June expenditure

3498	Currys	Computer Monitors	£138.00
	Tesco	Refreshments for Annual Parish Meeting	£69.95
	B&Q	Allotment Padlock	£36.00
	B&Q	Nails	£2.64
	Lloyds Bank	Monthly fees April 25	£3.00

Interim Payments made

3499	Wealden Benches	2 Teak benches with fittings for JVMG	£1,100.00
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Standing Orders and Direct Debits For Information

3500	SO C. Brooks	Salary June 25	£1,979.75
3501	SO Sarah Castro-Edwards	Salary June 25	£664.72
3502	DD Smart Pension	May 25 Pension Payment	£964.17
3503	DD EDF Energy	Pavilion Electricity May 25	£115.31
3504	DD EDF Energy	Electricity Brenchley Toilets May 25	£13.27
3505	DD Smart Pension	May 25 Pension admin fee	£26.40
3506	SO Churchill Group	June 25 Toilet Cleaning services	£927.65
3507	DD SSE	Streetlight electricity May 25	£75.63
3508	DD Everflow	Water Charges 22/7 - 21/8	£493.46
3509	DD First Com Tec Works	Monthly Phone and Broadband Service May 25	£197.73
3510	Unity Bank	Monthly Service Charge Jun 25	£12.00

The RFO having provided invoices for scrutiny Cllr Akenhead and Cllr Churchill would authorise these for payment.

19. Meetings attended and reports by Councillors

None.

20. Date of next meeting: Monday 1st September 2025, 7pm, Matfield Pavilion