



BRENCHLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

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

Tel: 01892 723586 Web: www.brenchleyandmatfield-pc.gov.uk

MINUTES of the Annual Meeting of Brenchley and Matfield Parish Council held on Tuesday 5th May 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), S. Castro-Edwards (RFO)

In attendance: Thomas Mobbs (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC)), David Knight (TWBC), 1 member of the public

1. Election of a Chair of the Parish Council

Cllr Anderson nominated Cllr Buttery and this was seconded by Cllr Akenhead. There being only one nomination Cllr Buttery was duly elected as Chair of the Parish Council and signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office which was countersigned by the Clerk.

2. Election of a Vice Chair of the Parish Council

Cllr Thompson nominated Cllr Dewdney and this was seconded by Cllr Churchill. There being only one nomination Cllr Dewdney was duly elected as Vice Chair of the Parish Council and signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office which was countersigned by the Clerk.

3. To accept apologies for absence

None received.

4. To approve the Minutes of the last meeting

The Minutes of the meeting of 7th April 2026 were approved as an accurate record and were duly signed by the Chair.

5. Declarations of Interest

1. Training and information provided by the Clerk

The Clerk provided some training materials regarding DPIs and reminded Councillors to review their interests form with TWBC and that if unsure if they should declare an interest they should contact the Monitoring Officer before the meeting.

2. To record declarations of interest in any item on the Agenda

Cllr Akenhead declared a pecuniary interest in planning application 26/00766/FULL and did not participate in discussion nor vote on the matter.

Cllr Akenhead and Cllr Reynolds declared non-pecuniary interests in the matter under Agenda item 17.2 and did not vote on the matter, having provided some information only in the discussion.

6. To adjourn to allow public participation

Katie Hargreaves, representing the Paddock Wood Community Advice Centre (Agenda item 11.1 below) outlined some of their achievements in the last year and thanked the Council for its grant support. Cllrs commended the work of PWCAC in supporting residents of the parish and wider community.

7. Borough and County Councillor Reports

Cllr Knight advised that he had raised concerns about lack of enforcement actions with the TWBC Planning Department. Cllr Mobbs confirmed that an appeal on the decision to remove the call-in mechanism from September has been submitted to the Secretary of State. The Call for Sites consultation will shortly commence.

8. Chair's Announcements

- Annual Parish Assembly was attended by 40 people
- TWCB elections to take place on 7th May - 1 seat in Rural ward
- The Internal Audit is on 13th May and therefore the AGAR will be put to the June PC meeting together with the Statement of Internal Controls.
- The diversion of the PROW at the Wheelwrights is now in the final phase with a deadline of 12th June, the Parish Council has already resolved not to respond to this order being in agreement with the diversion.

9. Planning

1. Confirmation of planning comments submitted – to note

Due to TWBC deadline these comments were submitted on 20th April:

- **26/00330/FULL 1 Cinder Hill Wood, Five Wents, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7ED**
Two-storey rear extension; alterations to the external fenestration & roof; installation of 5no rooflights

NEUTRAL

The revised floor and elevation plan appears much improved as regards volume and the reduction in the number of rooflights is welcome. However, as no revised block plan has been produced, it is difficult to tell what the proposed new patio and parking arrangements will be. Under the existing block plan, the area of the front hedge that is native planting would be removed as in the previous proposal, leaving only the part that is cherry laurel hedging. The native front hedge is a feature of all the houses in this row and its removal would not conserve the landscape. Paragraph 6.442 of the Local Plan concerning extensions states that domestic proposals "should not result in pressure for the future pruning or removal of existing trees and hedges".

If TWBC is now minded to grant permission, given the proximity of the ancient woodland and the known presence of bats, the Parish Council recommends a condition concerning external lighting and an informative for blackout blinds on the rooflights and glazed doors. A condition concerning surface water drainage is also recommended because soakaways are often ineffective in Matfield due to the underlying geology, and run-off into adjoining property should be avoided.

2. Planning Applications – to consider

- **26/00766/FULL Childs Cottage, Crook Road, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7BE**
Proposed infill and rear extension, front porch and alterations to the dwelling, oil tank relocation, and erection of detached ancillary outbuildings (alternative to planning permission 24/03176/FULL)

RESOLVED to recommend: REFUSE

The Parish Council (PC) is concerned with the large skylight to the proposed extension and its cumulative impact on Dark Skies (LE8) from the approved development on this site, on a prominent ridge in the HWNL. The PC is not convinced that the applicant requires an additional 50m² of storage space proposed for the new outbuilding for his 5 bedroom chalet bungalow, in addition to the previously approved substantial two storey outbuilding providing storage and a gym.

- **26/00747/FULL and 26/00748/LBC The Old Vicarage, High Street, Brenchley, Kent, TN12 7NQ**
Dormer window, rooflight & woodburning stove; alterations to rooflights

RESOLVED to recommend: NEUTRAL

The PC recognises that the applicant would like to make maintenance of the water gully in the roof easier to prevent water influx and damage to the fabric of this Grade II* dwelling in the Brenchley Conservation Area, but will be led by the Conservation Officer's opinion.

- **26/00889/FULL The Allotment Gardens (Part OS Plot 9527), Tibbs Court Lane, Matfield, TN12 7NB**
Replacement shed

RESOLVED to recommend: APPROVE

26/00884/FULL and 26/00885/LBC Bourne House, High Street, Brenchley, Kent, TN12 7NQ
(Part-retrospective) Replacement of single glazed bay windows with double glazing; repairs to internal sills

RESOLVED to recommend: NEUTRAL

The PC will be led by the Conservation Officer's opinion of the proposed works on this Grade II listed dwelling in the Brenchley Conservation Area.

10. Traffic

1. Highways Improvement Plan – to note update from KCC

The Council noted the latest HIP which had been updated with comments from KCC and which includes the projects agreed for delivery in the Rural Parish Grant Scheme. Some further comments have been raised with KCC.

The Council noted the positive response, with outline costs, from KCC to add further gritting routes in the Parish. It was agreed that if confirmed by their contractor in July the costs would be funded from the existing traffic budget for this year and an amount allocated for next year's budget.

Cllr Reynolds outlined a near miss outside the school this morning which the School has reported and is investigating.

11. Annual Grant/Contract Reports – to receive

1. Paddock Wood Community Advice Centre

The Report on activities for 2025-26 was noted and that 26-27 is the second year of the 3-year grant support agreement.

2. Brenchley Archives

The Council noted the 2025-26 Report and accounts and that 26-27 is the final year of the current 3-year grant support agreement.

3. Kent High Weald Partnership - Cinderhill

The Report on 2025-26 activities was noted.

12. Policy and Management Committee

1. Minutes of the meeting of 22nd April 2026 – to approve

The Minutes were agreed as an accurate record by those Cllrs present and were duly signed by the Chair of the Committee.

The Clerk had circulated a marked-up version of the new proposed NALC model Standing Orders showing where particular options have been selected, for ease of reference. Item 25 of the Standing Orders has been taken from the Council's current SO which the Committee felt gave superior clarity.

The Council agreed to await the imminent revised NALC model Code of Conduct and agreed one small amendment to the existing Code which had been recommended by the Monitoring Officer.

RESOLVED to adopt the NALC Model Standing Orders as amended

RESOLVED to adopt the Code of Conduct as amended

RESOLVED to adopt the Financial Regulations as amended

RESOLVED to adopt the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy as amended

RESOLVED to adopt the Expenses Policy to apply from 1st April 2026

13. Committee Terms of Reference – to review

1. Personnel Committee

RESOLVED to re-adopt unamended

2. Finance Committee

RESOLVED to re-adopt unamended

14. Committees, Responsibilities and Working Groups – to appoint

The current list of Committees and responsibility areas was considered. It is good practice to alternate members of Committees where possible to ensure variety of opinions and ideas as well as to increase experience in the breadth of the Council's activities. The list of responsibilities was agreed and would be published.

Action Clerk

15. Council Meeting Dates 2026-27 – to note

The Chair reminded all Cllrs that where possible it would be appreciated if Cllrs could attend meetings and advise the Clerk in good time of unavailability to ensure quoracy.

16. Weald of Kent Protection Society (WKPS) Membership – to consider

The Council noted its previous membership of the WKPS and agreed that it would re-join.

Action Clerk

17. Clerk's Report with works list

1. Matfield Pavilion Fire Risk Assessment – to note annual review

The Clerk advised that following the full assessment of the premises by BeSure (Fusion) in April 2025 a log of actions including regular checks on equipment, is being maintained. As part of the recommendations the PAT testing, undertaken biannually, and the full fuseboard inspection discharge test (BS EN 5266/50172) of the installed emergency lighting system, is in the process of being booked.

2. Donation request – Castle Hill Cricket Club

The Council considered an application for a donation towards a defibrillator with reference to the available budget.

RESOLVED to donate £500 to Castle Hill Cricket Club for the purchase of a defibrillator.

3. Overflow drain reinstatement – to consider further expenditure

The Clerk outlined the Council's previous resolution on expenditure for the project, that maximum quoted legal costs had been required as payments "on account" and that the Council could not reclaim VAT on the reimbursement of the legal fees of the other parties. This necessitated a further resolution for expenditure to enable the project to progress.

RESOLVED to allocate a further £1000 to the costs associated with the new route of the overflow drain at Matfield Pond.

The Council noted that during the on-site survey required for the easement map comments had been raised about the section of the pipe from the pond to the pit in Masters garden. It was agreed that no further actions or expenditure would be undertaken at this stage other than those previously agreed.

- All Allotment Tenancy fees have been paid, the total income for the site is £1726
- The High Weald Landscape Trail post has been installed
- A Go-Pro camera and tally counter have been obtained for the Speedwatch team
- Two picnic tables have been put up at the JVMG
- All the Council's Land Registry titles are now in the name of the Clerk and Proper Officer, at Matfield Pavilion
- The Ted Grenham Memorial bench is now at the Halfway House
- There has been a site meeting with a Land Registry approved company to draw the plan for the pond drain route for the easement
- Horsmonden PC and Paddock Wood TC have agreed in principle to adding gritting routes extending into their parish, at our cost
- A fallen tree across a path at Cinderhill has been removed
- The concrete path outside Brenchley toilets has been repaired
- There has been a rubbish collection from the allotments
- Bins on Matfield Green have been repaired and painted following our request to TWBC
- Hanging baskets will go up on the Pavilion in early May
- The flagpoles have been serviced

18. RFO's Report with budget monitoring

The RFO confirmed the result of the re-valuation of the Pavilion for insurance purposes and that we are sufficiently covered. The first half precept had been received and transfers to the CCLA account made.

1. Accounts payable

3804	HMRC	Tax and NI Apr 26	£819.68	£819.68	
3805	C. Brooks	Apr 26 mileage	£61.20	Salary Balance £45.85	£107.05
3806	Waste Way	Mar 26 bin collects at Porters Wood/Brenchley Rec			£172.80
3807	Silva Woodland Management	Allotment Tree and Hedge Trimming			£720.00
3808	Capel Groundcare	Playground Inspection Monthly premium Apr 26			£306.00
3809	Capel Groundcare	SIDs Monthly contract Apr 26			£194.35
3810	Littlethorpe	Shingles for Bus Shelter Roof			£168.00
3811	Microshade	Apr 26 Software support			£216.94
3813	Garden Barber	Allotment Mowing 2026			£425.00
3814	Fuzion 4	Fire extinguisher servicing			£88.92
3815	Rialtas	Software support and maintenance 2026-27			£367.20
3816	BMH	Booking Fee Annual Parish Meeting April 26			£50.00
3817	GMT Property Maintenance	Fingerpost Sign Installation			£165.00
3818	DNA Ramps and Access	Ramp (IR)			£492.00
3819	Garden Proud	JVMG Gardening March			£60.00
3820	PWCAC	Annual Grant			£2,000.00
3821	BMH	Annual Car Park Grant			£1,500.00
3822	Brenchley Archive Group	Annual Grant			£1,000.00
3824	GMT Property Maintenance	Picture hanging and CCTV camera install			£94.50
3825	GMT Property Maintenance	Brenchley toilets concrete work			£392.11
3826	Streetlights	Annual Contract 1 of 2			£302.40
3827	Fuzion 4	Fire Alarm servicing			£344.40
3829	Mulberry	End of Year Shutdown Rialtas			£235.14
3830	Cooper Burnett Solicitors	Money on Account (Pond Drain Project)			£1,850.00

Payments by Credit Card Mar expenditure (total) DD £123.92

3831	Amazon	Hanging Basket Brackets	£28.00
	Amazon	Dummy CCTV Cameras	£28.46
	Amazon	Batteries, Cable Ties CCTV Signs	£28.47
	Toolstation	Metal Spike for HWLT Signpost	£35.99

Monthly card fee £3.00

Standing Orders and Direct Debits For Information

3832	SO C. Brooks	Salary Apr 26	£2,119.82
3833	SO Sarah Castro-Edwards	Salary Apr 26	£721.04
3834	DD Smart Pension	Apr 26 Pension Payment	£953.33
3835	DD EDF Energy	Pavilion Electricity Mar 26	£146.44
3836	DD EDF Energy	Electricity Brenchley Toilets Mar 26	£22.19
3837	DD EDF Energy	Electricity Matfield Toilets	£35.00
3837	DD Smart Pension	Mar 26 Pension admin fee	£26.40
3838	SO Churchill Group	Apr 26 Toilet Cleaning services	£913.46
3839	DD SSE	Streetlight electricity Mar 26	£112.36
3840	DD Everflow	Water Charges 22/05 - 21/06	0
3841	DD First Com Tec Works	Monthly Phone and Broadband Service Apr 25	£197.73
3842	Unity Bank	Monthly Service Charge Apr 26 tbc	£18.25

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

19. Meetings attended, reports by Councillors and urgent business

Cllrs Dewdney and Buttery and the Clerk attended a meeting with KCC/TWBC and the Environment Agency concerning an enforcement matter.

Cllr Churchill attended the Road Safety Active Travel Group meeting in Maidstone

Cllr Akenhead attended a meeting regarding the Bockingfold Solar Farm

20. Date of next meeting: Monday 1st June 2026, 7pm, Matfield Pavilion