



BRENCHLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL
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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE POLICY AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF BRENCHLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 14th APRIL 2025, AT 10.30am AT MATFIELD PAVILION

Present: Cllr Buttery (Chair), Cllr Dewdney, Cllr Anderson, C. Brooks (Clerk)

In attendance: Cllr R. Dafter

1. To accept apologies for absence

None.

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

None.

3. Review of the Minutes of the last meeting

The Committee reviewed the Minutes of the meeting of 13th November 2024 which had been received by the Full Council on 2nd December 2024.

4. Core Policies for biennial review

The Committee noted that the Council agreed to review Core policies in year 2 and 4 of the Council term. The new model Financial Regulations were re-adopted in September 2024 and were further amended by the Finance Committee on 26th March 2025 and approved by the Full Council on 7th April. The Risk Management Policy was last adopted in December 2024.

a. Code of Conduct – this was considered in advance of the May 2024 Annual meeting and no amendments were proposed.

No amendments were proposed.

b. Gifts and Hospitality – this was considered in advance of the May 2024 Annual Meeting and no amendments were proposed. It was suggested that it is added as an appendix to the Code of Conduct rather than as a separate Policy however no amendments were proposed.

c. Standing Orders – with the NALC model version of 2022 having been considered the Standing Orders were last adopted with amendments in November 2023. The Committee considered the possibility of adding a time limit to meetings noting that this might result in less items for information only being added to agendas, which was felt to be unacceptable.

No amendments were proposed.

d. Health and Safety – this policy was last adopted in May 2023, Cllr Buttery advised his agreement to continue as H&S Officer, a role which has to be appointed annually.

No amendments were proposed.

5. New Policies – to consider

The Committee considered whether activities warrant drafting new policies. Most policies currently in place had been referred to in the past year including the Tree Policy, the s.106 Funding Policy, The Memorial Benches Policy and the Complaints Policy. It was acknowledged that the Annual Meeting would remind Cllrs to read policies through once a year.

No new policies were proposed.

6. Emergency and Resilience Plan – to consider draft

Cllr Buttery had circulated a draft plan, based on the Kent Resilience Forum outline, having attended a Parish Chairs event. It was agreed that such a plan required the input of local residents to be effective as local wardens needed to be identified.

Whilst there was a view that such a plan was not necessary, given that major incidents were managed by local authorities/emergency services and utility companies, it was agreed that a simple plan listing such key information as contact details, local venues for refuge and for information centres (including Matfield Pavilion) would be beneficial. It was suggested that a sign-up list for volunteers could be added to the Parish Council stand at the Fete and also be promoted in Roundabout, on the website and social media.

It was agreed that Cllr Buttery would work with the Clerk to draft a post.

Action Cllr Buttery, Clerk

7. Risk Management and Risk Assessment Review

The Full Council adopted this new policy, together with the Risk Assessment schedule for Land and Assets in December 2024. It was noted that the Pavilion had just had its 5-year fire safety inspection and the full report was awaited.

Small factual amendments were made:

Playgrounds inspected weekly

Jack Verrall Garden steps re-pointed

8. Council Management

- a. Working Groups** – the Clerk outlined that the Environment and Sustainability Working Group had not met since October 2023 and the Traffic and Highways Working Group had last met on 5th January 2023. Both Working Groups had Terms of Reference adopted in December 2022. Working Groups usually being established for short term projects the Committee considered that the work of these groups could be incorporated into the main Council activities.

RECOMMENDATION to disband the Traffic and Environment and Sustainability Working Groups

- b. Allotments Association** – the Clerk outlined, having attended KALC training, a proposal for the establishment of an Allotment Association which would transfer responsibility for the everyday management of the Allotments to a tenants' association. This was discussed in some detail and it was noted that it would be difficult to enforce membership on existing tenants, despite the benefits such as a group insurance policy for Public Liability being cheaper to obtain for all tenants as a group via membership of the National Allotments Society. It would also require a number of volunteers to stand for specific positions such as Treasurer. It was therefore suggested that tenants be directed to join the NAS and that this be clarified in the Tenancy Agreement for new tenants.

Action Clerk

9. Date of next meeting: Autumn 2025