

Penshurst Parish Council Meeting MINUTES Monday 1 September 2025

Minutes of the Penshurst Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 1st September 2025 at 7pm in Penshurst Village Hall.

Present: Councillor Andy Campbell (Chairman), Councillor Diane Broad, Councillor Norman Furnell, Councillor Bruce Townsend, Councillor Jonathan Horsford, Rachael Turner (Clerk & RFO).

Also present: Kent County Councillor Robert Mayall, 1 Member of Public and Sevenoaks District Councillor Richard Streatfeild¹

Absent: Councillor Richard Gerard-Sharp, Councillor Sally Jolly, Councillor Robert Rees, Councillor Duncan Howard

1. Apologies for Absence received and approved from Councillor Sally Jolly, Councillor Duncan Howard, Councillor Robert Rees.
2. Declaration of interests in agenda items – none declared.
3. Minutes of the 4th August 2025 Penshurst Parish Council Meeting were duly approved and signed.
4. Matters Arising:
 - (i) Bus Shelter Refurbishment - works have been completed on the Penshurst, Fordcombe and Smarts Hill bus stops.
 - (ii) Chafford Park concerns from residents re noise and traffic raised previously. Clerk has written to SDC Planning and Environmental Health to make them aware.
5. Open Session - Nothing raised.
6. Kent County Councillor Robert Mayall – Cllr Mayall circulated information on the Local Government Re-organisation. The aim of the re-organisation is to create cost savings. It is planned for changes to be implemented from April 2028. A study has been commissioned by Kent authorities giving various options and Cllr Mayall asked the Clerk to share it:
[Agenda for Devolution and Local Government Re-organisation Cabinet Committee on Monday, 28th July, 2025, 10.30 am](#)

Cllr Townsend asked if Cllr Mayall was aware of the bison project in Kent. This had cost a lot of money, with fencing funded by KCC. It is understood there were plans to put bridges in the surrounding area and had concerns this too would cost more money and wanted to make Cllr Mayall aware.

Cllr Mayall confirmed the KCC Highways budget had increased from £10 million to £79 million.

¹ Sent apologies for late arrival. Arrived 7.40 pm

Cllr Furnell informed Cllr Mayall of the holes in the road left by the temporary cats eyes. The holes are growing bigger. KCC has painted lines around them but has not done anything with them. He was also informed of frequent urgent closures of roads and concerns over the quality of works done, particularly by the utility companies, and the fact the works are supposed to be inspected by KCC. The ongoing water leak in Fordcombe that has persisted for years was also brought to his attention.

Cllr Furnell would like to ensure the leader of KCC is aware of the lack of policing faced by the area and would like to include Cllr Mayall in the email correspondence. Clerk to provide email address for Cllr Furnell.

7.35 pm Cllr Mayall left to attend another meeting.

- 7. Sevenoaks District Councillor Mr Richard Streatfeild** – Cllr Streatfeild reported there was lots of debate at SDC about assets. He will be attending a Local Plan briefing this month, with an update coming soon after. There is potentially lots of housing planned for Chiddingstone Causeway. With regards to Kingdom, the Enforcement Officer has left and a new officer assigned, however, they thought the case was closed. Cllr Streatfeild has asked if there are any noise issues in the parish, the first step is to contact the organisation and request they reduce the noise. If nothing happens then it should be raised with Enforcement. Noise levels should be recorded on the Noise App provided by SDC and the issue raised with them, copying in Cllr Streatfeild too. Noise is recorded at Kingdom so noise related reports of issues can be checked.

Despite enquiring, ownership of the wall in Fordcombe has not been established.

Cllr Horsford raised the issue of parking opposite Paddock Close, believed to be from residents at Reeves Court, with dangerous parking including parking on the pavement. It was suggested more parking should be provided by Reeves Court for their residents. Clerk to email details to Cllr Streatfeild.

7.55 pm Cllr Streatfeild left the meeting.

- 8. PC John Donegan – no report this time.**

- 9. Neighbourhood Report** – Cllr Furnell reported that:

- a) Neighbourhood Watch had been pretty quiet
- b) In response to the email regarding the need for more local police, a reply has been received from Tom Tugendhat, MP. Among other things Tom says:
“I have approached the current Minister responsible for Policing, Diana Johnson MP, to ask whether they will ensure a greater grant to Kent Police, whilst also approaching Kent Police and Crime Commissioner, Matthew Scott, to ask whether he can look at additional funding options too.”

In the meantime, Cllr Furnell has emailed the information to Linden Kemkaran, the new Reform leader of KCC.

- c) There are free scam alerts that are really useful, provided by Which. You can sign up for these via:
<https://signup.which.co.uk/wlp-scamalert-newsletter>
- d) Speedwatch – potential sites, with the help of Rob Sellings, were identified and have been visited by Cllr Furnell and the Clerk. Clerk to check the sites with Police and register with
<https://www.kent.police.uk/speedwatch> . The Speedwatch equipment that was sent off for repair some time ago was thought to be deemed irreparable, however the Clerk will look into this.

10. New Road site update – Nothing to report at present, other than it is believed more details should be available for the October meeting.

11. Finance/Accounts:

- a. **Payments:** The following accounts were presented and approved for payment at the meeting:

September 2025 Payments List		
Payee	Details of payment	Amount
NJL Services	Maintenance of Fordcombe, Smarts Hill and Penshurst bus shelters	£1600
Complete Weed Control	Weed control Fordcombe village centre 26/6/25	£234
Rachael Turner	Clerk Aug pay	£1019.84
HMRC 120PR02597105	PAYE/NI Aug 25	£412.61
Vision ICT	Website hosting and support Sept 25-Aug 26	£210
Lucy Fuller Rowell	Lengthsman Service Aug 25	£100
		£ 3,576.45

- b. ***Finance Update including bank reconciliation** – duly approved and signed.

- c. **Grant Applications:** None received for consideration this time.

12. Defibrillators update

- a. Penshurst Village Hall – defibrillator has been cleaned, new pads and batteries fitted and is now registered on The Circuit which is used by emergency services.
- b. Fordcombe Village Hall – The defibrillator cabinet door is stuck. As the handle is turning when the code is entered, the manufacturer recommends to try with more force to open it and lubricant spray for hinges. Once checked and operational will also add to The Circuit.

13. Penshurst – To hear road safety concerns that have been raised and to consider potential solutions.

Concerns have been raised regarding road safety in the area near the school/ store. There is parking on the bend opposite the school. Could the following measures be considered:

- a) Yellow lines
- b) A pedestrian crossing
- c) Reduction of speed limit to 20 mph

It is thought it would not be possible to install a crossing due to the need to have street lighting. Other options can be explored, although it is unlikely the speed limit will be reduced. Clerk to request site visit and information from KCC Highways on potential solutions.

There have been several accidents recently on that stretch of road where vehicles have been damaged, thankfully nobody has been injured.

Once further information has been sought, it will be added to the Highways Improvement Plan.

14. Fordcombe Play Area update following the Annual Safety Inspection

The report confirmed action points were mainly maintenance, replacement caps for bolts and securing matting. Quotes being sought for replacement supports for the multiplay, cleaning of equipment and also weed control to prevent strimmer damage.

Play area gates will need replacing in the next year. The cableway service will need to be scheduled.

15. Allotments update – Rental payments have all been received bar one, Cllr Campbell will check in with the tenant to see if they wish to continue. There is a waiting list for allotments in place. Cllr Campbell will get quote for deer fencing and look at creating additional allotments on part of the field. A new gate is required for the field entrance.

16. Clerk Report – Items for noting and information

- a. Saturday Bulk Refuse Freighter service suspended by SDC from October due to issues with staffing. Could Parish Councils look at arranging this service independently of SDC? Concerns are that if the service ceases then potentially there could be an increase in fly tipping. Clerk to investigate.
- b. Verge cutting – sadly the company is unable to continue with this. The cluster is looking for alternative supplier or may have to revert back to KCC providing the service. Councillors would prefer to keep this service outside of KCC. Clerk to provide contact details to Cllr Horsford who will circulate to contacts to see if an alternative provider can be found.
- c. CPR/Defib training for community – a request has been sent to Kent Fire Brigade contact who provide training.
- d. KCC are trialling a new pothole reporting tool.
- e. Emergency Alert system – UK Government are testing the system on Sunday 7th September at 3pm when all compatible mobile phones will hear a loud siren like sound and vibration for 10 seconds plus a message.
- f. Councillor Emails – A shortcut can be used to access emails more easily via a desktop or phone. The other alternative is to use the Blue Mail App which is available from the Play Store.

Instructions are available. Clerk is happy to help set up access for Councillors so official email addresses can be used going forward instead of personal ones.

17. Planning: Planning Applications:

SDC Ref.	Address	Summary of application	Deadline for comments
SE/25/01087/FUL	Watstock Farm Wellers Town Road Chiddingstone Hoath Kent TN8 7BH NB – This application is in a neighbouring Parish	Conversion and part alteration of three existing barns to create eight self-contained dwellings with associated parking, private garden and landscaping, air source heat pumps and bin stores. Diversion of public path and bridle way	9th Sept
25/02181/HOUSE	Smarts Hill House Smarts Hill Penshurst Kent TN11 8ER	Proposed conversion of existing stables. Removal of stables and construction of extension to create ancillary accommodation.	18th Sept 2025
PPC agreed view: As there is no increase in footprint or volume, no objection			
25/00968/HOUSE	Titchfield Barn Salmans Lane Penshurst Kent TN11 8DJ	Proposed erection of carport with solar panels, EV charger and front gates. App now valid - new plans have been provided with an amended red line	19th Sept 2025
PPC agreed view: No objection			

18. HIGHWAYS & PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

Details	Location	Date reported	Ref No	Comments	Fault repaired
Rogues Hill give way bridge tree on right obstructing sight line when coming to Penshurst	Rogues Hill - 2nd bridge out of village towards Bidborough	KCC 02/07/2025	886962	Not Highways - have requested Penshurst Estate cut	

				back the tree. Requested again 8/25	
Recent works have left the surface at the bottom of very well used footpath and bridleway almost 1 foot below the level of the path and exactly where people stand to see if there is any approaching traffic. It is a hazard which needs to be removed and replaced with something more suitable asap before it causes an accident	B2188 New Road, Penshurst where SR458 cross the road	PROW and KCC 19/8/25	250812 995		Yes

Fordcombe Village Green – drainage works are progressing and hopefully will resolve the issue. It is hoped the entranceway kerb will also be sorted out.

19. Items for noting or inclusion on future agenda at the discretion of the Chairman.

- a. The following have hedges/growth that is encroaching the footpath and need cutting back, particularly now school is back. Clerk to report:
 - i. 6 Glebelands
 - ii. Birches
 - iii. Star House
- b. Fordcombe bin at the bus shelter is frequently overflowing, leaving rubbish over the green. Clerk to check it is being emptied regularly and to see if a larger bin could be supplied. It was questioned where the waste was coming from.

Meeting closed 8.36 pm

Date of next meeting – Monday 6th October 7.00 pm Full Council in Penshurst Village Hall.

**Meeting dates/times can be subject to change, please always check
<https://www.penshurstpc.co.uk/website> for next meeting date/Agenda.**