

Penshurst Parish Council

Annual Meeting - Draft Minutes

Draft Minutes of the Penshurst Parish Council Meeting held in Fordcombe Village Hall on Monday 11th May 2026, which commenced at 7.15 pm.

Present: Councillor Andy Campbell (Chairman), Councillor Dianne Broad, Councillor Norman Furnell, Councillor Jonathan Horsford, Councillor Bruce Townsend, Councillor Richard Gerard-Sharp, Councillor Robert Rees, Councillor Duncan Howard and Kent County Councillor Robert Mayall, District Councillor Streatfeild, 1 MOP (Member of Public) and Rachael Turner (Clerk & RFO).

Absent: Councillor Sally Jolly

1. a) Election of Chairman. Cllr Campbell was proposed as Chairman by Cllr Rees, seconded by Cllr Furnell and duly approved. The Acceptance of Office form was completed and signed.

b) Election of Vice-Chairman. Cllr Rees was proposed as Vice Chairman by Cllr Howard and seconded by Cllr Gerard-Sharp.
2. Apologies for absence were received and approved from Cllr Sally Jolly.
3. Public Forum. Nothing raised.
4. Appointment of Representatives:
KALC Representatives - all
Village Hall Planning Representatives: Penshurst: Cllr Gerard-Sharp, Fordcombe: Cllr Townsend
PROW - Footpath/Bridle Path Representative – Penshurst: Cllr Broad, Fordcombe: Cllr Jolly
Allotments: Cllr Campbell
Play Area: Cllr Townsend and Cllr Horsford
Alms Houses: Cllr Howard
Becket Trust : Cllr Rees
Gatwick: all
Neighbourhood Watch: Cllr Furnell
5. No declarations of interest received.
6. County Councillor Mayall reported that Ringway were the new contractor for road repairs so improvement should be seen. The LGR (Local Government Review) approved option should be published in July. KCC choice was 1a which would be cost effective.

Cllr Mayall was asked, with all the savings made by KCC would there be more funding for road repairs? Cllr Streatfeild confirmed that more potholes had been repaired so more money had been spent. There were significantly more potholes due to weather conditions. It was asked if road surface repairs would take place. Cllr Streatfeild

confirmed they should be repaired when the damage is 5cm or more. Prior to that they would not be as they were classed as usable.

It was questioned if drain maintenance would take place in line with the pothole repairs. Cllr Mayall confirmed it should be.

It was also questioned again why so much money is collected in Council Tax, but the allocation of Police in the area was out of proportion and was it fair for a local authority to take money for services and not provide the service? Cllr Streatfeild commented that policing is allocated county wide.

7. District Councillor Streatfeild reported food waste collections had started and received a mixed response. Not every household had received their food waste bins due to a shortfall. Cllr Streatfeild confirmed the food waste is collected in a separate truck. It was asked how much these new trucks cost, which is to be advised. Householders will have to purchase replacement biodegradable bin bags for the food waste once those supplied have run out. Further recycling, including glass and cardboard is yet to be rolled out. This will mean more bins for households and the current recycling bags will not be used. With regards to the array of bins, arrangements can be made for collection in special circumstances. More information is available In Shape Magazine.

Ownership of the wall has not been confirmed. It does not belong to West Kent Housing or KCC or SDC. If it falls onto the highway KCC would be responsible for clearing it up. Cllr Streatfeild suggested PPC might want to gather some quotes for works and apply for CIL funding as nobody was registered as the owner.

The school bus provider is changing and confirmation is awaited as to who this will be.

Beckett Trust is interested in looking at the previous Affordable Housing survey.

Local Plan Regulation 19 next stage consultation will be coming out later in June.

8. Matters Arising
 - a. Chafford Park – it was noted there were recent event noise issues that have been reported. However, other local residents commented it was nothing like it was previously and weren't submitting a complaint.
9. Minutes of last meeting held on the 7th April 2026 were duly approved and signed.
10. Finance
 - a. Receive report from internal auditor – Whilst a lot of progress has been made, there were 4 areas (C. Risk, E. Income (pricing) L. website O. digital compliance) that were not fully compliant with, so are marked as a no on Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement and on the Internal Audit Report. These are in the process of being rectified.

The recommendations from the Internal Auditor are listed below:

**Internal Audit –
Summary of
recommendations**

Internal Audit Findings

Audit Point

B. FINANCE
REGULATIONS,
GOVERNANCE
AND PAYMENTS

Acceptance of Office forms: I recommend the form is amended to include formal acceptance to receive information by electronic means

B. FINANCE
REGULATIONS,
GOVERNANCE
AND PAYMENTS

It is best practice to anonymise quotes before they are presented to Council for authorisation in order to avoid bias should the councillors know any of the contractors personally.

C. RISK
MANAGEMENT
AND INSURANCE

The council has risk assessment policy on its website, but it was last reviewed and approved by council in February 2024. The Council has therefore not met FR2.2 and I was unable to test the completeness or effectiveness of this policy

E. INCOME

The Clerk is aware that a published charging schedule is required for transparency purposes and consistency and that fees should be reviewed annually at the time of budget setting but was unable to instigate this in the 2025/26 year.

G. PAYROLL

As the current clerk has not been in post for a full year no performance review took place, but a process is to be agreed moving forwards.

I. BANK AND CASH

Bank reconciliations: Councillors are reminded that they must always sign the bank statement as well as cover sheet as there was some inconsistency.

L. PUBLICATION OF
INFORMATION

Only the previous four years of Pages 4 (Annual Governance Statement), 5 (Accounting Statements) and 6 (External Auditor's Report and Certificate) of the AGARs are available for review on the council website

O. DIGITAL AND
DATA
COMPLIANCE

The council does not appear to have had an IT Policy in place during the year ending 31 March 2026. An IT policy was approved by the council at the meeting held on 7 April 2026 (minute ref 7).

O. DIGITAL AND
DATA
COMPLIANCE

The council did not complete a data audit in the year, and I recommend the council ensures this is completed regularly to comply with GDPR regulations.

- b. * Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) Annual Governance statement (Section 1) was duly approved.
- c. *The Accounting statements (Section 2), (Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015) and findings on the review by the members meeting as a whole were considered.

It was noted the prior year numbers (24-25) for balances carried forward, payments and assets submitted on the AGAR had a discrepancy and are being Restated. An explanatory note will be issued to the external auditor with the AGAR submission.

- d. Accounting statements were approved and signed and dated by the Chairman.

- e. Dates of Exercise of Public Rights as 3/6/26 to 14/7/26 were noted.
- f. The accounts listed at the end of the Minutes were approved.

8.05 pm Cllr Streatfeild left the meeting

8.10 pm Cllr Mayall left the meeting

- g. *Finance Update including bank reconciliation
Year End for 25-26 results:

| Section totals | Budget 25-26 | Actual spend 25-26 | Amount of budget remaining | Percentage under budget |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Overall totals | £ 95,525 | £ 76,094 | £19,430 | 20% |

Bank reconciliation was received and approved.

- h. It was noted that a VAT reclaim of £647.53 has been made for 25-26.

11. *Annual Policies listed below were reviewed and approved:

- a. Code of Conduct
- b. Asset Register
- c. Risk Management Matrix

12. Allotments update

Letter has been sent out to holders for rent invoices. Reiterated allotments must be cultivated and kept tidy and site visit will take place in the next month. Holders were asked to let Clerk know if they no longer wished to have their allotment as a waiting list in place.

There is a dead conifer tree by the gate at Bottlehouse Allotments that needs taking down. Quotes to be sought.

13. Annual Insurance Policy renewal

Gallagher has issued the renewal premium with Hiscox at £1076.19 which is a reasonable increase on last year. Approved. Insurance review will take place for next year.

14. Verge Cutting – Noted increase in costs due to rise in fuel costs.

15. Clerk Report – Items for noting and information

- a. There will be no July meeting.
- b. Website and emails – compliance issues with accessibility standards so website audit is being carried out to bring up to date. Emails awaiting confirmation of migration from old account. Ongoing service issues with supplier so will look at alternative options this year.
- c. Safety Mirror for outside Fordcombe Village Hall to aid vision when exiting The Lane. Costs estimated to be around £400-1000. It is understood Fordcombe Village Hall are happy for the

mirror to be placed on the verge. Clerk to write to Committee to request formal permission and to share potential concave mirror options and costs.

16. Planning:

Current Applications:

| SDC REF | ADDRESS | DEVELOPMENT | DEADLINE FOR COMMENTS |
|---------------|--|---|-----------------------|
| 26/01080/WTCA | 1 Moat Cottages Doubleton Lane Penshurst Tonbridge Kent TN11 8JA | Removal of Yew tree due to gaining access to the garage | NA – Info only |

17. *Highways & Public Rights of Way

Leicester Square water leak – SE Water have confirmed today the leak is not coming from the water main. Clerk to follow up.

Given the ongoing flooding and drainage issues across the parish, it would be useful to have confirmation of the cycle and due dates of drain clearing. A drain map of the drains that run through Penshurst High Street would be useful. Clerk to try to source.

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

- a) Cllr Furnell asked for a much overdue update from English Rural on the New Road site.
- b) Clerk confirmed potential providers for bulk waste service were being looked at.
- c) Cllr Campbell will clear the bus stop of leaves and debris.
- d) The Spring Hill footbridge issue is ongoing and concerns that it is dangerous. Cllr Broad to provide Clerk with exact location so it can be reported.
- e) Cllr Horsford asked when The Lane drains are to be cleared as the drainage issues continue to damage the road. Clerk to investigate options for bringing the service in house.
- f) Concerns were raised over parking on the green that was blocking access to the school. On occasions this also blocked emergency services access. Signage to be produced stating short term parking only and to not block access.
- g) Parking at the front of Fordcombe Village Hall – this needs to be opened to reduce parking on the green.
- h) It was reported gates were being installed on the Old Coach Road by Watstock Farm bridleway. These would need to be accessible to those using the right of way.
- i) The notification of price increase for garden waste by SDC was raised together with a reduction in provision in service which did not seem fair. Cllr Howard to provide Clerk with details to send to SDC.
- j) How to dispose of old unwanted fuel, such as petrol was raised. Cllrs to look into this.
- k) It was agreed going forward PPC meetings would start at 7.15 pm

Date of next meeting – Monday 1st June 2026 7.15 pm Full Council - in Penshurst Village Hall.

Meeting closed 8.55pm

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

Appendix

Payments list:

| Penshurst Parish Council | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| May 2026 Payments List | | | |
| Cheque Number | Payee | Details of payment | Amount |
| 1297 | Lucy Fuller Rowell | Lengthslady services Apr 26 | £ 100.00 |
| 1298 | Rachael Turner | Clerk pay Apr 26 | £ 1,019.84 |
| 1299 | HMRC 120PR02597105 | Tax and NI Apr 26 | £ 412.61 |
| 1300 | Rachael Turner | Clerk Expenses | £ 253.81 |
| 1301 | Oast & Oak Services | Penshurst and Fordcombe closed churchyard mowing and strimming 4 April to 8 May | £ 818.72 |
| 1302 | Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd | Internal audit fee 25-26 | £ 364.32 |
| 1303 | Friends of Penshurst Church | Grant Payment towards Penshurst Living Archives website. Payable under s137 | £ 200.00 |
| 1304 | High Weald Churches | Fordcombe Magazine towards production costs grant S137 agreed at April 26 meeting | £ 1,500.00 |
| | | TOTAL | £ 4,669.30 |