



## Coxheath Parish Council

Minutes of a Meeting of Coxheath Parish Council held on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> of July 2025 at 7.15 p.m.

**Present:** Parish Cllrs: G Crickett (Chairman), C Bird, N Gardner, K Laponder, C Parker, S Thomas, H Weaver

**In attendance:** Irene Bowie (Parish Clerk)

### 79/25 Apologies and absences:

- a. Apologies for absence received and confirmed by the Council Members who cannot attend a meeting shall tender their apologies to the Parish Clerk prior to the meetings, under Section 75(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, the members present must decide whether the reason(s) for a member's absence shall be accepted.  
There were no apologies.
- b. Declaration of Changes to the Register of Interests.  
*Councillors are responsible for ensuring that their Register of Interests is up to date (within 28 days of any changes).* There were none.
- c. To receive Declarations of Interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda.  
In accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 in respect of members and in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect of officers.  
*Reminder to Members to disclose either a Pecuniary Interest or Other Interest in any item on the agenda. The clerk cannot advise members on this, and members are personally responsible for declaring an interest.* There were none.
- d. Requests for Dispensations. There were none.
- e. Declarations of Lobbying. There were none.

### 80/25 Public comments and observations. (Maximum 15 minutes).

**The meeting will be adjourned to allow members of the public to speak. Individuals may speak for up to three minutes at the discretion of the Chairman. The Minute Book will be closed.**

### 81/25 To receive reports from external parties (if present).

### 82/25 CO OPTION of Parish Councillor/s: To consider candidates for co-option.

None to consider.

### 83/25 To receive reports on matters not included elsewhere on the agenda.

- a. Chairman of the Parish Council Cllr Crickett  
The Chairman reported that he had attended the KALC Local Government Reorganisation - Transfer of Assets Training
- b. Playground Inspection Reports Cllr Parker
  - a. To receive and agree actions from the Annual RoSPA Inspection July 2025  
Noted. Further consideration to be given to the report because of the late addition to the meeting.
  - b. To receive and consider quotations for monthly playground Inspections
- c. Councillors Reports All Cllrs  
Councillor Weaver gave her report as the Village Hall Representative.
- d. Community Litter Pick Clerk  
Councillor Weaver gave her report. She also raised her concerns regarding the emptying of the litter bin at the MUGA and requested to see the Honorarium Agreement.
- e. Clerk's Report Clerk  
The Clerk reminded the Council that part of her role is to make sure that the Council follows proper procedures. Sometimes this means advising Councillors that certain activities cannot be taken. She also explained that she can only give guidance if she is told about proposed actions in advance.

**84/25 Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting.**

**RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> of June 2025 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**85/25 Finance.**

- a. To receive and authorise payments listed on the schedule (to be provided at the meeting)  
**RESOLVED: To approve the payments on the schedule.**

<b>Vodafone</b>	Vodafone £27.45 July 2025	<b>27.45</b>
<b>Ionos Emails</b>	July 2025	<b>70.20</b>
<b>Adobe Software</b>	Adobe 19.97 July 2025	<b>19.97</b>
<b>Dave Mann</b>	Grass Cutting Village Planters	<b>530.30</b>
<b>Village Hall</b>	Room Hire Cleaning	<b>45.00</b>
<b>Gala Lights</b>	Beacon Lights Installation	<b>900.00</b>
<b>PlaySafety</b>	RoSPA Inspections	<b>288.00</b>
<b>KALC</b>	Planning Training	<b>60.00</b>
<b>Staff Costs</b>	Clerk Salary and HMRC	<b>Confidential</b>

- b. Late Payment Request/s to be discussed for approval and payment. There were none.  
c. To consider any late financial matters. There were none.  
d. To receive the bank reconciliation. Not available the Clerk was finishing Scribe Training and the transfer of the accounts.  
e. To receive the receipts of Income. Not available the Clerk was finishing Scribe Training and the transfer of the accounts.

**86/25 Planning Committee.** Councillors Gardner, Thomas and Weaver. Councillor Cricket Substitute Member.

- a. To receive the decisions and recommendations.  
Cllr Gardner gave an update on planning matters.

**87/25 Working Groups. To receive reports and recommendations.**

- a. **Recreation and Open Spaces Working Group.**  
(Councillors Bird, Crickett and Parker. Affiliate Member Mr. D Mann)  
**RESOLVED: That Councillor Weaver would join the Working Group.**
- b. **Traffic & Community Safety Working Group.**  
(Councillors Bird, Gardner, Thomas)
- Parish Portal Report. Noted
  - To receive an update on the Highways Improvement Plan.

**RESOLVED: To accept the recommendation from KCC Highways and have agreed to progress with the design phase of wig wags on the existing school warning signs.  
A maximum budget of £8000 ex VAT was set.**

- c. **Communications and Events Working Group.**  
(Councillors Gardner, Parker and Thomas)  
**RESOLVED:**
- To accept the request from the Clerk that she would no longer be a member of the group.
  - To accept the request from the Clerk that she would no longer be responsible for the parish council website or facebook page.

- d. **Pavilion Working Group.**  
(Councillors Crickett, Gardner, Thomas. Affiliate members Mr. D Mann and Mr. N Hadley)  
No further updates.

**88/25 Motion Proposed by Councillor Gardner:**

To change the Events/Comms working group to a full committee with chair/VC etc. A budget to be set for full rebuild of PC website.

**RESOLVED: That the events and Communications Working Group become, with immediate effect, a Committee.**

**89/25 Motion Proposed by Councillor Gardner:**

The creation of a Digitisation Process, to work back through all PC paper records and digitise them. This would include full database creation with indexing, provision for off-site backup and access for councillors and clerk. A budget would be set, including the hiring of at least one person/provider to undertake the task (following Local Government data protection guidelines). Councillors Gardner and Thomas to oversee.

**RESOLVED: To approve the motion by Councillor Garner and begin the process of digitizing parish council records.**

**90/25 Annual Policy Review.**

**a. To readopt the following policies:**

- i.. Finance Committee Terms of Reference
- ii. Model Publication Scheme
- iii. GDPR Document Retention Policy
- iv. Freedom of Information Policy
- v. Code of Conduct
- vi. Risk Assessment Policy and Register
- vii. Privacy Policy
- viii. Email Policy
- viii. Civility and Respect Pledge.
- viii. Grant Policy and Grant Monitoring Form
- ix. Section 101 Scheme of Delegation
- x. Memorial Tree and Bench Policy

**b. To consider and adopt the following policies:**

- i. Whistleblower Policy
- ii. Social media and Communications Policy

**AGREED:** That these policies would be reviewed at the September Parish Council Meeting.

**91/25 Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)**

- a. Update from KALC Local Government Reorganisation - Transfer of Assets Training  
Councillors Crickett, Bird and the Clerk gave an update.
- b. KALC Local Government Reorganisation Survey

**AGREED:** The Clerk would contact MBC and ask for a list of assets currently held in Coxheath.

**92/25 Correspondence:**

- a. To table items of late correspondence.
- b. Items circulated.
  - i. Local Government Reorganisation survey
  - ii. KCC HIP Updates - Aspian Drive and Heath Road Double Yellow Lines
  - iii. KALC Training Bulletin

All correspondence was noted.

**93/25 Consideration of items to be taken in private (Exclusion of Public and Press):**

There are only a few reasons as to why, legally, the public and press can be excluded from a meeting. The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Sec 1 (2) states "A body may, by resolution, exclude the public from a meeting (whether during the whole or part of the proceedings) whenever publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons stated in the resolution and arising from the nature of that business or of the proceedings; and where such a resolution is passed, this Act shall not require the meeting to be open to the public during proceedings to which the resolution applies." It is generally considered acceptable to exclude the press and public if the agenda item relates to the consideration of tenders, leases, purchases of assets, for matters relating to staffing covered by the Data Protection Act and to consider complaints against the council or a code of conduct complaint.

- a. To receive an update on legal matters from the Clerk.  
AGREED: That the Clerk can progress matters if appropriate.

**Meeting Dates 2025**

**FULL COUNCIL :** September 30th, October 28th, November 25th.

**PLANNING COMMITTEE:** 6.45 pm prior to the Full Council Meetings listed above.  
*Please note Planning Committee meetings may be cancelled if not required.*

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:** To be confirmed

***These minutes are not a verbatim record of the meeting, but a record of resolutions made.***

**There being no further business to be transacted, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9:09 pm.**

**Signed :**

**Date:**

**Chairman : Please Print Name**

## Update from Councillor Lottie Parfitt

Dear Councillors,

Please find below my latest update on key matters from Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) that may be of interest to the parish.

### **Maidstone House Refurbishment & Decarbonisation**

One of the most concerning recent developments is the decision by the new administration to authorise up to **£7.7 million** for the refurbishment and decarbonisation of **Maidstone House**, a council-owned asset currently valued at around **£4 million**, according to the Cabinet Member for Housing.

The Conservative Group, which I represent, called this decision into **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**, on which I sit. We did so because we felt such a significant financial commitment warranted debate and input from **all council members**. Unfortunately, our request for the matter to be taken to Full Council was rejected, and the debate was held behind closed doors under restricted papers.

In my time as a councillor, I've always aimed to stay constructive, but I cannot support this decision. The **internal rate of return (IRR)** on this investment is around **1.9%**, far below the council's usual benchmark of 5%. While I am not opposed to refurbishment in principle, borrowing such a large sum to potentially make a couple of extra floors rentable seems deeply risky, particularly at a time when we are facing the possibility of **local government reorganisation**.

### **Five-Year Land Supply & Local Plan Concerns**

The second pressing issue is that **MBC no longer meets its five-year housing land supply requirement**. When our group left administration, we had delivered an adopted Local Plan Review and met the five-year supply. While it wasn't perfect, it was declared sound by the Planning Inspector.

Losing the five-year supply is highly problematic. Without it, the borough is vulnerable to speculative development, particularly in the countryside. There are national challenges around housebuilding, but local decisions are also a factor. This administration has shown a lack of commitment to the Local Plan process and has repeatedly reduced housing numbers on town centre sites. Meanwhile, we are now **18 months into Green/Lib Dem leadership**, and there has been **little to no progress** on the next Local Plan.

As I've consistently stated, I oppose the **dispersal method of development**, which has already caused significant damage to our rural villages, particularly in the south of the borough. The only thing worse than dispersal is a developer's charter and a return to the "**presumption in favour of development**."

### **Positive News: Support for Fusion Healthy Living Centre**

On a much more positive note, I am pleased to report that a motion I brought forward—**supported by the Conservative Group**—was passed by Full Council. The motion secures **£12,000 per year** in council funding to cover the rental costs of **Fusion Healthy Living Centre** in Park Wood.

Fusion is a vital community hub offering youth services, wellbeing support, and a safe space for many of our most vulnerable residents. Yet, until now, it was **the only Healthy Living Centre in Kent not receiving any financial support from its local authority**.

Other councils provide support as follows:

- **Dartford:** Two funded centres (Dartford Town & Temple Hill)
- **Gravesham:** Financially supports The Grand; their council leader is a trustee
- **Swale:** Fully funds Sheppey Matters
- **Medway:** Fully funds the Sunshine Centre

Despite receiving no help from MBC, Fusion has delivered outstanding results—generating over **£27 in social value for every £1 received** through grants. That is exceptional value and clearly justifies council support.

My motion stated:

*\*“This Council recognises and gratefully acknowledges the vital role that the Fusion Healthy Living Centre plays in the lives of many residents, through the wide range of services and support it provides at its hub in Park Wood.*

*Fusion is currently the only Healthy Living Centre in Kent that receives no support from its local council.*

*In recognition of its invaluable contribution to community wellbeing, this Council resolves to provide ongoing practical and financial support to Fusion by covering the rental costs currently incurred from its landlord, Golding Homes. This amounts to £12,000 per year and will be funded from the Health Inequalities budget.”\**

I was pleased to see this motion pass and hope it sets a precedent for more meaningful, practical support for frontline services.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions about these matters or others affecting our communities.

Best regards,

**Cllr Lottie Parfitt**

**Coxheath and Farleighs**

Maidstone Borough Council