



# Coxheath Parish Council

**Minutes of a Meeting of Coxheath Parish Council held on  
Tuesday 20 January 2026 at 7.15pm in the Small Hall, Coxheath Village Hall**

**Present: Cllr. N. Gardner (Chairman), D, Carpenter, I. Laponder. K. Laponder, H. Weaver, C. Parker  
In attendance: Louise Goldsmith (Locum Parish Clerk), 2 members of the public**

## MINUTES

### 148/25 ADMINISTRATION

Fire Exits, Fire Meeting Point, Mobile Phones. It was noted that Cllr. Gardner is recording the meeting to assist with the minute taking.

### 149/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, DECLARATIONS AND DISPENSATIONS

- a) Apologies for absence:  
**An apology for absence was received from Ward Member Claire Kehily and Independent Councillor Robert Ford and the reasons for absence were granted.  
Members received and accepted Cllr Thomas' request for authorised absence from parish council meetings for the next four months, in accordance with Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.**
- b) To receive Declarations of Interest in respect of matters contained in the agenda.  
*Disclosable Interests:* Under the Localism Act 2011: **None received.**  
*Other Significant Interests:* **None received.**  
*Other Interests:* **None received.**
- c) Requests for Dispensations: **None received.**
- d) Declarations of Lobbying: **None received.**

### 150/25 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

**Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on the 25 November 2025 be approved and confirmed as a true and accurate record subject to the correction of the initials ABC to MBC in 141/25 (e) ii and correction to the initials BESN to BSEN in 141/25 (g) ii.**

### 151/25 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

*7.22pm A member of the public arrived*

Cllr. Gardner thanked everyone who had helped organise the Christmas Carol Service and Christmas Lights Switch On. Cllr. Gardner advised that unfortunately 'The Star', which was donated to the parish by the Parnham family, was not able to be illuminated and that this will be addressed this year. Cllr. Gardner thanked Cllr. Carpenter and his family for hosting a Christmas get together for members of the Parish Council and Village Hall Committee. Cllr. Thomas was also thanked for assisting with erecting the Christmas Tree and Cllr. Parker was thanked for helping with dismantling the tree and for retrieving the Church panel from the storage container and ensuring that it is returned safely. Cllr. Gardner expressed his dismay with the recent South East Water outages and advised Members that he has applied for Coxheath to be a future water dispersal zone. Cllr. Gardner thanked Cllrs. I

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Laponder and K. Laponder for kindly helping to distribute water supplies to vulnerable residents. Cllr. Gardner advised that he is keen to arrange bi-yearly meetings with the neighbouring Parish Councils to discuss subjects such as emergency planning. Cllr. Gardner advised that he would like to attend the 'NALC Future Leaders – Attracting Young Talent to Parish and Town Councils' event which is due to be held online on the 26 February 2026. Cllr. Gardner expressed his gratitude to those that cut back a hedge that fell outside the Heathside Centre over the Christmas period. It was noted that Cllr. Gardner and the Clerk will meet with MP Katie Lam in Coxheath on Friday 30 January 2026 to discuss local issues.

#### **152/25 CLERKS REPORT/PAST MATTERS**

Nothing additional to report.

#### **153/25 COUNTY COUNCILLOR/WARD MEMBER REPORT**

It was noted that Independent Councillor Robert Ford and Ward Member Claire Kehily have given their apologies.

#### **154/25 OPEN SESSION**

A Governor from Coxheath Primary School attended the meeting and explained that the Governors are reviewing the Strategic Plan and would like to be involved more in the wider community and in particular with the Parish Council.

#### **155/25 COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS**

##### **a) Membership**

It was agreed to review the membership of the Committee and Working Groups to ensure, given the agreed prolonged absence of Cllr. Thomas, that they are quorate.

**Resolved: To agree the following membership of Committees and Working Groups.**

##### **Membership of each Committee and Working Group confirmed as follows:**

**Planning Committee:** Cllrs: Weaver (Chairman), Carpenter, Gardner, I. Laponder.

**Finance Committee:** Cllrs: I. Laponder, Parker, Weaver (Chairman to be agreed)

**Staffing Committee:** Cllrs: K. Laponder (Chairman), Gardner, Weaver.

**Events & Communication Committee:** Cllrs: Gardner (Chairman). Carpenter, K. Laponder.

**Traffic & Community Safety Working Group:** Cllrs: Gardner, Weaver, Parker.

**Recreation & Open Spaces Working Group:** Cllrs: Weaver (Chairman), Gardner, Parker.

**S106 Working Group:** Cllrs. Carpenter, Gardner, I. Laponder, Weaver.

##### **b) Planning Committee**

###### **i. Minutes of the meeting held on the 25 November 2025**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 25 November 2025 were noted.

###### **ii. To receive a report from the meeting held this evening**

Cllr. Weaver reported on the Planning Committee Meeting held before the Full Council Meeting.

##### **c) Staffing Committee**

Cllr. K. Laponder reported that the contract for the new Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer has been signed by both parties and that an annual leave entitlement has been agreed. Cllr. K. Laponder will ensure that professional development meetings are held with

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the new Clerk and a meeting will be held at the end of the probation period. Cllr. K. Laponder proposed and it was agreed for the Clerk to draft a Lone Working Policy.

**d) Finance Committee**

**i. Nat West Bank Mandate:**

The Clerk reported that the new bank mandate has now been processed by NatWest. Cllrs. Gardner, Parker, Thomas and Weaver are signatories on the account and Cllrs. Gardner, Parker, Weaver and the Clerk also have access to online banking to view the accounts. The Clerk advised that all regular payments and most BACs will continue to be made out of the Unity Trust current bank account and not from the NatWest accounts to ensure that the financial regulations are adhered to.

**ii. Proposal to reinvest funds in reserves**

The Clerk reported that over £300,000.00 is held in the NatWest bank accounts which is above the FSCS protection limit which was increased from £85,000.00 to £120,000.00 on the 1 December 2025. The Clerk advised that the current interest rate is just 0.95% which could be improved on. A previous resolution to invest £85,000.00 in a Public Sector Deposit Fund, (PSDF), with the CCLA has not been actioned. The Clerk had circulated some information on the fund and explained that the PSDF is not FSCS protected but is a AAA rated market fund and that there is no qualifying level for this protection. The Clerk advised that the current yield on the PSDF is approximately 3.68%. The Clerk also suggested investing some of the reserves in a short term bond to attract a better rate of interest. It was agreed for the Clerk to prepare a report for the next Finance Committee with some proposals for reinvesting the reserves in the NatWest accounts.

**iii. To approve the Budget for 2026/2027**

Members considered the draft budget which has been prepared by the Finance Committee and updated by the Clerk. Given the level of reserves it was agreed to have a deficit budget.

**Resolved: To accept the budget proposals for 2026/2027 with a forecasted expenditure of £139,222.00**

**iv. To approve the Precept for 2026/2027**

Members discussed the precept requirements and the current level of reserves.

**Resolved: To set the precept for 2026-2027 at £99,569.00 which is the same figure as the previous year but represents a decrease of 3% for a Band D property due a small increase in the tax base. (Carried 5 in favour, 1 abstained)**

**v. To receive the accounts as at the 31 December 2025**

The accounts as at the 31 December 2025 were received.

**vi. To receive a bank reconciliation as at the 31 December 2025**

A bank reconciliation as the 31 December 2025 was received and checked and signed by Cllr. Parker in line with the adopted Financial Regulations.

**vii. To receive a payments list for ratification and approval**

The payment schedule appended to the minutes had been circulated prior to the meeting and checked.

**Resolved: Cllrs. Gardner and Parker to authorise the payments online. Cllr. Gardner, as the Chair, initialled the payments list in accordance with the adopted Financial Regulations.**

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**e) Recreation and Open Spaces Working Group**

- i. **To receive the draft minutes from the meeting held on the 15 January 2026**  
The draft minutes of the meeting held on the 15 January 2026 were noted.
- ii. **To approve the following recommendations**

**Appointment of a ground maintenance contractor for one year**

Cllr. Weaver gave a brief summary of the quotes obtained and the recommendation from the working group was discussed. A positive reference has been obtained for the recommended contractor.

**Resolved: To accept the recommendation of the working group and appoint Paul Waring as the grounds maintenance contractor for one year, (2026), subject to any licences required to be obtained. The Clerk to draft a contract.**

**To carry out a consultation exercise for the village green**

Cllr. Weaver explained that the working group would like to carry out a consultation exercise to find out what, if any, improvements, parishioners would like to the village green. It was noted that the Parish Council has leased the village green from the Maidstone Housing Trust since 2008 and that the lease runs out in July 2033. The Clerk has been asked to find out if the lease could be renewed earlier and/or whether the Parish Council could purchase the land. The Clerk had prepared and circulated a link to an online survey. Methods of distribution of the survey were discussed to include a Royal Mail door drop. It was agreed to arrange and pay for a door drop if the response rate is low.

**Resolved: To carry out a consultation exercise. To post details about the survey on the website, social media and noticeboards. A flyer about the survey to be hand delivered to the residents around the green.**

- iii. **To receive an update on the football club agreement**

It was noted that Cllr. Weaver and the Clerk met with Neil Hadley, Chairman of Coxheath and Farleigh Junior Football Club, prior to the working group meeting held on the 15 January 2026. Cllr. Weaver was pleased to report that Neil Hadley signed the football agreement and terms and conditions at the meeting. The Clerk will invoice the football club for the annual fee. Cllr. Weaver advised that Neil Hadley has agreed to provide a fixture list and is keen to engage with the Parish Council.

**f) Traffic & Community Safety Working Group**

- i. **Highways Improvement Plan (HIP)**

Cllr. Gardner updated Members on the new priorities that have been added to the HIP. The Clerk had circulated a copy of the updated HIP. Cllr. Gardner advised that a meeting is to be arranged with the Community Engagement Officer to receive an update on the historic priorities and to discuss the new priorities.

- ii. **Faults**

Cllr. Gardner advised Members to forward details of any faults to either himself or the Clerk to report on the portal. Cllr. Gardner has requested that the lines for the bus stop on Heath Road and for the buildout near Murdoch Close are refreshed. The breaking up of the road surface on Mill Lane and the condition of the footpath from Clock House Rise to St Lawrence Crescent are to be reported.

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g) **Events and Communication Committee**

i. **To receive feedback from the Christmas Lights Switch On**

Cllr. Gardner reported that the Christmas Lights Switch On had been well attended. It was noted that the Clerk has since prepared and circulated a document with helpful notes to ensure that the event runs smoothly in future. Cllr. Gardner advised that unfortunately there was an issue with the location and lighting of 'The Star'. Cllr. Gardner has, on behalf of the Parish Council, apologised to the Parnham Family.

h) **S106 Working Group**

i. **To agree the terms of reference**

It was noted that the Clerk had circulated some draft terms of reference for the working group.

**Resolved: To adopt the terms of reference but for these to be reviewed as and when required.**

ii. **To set the date of a meeting**

The Clerk was asked to circulate some dates for the first meeting.

**156/25 PARISH MATTERS**

i. **KALC Community Award Scheme 2026**

**Resolved: To nominate Elizabeth Potts posthumously for the KALC Community Award 2026.**

ii. **Proposal to mark the passing of former Cllr. Elizabeth Potts**

Cllr. Gardner announced the sad passing of former Councillor Elizabeth Potts. Cllr. Parker gave many examples of her outstanding contribution to the community. In addition to the above award Members discussed ways of commemorating her life. It was agreed for the Clerk to obtain a quote for a plaque for one of the recently installed benches on the recreation ground.

iii. **MBC Assets in Coxheath**

It was noted that the Clerk will obtain a list of MBC assets in Coxheath for the S106 Working Group to consider.

iv. **Local Government Reorganisation:**

The Clerk advised that a decision from Central Government about the number of Unitary Authorities is awaited.

v. **Community Resilience Planning**

Cllr. Gardner suggested that given the recent water supply issues that the Parish Council should consider developing a Community Resilience Plan or, at the very least, a list of key contacts and places of respite in the parish. In principle Members agreed that this would be a good idea but agreed to defer the formation of a working group until more Members have been co-opted. The Clerk suggested that the neighbouring parishes may be interested in creating a joint plan. Cllr. Gardner agreed that this would be a good initiative to discuss with the neighbouring parishes at the proposed meetings.

vi. **Kent Police:**

The Clerk reported that a new Beat Officer, Lee Tallon, has joined PC Harry Greenfield to support work in the area. The Clerk will find out if one of the Beat Officers can attend a future Parish Council meeting. It was noted that Cllr. Gardner and the Clerk will attend the virtual Parish Forum with Kent Police due to be held on the 10 February 2026.

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vii. **Litter Picking:**

Cllr. Weaver reported that the voluntary litter pickers have pencilled in some dates for January 2026. The additional new hoops and pickers, purchased by the Parish Council, have been gratefully received and will replace some of the older equipment.

**157/25 ADMINISTRATION**

i. **Email accounts and .gov.uk domain**

**Proposal to appoint a new outside provider for email accounts**

Cllr. Gardner reported that current website with Hugo Fox is now a .gov.uk domain. The Clerk reported that IONOS, the current email provider, can offer .gov.uk email addresses. However, Members continue to have problems accessing their accounts. The Clerk advised that Hugo Fox can also provide .gov.uk email addresses through a provider called Spacemail. The Clerk has experience of using Spacemail and explained that the service is quite basic with options like being able to set a 'vacation' response not being possible. Cllr. Gardner reported back from a virtual meeting held with a representative from Heliocentrix and the Clerk. Heliocentrix currently provide .gov.uk email addresses to a number of local Parish Councils and are based in Marden. Heliocentrix have advised that they can set up a Coxheath Parish Council Microsoft 365 and can link the domain to this and create new accounts with the same email address as used in IONOS or switch to .gov.uk email addresses. Heliocentrix will provide a guidance document on how to log into Microsoft 365, how to access emails and how to access OneDrive for files. All email content, contacts, calendars will be migrated across from IONOS so that nothing will be lost. Heliocentrix charge a one off migration fee of £288.00 (excluding VAT) to complete the work and migrate everything across. The Microsoft 365 account licenses are billed on a monthly basis to the Parish Council with no long term commitments. The recommended licence, Business Basic for Members, gives the user a 50GB mailbox, access to Microsoft Teams, 1TB of OneDrive cloud storage, access to SharePoint shared storage areas, and access to the online copies of Microsoft Office applications (Word/Excel/PowerPoint etc). The Clerk advised that Business Basic is £5.52 per user per month, (excluding VAT) which is cheaper than the current provider and includes online copies of Microsoft Office applications. A Microsoft Business Standard account at £11.52 per month (excluding VAT) is recommended for the Clerk. Cllr. Gardner advised Members that Heliocentrix will also be providing a quote for a new website. Cllr. Gardner advised Members that it has previously been agreed to purchase tablets for Members that would like one and that this would be a good time to set these up with the new provider. The Clerk offered to find out if Heliocentrix could provide and set up the tablets. Cllr. Gardner and the Clerk agreed to obtain some quotes for tablets. It was agreed in principle to switch to Heliocentrix as the email provider subject to the Clerk confirming that the Parish Council is not locked into a contract with Ionos.

ii. **Policies**

Members considered a draft Health and Safety Policy, Publication Scheme, Disciplinary, Grievance and Capability Policy and Information and Data Protection Policy prepared and circulated by the Clerk.

**Resolved: To adopt the Health and Safety Policy, Publication Scheme, Disciplinary, Grievance and Capability Policy and Information and Data Protection Policy.**

iii. **To receive feedback from the appointed solicitor**

**Resolved: To discuss as a Confidential Item.**

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**158/25 REPRESENTATION AT MEETINGS**

- i. Village Hall Committee: Cllr. Weaver reported back from a meeting held on the 13 January 2026. The Village Hall Committee is going to carry out a survey of the perimeter trees. The Clerk has shared the football agreement and terms and conditions of hire with the committee. Works to create external access to the toilets commences next week.
- ii. KALC Area Committee: There has been no meeting. It was noted that the next meeting is due to take place on Monday 26 January 2027.
- iii. Coxheath Community Group: There has been no meeting. The next meeting is due to take place on Tuesday 27 January 2026.
- iv. Other Meetings: Cllr. Weaver advised Members that she attended the Coxheath Primary School's Eco-Council meeting at the end of November to talk about litter picking and a bug hotel. Cllr. Weaver advised that it had been a useful exercise and sharing of ideas.

**159/25 CORRESPONDENCE/CONSULTATIONS**

Pre-School Quiz Night: Saturday 7 March 2026

**160/25 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

*Part 2 Exclusion of Public and Press – In accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings Act 1960), the public and press be excluded from the meeting by the reason of its confidential nature.*

***The meeting closed to the public at 9.24pm***

**157/25 (iii) To receive feedback from the appointed solicitor**

The Clerk presented some documents that have been sent by the solicitor. It was agreed that the documents should be reviewed by the Staffing Committee and for the Clerk to then send any comments to the solicitor.

**161/25 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING: Full Council Meeting Tuesday 24 February 2026**

**With no further business to transact the meeting closed at 9.36pm**

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<b>Payment List - December 2025 &amp; January 2026</b>					
<b>Ref:</b>	<b>Payee</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Gross</b>	<b>VAT</b>	<b>Net</b>
<b>BACs Payments for ratification 20 January 2026</b>					
BACS 12-01	Capel Groundcare	3 playground gates	6,636.34	1,106.06	5,530.28
BACS 12-02	Esquire Print	Printing of carol sheets	228.00	-	228.00
BACS 12-03	Louise Goldsmith	Salary December	1,355.54	-	1,355.54
BACS 12-04	HMRC	HMRC Payment	613.04	-	613.04
BACS 12-05	Louise Goldsmith	Reimbursement Ionos, mulled wine ingredients and mince pies. Hi-viz jackets	325.49	-	325.49
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,158.41</b>	<b>1,106.06</b>	<b>8,052.35</b>
<b>BACs Payments for payment on 20 January 2026</b>					
BACS 01-01	SLCC Enterprises	Locum Fees November	4,724.04	787.34	3,936.70
BACS 01-02	Louise Goldsmith	Clerks Expenses	54.90	-	54.90
BACS 01-03	Louise Goldsmith	Reimbursement Ionos £56.40, Litter Picking equipment £54.34, Laminator and pouches £77.05	187.79	-	187.79
BACS 01-04	Gala Lights	Hire & Installation of Christmas Lights	13,836.00	2,306.00	11,530.00
BACS 01-05	KCC	Load Testing Fee for Christmas Lights	3,528.00	588.00	2,940.00
BACS 01-06	DM Payroll Services	Half yearly payment	72.00	12.00	60.00
BACS 01-07	Playsafety Ltd	RoSPA Inspection MUGA	378.00	63.00	315.00
BACS 01-08	Louise Goldsmith	Reimbursement Pre-planning fee	315.00	-	315.00
BACS 01-09	BCH Builders Ltd	Installation of two benches	3,552.00	592.00	2,960.00
BACS 01-10	Capel Groundcare	Playground Inspections December and January	168.00	28.00	140.00
BACS 01-11	KALC	Training Course	60.00	10.00	50.00
BACS 01-12	Coxheath Residents Village Hall	Hall Hire, Parish Office expenses & utilities	263.25	-	263.25
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27,138.98</b>	<b>4,386.34</b>	<b>22,752.64</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>Payee</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Gross</b>	<b>VAT</b>	<b>Net</b>
<b>Direct Debits and Standing Orders for ratification 20 January 2025</b>					
30/11/2025	Unity Trust	Service Charge	6.90	-	6.90
31/12/2025	Unity Trust	Service Charge	7.05	-	7.05
11/12/2025	EE	Mobile Phone	15.60	-	15.60
12/01/2026	EE	Mobile Phone	15.60	-	15.60
30/01/2026	Louise Goldsmith	Clerks Salary January	1911.84	-	1,911.84
30/01/2026	HMRC	Clerks HMRC Payment	945.36	-	945.36
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,902.35</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,902.35</b>

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