



Coxheath Parish Council

Recreation and Open Spaces Working Group

Minutes from the meeting held on Thursday 26 March at 7pm
in the Parish Office, Coxheath Village Hall, Stockett Lane.

Present: Cllrs: H. Weaver (Chairman), D. Carpenter and N. Gardner

In attendance: Louise Goldsmith (Clerk)

MINUTES

25/25 Administration

Fire Exits, Fire Meeting Point, Mobile Phones. There were no intentions to record the meeting.

26/25 Apologies for Absence, Declarations and Dispensations

- a) Apologies for absence: **An apology for absence was received from Cllr. Parker and the reason for absence was accepted.**
- b) To receive Declarations of Interest in respect of matters contained in the agenda.
Disclosable Interests: Under the Localism Act 2011.
Cllr. Carpenter declared an interest as Trustee of the Village Hall
Other Significant Interests: **None received.**
Other Interests: **None received.**
- c) Requests for Dispensations: **None received.**
- d) Declarations of Lobbying: **None received.**

27/25 Minutes of the last meeting

Resolved to accept the minutes of the meeting held on the 15 January 2026 as a true and accurate record.

28/25 Open Session

No members of the public present.

29/25 Grounds Maintenance 2026

- a) **To receive an update on the Hanging Baskets Certification**
The Clerk reported that the application for the certification for the hanging baskets has been submitted to the Lighting Commercial Officer at KCC to include a request for the load bearing test. The Clerk has reported on the KCC portal that vegetation needs to be removed from one of the lampposts. It was noted that the two members of the grounds maintenance contractor team have now passed the required 'working at the roadside accreditation' in accordance with the New Roads and Street Works Act.
- b) **Planting of hanging baskets**
It was noted that the Clerk is meeting the grounds maintenance contractor at the container this week to hand over the hanging basket containers. The contractor aims to get these planted this month and, depending on the weather, will install these on the lampposts in May 2026.
- c) **Grass cutting update**
It was noted that the Clerk is meeting the grounds maintenance contractor this week to hand over keys/codes to all the gates to the recreation ground and to discuss the arrangements for the grass cutting. Weather permitting the grounds contractor will start cutting the grass within the next two weeks.

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30/25 Proposal to replace the containers on the recreation ground

a) To receive an update on the pre-planning application

It was noted that the Clerk had submitted a full planning application to MBC to replace the two current containers with a 40 foot container. MBC have requested additional plans and a tree and root survey (BS5837:2012 Arboricultural Survey). In between meetings it was agreed for the Clerk to appoint a local architect to assist with the preparation of the requested scaled drawings and biodiversity net gain calculation. Down to Earth, who have been appointed to carry out a tree survey this week for the whole recreation ground, have been asked to provide a quote for the required Arboricultural report for the planning application. Hopefully all the required reports can be submitted within the next two weeks meaning that planning permission should be granted in June 2026.

b) To receive an update on the quotes to replace the container

It was noted that the Clerk has tried to obtain more than one quote to remove the existing containers and replace them with a 40 foot container. The local contractor, Lawrence Containers, has provided a quote but other companies have requested an upfront fee to just attend and provide a quote. It was agreed to recommend to Full Council to accept the initial quote from Lawrence Containers subject to planning permission being granted.

c) To discuss the next steps

The Clerk will submit the plans for the replacement container and quote to the S106 team at MBC who have previously suggested that this project might qualify for S106 funding.

31/25 Recreation Ground

a) Proposal for improvements to the car park from Linden Road/Footpaths around Middle Field and Beacon Field

The Clerk reported that the S106 Working Group met on the 3 March 2026 and had discussed the S106 allocation of £191,212.62 - 17/502072/OUT which expires on the 21 May 2031. The S106 Working Group identified the following projects that they felt could qualify for this allocation noting that the Parish Council has five years to spend the available funds. It was agreed that this Working Group should explore the following projects.

- Improvements to the car park from Linden Road, in both terms of access and appearance.
- Install a footpath around both the Middle Field and Beacon Field.
- Replace all gateways on the Middle Field and Beacon Field.

The Clerk advised that the installation of footpaths and improvements to the car park will exceed the threshold at which quotes can be obtained and that a formal tender process will be required. It was noted that the Clerk will need to seek advice on a specification of works for both projects which it was agreed could be combined. It was suggested and agreed that the specification of works is shared with the S106 Team before going out to formal tender to ensure that the works will qualify for the S106 allocation. The Clerk has carried out a land search which has confirmed that MBC own the freehold of the recreation ground. The Clerk has requested a copy of the lease but MBC seem unable to locate one. It was suggested and agreed that the Clerk should advise MBC of the above proposals for the car park and footpaths and seek approval before going out to tender. It was suggested and agreed that the Clerk seeks advice and some quotes from local gate suppliers to replace the gateways on Middle Field and Beacon Field which are currently inaccessible for many user groups.

32/25 Playground/MUGA

a) To receive and discuss the monthly inspection report

The Clerk had circulated a copy of the current monthly inspection report for the play park, gym equipment, kick wall and MUGA which was carried out on the 16 March 2026.

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b) To receive an update on the remedial works

It was noted that Capel Groundcare have completed the remedial works to the MUGA and that all the remedial works to the playground except the repairs to the swings have been carried out. Members discussed a quote of £562.64 from HAGS, the supplier of the playground equipment, for 4 shackles and bushes for the swings. Capel Groundcare has suggested that this cost is excessive and that they could fit new unbranded bushes and standard size shackles for a lot less. Members agreed to accept the recommendation of the contractor, Members also agreed to the suggested remedial works to the outdoor gym equipment.

c) To discuss a proposal to increase the CCTV cover on the MUGA

The Clerk reported that the MUGA Steward has expressed concern about incidents of anti-social behaviour that take place on the MUGA. Cllr. Carpenter advised that there is currently one CCTV camera that is erected on a pole in the village hall car park that covers the MUGA. Cllr. Carpenter shared some of the images and it was agreed that it would be beneficial to investigate all of the options to increase the CCTV cover. The Clerk will meet with the local CCTV provider and obtain a quote.

33/25 Football Pitches

a) To receive any update

It was noted that the Football Club has paid the annual fee for the hire of the pitches. It was also noted that Cllr. Weaver is going to try and attend a football club committee meeting. The Clerk has requested a copy of the schedule of when the club will be using the pitches which the Clerk will share with the grounds maintenance contractor. The Clerk is keen to set up an open dialogue with the football club and the grounds maintenance contractor and will request a further meeting with the football club. Cllr. Carpenter advised that the Village Hall Committee have some concerns about the football club's public liability insurance cover for third parties. The Clerk advised that the insurance is provided by the Football Association and that her understanding was that public liability for spectators and players is provided. Cllr. Carpenter advised that the Village Hall Committee have requested confirmation that the insurance covers other users of the recreation ground when the football teams are present. Members noted a decision to close and padlock the main gate to Beacon Field following an incident of motorbikes unlawfully entering the recreation ground and damaging the grass. The Clerk was asked to obtain a receipt for the padlock from the football club and to reimburse the cost. It was agreed to keep the gate closed and padlocked, (despite one complaint from a resident), to prevent further damage to the pitches. This decision will be reviewed until the proposed new pedestrian gates are installed.

34/25 Huntingdon Road Village Green

a) To receive and discuss the results of the consultation

Members discussed the results of the consultation circulated by the Clerk. It was noted that 54 residents completed the survey and that generally the village green is used for the walking of dogs and for somewhere to sit and reflect. 18% of respondents would like picnic benches installed, 12% would like some wildflower planting and 11% would like more trees planted. It was noted that the Parish Council has leased the village green from the Maidstone Housing Trust now Golding Homes since August 2008 and that the lease expires on the 31 July 2033. Members agreed to discuss the results further at the next meeting. Initial thoughts are to install some bunds and plant bulbs, a wildflower area and a few trees subject to these being acceptable improvements for a registered village green.

b) To note the village green status and restrictions of this

Members noted that the land at Huntingdon Green Road was officially registered as village green on the 11 February 2008, registration VG241. The Clerk advised that village greens are protected by ancient statutes. In summary, village greens must be kept for recreational pursuits and not be misused. The Clerk was asked to find out if an Officer from KCC would be willing to meet with Members to discuss the implications of the legal status of village greens. The Clerk suggested and it was agreed that the Parish Council should have a policy for the village green. The Clerk will prepare a draft policy for the next meeting.

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c) **To receive an update on the lease**

It was noted that the Clerk has not received a response from Golding Homes/Maidstone Housing Trust regarding a request to extend the lease that expires in 2033 or to purchase the land.

d) **To discuss the next steps**

The Clerk to find out whether the proposed improvements to the village green comply with the restrictions of a registered village green.

35/25 Tree Surveys

It was noted that Down to Earth will be carrying out a tree survey on all of the recreation ground and Huntingdon Village Green tomorrow. Cllrs. Weaver and the Clerk will also attend.

36/25 Whitebeam and Fairhurst Play Areas

The Clerk had reported to the S106 Working Group that MBC own the freehold of both the play areas in Fairhurst Drive and Whitebeam Drive and that these are classified as 'Non Strategic Play Areas'. The Clerk has since found out that MBC decided in 2017 to assign certain play areas as Strategic Play Areas (SIPAs). The Clerk advised that the village hall play area is a Strategic Play Area and that the Parish Council is responsible for maintaining it. All play areas not considered to be SIPAs are referred to as Non-Strategic Play Areas, (NSPAs). NSPAs will not be maintained or refurbished by MBC and will be decommissioned when they come to the end of their useful life. In 2019 MBC asked Parish Councils if they would be interested in taking over NSPAs in their area. The Director of Finance at MBC has confirmed that both Whitebeam and Fairhurst Play Areas are NSPAs and that the Parish Council could still adopt them.

Recommendation to Full Council: To begin the process of adopting both Whitebeam and Fairhurst Play Areas.

37/25 Confidential Items

There were none.

38/25 Date of the next meeting

Thursday 7 May 2026 at 7pm in the Parish Office.

With no further business to transact the meeting closed at 8.07pm

Signed:

Date:

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