



WESTBERE PARISH COUNCIL

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TO: ALL MEMBERS OF WESTBERE PARISH COUNCIL: Councillors are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of Westbere Parish Council on **20 May 2024** in Westbere Village Hall at **7.00pm** for the transaction of the business described in the following Agenda.

Amanda Sparkes

A SPARKES, CLERK TO THE COUNCIL

A G E N D A

1. This is the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council – the first item of business is to Elect a Chairman for the year 2024-2025 – and Chairman to complete the Declaration of Acceptance of Office
2. TO ELECT a Vice-Chairman for the year 2024-2025
3. **The Chairman's opening remarks** and reminder of rules for public participation during the meeting – whilst parish council meetings are meetings in and open to the public, they are not public meetings, and to ask for adherence and respect about the public participation opportunity:
4. **Adjournment of the meeting for Parishioners' questions and comments.** The meeting will be adjourned for parishioners' questions and comments. *This is the only opportunity during the meeting for residents to speak.* The period for public participation will last no longer than 10 minutes and a single member of the public is afforded no more than 3 minutes to make their representation, with the discretion of the Chairman.
5. **The parish council meeting to now resume – there is no public participation from this point forward.**
6. **Apologies for absence.**
7. **Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**, Other Significant Interests & Voluntary Announcements of Other Interests, & reminder for any changes to the DPI register held at CCC, such as change of job or home.
8. **To agree as a correct record the Minutes of the last meeting held 15 April 2024**
9. **Sunday 07 July 2024 event on the village green 2pm-4pm to celebrate/mark the gifting of the Green to the village** – TO NOTE email received on 17 April 2024 advising that from after careful consideration the WVPS has concluded that the WVPS and PC have a very different vision of what this community event could be. Whilst the WVPS appreciates the PC desire to ensure that public money is invested in an appropriate way, WVPS do not believe that what the PC is proposing is deliverable in a way which would make the event both fun and sustainable – WVPS will therefore not be helping to co-ordinate and host it this year.
TO DISCUSS and RESOLVE next steps. Suggestions:
 - Cold food buffet and juices offering – and bring your own wine if you wish to be advertised.
 - Tombola to be held – with any profit to a local dog charity – tombola donations welcomed.
 - To invite Sturry and Hersden parish councillors, and city and county councillors.
 - Hall to be booked in the event of wet weather
 - Flyers and publicity to be arranged.
10. **Parish Councillors' reports**
11. **Reports from County and City Councillors**
Following the closure of Sturry Post Office, a new branch opens on 23 May 2024 at 1pm in a new location - Premier Minimart, 33 Hoadwood Road, Sturry, where it will operate a local style branch.
12. **Planning matters**

Outcome re Village Green application by The Two Fields Action to KCC for the Two Fields

The KCC Regulation Committee Member Panel at its meeting on 22 April 2024 voted 4:1 in favour of the Inspector's recommendation, that the application did not meet the legal tests for registration as a Village Green under section 15 of the Commons Act 2006, thus rejecting the application. Minutes of the meeting on the KCC website: <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ie/ListDocuments.aspx?CId=182&MId=9555>
The matter is now closed and no further action will be taken by the County Council in respect of the Village Green application. (The Local Plan continues to describe the Two Fields as forestry land and as a Green Gap). The parish council's outstanding application to record Public Rights of Way over the land is a separate legal process), and a KCC officer will be in touch with the relevant parties shortly.

Bread and Cheese field – currently in Hersden parish – Community Governance Review by CCC running until 20 May 2024 asking “*Should the parish boundary for Westbere be moved to incorporate the Bread and Cheese Field site?*” TO NOTE at the last (15 April 2024) parish council meeting the parish council supported residents' call for the field to be returned to Westbere and the full response

was included in those Minutes. (The consultation responses will be analysed and recommendations to the General Purposes Committee in September and a decision made by full council in October)
TO NOTE the CCC CGR advisory group has set a virtual 'witness session' for 16 May 2024 – the Chairman and Clerk will attend to be asked views on the review of the Westbere parish boundary. The purpose is to help the group with their understanding when considering the consultation responses.

Rural Service Centre versus Local Service Centre hierarchy – and “Settlement boundaries”:
The CDLP Development Topic paper (February 2024) has three relevant paragraphs:

- 3.14. ... the NPPF (Paragraph 83), states that ‘to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services.’ A balance must be achieved however, between allowing new housing and the need to protect the character and heritage of the settlements themselves, as well as the surrounding countryside. To support the development of the Local Plan, the Rural Settlement Study (2020) was undertaken to identify the level of services and facilities available in settlements outside the city of Canterbury and the coastal towns of Whitstable and Herne Bay.
- 3.15. Sturry, Blean, Bridge, Chartham, **Hersden** and Littlebourne are identified as Rural Service Centres. These are highly sustainable settlements where residents can meet most of their day-to-day needs within the settlement itself. These ‘Rural Service Centres’ provide access to key services such as primary schools, nurseries/pre-schools, GP surgeries, community halls and convenience stores; and serve both residents within the settlement and in nearby smaller rural settlements. Rural Service Centres therefore play a critical role in supporting our rural communities and are suitable for a scale of growth that supports their function.
- 3.16. Adisham, Barham, Broad Oak, Harbledown, Hoath, Lower Hardres, Petham, Rough Common, Stuppington, **Westbere** and Wickhambreaux are identified as Local Service Centres. These settlements provide a more limited range of services and facilities compared to Rural Service Centres, however are still considered to be relatively sustainable in the wider context of the district. Many of these settlements have their own primary schools and shops, and will also serve residents in nearby smaller rural settlements. Local Service Centres therefore play an important role in supporting our rural communities and are suitable for a limited scale of growth that supports their function.

The settlement designations are informed by the rural settlement studies which look at settlements, not parishes, to determine sustainability. It makes no difference to the assessment should the Bread and Cheese Field become part of Westbere parish as functionally the development would still be an extension of Hersden 'settlement'. The boundary of the settlement designation can be seen at

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/1e8c61757821421e8dc7d1eab938ed98/?draft=true> Click on the map layers icon at the top and then select boundaries and then see a settlement category. Switch off the other layers and this shows the extent of the Hersden settlement.

NB. The Community Governance Review is for a boundary change only – its inclusion as a strategic housing site in the next draft Local Plan is a separate process:

New Regulation 18 draft Canterbury District Local Plan [Draft Canterbury District Local Plan to 2040](#)
Consultation running until 5pm on 03 June 2024.

The Bread and Cheese Field is still a chosen strategic site

The Transport Strategy confirms that the lengthening of the platforms at Sturry will also be included.
TO NOTE the Chairman and Clerk met with CCC officers and CCC Cllr Harry McKenzie on 17 April 2024.

TO DISCUSS the parish council's response to the CDLP consultation.

CA/22/01388 - Walnut Tree Livery, Bushy Hill Road, Westbere, CT2 0HE – application still undetermined by CCC for Retrospective application for change of use of land to campsite in addition to existing use for livery/horse keeping. TO NOTE any updates – None.

Appeal for CA/22/01158 - Walnut Tree Farm Walnut Tree Lane Westbere - Agricultural building for use of drying fruit and vegetables. Application ref: CA/22/01158 Appellant's name: Dr G Mason
Appeal ref: 3334121 Appeal start date: 3 April 2024. The Clerk asked CCC on 09 May 2024 for the Details of the appellant's grounds of appeal and the CCC's Statement of Case.

TO NOTE any new applications that are validated prior to the meeting since the Agenda was posted.

Notifications: None this month.

13. **Use of Section 101 Scheme of Delegation** to the Clerk in conjunction with a minimum of two councillors since the last meeting:
- Defibrillator for the village** – TO NOTE the grant application to the British Heart Foundation was unsuccessful, however the grant to the DHSC for a defibrillator at the village hall offered a defibrillator and heated cabinet at a discounted price of £750. The parish council pays for costs of installation, insurance and ongoing consumables (battery and pads when needed), the hall committee pays for electricity for the cabinet. The £750 offer was accepted under Section 101 on 07 April 2024. TO NOTE the Clerk added the defibrillator to the council's Insurance and Fixed Asset Register on 25 April 2024.
- The Chairman obtained an electrician's quote for installation to its own separate circuit and has instructed this.
- TO DISCUSS who on the parish council will register the defibrillator on The Circuit and undertake regular (at least monthly) checks and complete these afterwards online.
- Previous experience or first aid qualification/training is not necessary to use the defibrillator – a recorded full demonstration training session including FAQs is at: <https://vimeo.com/557677120/e7524918c5>
14. **Finance** - Financial matters, including bank statements and bank reconciliations to be signed by a Councillor (not the Chairman), and Authorisation of payments, and initialling of invoices by two Cllrs.
- Precept 2024-2025** - TO NOTE a payment from Canterbury City Council by BACS on 15 April 2024 for the precept for 2024-2025 totalling £16,681.
- Concurrent function funding for year 2024-2025** - Concurrent funding will remain the same as the previous year. Westbere Parish is due to receive its annual CFF Payment of £4,503. CCC will send the monitoring forms for 23/24 and new grant agreement soon.
- CCC Capital grants** – The Clerk signed the agreement and sent an invoice for £1,095 to CCC on 13 April 2024 for a Capital grant for two further replacement recycled benches on the village green. (Total costs £1,856, grant £1,095, parish council's own contribution circa £761). Payment by bacs due.
15. **Annual subscriptions:** TO RESOLVE to renew:
- (a) Kent Association of Local Councils;
 - (b) Campaign for the Protection of Rural England;
 - (c) The Information Commissioners Office
- and TO RESOLVE that payment be by variable direct debit for the annual CPRE subscription, and the annual subscription to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).
- Financial Regulation 15.5 states: All appropriate members and employees of the council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined [annually] by the council, or duly delegated committee. TO NOTE that has been reviewed – the Insurance renewal from 01 June 2023 has the Fidelity Guarantee set at £250,000.
16. **TO DISCUSS and RESOLVE Cllr responsibilities for 2024 – 2025.** These are *currently* as follows:
- Newsletter production – Clerk
 - Newsletter distribution – Cllr K Fielding, Clerk
 - Street lights – Cllr Dekker;
 - Inspection of council's Assets – Cllr D Wilson
 - Transport – All councillors;
 - Planning – Cllr Harlow, Cllr Georgina Glover and Cllr Dekker;
 - Fire Hydrants – Cllr P. Glover;
 - KMBR reports – Cllr Harlow;
 - Environment – Cllr Harlow;
 - Neighbourhood Watch – Cllr K. Fielding
 - WPC representative on the Village hall committee – Cllr K. Fielding;
 - Monitoring of the village salt bins – Cllr P. Glover;
 - Village events – All councillors;
 - Parish council representative for Westbere Village Preservation Society (WVPS) and attend WVPS meetings – Cllr K. Fielding
 - Public Right of Way/Footpaths – report problems to Cllr Kathy Fielding
- TO NOTE that the Clerk will amend this information on the parish council website in order to satisfy the Transparency Regulations requirements*
17. **Model Standing Orders** - TO NOTE that there have been no changes since the last review and adoption of the parish council's Standing Orders and TO RESOLVE to continue with them as last adopted until changes are made to the NALC Model.

18. Model Financial Regulations – *TO NOTE that there are to be changes imminently to the NALC Model - TO RESOLVE to continue with Financial Regulations as last adopted until changes are made to the NALC Model then revisit with revised Financial Regulations to reflect the NALC Model template when available.*

19. For Annual Return 2023-2024

TO RESOLVE that Westbere Parish Council meets the criteria for 2023-2024 to be an exempt authority, and wishes to be an exempt authority, not subject to a Mazars external auditors review for that year.

TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE :

- i) The Year End Bank reconciliation to 31 March 2024 – year-end balance is £20,940.61.
- ii) Office and Finance Risk Assessment
- iii) The Parish Council's Statement of Internal Control
- iv) The Parish Council's Statement of Accounting Policies
- v) TO NOTE the Internal Auditor conducted internal audit remotely on 09/04/2024 and with a virtual meeting with the Clerk on 24/04/2024, and has completed Section 4 of the AGAR. *(The Internal Auditor's report and her recommendations are detailed below for consideration.)*
- vi) Breakdown of Income, Staff Costs and All Other Payments in 2023-2024
- vii) Statement of Variances proforma and the explanations of significant variances.
- viii) Current Ear Marked Reserves schedule up to 31 March
- ix) The Parish Council's Register of Fixed Assets at 31 March
- x) The Annual Governance & Accountability Return (**AGAR Form Part 2**) for the financial year ended 31 March for submission to PKF Littlejohn:

– Section 1 : the Annual Governance Statement –

TO RESOLVE to accept Section 1 in advance of approving Section 2 - and section 1 to be signed by the Chairman (and the Minute No. subsequently noted later)

- Section 2 : the Accounting Statements –

TO RESOLVE to approve Section 2 – and when resolved Section 2 should be signed by the Chairman (and the subsequent Minute No entered later)

AND TO NOTE that the council will make arrangements for the 30 working day period for the exercise of public rights irrespective of claiming exemption from a review, publishing, the Notice of Public Rights (which MUST include the first 10 working days of July), along with Publication of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return Section 1 and Section 2 (approved and signed), along with a copy of the Internal Auditor's report, on both its parish noticeboard(s) and website – TO APPROVE dates for the period of public rights as Monday 03 June 2024 to Friday 12 July 2024.

20. Internal Auditor's report – comments, suggestions and recommendations:

- i) The Council bank account is non-interest bearing, recommendation that the Council researches an Instant Access account as these are currently available at levels above 2%.
- ii) For the 2025-2026 Precept budget: Given that the Precept for 2024/25 has increased to £16,681.72, there is the potential for the receipts or payments for 2024/25 to exceed £25,000. Therefore, the Parish Council should consider budget provision for an External Audit limited assurance review in 2025/26 (£210 + VAT).
- iii) Data Protection Act 2018 & GDPR: It is recommended that the Council conducts a data audit and keeps this on file.
- iv) Councillors should all be encouraged to use PC email addresses in preparation for mandatory introduction. 4 of 7 are currently using them.
- v) Biodiversity policy – under the 2021 Environment Act, Parish Councils are required to develop a Biodiversity Policy.

21. Quotes for refurbishment of the village green sign on the village green and retreating of the plaques on the post – TO DISCUSS quotes - The first quote was reported to the March meeting totalling £948, the second is £825.

22. Village Hall insurance – TO NOTE a new updated legal document between The Diocesan Board, the lessors and Westbere Parish Council as lessees along with an explanatory covering letter will now be copied for signature by all, plus now the hall committee also to make the hall committee responsible for buildings cover for the hall as well. (The hall is insured under the parish council's insurance currently).

23. Authorisation of online payments (Chairman to sign Finance Appendix x2 for Minute book and Invoice file)

KALC Annual subscription	206.20
Payment for defibrillator and external cabinet - reduced by successful grant to DHSC	750.00
Zurich Municipal – annual insurance for the period 01 June 2024 to 31 May 2025.	1,065.64
Dynamix Consultancy – payroll services for year end and P60	24.00
Mrs Deborah O'Brien – internal audit services for year ended 31 March 2024	140.00
Clerk May salary and mileage	579.35
HMRC PAYE and NIC May 2024	154.72
KCC LGPS Pension May 2024	246.15

BANK BALANCES - bank balances are as follows: At **30 April 2024**: Unity Trust £35,693.32

24. Actions continuing/required from 23 July 2023 Asset Inspection

TO NOTE that since the last meeting the WVPS has withdrawn from any village volunteer scheme.

TO NOTE Cllr P Glover has made contact with the Community Payback Team and is waiting on a response.

- a. TO CONSIDER Quote for Paddy's bench in churchyard: to sand and treat with two coats of oil £180
- b. TO CONSIDER Quote for metal access handles at entrance to village green – for metal handles be painted in a protective paint (in a colour to be agreed) to make them more visible £120
- c. TO DISCUSS Clerk and any volunteer parish councillors dealing with removing the ivy of the Shrubby Corner wall — once removed to discuss further wall ownership and possible need for re-pointing as wall is in poor condition. Also possible animal nest in the wall middle by the bench –Needs investigating.
- d. TO DISCUSS seeking volunteers to help the Clerk to clean/tidy the Book Library at Shrubby Corner

25. TO CONSIDER whether the parish council should register with CCC assets in their village as Assets of Community Value, such as The Yew Tree pub

Community Right To Bid legislation came in as part of the Localism Act. It means that the parish council may look to getting assets of community value in the village added to a register of assets, held by Canterbury City Council, whereby if there is any notice of their disposal or sale, the parish council be notified and the parish council/community then have a limited amount of time to raise finance and have a right to bid to buy the asset before it can be sold on the open market. (If any assets are successfully added to the register, this gives a right to bid on an asset – but not a right to buy).

The Yew Tree (although a going concern/business), the village hall, the Church, and the Westbere lakes are all assets. Residents would also like The Two Fields, and The Bread and Cheese Field (although currently in Hersden parish), investigated for eligibility.

The Plunkett foundation has some of case studies on their website: <https://plunkett.co.uk/case-studies/>

TO RECEIVE any updates

26. **Clerk report** – for anything not noted elsewhere on this agenda/meeting paperwork.

27. TO NOTE and consider attendees for the next **Joint Parish Group meeting: 7pm to 9pm on Monday 24th June 2024 at The Hersden Community Centre**, The Avenue, Hersden. A representative from Silvertime Legal will be present and will deliver a presentation called Legacy Fortress for Generations, this includes information on Inheritance Tax and the importance of having both a Will and Lasting Powers of Attorney. Hersden Parish Council will also have a short presentation on the history of the Parish.

28. TO RECEIVE at previous councillor's request the Clerk's research on some parish councils in the Canterbury District undertaking Neighbourhood Plans:

- Bridge – 12 years so far, submitted for examination in line with Regulation 17 in July 2023, passed Referendum stage in April 2024 – costs £30k plus, met through grants – the Chairman is willing to speak informally to Westbere Cllrs, but stressed a Plan must specify areas for development, and accord with the Canterbury District Local Plan.
- Chartham – 4.5 years so far from December 2019, £48k spend to date, £30k from grants.
- Hoath (2023), Fordwich (2021), Thanington (2020) and Upper Hardres (2022) are developing plans.

29. **Newsletter** - format / next edition – to receive any update

30. **Parish Plan** – to consider any new households to receive this (there is one copy left after which the Welcome Pack will be delivered)

31. Closure of the meeting

Next Meeting dates: - the third Monday of the month except none in August and December: 20 May, 17 June, 15 July, 16 September, 21 October, 18 November 2024.