

Minutes of the meeting of Westbere Parish Council held on Monday 18 November 2024 in Westbere Village Hall at 7.00pm.

Present: Parish Councillors:

Cllr Paul Glover (Chairman), Sylvia Harlow (Vice Chairman), Kathy Fielding, Dave Wilson, Ken Dekker, and Georgina Glover.

CCC councillors Cllr Harry McKenzie and CCC Cllr Keji Moses

PC Amelia Parkinson-Wellard and Sherwin Fernandez, new Police officers for Westbere and surrounding areas – for part of the meeting

Clerk to the Council, Amanda Sparkes.

6 residents

1. The Chairman's opening remarks

Cllr P Glover welcomed everyone to the meeting. He reminded residents that whilst parish council meetings are meetings in and open to the public, they are not public meetings, and then offered public participation in the adjournment:

2. Introduction to PC Amelia Parkinson-Wellard and Sherwin Fernandez, new Police officers for Westbere and surrounding areas

Amelia and Sherwin introduced themselves as the new police officers for the area. They commented that there is not too much trouble in Westbere. They were aware of a resident's report of a gang of people trying car doors in Westbere Lane in the early hours of the morning in the last month and said they will patrol the village.

They can put things on to My Community Voice to make residents aware and encouraged residents to sign up to this. They will also send key messages via the clerk for Cllr Fielding to forward via the Neighbourhood watch email group.

Amelia explained that they are also looking to set up coffee mornings "Coffee with a Cop" events in due course.

Amelia and Sherwin left the meeting at this point.

3. Adjournment of the meeting for Parishioners' questions and comments.

A resident commented about the new site submitted for housing to CCC at Golden Hills and asked if we can oppose it. Access for the site would be problematic at present.

A resident asked to record thanks on behalf of the WVPS committee and members, to the Parish council and individual councillors, parish and city, regarding the successful boundary review for the Bread and Cheese Field.

Another resident advised that for the Owl Boxes idea on Bushy Hill Road he lived in the road and had an owl box installed.

There were no further questions or comments. The meeting continued.

4. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Parish Councillor Granville Glover (unwell), and from KCC Cllr Alan Marsh.

5. Declarations of Interests

None.

6. Minutes of the last meeting held 21 October 2024

Cllr Wilson advised that for item No 17 the word endorsed should read evidenced – such that it would read, "Cllr Wilson expressed concern about the year end forecast not being *evidenced* sufficiently." The Chairman did a hand amendment on the master hard copy.

Cllr Harlow proposed and Cllr Georgina Glover seconded and all councillors agreed they were a true record of the meeting, and the Vice Chairman duly signed them.

7. KCC road closures on 12 November 2024 to cleanse/clear drains and gulleys

This road closure took place and the drains have been cleared.

8. Parish Councillors' reports

Cllr Georgina Glover

Cllr Georgina Glover was pleased to report that a Christmas Service will take place at 10am in the Church on Christmas Day. Talks are taking place with the two Sturry Church wardens this week for more services in Westbere.

She explained she had walked the village and some gardens are overgrown in places.

Cllr Fielding

Cllr Fielding advised that for item No 11 on the Agenda – the village hall garden which is suffering natural movement that the village hall committee agreed the scope of works and a contractor worked over the weekend of 16 November 2024 and dug out grouting and put metal bars in. He also cleared our drainage holes too. (Re the fencing, the hall committee consider that under no circumstances should it be removed as it would be very unsafe to work up there without any barrier to prevent a fall).

Cllr Fielding also highlighted the village hall Christmas Dinner at lunchtime on 07 December 2024.

Also, Line Dancing classes should be about to start on Monday nights in the hall – three Mondays a month except the third Monday of each month reserved for parish council use.

Cllrs Dekker, Harlow and P Glover had nothing to report.

Cllr Dave Wilson

Cllr Wilson advised he has been chasing for information on the Local Plan and the Sturry Link Road and would report under those agenda items.

9. Update from the Chairman re the Community Payback Team to attend the village

Cllr P Glover advised he would chase again to see if the Payback team are able to formulate anything to fit around the preschool.

10. KCC Councillor Alan Marsh report

Kent County Councillor Cllr Alan Marsh had given apologies to the meeting but had rung the Clerk to give the following update on the delays with the Sturry Link Road: The major issues he said are that

- A court case has been brought by an individual landowner which has been referred to a government inspector and may take six months for this judicial hearing result.
- Planning at CCC allow builders to build houses before paying developers' contributions – and there are issues with funding being available.
- Market demand for new houses is low which is also a factor.
- KCC cant guarantee the road. The schedule has now slipped to the end of 2027 – so five years later than planned.

11. CCC Cllr Report

CCC Cllr Keji Moses and Cllr Harry McKenzie had sent the following report:

Golden Hills- The site at Golden Hills, Westbere was submitted to the council as a representation to our latest Regulation 18 Local Plan consultation which ended in June (Ref WR1448).

The site has been proposed for residential development and has been assigned reference number SLAA323.

The council is in the process of assessing all sites that were suggested through the Regulation 18 consultation as well as any land submitted to us as part of our current Call for Sites which concludes in December. The assessment results for all new sites will be published in an update to our Strategic Land Availability Assessment in due course.

Goose Farm - Goose Farm has just been validated and will proceed to a consultation phase before reaching the planning committee. Currently, there is no specific timeline set. Following the Government's recent proposal to amend the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF),

housing targets for local authorities are expected to change. The consultation for this amendment concluded in September, and a response from the Government is anticipated by year's end. This means that by the new year, local authorities may not meet their initial target requirements, as the criteria are being revised.

The local council will need to consider the "planning balance" against any identified harms, such as impacts on visual amenities or sustainability. These factors must be weighed against the public benefits of the development. However, a decision cannot be made until the council has received all consultation feedback. A key input will come from the urban design officer, who will assess the design's impact and how well the development's layout and structure fit with the existing Broad Oak settlement.

For now, there is no further information available.

Shelford update- On Thursday 5th September, there was a Community Liaison Group meeting with Valencia. Harry McKenzie, Richard Miller and Alan Marsh were present. (The minutes of that meeting have been sent to the Clerk separately who forwarded these to parish councillors on 17 November 2024).

Sturry Relief Road delayed - The Sturry Relief Road has been delayed by another 18-months due to funding setbacks. This is a KCC project, so it is for Cllr Alan Marsh to update, we are just noting it as many residents are interested in this. This was discussed at the most recent meeting of the Joint Transportation Board; the footage of this meeting can be viewed

here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4FcEjCi2pnk>

News article: <https://www.kentonline.co.uk/canterbury/news/41m-link-road-project-delayed-again-314720/>

Please ensure to send any questions or casework to us

at harry.mckenzie@councillor.canterbury.gov.uk and/or keji.moses@councillor.canterbury.gov.uk

Cllr G Glover requested five Lord Mayor's Fund vouchers from the city councillors this year. Cllr Keji Moses confirmed this.

Cllr Wilson commented that for the Golden Hills Farm site submission we need to know what the assessment criteria is and this is not a brownfield site.

Cllr Wilson also commented that the Sturry Link Road is an over-designed scheme, crossing the river, and he feels that it is never going to happen. Rising costs continue. It needs CCC councillors to advocate to stop building or to find another solution.

Cllr McKenzie advised that lengthening of the rail platforms at Sturry station is an alternative and this is in the Canterbury District Local Plan.

He also advised that he was pleased to see the Bread and Cheese Field boundary amendment and had been pleased to be part of the working group for this governance review.

12. Planning matters

Draft Canterbury District Local Plan and new Call for Sites

CCC's Cabinet decided in September to extend the current local plan timetable so officers could consider government changes to national planning policy which are due soon. The deadline for a final draft has now moved from the one imposed by the last government of June 2025 to Spring 2026. This revised timetable is set out in the council's Local Development Scheme (September 2024), viewable at www.canterbury.gov.uk/planning-and-building/new-local-plan.

New Call for Sites

Consultation feedback made it clear that people would like to see more brownfield sites proposed for development in the local plan. CCC is asking if there are any more potential

brownfield sites that are suitable and available for development in the district. This Call for Sites runs from 21 October until 5pm on 1 December 2024 inclusive.

[Call for Sites](#)

Cllr Wilson commented that ACRA is saying that CCC should be actively seeking Brownfield sites such as CCC owned car parks and the Wincheap Industrial Estate – to take pressure off allocating Greenfield sites. Buildings on the Wincheap estate are looking tired and there are other commercial spaces that Wincheap retailers could relocate to.

A new CCC SLAA submission for the local plan, SLAA323 - Golden Hills Farm:

This new SLAA was submitted under the Regulation 18 draft Canterbury District Local Plan and is being positioned as an extension to the proposed Bread and Cheese Field development. It is 4.54 ha in size so smaller than the Bread and Cheese Field.

The live link states that the Golden Hills Farm site is 'under assessment' by CCC.

It can be viewed at:

<https://canterburycity.maps.arcgis.com/apps/inspect/basic/index.html?appid=d5eb0786ef4145b1bbcbef1fb2587f64>

This site is considered to be wholly unsuitable – there is no available access to it, and it has very steep topography. If the Bread and Cheese Field were developed first this could allow a designed access but then construction traffic would have to go through the Bread and Cheese development which would not be desirable. Whilst there is no open consultation at present giving any opportunity to comment the Clerk will email the city councillors and the CCC Policy Officer with these comments.

Bread and Cheese field (currently in Hersden parish): Community Governance Review by CCC

The Community Governance Review by CCC has now concluded with Full Council in October 2024 resolving that the Bread and Cheese Field and whole petitioned site be transferred back to Westbere.

13. The Parish's application to record 3x public footpaths across "The Two Fields" (Claim No C428).

Re: The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 – Section 53

- 1) Claimed public footpath from A28 Staines Hill to Public Footpath CB91 (Route A)**
- 2) Claimed public footpath from the corner of Westbere Lane to Public Footpath CB91 (Route B)**
- 3) Claimed public footpath from A28 Staines Hill parallel to Westbere Lane to connect with public footpath CB91 (near the entrance with Westbere Lane) (Route C)**

An application has been submitted under Section 53 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 that the Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way should be modified on the basis of the public having used the above routes for an uninterrupted period of 20 years.

The County Council has a duty to investigate every application it receives and as part of this process, views with any evidence to support or negate the application should be sent before 29 November 2024 to Michael Tonkin, Definitive Map Officer, PROW & Access, Kent County Council, Invicta House, Maidstone, ME14 1XX. Tel: 03000 41 03 25.

Email michael.tonkin@kent.gov.uk

For clarity, no further information is required from the parish council as the applicants. This consultation is for any member of public that did not originally engage with the application to have a chance to send evidence over. It also updates user groups (ramblers etc.) and statutory undertakers (water, gas) in case they have their equipment in the vicinity.

14. New planning application:

CA/24/01740 Use of outbuilding as dog grooming business. Westbere Cottage, 20 Westbere Lane, Westbere, Kent, CT2 0HH

Key points are:

- It uses an existing outbuilding/shed behind the existing garage – with no changes in size or layout or appearance.
- A maximum of 2 dogs would be on site at any given time, and capped to a maximum of 6 dogs per day
- Operating hours to be Mon-Fri 9am-5pm, and Saturdays 9am-3pm. No operation on Sundays or bank holidays.

CA/24/02048 – Gate House, 26 Walnut Tree Lane CT2 0HG

Replacement timber windows to all elevations together with replacement of front door from timber to composite.

Notifications:

CA/24/00511 - The Barn, Bushy Hill Road, Westbere CT2 0HE

Installation of panelled fencing at a height of 1.8m - GRANTED by CCC

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. There is no update.

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. There is no update.

15. **Use of Section 101 Scheme of Delegation** to the Clerk in conjunction with a minimum of two councillors since the last meeting: None.

16. **Finance**

RECEIVED the bank statements and bank reconciliation for October 2024 and RESOLVED the signature of a councillor other than the Chairman thereon – and two councillors to initial the invoices.

Mandate to open a new Savings Account

Unity Trust Bank has now processed opening a new Savings Account with Unity Trust Bank at 2.75% gross rate (with £10,000 automatically transferred by Unity from the current account on opening).

Local Government Pay claim 2024-2025 - The NJC (National Joint Councils) Trade Unions have now agreed new pay scales for 2024-2025: With effect from 01 April 2024, an increase of £1,290 on all NJC pay points (this equates to £322.40 p.a. pro-rata to the Clerk and is equivalent to a 3.5% pay rise); The new monthly salary of £791.26 is therefore implemented in the November 2024 pay along with a one-off taxable and pensionable back pay payment of £188.02.

Councillor to check the salt bins contents

Cllr P Glover kindly agreed to check the contents of the village's salt bins and speak with the Clerk to replenish where necessary.

Biodiversity - steps to conserve and enhance biodiversity

Whilst consideration of whether to install bird boxes and bat boxes in the churchyards, and owl boxes in private landowner's trees in Bushy Hill Road was agreed to be carried forward until the year end finances are more clearly known, CCC has advertised the opportunity to apply for a biodiversity grant – and the Clerk will make an application to this for all three items.

17. Precept budget for 2025-2026

Five Options were presented for the Precept budget for 2025-2026 –

OPTION 1 : Retaining administration and meeting frequency as now - a precept and budget of £17,819.67 for 2025-2026. This is an increase of £1,138.67 on last year's – equivalent to a **6.83% increase**.

OPTION 2 : TO IMPLEMENT BI-MONTHLY MEETINGS and reduce administration by a resulting 34.63 hours per year (equivalent to 40 minutes per week) - a precept and budget of £16,872.87 for 2025-2026. This is an increase of £191.87 on last year's – equivalent to a **1.15% increase**.

OPTION 3 : TO IMPLEMENT BI-MONTHLY MEETINGS and reduce administration by a resulting 34.63 hours per year (equivalent to 40 minutes per week) but with a staffing contingency in the budget for an additional two meetings if required - a precept and budget of £17,312.73 for 2025-2026. This is an increase of £631.73 on last year's – equivalent to a **3.79% increase**.

OPTION 4 : TO DROP TWO MEETINGS and reduce administration by a resulting 17.31 hours per year (equivalent to 20 minutes per week) - a precept and budget of £17,346.06 for 2025-2026. This is an increase of £665.06 on last year's – equivalent to a **3.99% increase**.

OPTION 5 : TO DROP TWO MEETINGS and reduce administration by a resulting 17.31 hours per year (equivalent to 20 minutes per week) but with a staffing contingency in the budget for an additional meeting if required - a precept and budget of £17,565.99 for 2025-2026. This is an increase of £884.99 on last year's – equivalent to a **5.31% increase**.

Cllr P Glover proposed Option 3. Cllr Wilson thanked the Clerk for the options and also agreed with Option 3. He commented that he wanted to deliver more value for money for residents and that the administration percentage of the precept is excessive. He drew attention to the King promoting Fish and Chips celebration events for VE Day next year on 08 May 2025. Cllrs Harlow, Dekker, Fielding and G Glover also supported Option 3. Cllr G Glover advised she did so with some reluctance, that it is a shame that the administration costs are so high but small parish councils are all in the same boat.

RESOLVED therefore OPTION 3 : TO IMPLEMENT BI-MONTHLY MEETINGS and reduce administration by a resulting 34.63 hours per year (equivalent to 40 minutes per week) but with a staffing contingency in the budget for an additional two meetings if required - and **RESOLVED** to adopt a budget as set out in the supporting document of £17,312.73 for 2025-2026. And **RESOLVED** a precept for 2025-2026 of £17,312 against the budget document figures, as a forecast of where the parish council plan to spend the money.

Residents present at the meeting raised comments about going bi-monthly, particularly with planning issues. Cllr Wilson advised the clerk is diligent on planning. Cllr P Glover advised the council will continue to work behind the scenes. The S101 scheme of delegation to the clerk can be used for decisions although this means members of the public hear information in arrears. Residents present felt it was more useful to have meeting frequency as now and with so much going on this was their preference. The Option resolved does however have contingency to call additional meeting(s) should a planning item for example arise.

18. Meeting dates for 2025

In light of the above decision that the parish council should meet bi-monthly in future it was agreed that this should be implemented with effect from 01 January 2025. Meetings will be on the third Monday of each month: 20 January 2025, 17 March, 19 May, 21 July, 15 September, 17 November. (Plus 24 March 2025 for the Annual Electors' meeting).

19. Data Audit

The Clerk had circulated a Data Audit document. There were no comments on this.

20. **Authorisation of online payments**
The payments were listed on the agenda. The Chairman will sign the Finance Appendix x2 for the Minute book and Invoice file.
21. **Actions arising from the August 2024 Inspection of the parish council's Assets:**
Cllr Fielding advised that the village hall committee had discussed the seat outside the village hall in need of refurbishment and are now thinking of removing it.
22. **Clerk report**
From 26 October 2024 employers have a legal duty to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of employees in the course of their employment. TO NOTE the parish council is already covered for this in its adopted "Dignity At Work" Policy (More information at: [Sexual harassment and harassment at work: technical guidance | EHRC](#)).
- For the Enquiry with KCC PROW team to consider extending the type 2 laid surface on the Fairview Gardens path to Westbere as well – TO NOTE Report Ref. 240962238 status is now "Work added to Forward Maintenance Plan".
23. **Nominative Trustee for the Westbere Charity**
Following the retirement of Diana Poulter as a PC Nominative Trustee of the Westbere Charity, all councillors were happy ELECT Mrs Maria Morcom for a one year 3 months term of office as a Nominative Trustee of the Westbere Charity, commencing on the 1st of January 2025 until 31st March 2026. Thereafter her term of office will be 4 years.
24. **Assets of Community Value**
The Clerk explained she had mis-read the CCC letter and the Agenda text was wrong - the Village Hall was accepted by CCC on 25 October 2024 for nomination for inclusion on the CCC register of assets of community value. (Reference ACVNF67). CCC has 8 weeks until 17 December 2024 to reach a conclusion on this nomination and will advise the clerk in due course of the outcome.
25. New residents for a Westbere Parish plan – Cllr Wilson will deliver to the Yew Tree occupants and Cllr P Glover will deliver to a new household in Church Lane. There are none left – in future new residents will be given the Welcome Pack document instead.
26. NOTED no meeting in December - Next Meeting date is 20 January 2025.
Members of the public were now excluded from the meeting for the confidential Staffing matters.
27. **Staffing Matters**
With the new bi-monthly meeting pattern agreed at the meeting the Clerk's contracted hours will change from 10 hours per week to 9.333 hours (9 hours 20 minutes) per week.
For the change in hours with effect from 01 January 2025 the clerk will:
- Advise the payroll provider
 - Update figures on the KCC pension portal
 - Prepare two copies of a new Contract of Employment to reflect the reduction in hours with effect from 01 January 2025 with all other terms of the contract to remain the same as before – one copy for the Chairman and one copy for the Clerk – and Clerk and Chairman to both sign them
 - Do an amended annual leave spreadsheet for 2024-2025 and a new annual leave spreadsheet for 2025-2026

The meeting closed at 8.25pm.

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Signed: Cllr Paul Glover, Chairman

Date:

Please note these Minutes remain as draft Minutes until they are approved by the parish council at their next parish council meeting.

Meeting dates for 2025: - The parish council will meet bi-monthly on the third Monday of each month: 20 January 2025, 17 March, 19 May, 21 July, 15 September, 17 November.

Plus 24 March 2025 - Annual Electors' meeting, and a date for the village green event 2025 tbc.