

Minutes of the meeting of Westbere Parish Council held on Monday 19 January 2026 in Westbere Village Hall at 7.00pm.

Present: Parish Councillors:

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

CCC Cllr Harry McKenzie.

Clerk to the Council, Amanda Sparkes.

5 residents

1. The Chairman's opening remarks

Cllr P Glover welcomed everyone.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Parish Cllr Kathy Fielding (leave), Parish Cllr Granville Glover (unwell), CCC Cllr Keji Moses, and KCC Cllr Mark Mulvihill (although he had sent a report, below).

3. Declarations of Interests

None.

4. Minutes of the last meeting held 17 November 2025

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

5. Broad Oak reservoir

NOTED the next Broad Oak reservoir Stakeholder meeting was held virtually on 11 December 2025. Cllr Wilson advised there is now a visual on South East Water's website and 28 interest bodies on the stakeholders list. Public consultation is starting next month.

The Environmental Impact Assessment application to CCC was validated last week:

CA/25/02340 - Land To North Of Broad Oak Kent CT2 0QT

EIA Scoping opinion request for creation of water storage reservoir with a storage capacity that would be approximately 5,126 million litres and a surface area of approximately 70 hectares, engineering operations including erection of up to 17m high embankments, creation of raw water abstraction points and pipelines, erection of common high lift transfer pumping station, installation of potable water pipeline running approximately 7.5km west connecting the reservoir water treatment works (WTW) with the existing Blean Service Reservoir, and associated non-water infrastructure elements such as bypass channel of the Sarre Penn and a fish pass, site access and interal access roads, visitor amenities hub, car parking, open spaces, wetland storage area, improvements to footpath, cycleway and bridleway networks, landscape and biodiversity habitat proposals, such as woodland, scrub, hedgerows, grassland, wetland and other habitat features, utility diversion and diversion of minor roads and footpaths within the footprint of the reservoir.

Find out more about the Ground Investigation works, and the Broad Oak reservoir project as a whole at www.southeastwater.co.uk/broad-oak.

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

The residents present had no questions or comments.

The meeting continued.

7. Parish Councillors' reports

Cllr Ken Dekker

Cllr Dekker advised he had seen two streetlights not working on Westbere Lane as he drove to the meeting. He will report these in the morning. He attended the Carol Service on the green which had been lovely.

Cllr Georgina Glover

Cllr G Glover asked to record thanks to the Westbere Village Preservation Society for all their hard work in organising the Carols on the green event. The event was crowded.

Cllr G Glover advised there are several potholes on the A28 and she and Cllr P Glover will try to report these where they meet intervention criteria.

Cllr Dave Wilson

Cllr Wilson had nothing to report.

Cllr Harlow

Cllr Harlow had nothing to report.

Cllr P Glover

Cllr P Glover had nothing to report.

8. Canterbury City Councillor Harry McKenzie report

Cllr McKenzie gave the following report:

Councillor Report for Westbere Parish Council November-December 2025
Councillors Harry McKenzie and Keji Moses

2025 Wrapped

- 177 casework issues solved - including getting a letter sent to the dog groomers reminding them of the conditions on their planning permission.
- 42 local meetings and events attended – including Remembrance Service.
- 34 council meetings participated in – including the Overview Committee where we raised concerns with the Draft Local Plan highlighted by WPC.

New Year Priorities

We hope you all had a lovely Christmas and wish you a very Happy New Year. As we enter 2026, we are thinking about our priorities (aside from casework and committee meetings) to be working on. Tell us what you think our priorities should include.

Local Government Reorganisation

On 20th November, we supported the 4d Model for LGR at Full Council and the 4d Model passed with a majority of votes from councillors and has been submitted to the government as Canterbury's business case. We supported the 4d Model because we believe it balances local representation with efficient service delivery. That is because:

- It keeps the elector-councillor ratio relatively low.
- It keeps the council area fairly compact and very well connected.
- It would allow for the creation of a combined authority and mayor to drive investment in the region and coordinate strategic service delivery.
- It would allow for collection and redistribution of revenue over a larger area.

The government will launch a public consultation and make a decision in the coming months; we will keep you informed about the consultation.

Relevant consultations

- The deadline to submit proposals for the Annual Parking Review closed and formal proposals have now been written up ready to go out for consultation from 22 January 2026. Once live it will be on the CCC website at <https://news.canterbury.gov.uk/latest-consultations/>
- The budget consultation has closed, and officers are writing a report for councillors to review ahead of the budget setting meeting on 23rd February.
- The Regulation 19 consultation for the Draft Local Plan will be coming very soon, and we will keep you updated on that.

Planning issue with access on Church Lane

The Clerk alerted us to an issue with a new access drive being built on a home on Church Lane. Harry raised this directly with the Head of Planning and a Senior Planning

Enforcement Officer, the advice received was that this counts as permitted development because it is located on unclassified road and adequate drainage is built in, so there is no appropriate enforcement action to take.

As always, you can contact us at

- harry.mckenzie@councillor.canterbury.gov.uk / 07944345409
- keji.moses@councillor.canterbury.gov.uk

You can also follow our Sturry Ward Councillors pages and Harry's personal councillor pages on Facebook and Instagram to keep up-to-date with what we're up to.

9. KCC Cllr Mark Mulvihill report

Cllr P Glover read the Kent County Councillor's report to the meeting, as follows:

Westbere PC KCC Report 19/01/2026

Sorry I am unable to be with you all this evening, I have another meeting to attend which will delay me getting back in time, I hope you all had a good Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all.

I will start with South East Water which I am aware has affected residents within the ward including Broad Oak and Herne and how the company has handled the situation throughout Kent has been diabolical.

On the 13th January the leader of KCC Linden Kemkaran wrote to Chris Train OBE, chairman of SE Water to formally call upon the board to take immediate action to ensure the leadership of SE Water is capable of restoring public confidence and for David Hinton (CEO) to step down. The recent incidents clearly show the lack of investment SE Water have put into pumping stations and piping etc.

Canterbury Street Lights:

Despite a lot of media attention, KCC has not been ripping out all the lamp posts, and the ones that have been reported within Canterbury in the media are not even Victorian. Only the unsafe cast iron columns have been replaced using steel columns, most people have not noticed the difference and KCC has received no complaint.

A28 – Sturry Link Road,

The Sturry link road has also been in the media recently, having spoken to Highways with regards to the funding shortfall this is the response I have received.

"The business case for the Homes England grant is in its final stages of review, and we expect a decision by the end of the month.

'Sturry Link Road is a critical project for reducing congestion and improving connectivity for residents and businesses in the area. We remain absolutely committed to delivering it and are continuing to progress the scheme in line with our plans.

'Should the grant not be approved, our immediate priority will be to start work on the A28 roundabout to make some much needed improvements to traffic flow for residents. This is a key part of the overall solution to ease traffic pressures and improve safety, and we will explore every available option if needed to keep the wider project moving forward"

However, I have today raised my concerns that this road needs to be built and completed.

A28 Crossing

I have had an enquiry from a resident regarding the possibility of having an additional crossing on the A28 at the top of Church Lane, this is currently being investigated by a highways officer and hopefully I will receive a response soon.

Power Cuts.

Last year we endured numerous power cuts throughout the whole division, should you receive any throughout this year I would be grateful if you could let me know, it appears

that Herne Villages and Sturry have this quite frequently compared to our neighbours and is something I shall monitor throughout the year and will communicate with UK Power Networks if they remain fairly frequent.

That's all from myself for now, as always anything I can assist with, do get in touch, and hopefully I will see you all in March for your next meeting.

Cllr Wilson queried the streetlight element of Cllr Mulvihill's report – the issue of the streetlights had been picked up by the Daily Mail, Daily Telegraph and Kent online. Steel columns are not similar. The ones condemned are cast iron Biggleston columns. There is discussion in the conservation sector about these.

10. Local Government Reorganisation:



At CCC Cabinet on 20 November 2025, Canterbury City Council resolved to propose Option 4d (image above) as its business case to the government for LGR. It passed with 24 for, 8 against and 0 abstentions.

The proceedings of the meeting can be watched at: [Extraordinary Meeting of Full Council, Thursday 20 November 2025, 6.00 pm](#)

It was supported as:

- The elector-councillor ratio is kept low meaning councillor workload is kept manageable and the connection between councillors and their residents is kept close.
- The council area is kept relatively compact and very well-connected by motorways and transport links.
- It supports the delivery of a combined authority and elected mayor to drive investment in our region and strategically deliver services like housing, skills, transport and industry.
- It allows the council to collect and redistribute revenue over a larger area allowing services to be delivered more effectively (but not so large that it removes local representation).

The government will launch a public consultation and make a decision in the coming months.

11. CCC's Infrastructure Funding Statement

The latest Infrastructure Funding Statement has now been published on the Council's website. The link to the webpage where this year's statement along with those from previous years is: [How we report developer contributions | Canterbury City Council](#) Cllr Wilson advised he had looked at this. Only three parish councils appear to have received CIL funding. Parishes receive 15% of CIL funding from their individual parish. The Clerk explained that CCC would pay it automatically every six months in April and October if the parish has had any application that attracts a CIL payment. Westbere hasn't received any. For spending CIL money, it has to be spent on items that meet the eligible criteria for spend. The parish council did adopt a policy and wish list some 3 or so years ago.

12. Possible Community Governance Review

At the 08 January 2025 CCC Full Council meeting there was a general discussion on whether a Community Governance Review should be undertaken ahead of local government reorganisation.

The motion called for this discussion to take place before the Cabinet meeting on 19 January, where a report, commissioned by Cabinet members, will invite Cabinet to consider whether resources should be allocated for a review in 2026/27. (A link to the Council debate can be found here [Agenda for Council on Thursday, 8th January, 2026, 7.00 pm | Canterbury City Council](#). The livestream includes a petition presented at the start of the meeting, with the debate beginning at 1 hour 7 minutes into the recording.)

Cllr Wilson commented that the report includes several options, including "do nothing", "do the City of Canterbury only", or "do the whole district". There has been lobbying for all unparished areas, although the officer recommendation is to undertake a review in the City only.

13. Sturry Link Road

KCC is to commence advanced works for the new Sturry Link Road scheme. Volker Fitzpatrick will be acting on behalf of KCC to undertake some pre-commencement activities on the A28 including conducting trial holes and diverting utilities ahead of the project starting. Advance works started 12 January 2026 for approximately 13 weeks. The scheme will then formally start in April 2026. A temporary construction access for the scheme will also be built within this period. You may also see works being undertaken away from the A28.

The advanced works will be on A28 Sturry Road between the Park and Ride entrance and Black Mill Bridge.

A series of phased lane closures under temporary traffic signals will be introduced on the A28, which will likely cause some localised congestion. The temporary traffic signals will be monitored to minimise disruption.

Following this work on the A28, no further significant traffic management for the scheme is anticipated until 2027.

Further details can be found on the project website: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/road-projects/planned-road-projects/sturry-link-road>

So far hardcore is down in the field and the tree line has been knocked through.

Some councillors were unhappy that there is no detail of when the traffic lights will be in place and when they won't be, as this makes personal time management difficult.

14. Actions from the annual inspection of the parish council's Assets undertaken on 01 and 02 August 2025.

- i) The Churchyard walls - these are owned by the Church but the maintenance of the closed churchyards is WPC responsibility – the flint walls are on the WPC Insurance schedule with a value of £22,050 at 01 June 2025 insurance renewal. Walls are in fair condition.

There is a question about whether there is any documentation from the diocese setting out what the parish council is and is not responsible for. Cllr Georgina Glover has advised she has no knowledge of when the churchyard closed and has offered to speak to the Diocese about this. Cllr Georgina Glover will chase for a reply.

- ii) Broken Green bin at Walnut Tree Lane level crossing – not on parish council's insurance or asset register – needs replacing. CCC is happy for the parish council to replace this with a new litter bin and CANENCO will keep emptying this. Cllr P Glover advised he had looked at this again to see if it needs replacing imminently or whether a watching brief would suffice. He confirmed the top is broken but it's not dangerous and is still functional. Cllr Wilson proposed park this item for now, which was seconded by Cllr Georgina Glover.

15. Planning matters

New planning applications: None.

Notifications: None.

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.

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

17. Finance

RECEIVED an End of Quarter Three Payments and Receipts spreadsheet – and NOTED that this was uploaded to the parish council's website on 02 January 2026 to satisfy the Transparency Regulations.

The Clerk was asked to do an End of Year forecast.

NOTED that from 01 February 2026 Unity Trust Bank is increasing its monthly account charge from £6 per month to £7 per month.

NOTED the Actuary Barnett Waddingham LLP has set employers' pension contribution rate as 19.2% for the 3 years 01 April 2026 to 31 March 2029. The new rate to take effect from 01 April 2026. (This is down from the previous rate of 26.7% for the previous 3 years.)

NOTED that the government published its [Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2026/27 to 2028/29](#) before parliament rises for its Christmas break. The settlement and consultation include core proposals from the previously published written ministerial [policy statement](#) that parish and town councils should be exempt (this time over a whole three-year period) from referendum principles on excessive council tax increases.

NOTED CCC's consultation on its budget proposals for 2026/27 includes a proposal that Concurrent Function Funding should increase by inflation for each of the next three years. The Clerk responded to the consultation on 05 January 2026 that Westbere Parish Council wholeheartedly supports and welcomes this.

The Pensions Regulator – Re-declaration of compliance

NOTED that every three years there is a duty to re-declare compliance with the Pensions Regulator.

NOTED that the Clerk completed the online re-declaration of compliance on 11 January 2026.

CCC Capital Grants 2026-2027

NOTED that the Clerk submitted a capital grant application to CCC on 08 October 2025 for projects to be delivered in 2026-2027. (i) Removal and replacement hedging of the dead section of hedging at the village green. If successful, the grant would be for £278.40, and the parish council's own contribution would be £201.60. (Total £480)

NOTED that when the Chairman and Clerk dealt with the picnic table unstable middle leg, they found that one of the legs has sheared in half (this will need a repair) – so the Clerk completed and submitted a second capital grant application to CCC on 12 October 2025 for

a replacement picnic table plus installation costs. If successful, the grant would be for £952 (74%) and the parish council's own contribution would be £335 (26%) – total cost £1,287. CCC advised on 12 December 2025 that CCC has been heavily oversubscribed and a report with options will go to Cabinet in March 2026. If projects were partially funded by CCC the projects would still need to complete by the end of March 2027.

NOTED that The Kent Tree Company felled the dead Scots Pine tree in the churchyard on 18 December 2025 – and left a 'habitat pole' for bats and woodpeckers etc at the bottom – however will return soon to bring this to the ground. Cllr Wilson queried this decision. The estimate accepted was to fell it to the ground, but the company rang the clerk to review it at the 3m height as a habitat pole. Cllr P Glover commented that some residents had said to him that it was an eyesore and he was concerned that it may cost more again in the future to fell it if needed. Other residents felt the habitat pole was preferable. A vote was taken – Cllr Dekker abstained, Cllrs Wilson and Harlow preferred retention of the habitat pole, but Cllrs G Glover and P Glover voted to fell it, so with the Chairman's casting vote the decision to fell it won.

18. Authorisation of online payments

The payments were listed on the agenda. The Chairman signed the Finance Appendix x2 for the Minute book and Invoice file.

The Clerk explained that the order for the salt bags had not been fulfilled and as no delivery date was available, she had cancelled that order and placed another with an alternative company for a different amount (£67.96).

19. Website Accessibility

The 2025 edition of the Practitioner's Guide has a new requirement for 2025-2026 that the parish council's website should meet the new minimum accessibility standard WCAG 2.2 AA – The Clerk attended a NALC Webinar on 02 December 2025 about this. The difference between WCAG2.1AA and WCAG2.2AA is that there are technical changes to keep up with assistive technology that people with disabilities use. TO NOTE that the Clerk tested the website on 02 January 2026 and updated the Accessibility Statement. The Clerk believes the website conforms. If anybody would like to request any document or information in another format, please contact the Clerk who will endeavour to help.

20. Clerk report

RECEIVED the Clerk writeup of a South East Water Smart Meter programme briefing that she attended virtually on 08 January 2026. This is attached as an appendix to these Minutes.

21. Date for the Annual Electors meeting

Cllr Wilson proposed and Cllr Dekker seconded that this be held at 6pm on the same day as the next parish council meeting – 16 March 2026 – with the parish council meeting to run at 7pm afterwards.

22. New residents for a Welcome Pack

None this month.

The meeting closed at 7.58pm.

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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.

The parish council meets bi-monthly on the third Monday of each month: Next meeting dates are 16 March, 18 May, 20 July, 21 September and 16 November 2026.

APPENDIX

Writeup of South East Water Smart Meter briefing (held virtually on 08 January 2026)

The Smart Meter programme starts on 20 January 2026 and will run for the next 10 years.

Background to smart metering

The South East of England is considered 'seriously water stressed' due to:

- Low rainfall.
- High demand due to a high population density and limited resources.
- All local natural water sources already being used up.

Smart Meters are the most important step in helping manage water usage until new sources like the Broad Oak reservoir are operational. And they also help to meet the government's targets to reduce water usage and leakage reduction.

Key initiatives for smart metering are included in South East Water's Business Plan for the 2025-2035 business period. Smart metering is a central feature of its Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP 24).

Timeline

Overall rollout goal

- Upgrade approximately 298,903 smart meters by 2030.
- Upgrade approximately 880,000 smart meters by 2035.
- All meters on the network will be smart by 2035.

Year one

☐ The main roll-out begins in January 2026.

- Year one runs from January - March 2026 only.
- During year one, South East Water aims to install 12,500 meters across both household and non-household properties.
- Year one focuses and targets on the water supply zones of Canterbury and Whitstable first.

South East Water will install meters with smart meter capability in households, i.e. households and businesses who already have a meter.

The difference between smart meters and current meters is that smart meters use automated meter reading technology – unlike the manual six-month checks currently.

When fully connected to the smart network the upgraded meter will:

- Operate as a smart meter.
- Automatically send South East Water close to real-time readings throughout the day (readings are taken every hour, and transmitted as a packet every 24 hours).
- The data collected will be used to engage with customers around their water usage.
- Customers will be able to access their data through South East Water's online portal, "My Account" – www.southeastwater.co.uk/myaccount . (South East Water anticipates smart meter technology being ready from April 2026.)

My Account, the online portal, enables customers to:

- Manage their South East Water account.
- Get updates about their water supply.
- Manage payment plans.
- View and download bills.
- Make payments.

The advanced data collection has benefits of early leak detection, water usage and efficiency, and no more estimated bills, so efficient billing.

Installation

- The customer does not need to be in.
- The water will be turned off for a few minutes.

- A card will be left to let the customer know about their upgraded meter. (or if South East Water has not been able to upgrade the meter, for example if flooded, or a vehicle has been parked over the meter, a card will be left detailing next steps).
- South East Water will get in touch with the customer when their upgraded meter has been connected to smart meter technology.

Communication

Customers will receive a communication from South East Water informing them of the meter upgrade programme. These will be sent one month before installations begin by:

- Posted letter
- My Account message If the customer has signed up to My Account.
- Email If South East Water holds an email address for the customer.

South East Water web pages will have FAQs, a feedback survey, and the details of the customer services team. Social media will also be used.

- Email smart.metering@southeastwater.co.uk.
- Call the Customer Service team on 0333 323 5850 (Monday to Friday 8am – 7pm).

Other help South East Water offers

South East Water offers customers a number of ways to save water and money.

Customers can request free water saving devices via the website, such as:

- Regulated shower head
- Shower regulator
- Tooth brushing timer
- Kitchen tap flow regulator
- Universal sink plug
- LeakyLoo detection strips
- Shower timers
- Plant water saving gel
- Outside tap jacket
- Pipe lagging

Customers can also purchase a heavily discounted water butt kit via South East Water's website to help reduce water use in the garden.

Waterlink (a department within South East Water) are currently carrying out Water Efficiency Visits to help customers reduce their water usage. Customers can request a Water Efficiency Visit by signing up at <https://www.southeastwater.co.uk/help/save-water/>. At the visit Waterlink will:

- Fix any internal leaking fittings such as taps, toilets and tanks etc (where possible).
- Install water saving devices such as tap aerators, showerheads and cistern bags.
- Find out how much water the customer uses, then suggest small, easy changes they can make to help them use less water.

Useful links:

Household customers website: [southeastwater.co.uk/meter-upgrade](https://www.southeastwater.co.uk/meter-upgrade)

Household customers email: smart.metering@southeastwater.co.uk

Non-household customers website: [business.southeastwater.co.uk/smart-meter](https://www.southeastwater.co.uk/business/smart-meter)

Non-household customers email: business.smartmetering@southeastwater.co.uk

Priority Service Register: www.southeastwater.co.uk/help/priority-services/