

Minutes of the Annual Parish Electors' meeting of Westbere Parish Council held at the Village Hall on Monday 16 March 2026 at 6pm.

Present:

Parish Cllrs: Paul Glover (Chairman), Sylvia Harlow (Vice Chairman), Kathy Fielding, Georgina Glover, Granville Glover, and Dave Wilson.

15 x residents

1. Welcome

The Chairman, Cllr Paul Glover, welcomed everyone to this 2026 annual electors' meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Parish Councillor Ken Dekker and Canterbury City Councillor Harry Mckenzie.

3. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Electors' meeting held on 31 March 2025 *

There were some hard copies of last year's full Minutes at the meeting. These may be read at <https://westbereparishcouncil.gov.uk/parish-council-minutes/annual-electors-meetings-chair-reports/>

Resident Malindi Tucker proposed and Cllr Georgina Glover seconded that these were a true record of the meeting.

There were no matters arising.

4. The Chairman's Annual report

Cllr Paul Glover read his report to the meeting as follows:

Westbere Parish Council Chairman's report May 2025 to April 2026

I was again very pleased to be re-elected as the continuing Chairman in May 2025.

My continuing mission, from when I first joined the council remains the same, to make Westbere the place we want to be proud to live in. Whilst I believe we have come a long way, we continue the ongoing mission, and it's one that will remain high on the council agenda.

We continue, for now, getting a regular sweeper through the village, only having to chase a couple of times this year. We try to stay on top of lighting repairs and upgrades. We continue reporting the ever-growing potholes, which remains an ongoing fight as we seek these against the continued backdrop of squeezed budgets.

Details of the Parish Council Annual budget can be seen on our website. Since January 2025 to save money, the council now meets bi-monthly and the clerk's hours and salary were adjusted accordingly. This arrangement seems to be working well.

Some of our key areas of focus this year include:

- Assisted and supported by residents and the WVPS, a super "Bread, Cheese and Ale Feast" celebration event was held on 21 June 2025. With the Dead Horse Morris Dancers, some great food, a series of organised games, and with a dose of fine weather the event was very well attended indeed. Particular thanks are recorded to the chief resident organiser.
- Together with Cllr Dave Wilson, who chairs the Broad Oak reservoir Stakeholder Advisory Group, the Clerk and I attend these meetings to learn the latest news from South East Water. South East Water has just held public exhibitions and consultation and will hold further public consultation on a set of refined proposals later in 2027. Your feedback for Broad Oak Water, will then be taken on board and they will seek further comments ahead of submitting a planning application in early 2028. Construction starting is anticipated for 2031 with water in supply in 2035.

- Our biennial tree inspection last year highlighted that 16 trees in this financial year required remedial work, with two requiring felling, eight needing dead wood removal and five requiring pruning.
- The Bench on the River Stour located at the western end of the path which runs between Westbere Lake and the River Stour, as an important asset for the community of Westbere, had its ownership transferred from the WVPS to the parish council – and it is now on the parish council's insurance and fixed asset register.
- In collaboration with our neighbouring parish Hersden we were able to finally offer free Defibrillator training earlier this month.
- In May 2024 we sadly reported the unsuccessful outcome of the village green application for the Two Fields, however following that decision the application for the three public rights of way across the land was finally assigned to a KCC officer. Many of you will have been involved in that assessment, having been personally contacted by the officer. We can gladly announce the success of the application and in February this year the three paths have been recognised, and The County Council will therefore make an Order to record the routes as footpath status on the Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way.

We always seek to supplement our income with grants where available and other income. We gratefully accepted £200 from Lady of the Missions, St Anne's convent towards the upkeep of 25 Sisters' graves in All Saints Church.

We have made further Capital Grant applications to CCC for the replacement of the picnic bench on the village green and replacement of dead box hedging on the green, and we anxiously await their outcome.

We continue with our regular newsletters for residents to keep you all informed. However please continue to note we no longer print these and post them through doors routinely, unless you specifically ask for a hard copy. They continue to be available electronically on the parish website or by email, should you provide your email details to the clerk.

Planning is a big item, and for The Canterbury District Local Plan a focussed further Regulation 18 consultation was undertaken by CCC last Autumn. The Bread and Cheese Field, regardless of our objection, unfortunately remains a draft allocation for 150 homes.

Full Council will vote on 18 March 2026 on whether it will move to the next eight-week long Regulation 19 consultation. This unfortunately won't now be to consider individual sites – it is about the legality and soundness of the Council's Plan. Then all comments from this and previous consultations are given to a government inspector, and public examinations will be held later/end of this year. If anybody wants to speak to the Inspector, they must put in a representation to the Regulation 19 consultation.

The quiet village as we have come to know it is very much being pressurised by surrounding development opportunities; from the Two Fields owned by Bellway homes, the new planned development by Bretts and Sturry council at the Westbere Butts, to the Bread and Cheese field at the other end of the village now currently in the district plan. So, we remain vigilant, and interactive, as the pressure on the council to do the best for our community remains high. The outcome of the government's consultation and Ministers' chosen options for Local Government Re-organisation within Kent will likely be announced this summer and we wait for the outcome of that.

It is highly likely that concurrent function funding will cease under a new Unitary council. So, with that in mind the parish council resolved to set a precept budget of £19,078 for 2026-2027, a 10.2% increase. (Our budget may be viewed in detail on our website.)

Westbere is very fortunate to have an army of volunteers stepping into the breach for the various committees, societies and working groups, and for this we thank you all again this year, for making this an inclusive and well supported village community.

We thank our KCC Cllr Mark Mulvihill and our city councillors, Keji Moses and Harry McKenzie for their continued support for all things to do with Westbere, and the wider community.

I offer thanks to my fellow Parish Councillors who are dedicated volunteers, giving up their valuable time, to work very hard on behalf of Westbere. An awful lot of immediately unseen work goes on behind the scenes, in terms of committees, planning, the environment, the neighbourhood watch, the village hall, and informally monitoring of our footpaths, fire hydrants, streetlights and salt bins, etc.

My continued thanks also always goes to our parish Clerk, Amanda, for her continued dedicated, and invaluable support, as well as the wealth of expertise and experience she brings to the parish of Westbere.

We again look forward to a positive year ahead.

We will be planning another Summer Party event to celebrate/mark the gifting of the Village Green to the village. So please look out for these details on the noticeboards, and various communications in due course.

Cllr Paul Glover, Chairman 2025-2026, Westbere Parish Council

5. Kent County Cllr Mark Mulvihill report

There was no report from KCC Cllr Mark Mulvihill.

6. Report from City Councillors Harry McKenzie and Keji Moses

There was no annual report from Canterbury City Councillors Harry McKenzie and Keji Moses.

7. Report for the year 2025 from the Westbere Charities

Dr Geoff Jones read his Westbere Charities chairman's annual report to the meeting including the accounts – handouts of this were given out/available to all residents present at the meeting and the report is appended to these Minutes.

A resident asked why the charities don't publish their assets – Malindi Tucker, Trustee and Clerk for the charities explained that as the charities income is below £10,000 there is no requirement to do so. Dr Jones commented that its capital had been stable for 20 years.

A resident asked if it was just residents in the ancient parish of Westbere that might benefit. Malindi Tucker, Trustee and Clerk for the charities explained the ancient parish takes in Friendly Hall, a little of the A28 towards Hersden and some towards Fordwich. Trustees do however have discretion to consider slightly further.

8. Church Wardens to attend the May 2026 Westbere Parish Council meeting

The Chairman advised that the Sturry and District United Church's Church Wardens will attend the 18 May parish council meeting to discuss the Future of Westbere Church and the proposal to close All Saints Church as a venue for worship.

Cllr Wilson proposed that the parish council have discussion with the Westbere Village Preservation Society about getting the Church listed as an Asset of Community Value and if successful what the church could be used for and how to raise funds for any purchase and upkeep. Cllr P Glover seconded this, and residents present were happy with this. The Clerk and Cllr Wilson will finalise an Asset of Community Value application to CCC.

9. Electors' Participation

A resident commented that the council tax and precept had gone up again. He asked where the value for money was for the parish council, commenting that it was becoming an

impudent council with such high salary costs. He felt that residents should have a say on this.

The Clerk confirmed that Westbere's precept is one of the highest in the Canterbury district however salary costs always make up a significant percentage of all parishes' and businesses' costs.

Cllr Wilson advised Westbere could merge with a neighbouring parish council (Hersden or Sturry) but people are linked to their identity and community and merging isn't easy to do. He felt that the new Unity won't want Westbere to take over assets. He suggested waiting for the outcome of the Local Government Reorganisation and the next Community Governance Review anticipated in 2028. Cllr P Glover reminded residents that the last Community Governance Review in 2018 which set up the new Hersden Parish Council from 2019 that residents did not want to join with the new Hersden.

A resident suggesting joining with SABORA (Sturry and Broad Oak Residents Association) but the Clerk explained this could not be an option as SABORA is a residents' association not local government. Cllr Wilson commented that Westbere does do joint working when applicable and that parish councillor Ken Dekker is the Clerk to Sturry.

A resident asked the parish council to make an objection to the Bread and Cheese Field draft allocation at the Regulation 19 consultation. The Clerk explained the consultation is not about individual sites but about the soundness and legality of the Canterbury District Local Plan. The parish council is in talks about putting in a representation on the soundness of the Hersden settlement boundary lines however.

A resident commented that lots of the village drains are blocked. The Clerk and Chairman will look to report these.

In Westbere Lane near the entrance the road edge is crumbling away a resident advised. The Clerk said she'd look at this and get it reported. Another resident suggested that this be reported to KCC Cllr Mark Mulvihill. And to also ask him for any update on the residents' request for a pedestrian crossing on the A28 by the top of Church Lane. Another resident suggested that this list also include overgrown footpaths from Bushey Hill Road to Brooklyn Cottages – this is now so encroached it allows only single file pedestrians.

A resident asked that it be Minuted that there is a general dissent amongst Westbere residents that the KCC councillor is not present tonight and does not attend Westbere Parish Council meetings regularly.

A resident commented that it was sad that the villages are merging and that there is no park for people to meet and lovely areas for walks are getting eroded by development.

Cllr Wilson commented that it could be a good thing to have a Neighbourhood Plan to have a say in development and an increase in any CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) funding but it is too expensive for Westbere to do alone – although a joint one with Sturry and / or Hersden could be considered.

A resident commented that the Two Fields is a lovely space, but it could be nicer and better tended. Another resident commented that volunteers can't do anything as it's private land.

A resident commented that the original footpath to Sturry is on a slant and brambles are overgrowing. Westbere Parish Council does report this to Network Rail.

There were no further questions or comments.

The meeting closed at 6.50pm.

THE WESTBERE CHARITIES

Registered Charity Number 239866

WESTBERE CHARITY CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT TO THE ELECTORS MEETING OF THE PARISH OF WESTBERE , MARCH 2026

Accounts for the period	01/01/2025 to 31/12/2025
Income	£5155
Expenditure	£4976

Our capital fund is invested in the Charitable Organisations Investment Fund as approved by the Charity Commission. The share dividends for 2025 have increased by 2.7% but the value of the shares has decreased by 4.8%.

We were very grateful to receive the profits from the Westbere Community Event, the Bread, Cheese and Ale Feast, held on midsummer's day.

Once again the Trustees were pleased to be able to benefit a number of local students, 6 of whom received book grants to assist with their studies. The Christmas voucher scheme benefited some 5 residents in the locality and the Charity gave a celebratory gift to 5 Nonagenarians in the village.

The Charity is aimed particularly at residents over the age of 55 and students undertaking tertiary education. We appeal to everyone who becomes aware of anyone living in our village, whom they think could be suitably helped, to contact the Clerk, Malindi Tucker, or any of the other Trustees. All cases are dealt with in strictest confidence and are known only to the Trustees below.

Geoff Jones (Chairman)	Holly Lodge, Westbere Lane	712570
Malindi Tucker (Clerk)	Ashby Meadow, 6a Westbere Lane	710209
Judy van den Broek	Ashby Cottage, 6 Westbere Lane	712937
Alison Grubb	The Warren, 9 Westbere Lane	711857
Maria Morcom	14 Pennington Close	711419

Finally I would like to thank each of my co-trustees for their work and support over the past year. I would also like to thank Andrew Miles, who acts as independent examiner and audited the financial statement.

Geoff Jones
Chairman
9th February 2026