

Minutes of the meeting of Westbere Parish Council held on Monday 18 May 2026 in Westbere Village Hall at 7.00pm.

Present:

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

Church Warden Martin Pilgrim (for part of the meeting).

CCC Cllr Harry McKenzie

Clerk to the Council, Amanda Sparkes.

Two Hersden Parish Councillors.

Clerk to Hersden Parish Council.

8 x residents

1. Election of Chairman for 2026-2027

Cllr Dekker proposed that Cllr Paul Glover be elected as Chairman and this was seconded by Cllr Fielding. There were no other nominations. Cllr Paul Glover was happy to accept the position, and he signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

2. Election of Vice Chairman for 2026-2027

Cllr Paul Glover proposed that Cllr Sylvia Harlow be elected as Vice Chairman and this was seconded by Cllr Wilson. There were no other nominations. Cllr Harlow was happy to accept the position.

3. The Chairman's opening remarks

Cllr P Glover welcomed everyone and gave a reminder about the rules around public participation.

4. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from CCC Cllr Keji Moses, KCC Cllr Mark Mulvihill, and Parish Councillor Granville Glover (unwell).

5. Declarations of Interests

None.

6. Sturry and District United Church's Church Wardens and the future of All Saints Church

Cllr Paul Glover welcomed Martin Pilgrim, the Church Warden and Steward at Sturry. Martin explained that Westbere Church is part of the Sturry with Fordwich and Westbere with Hersden parochial church council. It has two Church buildings and two churchyards, and is Methodist and Anglian denomination. They have been without a full time Priest since 2021. Since then, ministerial support has come from a variety of sources. They have failed to appoint a part-time clergy, due to a shortfall in clergy and declining congregations. Westbere Church is used infrequently for services and by a very small number of people 14-20 people, 8-10 of which attend Sturry (and Sturry has a congregation of 43 people.) The PCC has discussed with the Archdeacon to look at its closure. The Archdeacon suggested the PCC consider if the Church is sustainable as a place of worship. The cost is £5,000 per year including insurance. Plus the church must be inspected every 5 years – the last inspection was done in 2022. As the building gets older the chance of major repairs is higher. There is also poor disabled access, inadequate parking and no toilets. Martin commented that if they give up the Church they are not giving up on this end of the parochial parish – there are several new homes and a new community building up.

The village hall is still owned by the Church and leased to Westbere Parish Council. The lease allows the Church to use the village hall without payment every Sunday and one evening a week – so the village hall could be used to hold services.

Martin explained that he and Cllr Georgina Glover have sketched a case for closure out, with more detail to be added. The decision ultimately will be for the Diocese. The process will take 6-12 months. The Diocese will hold two rounds of formal consultation.

Martin invited questions. Cllr Wilson commented that the Church is a physical asset and if it is closed it still needs to be maintained and insured. Martin responded that when it is closed for worship the responsibility is then taken over by the Diocese. Fordwich has a churches conservation trust although they are not taking on any new churches currently, so their involvement is unlikely. Martin advised he was not sure what the Diocese would do – they might try to sell it.

Cllr Wilson commented that there are two or three charities that help communities take over churches, for example, the Friends of Friendless Churches.

Cllr Fielding advised she was Chair of the village hall committee and that the lease allows use of the village hall subject to the current booking conditions – so could the village hall committee charge the PCC for cleaning, and also, from time to time of gas and electricity as consumed. Martin felt the answer to this was yes.

Cllr Georgina Glover commented that most of the questions will need to be asked of the Diocese. She also commented that the Church has medieval glass and tombs up the aisle, for example. The parish council will need to clarify things with the Diocese in due course.

7. To consider submitting an application to CCC to register All Saints Church, Westbere as an Asset of Community Value

Cllr Wilson proposed and Cllr Georgina Glover seconded and all councillors resolved that an asset of community value should be submitted to CCC for the Church.

8. Minutes of the last meeting held 13 April 2026

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

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

A resident advised that a Bushy Hill Road street name plate had gone missing and he had reported this to the Clerk. The Clerk has placed an order for a replacement to CCC.

A resident commented that the road at the bottom of Church Lane appears to have heaved and the road surface has a hump - Cllr Paul Glover offered to look at this.

A resident commented that Westbere Lane has 13 or so potholes – some have been repaired where they meet intervention criteria.

A resident commented that the Church is currently maintained by the PCC and asked where the income comes from – Cllr Georgina Glover explained income is from fundraising and church goers contributions. The Diocese income comes from investments, PCC precepts, etc.

The resident asked if the parish council knows what residents want for the future of the Church. Cllr Wilson advised that parish council representatives had met with WVPS representatives. It is difficult to find a viable alternative. The Church building is Grade 1 listed and has bats.

The meeting continued.

10. A small part of the village green hedge has suffered partial collapsed

The small section of hedge at the village green that has suffered partial collapse has been cut by the contractor. Cllr Paul Glover explained that he has looked at it and felt that it is recovering naturally and regenerating from the bottom. The Clerk was asked to talk to the parish council's grounds maintenance contractor and ask them not to cut the shoots at the base and ask if they have any other comments and/or suggestions. The parish council will keep a watching brief on this.

11. Parish Councillors' reports

Cllr Dave Wilson

Cllr Wilson explained he had spent the last 8 weeks working on responses for ACRA and the

Canterbury Society for the Regulation 19 consultation on the Canterbury District Local Plan. Both responses are critical of the Canterbury District Local Plan's provision of infrastructure, traffic, and forecast of homes to be built. Only 54% of homes have been built since 2017. He feels the CDLP is unsustainable, undeliverable, and unjustified.

Cllr Wilson advised he is also working on the CCC Community Governance Review (CGR) and he attended a briefing last week and also attended a KALC Executive committee on the CGR.

Cllr Georgina Glover

Cllr G Glover advised the pavement from Bushy Hill Road to Pennington Close has been partially cleared. Cllr Fielding commented that trees by the convent are overhanging the footpath but she did not know whose ownership they are in – the Clerk will look at these and their locations and report as appropriate.

Cllr Dekker

Cllr Dekker had nothing to report.

Cllr Fielding

Cllr Fielding had nothing to report.

Cllr Harlow

Cllr Harlow had nothing to report.

12. Canterbury City Councillor Harry McKenzie report

Cllr McKenzie's read his following report:

Councillor Report for Westbere Parish Council (18/05/2026)

Councillors Harry McKenzie and Keji Moses

This report relates to our work from March and April 2026

Horton Court Planning Call-In

Keji has called in the planning application for Horton Court to the Planning Committee for a decision. We are now in listening mode and carefully reviewing the application and all representations. As a member of the Planning Committee, Harry cannot be predetermined. We will keep you updated on how this planning application proceeds.

Draft Local Plan and Transport Strategy

The Draft Local Plan and Transport Strategy were sent to a Regulation 19 Consultation before being sent to the Planning Inspector. The consultation closed today. We hope you all had a chance to have your say, and we will keep you informed on how these proceed.

Old Park purchase

On 27th March, it was revealed that Canterbury City Council has put in a bid to buy Old Park from the MOD. If successful, this will allow us to protect this precious green space for generations to come. It is still early days for negotiations and we are monitoring this.

SOS Whitstable

Harry attended the SOS Whitstable protest to join with colleagues, community groups and residents from across the Canterbury District and beyond to oppose the obscene level of pollution into rivers and the sea locally and call on Southern Water to clean up their act. There has been over 10 hours' worth of sewage discharged from the Waste Water Treatment Plant in Westbere and the Combined Sewer Overflow on Fordwich Road in Sturry so far this year. So, he went to speak up for local residents and nature.

Training on Sewerage and Waste Water Management

The Leader of the Council and Head of Planning put together a training event for councillors to learn more about planning processes involved with sewerage and waste water management. We both attended this training and learned about the process planning officers take when reviewing applications and how provisions in the Draft Local Plan will make a difference in terms of infrastructure delivery. This knowledge, as intended, will be taken into our roles when working on planning-related matters.

Housing Committee

As a member of the Cabinet Advisory Committee on Housing, Harry reviewed the new Social Housing Consumer Standards Service Improvement Strategy provided by officers at the last meeting which has now been referred to Cabinet for approval. It is a robust strategy that meets the scale of the challenge as last year the Regulator of Social Housing downgraded CCC to C3 meaning we had serious failings in our social housing stock. We are determined to change this.

Relevant government policies:

- **Right to Buy** – the government is shaking up Right to Buy so that tenants now need to live in their council home for 10 years, up from 3, before they can buy it, new-build council homes can't be sold for at least 35 years and the discount to purchase a council home through Right to Buy has been reduced.
- **Council Tax** – the government is introducing a new responsibility for councils to work with residents who fall behind on council tax payments to set realistic and sustainable repayment plans rather than take overly harsh enforcement action. Also, council tax payments will be spread over 12 months but with the option to keep it spread over 10 months if residents prefer it that way.

Cllr McKenzie also explained that there was an announcement on 06 May 2026 that the CCC Labour/Liberal Democrat Coalition came to an end over a WhatsApp message from the Labour Leader asking Lib Dem councillors to abstain rather than refuse Canterbury District Local Plan development sites.

The Cabinet is to drop from 9 members to 6 members, and the planning committee has also been reduced a little.

There has been a Civic Team change – Cllr Keji Moses has stepped down as Mayor and Cllr Alister Brady (Chartham and Stone Street ward member) has been appointed as the new Mayor for the year.

Cllr Wilson commented that for the Horton Court planning application Cllr McKenzie could ask for a substitute when it comes to planning committee and speak against the application – or ask Cllr Keji Mose to speak. There are plenty of objections.

The Clerk has been notified of amended plans for the application – she explained it was only for a slight change to the OS map site boundary line beside Horton Court.

13. KCC Cllr Mark Mulvihill

KCC Cllr Mark Mulvihill had spoken to the Clerk with an update on the residents' request for a pedestrian crossing on the A28 by the top of Church Lane. He had a meeting with KCC Highways on 12 May 2026. Low footfall doesn't warrant a pedestrian crossing. However, KCC will look at putting in an island or two to make crossing the road easier. So, this request has moved to the KCC Planning team to look at a possible scheme.

He had also sent the following report:

KCC Councillor Mark Mulvihill Parish Council Report — May 2026

1. Reform UK — First Year Delivering for Kent

As we reach the first anniversary of Reform UK Administration taking control of Kent County Council in May 2025, I am proud to report on the genuine progress our administration has delivered. We came into office with a promise to do things differently — to put Kent's residents first, deliver better value for money, and protect the services that matter most. After twelve months in office, we are delivering on that promise.

Strong Financial Management — In our first year we inherited the existing debt of £732 million in May 2025. I'm delighted to tell you that we have, in the course of our first year in charge, reduced KCC's debt by £142 million to £590 million, saving over £1 million in debt interest payments in revenue every year. We cancelled £39.5 million of future spend associated with Net Zero whilst setting a balanced budget with no extra borrowing and

increased investment in Adult Social Care, Children's Services, and Highways. Our Council Tax increase of just 3.99% was lower than 86% of comparable councils across England.

Protecting Community Services — A third of our libraries were threatened with closure under the previous Conservative administration. We have saved every single one of them. Country Parks, Community Wardens and School Crossing Staff have equally been protected. These services were under genuine threat before Reform UK took control.

Education Excellence — 98% of Early Years settings in Kent are rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. 96% of pupils secured a place at one of their preferred schools. 48,000+ children with SEND are receiving support across the county.

Supporting Kent Business — We produced Kent's first ever Commercial Strategy, directed £55 million more in contracts to Kent companies, and provided enhanced support to 500 local supplier businesses. This is about keeping Kent's money working in Kent's economy.

2. Local Government Reorganisation

The Government's public consultation on LGR in Kent and Medway closed on 26th March 2026, with a decision expected during summer 2026 and new unitary authorities anticipated from April 2028. KCC's preferred option remains **Option 1A — a single unitary 'Kent Council'**, supported by three area assemblies. This delivers the fastest financial payback (3.3 years), annual savings of £69m, and cumulative savings of £457m over 10 years. It keeps Kent together and supports the less wealthy areas. There is a real risk with all the other options on the table that the east Kent coast will be split off from the rest of Kent and could face huge council tax rises to pay for the core services that residents depend on. I will keep all parish / town councils fully informed as the Government's response becomes clear.

3. Primary School Offers — Excellent News

Excellent news for Kent families — 98% of pupils have been offered one of their preferred primary schools for September 2026. This tremendous achievement reflects the hard work of KCC's Education team and the quality of our excellent Kent schools. Families who were not offered their first choice can join waiting lists by 30th April 2026, with appeals lodged by 18th May 2026. KCC will hold a second round of offers on 21st May 2026 for any spaces that become available.

4. Highways — New Contractor from 1st May

A significant milestone for Kent's highways took place on Thursday 1st May 2026, when Ringway Infrastructure Services officially began its role as KCC's principal highways contractor under a new Highways Term Maintenance Contract. This marks the start of a new era for Kent's roads and represents a major long-term investment in the quality, reliability and resilience of our highways infrastructure.

Ringway, a Kent-based business, replaces Amey, who have delivered highways services in Kent for over the past 12 years. Following a rigorous and competitive procurement process, Ringway was selected to deliver better workmanship, enhanced accountability, and improved value for money for Kent's council taxpayers. The new contract covers the full range of highways services including winter gritting, pothole repairs, bridge maintenance, drainage works, road markings, street lighting, and vegetation management across Kent's extensive 5,400-mile highway network.

Key improvements residents can expect include:

Faster repairs — Streamlined processes mean potholes, drainage faults and other highway defects will be fixed more quickly, reducing disruption to road users and improving road quality across the county.

Clear performance targets — Ringway will be held to account against measurable performance standards, ensuring consistently reliable service delivery and genuine accountability to Kent residents.

Better value for money — Transparent pricing structures mean every pound spent on highways is tracked and focused on delivering visible results that residents will see and benefit from in their daily lives.

24/7 emergency coverage — Round-the-clock response capability for emergencies, severe weather events and urgent highway safety issues, ensuring Kent's roads remain safe and accessible at all times.

As we have Ringway as our new principle highways contractor, better weather for works to be carried out also funds available in our budget for highway repairs I urge you to report potholes and defects that require attention, to report highway defects at <https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-or-track-a-problem-on-the-road-or-pavement>

If any issue you have reported in our division is not being progressed promptly under the new contractor, please contact me directly with the relevant reference number at linden.kemkaran@kent.gov.uk and I will ensure it receives the attention it deserves.

5. KCC Services & Campaigns

Forever Active Kent — Launched 1st April 2026, helping residents aged 50+ stay mobile and independent. Community groups can apply for grant funding for activity sessions. **Mental Health Grants** — The 2026 Kent & Medway Better Mental Health Fund offers grants from £500 to £10,000. Email suicideprevention@kent.gov.uk. **Family Hubs** — Free courses at <https://loom.ly/Kyd-Wbw>. **Mental Health Support (24/7)** — Text SHOUT to 85258 or call 0800 107 0160.

6. Canterbury Stroke relocation

I have been working hard with our public health teams and the HOSC committee members regarding the relocation of the stroke services at Kent and Canterbury being moved to William Harvey Hospital. Having gathered all the information that had been supplied most of which was outdated I worked with the HOSC team to produce a list of recommendations that they could use to put forward a motion. This motion was put forward and passed unanimously.

The HOSC committee has agreed that:

- Canterbury should be retained as the permanent East Kent HASU.
- NHS Kent and Medway and NHS England should publish clear evidence justifying any alternative model.
- A full equality impact assessment should be completed, with specific focus on Thanet, coastal East Kent, deprivation, and transport access.
- Side-by-side modelling should be published comparing Canterbury retention with the proposed alternative, including the impact on Ashford and Thanet.
- Independent assessment should be provided on travel time, ambulance resilience, and access to family support, rehabilitation, and discharge planning.
- The ICB should explain why an existing award-winning service in Canterbury cannot be retained as the permanent East Kent HASU.

Both I, the other East Kent Reform UK members, HOSC will continue applying pressure on the ICB on this issue and working cross parties with our local MPs. The full meeting is available to view on the KCC website.

7. A299 Thanet Way

The A299 Thanet Way will start having resurfacing works commencing on the 1st June through till the 21st July 2026, this will enable the 50mph to be dropped once the works are complete. This will involve road closures but this will be over night to minimise disruption.

7. Shalloak Road / Roadworks

Prior to the roadworks / road closure at Shalloak Road I was informed by highways that there were no "planned" roadworks due to take place, including the removal of the temporary traffic lights on the A28 Sturry Link Rd project. However, there is still a number of urgent works which have been taking place. I totally understand resident's frustrations, but urgent works are outside of KCCs control. This does not mean the issues being created are being ignored and I am regularly highlighting the issues caused to the Highways team. Yesterday I had another meeting with the highways engagement team, and have been assured that these

concerns have been raised with the operations team. I am awaiting their response and will share with all Parish / Town Councils once I hear back.

Mark Mulvihill

Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment, Coastal Regeneration and Public Health.
County Councillor for Herne Villages and Sturry.

14. Planning matters

Community Governance Review

[CCC is conducting a district-wide Community Governance Review](#) closing on 05 July 2026.

Cllr Paul Glover commented that it would be wrong not to discuss and explore all options. The timescale is short.

The Clerk's research paper had been circulated to all councillors.

Options for Westbere:

Option (a) - Stay as we are/ do nothing

Option (b) - Request that the parish council be abolished – this involves extensive public consultation and must be supported by the majority of residents.

Option (c) - Engage with Hersden Parish Council with a view to merging for longer term protection and financial viability and affordability.

Option (d) - Engage with Sturry Parish Council with a view to merging.

Option (e) – Engage with Fordwich Town Council with a view to merging.

There would be staffing and cost implications and other implications for Options (b) (c) (d) and (e).

Cllr Wilson explained that the mechanism is that if parishes request changes CCC will consider them – they must be viable and coherent. The residents at the Annual Electors' Meeting raised concerns about the level of Westbere's precept. He commented that Westbere is not sustainable as a parish and the new Unitary will mean less councillor representation per electorate and could offer opportunities for large parish councils/Town Councils. If Westbere Parish Council states options at the Stage 1 consultation CCC will then facilitate consultation at Stage 2 consultation with all affected households.

Cllr Georgina Glover commented that the precept is high and felt that we owe it to residents to explore further. Cllr Dekker did not comment due to having a pecuniary interest as Sturry's Clerk. Cllr Harlow and Cllr Fielding agreed options should be explored.

The Clerk advised that she had had spoken informally to the Fordwich Town Clerk who felt that her councillors would have little appetite for a merger and that they wouldn't want anything that might affect their Town Council status.

Cllr Dekker advised that the Clerk had also spoken informally with him and this would be an agenda item at the 10 June Sturry Parish Council meeting.

Cllr Paul Glover advised that he had attended the Hersden Parish Council meeting on 12 May 2026 where the councillors present all agreed to explore a merger further (although two councillors including himself had abstained due to having an interest) – subject to it not impacting on the precept Hersden residents pay and subject to resident consultation. The Clerk advised she'd also attended the Hersden meeting and suggested that the two Clerks got together to look at precept options for a joint precept budget. With Westbere holding reserves there could be 'wriggle room' to use some of that in the initial first couple of years to hold Hersden's precept low.

Cllr Paul Glover asked if Westbere should do a hard copy survey for all Westbere households at this time. Cllr Wilson explained that CCC has its own survey at present for anyone to give comments and CCC will then leaflet out themselves at Stage 2. He said it is not necessary for Westbere residents currently as there is no proposal.

Cllr Brabham (the Chairman of Hersden) suggested that Westbere councillors could call an Extraordinary General Meeting if required, depending on what information might be learned at the parish engagement meeting the next evening:

Parish Engagement Meeting

CCC is holding a parish engagement meeting on 19 May 2026 to provide:

- a question-and-answer session on the Community Governance Review (CGR)
- an update on the Local Plan, which is out for consultation under Regulation 19 and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)
- an update on neighbourhood plans

NOTED that Cllr Paul Glover, Cllr Georgina Glover and the Clerk will attend this.

Regulation 19 consultation on the Canterbury District Local Plan

Canterbury City Council published the Canterbury District Local Plan at

<https://haveyoursay.canterbury.gov.uk/43579/widgets/130223/documents/103524> on 23 March 2026 for consultation, in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The consultation is now closed.

It is expected that the Examination will begin in late 2026, concluding with a report from the Inspector in November 2027, and adoption of the new Local Plan in December 2027.

Westbere Parish Council's response was sent on 15 May 2026 and is included as an appendix to these Minutes.

TO NOTE the following representation was uploaded to CCC Planning Portal on 20 April 2026:

CA/26/00456 - Horton Court, Westbere Lane, Westbere CT2 0HJ

Erection of 3 two-storey detached dwellings.

The parish council objects to this application.

There is concern regarding access on and off the A28 – it is unsuitable. It is such a busy road and the speed limit here is 40mph. There is difficulty with vision and sightlines with the trees and fencing at the entrance. Three 5-bedroom houses will mean a minimum of six cars.

The site is not an allocation in the Canterbury District Local Plan. This is considered opportunistic development.

The Design and Access Statement at point 2.7 states that the site is not located in a Conservation Area. This is incorrect – Canterbury City Council's Planning constraints interactive layers map clearly shows the site is in the Westbere Conservation Area 2 (outer).

The Biodiversity Net Gain assessment is wrong – the applicant's own pictures show trees that they felled (without conservation area consent) since the assessment was made.

There is concern about the annotation on the proposed site block plan drawing stating "future access" – what does this mean. This suggests more than three houses are planned. The parish council objects as this is not the whole of the scheme and it appears an incomplete application. Westbere Parish Council objects to this application and asks that the ward councillors Cllr Harry McKenzie and Cllr Keji Moses call it in to the planning committee. Westbere Parish Council will book a representative to speak at planning committee.

NOTED that Cllr McKenzie and Cllr Moses have called the application in.

New planning applications: None.

Notifications: None.

Change to support housebuilding - where a local planning authority intends to refuse planning permission for a scheme which includes 150 dwellings or more, it must consult the Secretary of State:

Cllr Paul Glover advised that a new Consultation Direction was published by the Department on 31 March via The Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2026. The Direction has been introduced as part of a package of changes to support housebuilding trailed in the November 2025 and March 2026 Written Ministerial Statements. The Direction specifies that where a local planning authority intends to refuse planning permission for a scheme which includes 150 dwellings or more, it must consult the Secretary of State. Ministers are then provided 21 days to decide whether to use their existing powers to call in that planning application. The Direction will apply to applications which have not been determined by a local planning authority before 11th May 2026.

15. **Summer Party to celebrate the gifting of the village green Saturday 27 June 2026 12pm-3pm**

DISCUSSED the Yew Tree public house quotation – all councillors were happy to accept this and the offer from the Pub to have a pop up bar and soft drinks. Also NOTED that two WVPS members have offered to make cakes and help set up and clear up.

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 the bank statements and bank reconciliation for April 2026 and RESOLVED the signature of a councillor other than the Chairman thereon – and two councillors initialled the invoices.
NOTED a bacs payment was made by CCC on 16 April 2026 of £19,078 for the precept for 2026-2027.

Parish Council's Annual Insurance premium

Options were either: 1 Year: £1,255.68 (including IPT) or a 3-Year Long-Term Agreement: £1,151.11 (including IPT). Cllr Georgina Glover proposed and Cllr Dekker seconded and all councillors agreed a one-year renewal in light of the CGR options above.

CCC Capital Grants 2026-2027

NOTED that CCC has agreed two capital grant applications for Westbere:

- (i) Removal and replacement hedging of the dead section of hedging at the village green. The grant is £278, and the parish council's own contribution is £202. (Total £480)
- (ii) Replacement picnic table for the village green plus installation costs. The grant is £952 and the parish council's own contribution is £335 (Total £1,287).

A Grant Funding Agreement will be sent which the Clerk will sign and return and CCC will then process the payments. And TO NOTE: Parish Capital Grants for applications 2027/28 will be capped at £5000 per application and parishes will only be able to apply for one project per round. CCC will advise in the next couple of months when the next round is open.

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.

19. **Annual subscriptions to renew:**

- (a) Kent Association of Local Councils; proposed by Cllr Georgina Glover and seconded by Cllr Dekker and all councillors agreed, except Cllr Wilson.
 - (b) Campaign for the Protection of Rural England; all councillors resolved to renew.
 - (c) The Information Commissioners Office - all councillors resolved to renew. This is a statutory requirement anyway.
- and RESOLVED that payment be by variable direct debit for the annual CPRE subscription, the annual subscription to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), and the Unity Trust Bank monthly service charge.

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. NOTED that this has been reviewed – the Insurance renewal from 01 June 2026 has the Fidelity Guarantee set at £250,000.

20. **Cllr responsibilities for 2026 – 2027 were discussed and RESOLVED to stay the same as follows:**

- Newsletter production – 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;
- 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

21. **Model Financial Regulations** – There have been no changes since the last review and adoption of the parish council's Financial Regulations. Cllr Dekker proposed and Cllr Wilson seconded and it was RESOLVED to continue with them as last adopted until changes are made to the NALC Model.

22. **Model Standing Orders** - There have been no changes since the last review and adoption of the parish council's Standing Orders. Cllr Georgina Glover proposed and Cllr Dekker seconded and it was RESOLVED to continue with them as last adopted until changes are made to the NALC Model.

23. **Annual Return 2025-2026**

Cllr Georgina Glover recorded thanks to the Clerk for putting everything together for the Year End pack.

NOTED that for 2025-2026 the parish council's expenditure exceeded the £25,000 threshold and therefore Westbere Parish Council does not meet the criteria to be an exempt authority. The parish council will therefore have a limited assurance audit review by Forvis Mazars external auditors (and a fee will be payable for that.) In light of this threshold being exceeded the Clerk advised Forvis Mazars and asked for AGAR Form 3 (not AGAR Form 2 as in recent years).

RECEIVED:

- i) The Year End Bank reconciliation to 31 March 2026 – year-end balance is £19,012.42.
- 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) NOTED the website Accessibility Statement at <https://westbereparishcouncil.gov.uk/accessibility-statement/> was last reviewed by the Clerk on 02 January 2026.
- vi) The parish council's IT Policy.
- vii) NOTED that the Internal Auditor conducted internal audit with a virtual meeting with the Clerk on 21/04/2026, and has completed Section 4 of the AGAR. *(The Internal Auditor's report and her recommendations are detailed below for consideration.)*
- viii) Breakdown of Income, Staff Costs and All Other Payments in 2025-2026.
- ix) Expenditure against budget headings spreadsheet for the full year also, for information.
- x) Statement of Variances proforma and the explanations of significant variances.
- xi) Current Ear Marked Reserves schedule up to 31 March
- xii) The Parish Council's Register of Fixed Assets at 31 March

Cllr Wilson commented that the parish council has overspent against its predicted budget for the last four years and that he had no confidence of the managing of expenditure. He asked that the Chairman and Clerk meet to look at recommendations on how to control costs.

- xiii) The Annual Governance & Accountability Return (**AGAR Form Part 3**) for the financial year ended 31 March for submission to external auditor Mazars:

24. Section 1 : the Annual Governance Statement –

Cllr Dekker proposed and Cllr Fielding seconded and all councillors RESOLVED to accept Section 1. The Chairman and Clerk therefore duly signed Section 1.

25. Section 2 : the Accounting Statements –

Cllr Dekker proposed and Cllr Fielding seconded and all councillors RESOLVED to approve Section 2 – and this was then signed by the Chairman.

AND NOTED that the council will make arrangements for the 30 working day period for the exercise of public rights, 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 – APPROVED the date of announcement as Tuesday 02 June and the dates for the period of public rights as Wednesday 03 June 2026 to Tuesday 14 July 2026.

26. Internal Auditor's report – suggestions and recommendations:

NOTED the Clerk has downloaded the latest Practitioners Guide 2026-2027 as it contains new requirement and guidance which will affect the 2026-2027 year end.

NOTED that the recommendation that older minutes are stored at the County Archives cannot be fulfilled as KCC Archives only take Minutes over 30 years' old. (Minutes are stored in Westbere Village Hall.)

RECOMMENDATION: An ear-marked reserves schedule is maintained and totals £13,342.

This leaves an operating reserve of £5,670 or approximately 4 months' worth of expenditure. Practitioners' Guide paragraph 5.35 recommends that smaller Councils should hold closer to 12 months' operating reserve. The Internal Auditor recommends reviewing the earmarked reserves. The Chairman and the Clerk will do this and bring a new proposal to the next meeting.

RECOMMENDATION: that all councillors use ".gov.uk" email addresses as personal and/or work email addresses are subject to Freedom of Information requests. NOTED.

Also NOTED that the Internal Auditor has advised the Clerk that she will retire and that a new Internal Auditor needs to be sourced for next year – the Clerk will obtain 2-3 quotes and bring these to a future meeting.

27. Shrubbery Corner noticeboard

The WVPS committee has discussed the possibility of replacing the noticeboard at Shrubbery corner and now approached the parish council to ask if the parish council interested in jointly funding a larger noticeboard on the site to accommodate the current Heritage Trail sign plus village committee notices plus more general village information and notices of one off events. The current noticeboard is crowded, and the legs are wobbly. A WVPS member has agreed to carry out a survey and estimate. Cllr Georgina Glover proposed that this should be explored, all councillors agreed and the Clerk will reply to the WVPS.

28. Highways – double yellow lines

There is a persistent problem with cars parking too close to the entrance to Pennington Close making it dangerous when they're parked there. There is a stretch of yellow lines on one side. The Clerk had drawn a map showing a proposal and councillors unanimously agreed that the Clerk should put in a request to CCC for yellow lines to be added from the entrance of Pennington Close to the beginning of the drive of No. 16 Pennington Close and for this to be considered in the next annual parking review.

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

NOTED that the Clerk checked the defibrillator and updated The Circuit on 15 April 2026.

Reopening Manston Airport – 2026 Airspace Change Consultation

RiverOak Strategic Partners Limited ('RSP') is working to redevelop and reopen Manston Airport as an air freight hub.

The Clerk attended a presentation on 25 April 2026 – the flightpaths do not affect Westbere.

RECEIVED the Clerk's report:

RiverOak Strategic Partners Limited ('RSP') is working to redevelop and reopen Manston Airport as an air freight hub.

RSP's Stage 3 airspace change consultation will run until **Monday 22nd June 2026**. The consultation provides residents, communities and wider stakeholders with details of proposed changes to flight paths and airspace structure.

The consultation has several aspects to it, including a website where materials and proposals can be viewed and responses submitted:

<https://consultations.airspacechange.co.uk/manston-airport/manston-airport-consultation/>.

Summary of Key Differences

Approach

The only variation is in how aircraft approach Runway 10:

- Combination A: aircraft begin final approach at 2,500 feet
- Combination B: aircraft begin final approach at 3,000 feet

Noise

- Both combinations would expose a similar number of people to aircraft noise (around 26,000 people by day and 2,000 at night).
- There is no difference in predicated sleep disturbance or health impacts between the two combinations.

Fuel and Emissions

- Combination A performs slightly better, with lower fuel use and CO2 emissions than Combination B (aircraft have a slightly longer distance to travel in Combination B to align with the runway, avoiding controlled airspace nearby).
- Over a 10 year period, Combination A is expected to have a smaller carbon impact and a slightly better environmental score overall.

Operational Considerations

While both combinations work in a similar way, Combination B's 3,000ft approach is closer to Southend Airport's controlled airspace, which may make Combination A more practical from an air traffic management perspective.

Summary

- Combination A offers slightly lower environmental impacts.
- Combination A may be operationally more suitable due to airspace proximity.

30. **Welcome Pack for any new households – None this month.**

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.

.....
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 20 July, 21 September and 16 November 2026.

Appendix:

15 May 2026

By email to consultations@canterbury.gov.uk

Draft Canterbury District Local Plan (2042/43) Regulation 19

Westbere Parish Council representation:

Throughout the construction of the Canterbury District plan, Westbere Parish Council has continued to feed into the process at the various stages, highlighting the issues it has with the plan, and feel we have simply found ourselves falling on deaf ears. We have maintained that the plan does not cover the entire parish development pressures it finds itself under right now. Within this plan the N/E of the village is to be a strategic site, but the village already has development completed, with further development granted, and with yet further being proposed to the N/W of the village, which the plan does not currently consider. The green gap to the S/W of the village has been half purchased by a large building company, and we can only surmise that they have done so for no other reason than on the premise of development in the future. Planning permission has been sought for 3 houses in the centre of the village, with the suggestion of more. Canterbury City Council continues to not meet its housing delivery targets and cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply and is therefore under pressure to accept any proposed development, and the parish council feels exasperated by its current position.

We therefore make yet further representation, with this our local response from Westbere Parish Council, along with that of our MP and the Westbere Village Preservation Society. We believe that the shortcomings we have identified are symptomatic of wider issues with specific site policies within the Plan which consistently have been changed since the Regulation 18 version such as to make the Plan undeliverable and unsustainable, and thus unsound.

Whilst we are happy with the Regulation 19 Canterbury District Local Plan green gap designations in and around Westbere, ie. The Two Fields site – land at the junctions of the A28 and Westbere Lane; “Headley’s Field” on the A28 in Westbere, and Westbere Butts, a former quarry site on the north side of the A28 Island Road between Sturry and Hersden, we have the following two points to draw attention to:

1. Rural Service Centres / Local Service Centre designations

Westbere classified as a Local Service Centre

In our Regulation 18 response we drew attention to The Canterbury District Local Plan Development Topic Paper (February 2024) points 3.14, 3.15 and 3.16. which identifies Westbere amongst others as a “Local Service Centre” where these settlements are said to “provide a more limited range of services and facilities than rural service centres”.

Westbere has no shops and its only facility is The Yew Tree Public House. The village hall has a nursery occupying it 4 days a week, limiting its availability for any other uses. Therefore, Westbere Parish Council cannot understand how its tiny village could be classified as a Local Service Centre.

Since we made our Regulation 18 response there is now new information - we were advised in March 2026 that the Church council have been unable to recruit a vicar to officiate services at All Saints Church, Church Lane, Westbere and have just written to the Diocese to advise that they wish to stop services at the Church / close the Church.

We do therefore feel that the classification for Westbere in the [Rural Settlement Study](#) should be downgraded from Local Service Centre to Village or even Hamlet – to protect its rural character, especially as none of its roads have any pavements.

2. The CCC Settlement boundaries

An extract from Section 5 in the [CCC Development Topic Paper](#) re Settlement boundaries has section 5.4 stating that “settlement boundaries have been largely traced along the outside of roads and property curtilage boundaries, to be in line with the existing form of the settlements”. *However, 19 of the existing Westbere Bushy Hill Road homes have been excluded from the settlement boundary of Westbere.*

This is seen by some residents in this area as a direct manipulation to allow development of Policy R6 The Bread and Cheese Field (which takes its name from the original two-acre Bread and Cheese Field adjacent to the A28 within that allocated site) in the Draft Canterbury District Local Plan (2042/43) Regulation 19 for 150 homes, by excluding them. No-one wants Hersden and Westbere to merge so it is wrong to take out the Bushy Hill Road homes. Some of those properties have existed there since at least 1800. The first was a cottage at the very end of the Road, at the intersection with the A28. That was owned by the trustees of the Bread and Cheese Field Charity and which provided accommodation for the poor of Westbere. Over time, this part of the Road has seen a shop come and go, stables for horses during WW1 and property infill, starting in the early 1900's, resulting in a continuous line of houses until it joins Westbere Lane.

Residents, the Parish Council and the Westbere Village Preservation Society believe that the removal of part of Bushy Hill Road from the Settlement is without justification.

Both the parish council and residents in this area feel the lines drawn are wrong and they do not agree with the settlement boundaries as they currently stand.

In the Regulation 18 version CCC explicitly stated that the development of R6 must “relate to the pattern, scale and character of existing development and ensure that development does not result in coalescence between Hersden and Westbere”. That stipulation, along with 8 other policy requirements (mostly relating to environmental protection), has been deleted from the Regulation 19 version without any explanation and no evidence that any public comments caused such drastic changes. We believe such changes, which have been repeated at other site allocations across the Regulation 19 version, render the Plan unsustainable.

Regardless of the erroneous drawing of the settlement boundary to include site R6 in Hersden rather than Westbere, which it is in fact very clearly a part of both geographically and as a community, developing this site must cause such coalescence especially given the indicative travel links shown on the concept masterplan show travel to Hersden not Westbere, as does the intended provision of a community hub.

Related to that, Policy R20 Countryside says that “All parts of the District outside of the Settlement Boundaries ... are defined as countryside where priority will be given to protecting the rural character of the district.” Thus, even if the Council's view that houses on Bushy Hill Road are not part of Westbere were to be taken as correct, the Council has failed to give any priority to protecting the character of that area, and thus is in breach of its own proposed policy.

Further, clause 4 of R20 says “The Council will protect and support improvements to the network of valued open spaces ... [and] will resist development which ... would erode the separation between, or the setting of, individual settlements”. Development of R6, which is de facto and de jure in Westbere, would breach that Policy.

Section 5.6 of the CCC paper re Settlement boundaries states that “Agricultural... land has not been included in the settlement boundary...as deemed as countryside.” – so the Bread and Cheese Field should not be included in the Hersden settlement boundary *because it is an agricultural field. Again, the Council's proposal for R6 is in breach of its own Policies.*

Some residents, the Westbere Village Preservation Society (WVPS) and the parish council object to, and do not agree with, the settlement boundaries as they currently exist.

In July 2022 Canterbury City Council published its [Strategic Land Availability Assessment Report](#). In the section on Site Assessments and under SLAA163, Bread and Cheese field, the column entitled 'Townscape/Landscape (AP)', reads:

*Townscape: The site is located adjacent to a small row of houses on Bushy Hill Road to west **which are part of the Westbere settlement**, with the site also extending to the development to the east (Hoplands)...*

The Strategic Land Availability Assessment Report was the first occasion in which CCC declared Bushy Hill Road to be in the Westbere Settlement. Later versions of the Strategic Land Availability Assessment papers published in 2025 and 2026, continued to confirm it as part of the Westbere Settlement. **And yet this has been consistently contradicted in the revised Local Plans published in April 2024 and 2026.**

In April 2024 the new Local Plan was published. Again, without explanation, the Westbere Settlement Boundary had been amended to exclude the majority of Bushy Hill Road. The significance of this is that the Road was reclassified as Countryside.

The following map (see Fig 3.) shows the proposed Westbere Settlement Boundary outlined in black together with the Bread and Cheese proposed development in pink. The arrow denotes that part of Bushy Hill Road that has been excluded:



Fig. 3

Reference:

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/1e8c61757821421e8dc7d1eab938ed98/?draft=true>

In August 2025 The Strategic Land Availability Assessment File was published and repeated in 2026, which further compounded the confusion over the precise Westbere Settlement Boundary. [Appendix B](#) to the document takes you to a spreadsheet. This spreadsheet lists all the proposed SLAA sites. Under SLAA163 Column AP, the following statement is made: "Townscape: The site is located adjacent to a small row of houses on Bushy Hill Road to west which are part of the Westbere settlement, with the site also extending to the development to the east (Hoplands). While not part of a designated green gap (one is located to the north), **development of this land could result in the coalescence of Westbere and Hersden**, as the site would connect the Hoplands development to the residential dwellings on Bushy Lane."

Point (c) under Design and Layout in the Regulation 18 Plan for the Bread and Cheese Field allocation (then referred to as Policy R5 – now Policy R6 in the Regulation 19 Plan) stated

that the design and layout of the site should “Relate to pattern, scale and character of existing development and **ensure that development does not result in coalescence between Hersden and Westbere**”.

However, in the Regulation 19 Plan this criteria has been removed meaning that coalescence between Hersden and Westbere would undoubtedly occur.

How is this removal between Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 versions justified by CCC?

What is the proportionate evidence?

Preventing the coalescence of village communities has been central to CCC’s policies for many years. In its [Green Gaps and Local Green Spaces Review – April 2021](#), it states:

“Gradual coalescence can not only harm the character of the open countryside, but can also adversely impact the setting and special character of villages and the separate identity of the coastal towns.”

Request for further notification:

Please notify the parish council c/o the Clerk by email to clerk@westbereparishcouncil.gov.uk of the next steps:

- That the Canterbury District Local Plan has been submitted to the Secretary of Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government;
- Details of the Independent Examination in Public later this year or early next year;
- The publication of the Planning Inspector's Report;
- The adoption of the Canterbury District Local Plan.