

Minutes of the meeting of Westbere Parish Council held on Monday 20 July 2026 in Westbere Village Hall at 7.00pm.

Present:

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

Clerk to the Council, Amanda Sparkes.

6 x residents

1. The Chairman's opening remarks

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

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from CCC Cllr Keji Moses, CCC Cllr Harry McKenzie and KCC Cllr Mark Mulvihill.

3. Declarations of Interests

Cllr Dekker advised he is no longer the Clerk for Sturry Parish Council. He has completed a new DPI form which the Clerk will send to the monitoring officer at CCC.

4. Minutes of the last meeting held 18 May 2026

Cllr Wilson explained that Minute No 14 had only been partly recorded. A resident contacted Cllr Wilson after the meeting thinking that he'd made his made up about the community governance review. The Minute does not record that Cllr Wilson said that the wanted to hear residents' comments in the Stage 2 consultation. He commented that the minute was not good enough having been part quoted. He asked that the way the minutes get written should not attribute points raised to individual councillors, and this was agreed.

Cllr Wilson also drew attention to Minute No 23. He said he had asked for this as minuted correctly but this does not reflect tonight's Agenda heading.

With Cllr Wilson's comments now recorded in these Minutes, Cllr Fielding proposed, and Cllr Harlow seconded and all councillors agreed they were a true record of the meeting, and the Chairman duly signed them.

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

A resident was unhappy with the parish council's community governance review response to CCC as the parish council had not consulted with residents. Two parish councillors have said the parish council is not sustainable but that is their opinion – the precept would have to be raised to stay sustainable. It is more than likely that concurrent function funding will cease under the new Unitary and this will likely raise the precept by 30-35%.

The parish council had to say in its response that it wanted CCC to look at options or there would no options at Stage 2. The parish council took the opportunity to do so.

CCC at the briefing to parish councils said the views of residents at Stage 1 will be informative not determinative nor will the weight of residents' responses be determinative.

Almost all parishes nearby are looking at changes, including amalgamation and expansion.

The parish council is taking the long view and put in options following the process CCC set out - there are five options put forward – to stay as we are, to merge with Hersden, to group with Hersden, to merge with Sturry or to group with Sturry.

A resident said the CCC officer had said CCC would consider a Parish Meeting structure as an option. This might or might not be included as an option at Stage 2. It is up to CCC to determine the options to consult on.

CCC will consult with all affected households at Stage 2 and publicise Stage 2.

Residents felt that residents don't feel the parish council presence. Finances constrain what the parish council can do. A resident commented its not just about raising the precept, it's about reducing costs.

A resident spoke of the recent water leak in The Two Fields. The water company were there for several days. The parish council had no notification or knowledge of this.

A resident advised that at the top of Westbere Lane opposite the convent a sycamore tree has fallen down in to the field. Part of the tree left could fall into the road. It would be down to the landowner to deal however Cllr P Glover offered to take a look.

The meeting continued.

6. Summer Party to celebrate the gifting of the village green held on Saturday 27 June 2026

Cllr Georgina Glover recorded thanks to The Yew Tree for all their hard work and support. Cllr Wilson recorded thanks to the Clerk and volunteers who set up the hall, made cakes etc.

7. Parish Councillors' reports

Cllr Fielding

Cllr Fielding advised she'd walk the footpath from Fairview Gardens to Sturry and it needs cutting back – it has already been reported to KCC.

Cllr Georgina Glover

Cllr Georgina Glover commented on overgrown vegetation not being cut back by residents responsible for it.

Cllr Granville Glover

Cllr Granville Glover had nothing to report.

Cllr Dekker

Cllr Dekker had nothing to report.

Cllr Harlow

Cllr Harlow had nothing to report.

Cllr Dave Wilson

Cllr Wilson explained the Local Government Reorganisation announcement by the government last week confirms there will be one Unitary for East Kent – combining Canterbury, Thanet and Dover. The Unitary will have only 66 councillors - about 1/3 of now. Existing CCC councillors will serve for an extra year. The Shadow Unitary will take over in 2027.

He commented that CCC is losing high ranking officers probably as a result of Local Government Reorganisation.

He worked on the ACRA response to the community governance review – ACRA wants a Town Council for Canterbury.

Cllr Wilson explained he had looked at the Charity Commission website and noted that the village hall made a £4,500 loss last year. Cllr Fielding explained the hall committee is aware, money has gone on heating and general maintenance. The preschool pays 50% of the hire rate. The Church are the owners, the parish council has the lease and the village hall committee manage the hall. Village hall finances are a risk for the parish council. The Lease is with the parish council and Cllr Wilson felt perhaps the parish council should do more. He suggested a meeting with the hall committee members to discuss and be clear what each parties' responsibilities are and how the parish council could help, for example, provide Wi-Fi to make the hall more hireable.

The Clerk was asked to arrange a joint meeting.

8. Canterbury City Councillor Harry McKenzie report

Cllr McKenzie and Cllr Moses had sent apologies but their report had been circulated to councillors before the meeting. Cllr P Glover read the report in full to the meeting as follows:

Park and Ride Performance

Data from a Scrutiny Committee meeting at the beginning of June showed that total usage across all three park and ride sites has gone up by 12% in the last 12 months, and Sturry Road has outpaced the total with an increase of 18%. At the same time, parking acts in Canterbury are down by 3.7% but footfall is up by 1.2%. This indicates that our bus-first transport strategy is working.

Buses for Broad Oak

At the last Joint Transportation Board meeting, Stagecoach finally confirmed that a bus service will be restored through Broad Oak in September. It is unlikely to be the original number 7 route as Stagecoach intend to use their existing network; it is likely to be a reroute of the 602. However, this is still very positive news and a huge thank you goes to everyone involved. We did our bit to make this happen by running a petition, survey and holding a meeting with the commercial director of Stagecoach.

Shelford Landfill Site

In the first few weeks of June, we attended a public engagement event in Hales Place where we listened to what residents had to say to the Environment Agency who were present to take questions. The week after that was the Community Liaison Group meeting with Valencia where we held them to account directly on points such as fencing around the site, pollution of the Stour and more. A big outcome of that meeting was that Valencia has now agreed to a newsletter for residents.

Renewed Planning Enforcement Policy

Cabinet voted to adopt the renewed Planning Enforcement Policy in June and we wrote to them to welcome the policy which is pretty straightforward but also ask questions about how appeals will be managed, where funding will come from, how it will be objectively decided whether to act and what the enforcement process could look like. We have been promised further guidance and training to be released for councillors and parish councils later this year addressing each of these points and more.

Consultations and Funding Opportunities

- The Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy is out for consultation – the consultation closes in September and we welcome your views.
- Biodiversity grants are open for applications until 24th July.
- £300 Crisis and Resilience grants were opened for oil heating.
- RISE grants of up to £10,000 were opened up for community groups.

New Footpaths

KCC have opened two new PRoWs – one going from Westbere Lane down to the railway line and one from Staines Hill down to the railway line. We don't take credit for this, it is just positive news from KCC.

Bus Shelter Improvements

Funding has come from KCC to fix bus shelters across the district. One of the bus stops set for improvement is the one on Staines Hill. We are trying to get the bus stop outside Pennington Close fixed up too as it doesn't have seats or wind breaks.

New Adopted Housing Strategy

Cabinet have now accepted a recommendation from the Overview Committee to adopt the new housing strategy. Harry voted in favour of this in that Overview Committee meeting. It is a realistic and grounded strategy that has ambition within what the council is able to deliver to meet specific housing needs. There are a lot of elements to this strategy – some key points include tougher action to bring long-term empty homes back into use, mechanisms in the Draft Local Plan to increase social housing and more. Alongside our housing strategy, the government has also announced a social housing bill which will reform Right to Buy and make it easier to evict domestic abusers.

New Council Homes on East Street

11 new council homes are being built on East Street just off Sturry Road. This is a stone's throw away from this ward and residents here will be eligible to bid on these homes on Kent Home Choice. They will be chalet bungalows that will have disability adaptations and sustainable features such as solar panels. Harry voted for these new council homes on the Planning Committee last year and funding has been received from the Social and Affordable Homes Programme run by Homes England.

Community Safety Partnership

In the last Scrutiny Committee meeting, Harry asked council and police officers about what is being done to tackle illegal parking in Fordwich, when we can expect a new youth hub in Canterbury to be delivered after it was approved over 2 years ago and what is being done about dirt bikes vandalising football fields, as seen in Sturry recently. We are following up on each of these points as officers did not have information to hand.

Bin Collection Changes

Due to exceptionally hot weather, bin collections have been made earlier so they start from 6am to protect workers from the heat and help them to do their jobs safely.

Water Crisis

We have supported the Leader of the Council as he has written to the government calling for South East Water to be taken into Special Administrative Regime. If approved, this would effectively take the company into public ownership so that a government appointed special administrator could fix up the company and ensure effective service. We are still awaiting a decision from the government.

World Cup Campaign

Many of us are enjoying the world cup, however, it is important to recognise that it is not fun for everyone as data shows that domestic abuse increases by 38% when England lose and 26% when they win. The council has launched an information campaign to raise awareness of this and tackle domestic abuse, not just now but always. As for the world cup, officers are identifying council-owned venues across the district that would be suitable to open up for public viewings of remaining England matches.

9. KCC Cllr Mark Mulvihill

C/fwd – as reported to the last (May 2026 parish council meeting) 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.

Kent County Council is taking part in the NHT Public Satisfaction Survey on highways and transport services. Whilst the main survey is being carried out by Ipsos, who are sending forms to a representative sample of households, there are also six KCC web-based surveys on specific issues:

- Highway maintenance
- Accessibility
- Walking and cycling
- Public transport
- Road safety
- Tackling congestion

Access the surveys until 28 February 2027 at [National Highways and Transport Surveys 2026-27 | Let's Talk Kent](#)

10. KCC Community Warden session

Chill Out and Chat with your local KCC Community Warden (Roger Lithgow): Wednesday 5th August 2026 2pm – 3pm at Coffee Corner, Herne Bay Road, Sturry (Drinks not supplied).

11. Planning matters**Community Governance Review**

[CCC conducted a district-wide Community Governance Review](#) which closed on 05 July 2026.

NOTED that Westbere's response was sent on 05 July 2026, with two options for Stage 2 – to merge (or group) with either Hersden or Sturry (Hersden being the preference) OR to stay as we are. Proposals are expected in September 2026.

All Saints Church ACV Nomination

NOTED that on 02 June 2026 the Clerk submitted an application form to CCC for All Saints Church and the East graveyard only to be considered by CCC as an Asset of Community Value. (CCC Reference ACVNF84). CCC officers will determine if it is eligible for listing under the legislation by 28 July 2026.

The Clerk explained that the government has announced several changes to the Assets of Community Value regime as part of the recently introduced English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026. These include that the period during which a listed asset cannot be sold will be longer, up to 12 months and the listing period will also double from five years to ten years.

The Clerk was asked to contact the Diocese and check that they would consult directly with the parish council if they consider closing the Church.

New planning applications:

CA/26/00981 - 17 Westbere Lane, Westbere CT2 0HJ

Erection of single-storey detached double garage together with 2 dormers to front elevation and 1 dormer to the rear elevation of main dwelling. (The parish council had no comments).

Westbere Butts land

There was a presentation at the beginning of this year for proposals for the former quarry site on the north side of the A28 Island Road between Sturry and Hersden. Cllr Dekker explained we can anticipate a planning application being submitted.

Two Fields

A resident advised that some of the land not owned by Bellway has been sold at auction. No further details are known.

Notifications:

CA/26/00522 - 24A Westbere Lane, Westbere CT2 0HH

Erection of double garage with driveway together with raising the height of the roof to existing garage. *Granted by CCC*

The Broad Oak reservoir Stakeholder briefing held 13 July 2026

Cllr Wilson chaired this virtual meeting, the Clerk and Cllr P Glover also attended. An update was given on progress. The focus now is on ongoing design development, surveys and assessments and stakeholder engagement, with a planning application submission in 2028. There will be a Construction Management Plan for routing of vehicles etc during construction. The next meeting is set for 23 September 2026 for another update.

CCC briefing for Parish Councils on Planning Enforcement in the Canterbury district

This will be [online](#) from **5.30pm - 7pm** on **Monday 12th October 2026**. And the recently adopted [Planning Enforcement Plan](#) for the district. The Plan explains how reports of potential planning breaches are prioritised and managed by the planning team and gives information about who deals with other non-planning matters.

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

13. **Finance**

RECEIVED the bank statements and bank reconciliation for May and June 2026 and RESOLVED the signature of a councillor other than the Chairman thereon – and two councillors initialled the invoices.

NOTED that on 25 May 2026 the Clerk completed an online VAT Refund Claim for the period 01 January 2026 to 30 April 2026 totalling £671.47.

Financial Services Compensation Scheme Annual review – NOTED that on 09 June 2026 the Clerk confirmed the parish council's eligibility with Unity Trust Bank for the FSCS – this compensates customers up to a maximum of £120,000 if a bank, building society or credit union has stopped trading or does not have enough assets to pay claims made against it.

NOTED that the annual data protection fee of £47.00 to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) was taken by direct debit on 21 June 2026.

Annual subscription to the year ending 31 December 2026 to ACRA

Two other parish councils are members (Thanington and Bridge). Cllr Wilson explained that it is a useful quarterly meeting to hear what people are experiencing in the district and he proposed that the parish council should pay the £20 annual subscription to the year ending 31 December 2026 to ACRA (Alliance of Canterbury Residents' Associations). This was seconded by Cllr Georgina Glover.

End of Quarter One Income and Expenditure report to 30 June 2026

This had been circulated.

The Clerk will contact the village hall treasurer for the apportionment of the insurance premium relating to cover for the village hall.

Concurrent Function Funding for 2026-2027

NOTED an email was sent on 03 July 2026 from CCC on 22 April 2025 regarding the CFF award for 2026-2027. The award has increased by 3.8% in line with inflation from £4,503.00 to £4,607.5. The Clerk sent CCC an invoice for this and returned a signed new grant agreement. The Clerk also returned the monitoring forms for 2025-2026 and the necessary documentation to CCC on 09 July 2026. The payment has now been received.

CCC Capital Grants 2026-2027

- (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) – The Clerk appointed the contractor on 22 June 2026.
- (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). The Clerk is has talked to the contractor who will receive the picnic table and install it. The Clerk has received a pro-forma quote for payment. She negotiated a 10 discount. The table is made to order with a 4-6 weeks' lead in time. A resident advised he'd try to repair the old table and asked that the contractor 'dispose' of it to his house.

NOTED: 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 soon when the next round is open.

14. 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.

15. For Annual Return 2025-2026

NOTED that The Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR Form Part 3) for the financial year ended 31 March was submitted to the external auditor Mazars on 24 May 2026.

NOTED that the council made arrangements for the exercise of public rights, publishing the Notice of Public Rights (and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited), along with Publication of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return Section 1 and Section 2 (approved and signed), on both its parish noticeboard(s) and website on 02 June with the dates for the period of public rights as Wednesday 03 June 2026 to Tuesday 14 July 2026.

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

Review of earmarked reserves and operating costs:

An ear-marked reserves schedule to 31 March 2026 totalled £13,342 leaving 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 recommended reviewing the earmarked reserves. The following virements from ear-marked to general reserves were agreed.

- i) £5,000 from Planning and legal advice
- ii) £1,500 from Staffing Contingency
- iii) £450 for maintenance of Red Phone Box/Book library:

Reserve item:	Current £ held	RESOLVED amount to be held:
Staffing contingency	3270	1770
Elections/By-Elections	522	522
Surveyor report/New village hall lease	1200	1200
Telephone box/Book library	450	0
Planning and legal advice	6000	1000
Concurrent function shortfall	2500	2500
Totals	£13,942	£6,992

17. Red Phone Box/Book Library at Shrubbery Corner

This kiosk is listed.

The door needs repair. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk should seek a quote and bring this to the next meeting for repair of the door, sanding down, priming and repainting the box using specialist paint. X2 Connect is the approved stockist of spares etc for red kiosks (www.x2connect.com) – Red gloss paint is £53.25 per tin and primer is £35.84.

The Clerk will liaise with the WVPS to empty the book library in due course if the work is undertaken.

New Internal Auditor for 2026-2027 year end

The current Internal Auditor has advised she will retire and that a new Internal Auditor needs to be sourced for next year – the Clerk explained she has so far contacted 3 auditors for quotes. One has declined due to insufficient capacity and two have not yet replied. The Clerk is looking for others and will bring quotes once received for consideration to a future meeting.

Four year analysis report

Further to Cllr Wilson at the last meeting asking the Chairman and Clerk to meet to look at the last four years' expenditure:

3 out of the last 4 years had overspend on the precept and concurrent function expenditure. The key items of spend were on unknowns and unplanned but mainly required expenditure, in particular £13,220 of tree works in the last four years, and over £1,000 on updating electrics for the village green. The closing year-end balances are on a downward trend. The parish council has tried to keep the precept down and use unrestricted reserves at the bank. The parish council does carefully consider its budget each year. The Chairman's recommendation is to put a £6,000 contingency into the 2027-2028 budget and subsequent years budgets in addition to any inflationary increases to be confirmed at budget setting in October 2026.

18. Annual inspection of the parish council's assets

Cllr Georgina Glover and the Clerk will undertake the annual inspection of the parish council's assets this year.

19. **KALC Canterbury Area Committee - Call for Volunteer for Bus Focus Group**
The Convenor of the Canterbury Alliance for Sustainable Transport is establishing a Bus Focus Group for the Canterbury District. He set up the group after initial discussions with local bus user groups in the Whitstable CT5 area. The group has already held an initial meeting, but key stakeholders were not present, including the Stagecoach manager, a Kent County Council officer, and importantly a representative of rural communities within the district.
He is now seeking a representative with knowledge of rural bus services to join the group. The intention is to ensure that the rural perspective is properly represented in discussions around bus provision and connectivity across the district. He has suggested quarterly meetings. The Clerk explained there have been 3 volunteers across the district now.
20. **Shrubbery Corner noticeboard**
The WVPS committee has discussed the possibility of replacing the noticeboard at Shrubbery corner. At the May meeting the parish council did agree to explore jointly funding a larger replacement 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. A WVPS member has agreed to carry out a survey and estimate, and this will go to the 21 July WVPS meeting.
21. **Clerk report**
NOTED that on 22 May 2026 the Clerk 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.

NOTED that the Clerk checked the status of the defibrillator at the village hall on 08 July 2026 for "The Circuit" reporting tool.
22. **UK Digital Landline Switchover Guide**
Are you ready for the landline switch-off? The UK's old copper phone network is being switched off by January 2027, and some areas are already being affected. If you or someone you know relies on a home phone, particularly for a telecare alarm or medical device, it's important to act sooner rather than later. "Phonely" has a free plain-English checklist to help – with information about what the switch-off means and what residents need to do. Download it here: www.phonely.co.uk/uk-digital-landline-switchover or call the Phonely team free on 0800 112 5000.

Cllr Wilson explained that there have been power cuts recently and if the WiFi goes down phone availability and ability is lost, He explained that people can get a battery back up from their supplier to reduce the risk of losing the phone capability. He thought the battery lasts for about an hour.
This information will be added to the next newsletter.
23. **Welcome Pack for any new households**
Newcomers in a property in Church Lane are anticipated. The Clerk will speak to Cllr P Glover in a few weeks' time and deliver a Welcome Pack when they've moved in.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.

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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 21 September and 16 November 2026.

Appendix:

Westbere Parish Council's response to the CCC Community Governance Review:

05 July 2026

By email to consultations@canterbury.gov.uk

**Westbere Parish Council's response to the CCC Community Governance Review
Background**

In public meetings Westbere residents have expressed dissatisfaction with the high level of precept that Westbere Parish Council levies. Westbere Parish Council has a low tax base with only 138 households and is not a growing parish.

There is a concern that under the new Unitary council if the concurrent function award was withdrawn, this would lead to an immediate 25% increase in the precept in order to maintain the grounds maintenance etc that this award contributes to.

Westbere Parish Council has therefore taken the opportunity to explore various options for this district wide Community Governance Review for its residents to consider at Stage 2.

i) Possible merger with a neighbouring parish

Westbere Parish Council approached all three of its neighbouring parishes which share a boundary, namely, Fordwich, Sturry and Hersden, to seek views on the possibility of a merger.

1. Fordwich Town Council is definitely not interested in merging with Westbere – Councillors very much see the importance of Fordwich's identity as a specific location and value its Town Council status.
2. Sturry Parish Council resolved that the majority of councillors were happy that Westbere add a possible merger with Sturry as one of the options in its Stage 1 Community Governance Review consultation response, and that the option should be explored with Sturry and Westbere residents at Stage 2 consultation.
3. At the Hersden Parish Council meeting on 12 May 2026 Hersden councillors were not against a merger with Westbere subject to it not impacting on the precept that Hersden residents pay, and subject to resident consultation at Stage 2. The Westbere and Hersden clerks met and a 'dummy joint precept' was developed. It is thought that with Westbere's year-end balance being added in to the hypothetical merged pot that there would be wriggle room to cushion the difference needed to balance with no impact on Hersden's precept for at least a couple of years. And as Hersden is a growing parish with developments taking place and planned, Hersden's taxbase would continue to grow as more houses get built and occupied. The Westbere Parish Chairman and Clerk then attended the Hersden Parish Council meeting on 09 June 2026 and presented and talked through this example joint precept. Hersden councillors confirmed at that meeting that the Westbere Parish Council response to this Community Governance Review may include to explore a merger with Hersden and consult residents at Stage 2.

OPTION 1: In light of the above Westbere Parish Council would like to ask CCC to consider consulting directly affected residents on a merger (or grouping) with either Sturry or Hersden in the Stage 2 consultation. Our preferred merger would be with Hersden as we feel there are some shared facilities by residents of both parishes.

Continues/...

ii) Stay as we are

We are not sure what the *majority* of our residents would like. We would like CCC to offer residents the option to stay as we are – if this option receives a majority at Stage 2 consultation, then we can be validated and have a mandate to continue as we are. We are not sure if CCC would automatically include 'stay as we are' as an option in Stage 2? Assuming it does not automatically offer this as an option:

OPTION 2: Westbere Parish Council would like CCC to offer Westbere residents the option to retain the status quo and carry on as now.

Parish Meeting level of governance

Westbere councillors are aware that some residents are putting forward to CCC in their Stage 1 response that the parish council be dissolved and a Parish Meeting be set up instead. Whilst a Parish Meeting is not a simplified parish council there is some direct democracy, and this level of governance may suit very small communities.

Furthermore, we appreciate that CCC would not want Westbere to effectively be an unparished island if the option of abolishing the parish council were pursued instead.

– so, whilst Westbere Parish Council is not supportive of dissolution of the parish council, this seems an option that residents could be formally asked for their views on. We would however comment that if CCC is minded to consult on this option there needs to be very clear information to residents in Stage 2 about Parish Meetings please, to ensure that if they vote for it that they fully understand what they are voting for, and understand that the parish council would cease to exist.

An overview of other proposals emerging

We believe that Hoath and Chislet Parish Councils want to merge, and to incorporate the rural eastern part of unparished Reculver ward to create a single parish.

Herne and Broomfield Parish Council is proposing to incorporate Greenhill, which is currently unparished.

And a new parish will be proposed for Beltinge, with a population of about 7,000 by our calculations.

So, the trend here is for larger, more homogenous parishes, if residents agree. That illustrates how much of a disadvantage Westbere will be at if we remain as we are.

On that basis, may we request that the Stage Two consultation provides an overview of proposed changes across the district so that responding residents understand the context in which their option(s) sit?

Other general comments

Westbere Parish Council feels that the current unparished areas of the Canterbury district should be parished to provide another layer of representation underneath the new unitary authority at a local level.

We believe that the change to a Unitary Council requires that no areas of the new Council should be unparished. In order to ensure this is achieved, the current Community Governance Review should create town or parish councils for the unparished areas in line with effective governance and the preference of residents and the identity of local communities.