

## DITTON PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF DITTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER ON MONDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2025**

PRESENT: CLLRS. N NEWMAN [CHAIRMAN], M J PORTER [VICE-CHAIR], MRS J DEARDEN, A LAIDOUCCI, A MULCUCK, MRS M NEWMAN, MRS A THROSSELL, D ADLINGTON, MRS K NASH, MRS L COX, J COX, A WATERS & R WHITE  
MRS N GREENAWAY [CLERK OF THE COUNCIL], TMBC CLLR R CANNON

329. **OPENING OF MEETING**

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.30pm and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

330. **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence.

331. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**Dispensations under the Localism Act 2011

It was **NOTED** that to enable members to take part in discussions regarding the setting of the precept members are required to request a dispensation from the Clerk. It was **FURTHER NOTED** that the current dispensations had expired and members were required to sign a new form to cover them for the next four years.

**RESOLVED** MEMBERS WILL SIGN THE DISPENSATION REQUEST FORM AND THE CLERK WILL GRANT DISPENSATION TO EACH MEMBER FOR UP TO 4 YEARS TO PARTICIPATE IN DISCUSSIONS AND VOTE ON MATTERS RELATING TO SETTING THE PRECEPT.

332. **CASUAL VACANCY**

It was previously **NOTED** that an application had been received from Mr Richard White. Mr White was present this evening and was invited to say a few words in support of his application.

**RESOLVED** to co-opt Mr Richard White on to the Council.

Cllr White signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and undertaking to observe the code of conduct and joined the meeting.

333. **CONFIRMATION & SIGNING OF MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD 2<sup>ND</sup> DECEMBER 2024**

The minutes of the above meeting were **CONFIRMED** and **SIGNED** as a true record.

334. **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

335. **MINUTES OF OTHR MEETINGS HELD DURING DECEMBER 2024**

Finance and Administration Committee, 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024 (herewith)

The minutes of the above meeting were **CONFIRMED** and **SIGNED** as a true record.

**Recommendation:**

ESTIMATES FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2025/2026 [Page 133, Item 326]

**RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** and **ADOPT** the 2025/2026 estimates as set out in the minutes of the Finance and Administration Committee meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

336. **CORRESPONDENCE**(a) For Noting

The following items were **CIRCULATED, READ** and **NOTED**:

TMBC Committee Services: Devolution White Paper

Ditton Twinning Assoc: Minutes of meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2024  
Agenda for meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2025

SLCC: The Clerk January 2025

Carter Jonas: New Land Agent for Tarmac Quarry land

KALC: Free Webinars

David Thornewell: Info re removal of the Pond adjacent to Cobdown

(b) For Decision

TMBC [Des Keers]: Anti-Social Behaviour Team / Financial contribution  
**READ** and **NOTED** that TMBC were asking if parish council's would consider making a donation of £1.00 or £2.00 per resident to enable them to continue to provide this service. Discussion took place and members felt the KCC Warden Service provided a better level of service to residents as the ASB team had only visited Ditton twice in the last year. It was agreed not to make a financial contribution to this service.

TMBC [Matt Boughton]: Devolution White Paper  
**READ** and **NOTED** that the Government has published a Devolution White Paper and the proposals would impact TMBC and KCC as it would result in new unitary authorities and elected Mayors. It was noted more information and discussion would be taking place in the near future as to whether KCC and Medway would be considered for the Devolution Priority Programme. It was agreed to follow any discussions and want impact the proposals would have on parish councils. It was also noted that KCC Cllr Andrew Kennedy had also circulated information on the proposed Local Government Reform.

337. **FINANCE**(a) Payments to be Ratified**RESOLVED** the following payments be **APPROVED** and **RATIFIED**:-**December Payroll Summary**

Monthly	Gross	£28,177.74
	Net	£22,211.26

**Accounts (approved and paid 19.12.24 )**

Community Centre				
KCS	Cleaning & Consumables		300.09	
	White Lining Powder (OSA)		129.90	
		VAT	86.00	£515.99
Capital	Cleaning & Consumables		73.34	
		VAT	57.20	
			26.11	£156.65
Maidstone Ind Clean	Window Cleaning		260.00	£260.00
Envirocure	Legionella monitoring		48.75	
		VAT	9.75	£58.50
KBC	Boiler repairs		108.00	
			86.32	
		VAT	38.86	£233.18
Glass & Mirror Co.	Window/Door Repairs		165.00	
		VAT	33.00	£198.00
TH Electrical	Floodlights		319.00	
	Pre-school Immersion Heater		120.00	£439.00
Bar				
Glasdon	Cigarette Bin Key		15.86	
		VAT	3.17	£19.03
Chubb	Alarm Maintenance		219.74	
		VAT	43.95	£263.69
Lansdell	Bar Stock		225.52	
			(7.39)	
			47.96	
			186.04	
			113.21	
			100.73	£666.07
Kent & Sussex	Bar Stock		575.66	
			620.05	
			1168.88	
			472.92	£2,837.51
TMBC	Kilnbarn Licence		180.00	£180.00
TMBC	Community Centre Licence		180.00	£180.00
F&A				
Imagink	Winter Gazette		997.00	
	Credit		(52.00)	£945.00
OSA				
Tree Monkeys	Tree Works		4250.00	
		VAT	850.00	£5,100.00

**December Deposit Refunds**

27.11.24	Carman Room 24.11.24	£50.00
02.12.24	Carman Room 02.03.25	£50.00
04.12.24	Carman Room 01.12.24	£50.00
04.12.24	Carman Room 30.11.24	£50.00
16.12.24	Carman Room 07.12.24	£50.00

**(b) Direct Debits - Paid During December 2025**

**RESOLVED** the following direct debits be **APPROVED** and **RATIFIED**:-

**December Direct Debits**

28.11.24	Focus	Telephone	£89.70
28.11.24	Focus	Telephone Rental	£165.00
28.11.24	Veolia	Refuse collection	£629.98
29.11.24	Natwest	Bank Charges	£134.11
29.11.24	Paymentsense	Card Charges	£137.76
29.11.24	O2	Mobile phone	£13.20
29.11.24	Carlsberg	Bar Stock	£1,276.00
02.12.24	WEX	Fuelcard	£3.60
02.12.24	TMBC	Business Rates	£349.00
04.12.24	Carlsberg	Equipment Rental	£187.20
06.12.24	Carlsberg	Bar Stock	£2,916.42
09.12.24	WEX	Fuelcard	£58.67
09.12.24	Rentokil Initial	Washroom Services	£182.77
09.12.24	SKY	Monthly subscription	£433.86
13.12.24	Carlsberg	Bar Stock	£2,059.07
13.12.24	FDMS	Card Charges	£460.35
16.12.24	Bankline	Monthly Charges	£108.53
16.12.24	Safety Effect	H&S	£114.00
16.12.24	Sage	Monthly subscription	£255.60
16.12.24	DHFE	Till rental	£369.60
18.12.24	ICO	Annual subscription	£55.00
20.12.24	Commercial Service	Energy	£9,812.45
20.12.24	Carlsberg	Bar Stock	£2,071.42
23.12.24	Everflow	Water	£400.15
23.12.24	WEX	Fuelcard	£58.11
23.12.24	Hugo Fox	Website	£23.99
23.12.24	NEST	Pension contributions	£840.31
24.12.24	Host My Office	Computer Support	£754.44
24.12.24	BOC	Bar Gas	£239.94
27.12.24	Focus	Telephone	£85.21
27.12.24	Focus	Telephone rental	£165.00
27.12.24	Carlsberg	Bar Stock	£4,831.24
30.12.24	TNT	TV subscription	£487.31
30.12.24	Veolia	Refuse collection	£563.46
30.12.24	WEX	Fuelcard	£98.89

(c) BACS - Paid During December 2025**RESOLVED** the following BACs payments be **APPROVED** and **RATIFIED**:-**December BACS Payments (not previously listed)**

29.11.24	KCC Pension	Pension contributions	£1,454.53
29.11.24	HMRC	PAYE/NI	£6,942.45
29.11.24	Kent Fire Safety	Fire Risk Assessment	£480.00
02.12.24	We Are Beams	Hire Refund	£245.00
06.12.24	M Lancelly	Kilnbarn Entertainment	£230.00
09.12.24	N Greenaway	Reimbursement – refreshments	£8.25
19.12.24	HMRC	PAYE/NI	£5,183.33
19.12.24	L Fitchett	Reimbursement – footwear	£20.00
20.12.24	S J Cleaning	Scrubber Dryer repair	£248.74
23.12.24	M Beautridge	Bar services	£161.19

(d) Debit Card Payments - Paid During December 2025**RESOLVED** the following payments be **APPROVED** and **RATIFIED**:-**December Debit Card**

28.11.24	Amazon	Christmas decorations	£7.99
28.11.24	Toolstation	Safety Boots	£84.96
29.11.24	Amazon	Christmas decorations	£17.90
29.11.24	Tesco	Refreshments	£62.25
05.12.24	Amazon	Flipchart hooks	£5.94
05.12.24	Amazon	Hose attachment	£7.82
09.12.24	Amazon	Stationary/consumables	£28.47
09.12.24	Amazon	Prime Membership	£8.99
13.12.24	Tesco	Raffle Prizes/Refreshments	£132.35
16.12.24	Sign Shed	Door Signs	£87.27
16.12.24	Amazon	Toilet Roll/Soap Dispensers	£96.37
18.12.24	Tesco	Refreshment	£69.55

(e) Internal Audit Report**NOTED** this was not yet available.338. **REPORTS FROM BOROUGH & COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

Cllr Cannon gave the following report:

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM**

You will recall at the last Parish Council meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> December my ward colleague Colin Williams quoted the chief executive of TMBC Damien Roberts as referring to parish and borough/district councils being at the heart of local democracy, even if they are rather taken for granted. I am sorry to have to report that this observation has fallen on deaf ears within national government as you will have seen with the government's Devolution White Paper that you recently received. While there are no significant changes for parishes at this stage, there is every expectation borough and district councils will face a top down reorganisation and in due course complete abolition in the next few years.

In practical terms if Kent request to be in the “Priority Programme” ahead of the deadline this weekend \* (now confirmed) and the government subsequently agree as expected and we may hear their answer as soon as the end of this month, there will be no KCC elections in May with Kent’s county councillors staying on at least another year. Then in 2026 there will be an election for a county wide Mayor. The new Mayor would have responsibility for Kent-wide services such as economic development, transport, police, fire and civil defence. At the same time the role of Police and Crime Commissioner will be abolished. The other change is that new unitary councils would be formed with the likelihood there would be three or possibly four in Kent. It is possible Tonbridge and Malling may join up with Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone to form one of them. Elections for these new unitary authorities would probably also be in 2026. Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council itself would continue through a necessary transition period before finally being wound up in 2027 or 2028.

All this is of course provisional and the timelines will be somewhat later if Kent is not in the “Priority Programme” but it indicates the general direction of travel. These changes are the most wide ranging in local government history in Kent. KCC was formed back in 1889 and TMBC in 1974 and the likelihood is we will be the last cohort of borough councillors to serve. It seems to me a local government structure that has generally served us well over very many years is being blamed for the failure of central governments of all parties to provide adequate funding to pay for local government services such as social care while at the same restricting councils abilities to increase Council Tax to compensate thus creating a difficult financial situation.

#### PLANNING MATTERS

I am holding a meeting with the senior planning officer Susan Field tomorrow along with David Thornewell, Chair of Area 3 to discuss 653 London Road and will advise you of the outcome afterwards. Before Christmas Colin and myself met with a representative of Kynica Sport to discuss London City Lionesses and Cobdown Park. Without referencing their planning application, it is fair to say in general terms they will be bringing in much needed investment to this facility under their ambitious new American lady owner. Finally, we met with Milence who are based in Amsterdam over their plans for a new EV charging hub at Panattoni Park. I notice this is on your agenda later but it is certainly a significant project aiming to create 1700 high power public charging points, creating Europe’s largest public charging network for heavy-duty vehicles by 2027.

#### LEISURE FACILITIES

In a news release on 16<sup>th</sup> December, TMBC announced new state of the art gym facilities have been opened at Larkfield Leisure Centre, featuring the latest in fitness training equipment. It was also announced that £1m will be spent on heat pumps to service the fitness pool and a further £393,000 on additional solar panels bringing us much nearer to attaining a carbon neutral facility. Residents are invited to explore Larkfield’s newly refurbished gym and can arrange a tour of the facilities by contacting a tactive membership advisor on 01622 713225.

#### 339. **REPORT FROM NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICE/COMMUNITY WARDEN**

It was **NOTED** no report was available.

#### 340. **DATE SENSITIVE PLANNING, HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION ISSUES**

##### (a) Plans Received for Comment

24/01999/PA - 42, ST PETERS ROAD, DITTON, AYLESFORD, ME20 6PF

1 x partially fallen Ash (applicants ref. T3) – Fell to ground level. T26 of Tree Preservation Order

**RESOLVED** NO OBJECTION SUBJECT TO THE TMBC TREE OFFICER'S APPROVAL.

24/02028/PA – UNIT 1A, Bellingham Way, Panattoni Park, Aylesford, ME20 7WT

Proposed 8 bay Electric Vehicle charging station for commercial vehicles and associated amenity block, substation, equipment compounds, amenity block access gates hard and soft landscaping and drainage works

**RESOLVED** NO OBJECTIONS

24/01947/PA - 23, CEDAR CLOSE, DITTON, AYLESFORD, ME20 6EN

Non-Material Amendment to planning permission TM/24/01541/PA to change the proposed windows and doors to black PVCu instead of white

**RESOLVED** NO CONCERNS ABOUT THE MATERIAL CHANGES PROPOSED

24/01976/PA - DEVELOPMENT SITE SOUTH OF BRAMPTON FIELD BETWEEN BRADBOURNE LANE AND, Kiln Barn Road, Ditton, Aylesford

Non-Material Amendment to planning permission TM/23/03298/FL to amend the wording of condition 17

**RESOLVED** NO OBJECTIONS

(b) Plans dealt with by Area 3 Committee

The following decision was **NOTED**:

24/01683/PA - 35, PEAR TREE AVENUE, DITTON, AYLESFORD, ME20 6EB

Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: 3.3m extension of dropped kerb

**CERTIFIED - 23 December 2024**

(c) Orchard Mill

(i) Ditton Sign / 30mph speed sign

An email from a resident regarding the erection of a sign displaying "Ditton" and "30mph" speed limit along with comments and response from the St Modwen Homes site manager were considered. It was **NOTED** that the erection of a mph speed sign at this point was part of the planning approval and although it included the word Ditton it did not say welcome to Ditton and was not intended to be a sign indicating the village boundary. It was agreed to relay this information to the resident and suggest if they were not happy to contact KCC as it was a KCC approved sign.

(d) Bradbourne Development

(i) Further comments in response to TM/24/00372/PA

The additional objections drafted by Cllr Waters taking into account the revised NPPF published in December 2024 were considered.

**RESOLVED** to submit the additional comments to support the objections already submitted to TMBC.

(ii) Reply from TMBC to Open Letter from Chairman

The reply to the Chairman's concerns about future planning was **READ** and it was **NOTED** that the reply did not really address the concerns and a recent Area 2 Committee meeting had highlighted more reasons for concern about the future of planning. Further discussion will take place on this issue in closed session.

(e) Sycamore Trees in Bradbourne Lane on DPC land

TM/24/01936/PA and TM/01860/PA were **NOTED** as being two applications submitted by the parish council to fell Sycamores on the ransome strip in Bradbourne Lane. It was also noted that two communications from residents had been received and they were objecting to the felling of the trees. It was noted that there was a line of conifers behind the Sycamores so the removal of the Sycamores would not result in too drastic a change along this boundary. It was further noted that the reason for felling the trees was that they were interfering with the telephone wires and if they were trimmed rather than felled it would result in the trees growing bigger and more “bushy” making the problem worse in the future and them requiring more expensive tree surgery. The Clerk advised that one resident had indicated that she thought the removal of the trees was a good idea as they generated so much mess on the road.

**RESOLVED** TO REPLY TO THE RESIDENTS ADVISING THAT THE DECISION IF THIS WORK CAN GO AHEAD RESTS WITH TMBC AND IF THE APPLICATIONS ARE APPROVED, THE COUNCIL WILL PROCEED WITH FELLING THE TREES FOR THE REASONS STATED.

341. **MATTERS ARISING FROM “CORRESPONDENCE FOR NOTING”**

There were no matters arising.

342. **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

It was **NOTED** that the date for the Annual Parish Meeting was 28<sup>th</sup> April 2025. It was suggested that a member of the Twinning Committee be invited to talk about the Twinning with Rang du Flier as it is the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the twinning this year.

343. **MEETING TIMETABLE FOR 2025**

The Clerk advised that it had been necessary to amend the previous draft due to meetings being scheduled on Easter Monday and these had been moved to the Wednesday of the same week. It was also noted that it would be difficult to hold Community Centre Committee Meetings in February and May due to staff availability. It was agreed not to hold Community Centre Committee Meetings in February or May but if any urgent business requires a decision then it can be considered at Full Council. The amended timetable was circulated and agreed.

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Pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and standing Orders 27 & 50 the Chairman to move that due to the confidential nature of the next item the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting.  
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344. **CLOSURE**

The Chairman advised that he had recently viewed an Area 2 Committee Planning Meeting and was concerned how the Committee members were informed by officers there was no legal objection to the application and this resulted in approval.

The meeting closed at 8.33pm.

Chairman  
3<sup>rd</sup> February 2025