



# Bethersden Parish Council

email: parish.clerk@bethersden-pc.gov.uk tel: 07706 611676

## Meeting of Bethersden Parish Council, held on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at 19:00hrs in Bethersden Village Hall MEETING MINUTES

**PRESENT:** Cllrs Allen, Buss, Boyd (Chair), Cracknell, Crannis, Henderson, Light, Peters, Paula Cowperthwaite (Clerk).  
Cllr Blanford (ABC), Cllr Eustace (KCC) and 5 members of public.

*Reports from Kent County Councillors (KCC) and Ashford Borough Councillors (ABC).  
Public questions and comments on agenda and non-agenda items (this section will be limited to 15 minutes or otherwise at the discretion of the Chairman).*

Cllr Blanford reported that ABC are looking to redevelop the old Odeon site in the town centre and that there are consultations taking place with ABC regarding the funding to dual the A28 but there are no outcomes at this point.

Cllr Eustace reported that the Local Government Reorganisation consultation will close on March 26<sup>th</sup>. The National Planning Policy Framework is also currently under consultation. He reported that the next iteration of Local Plans need to be completed by the end of December 2026 or be restarted.  
96% of local children have received their first choice secondary school placement, and the KCC budget was recently approved with a 3.99% increase.

### **22/2026. Apologies**

Cllr Jordan (working)

### **23/2026. Declarations of Interest**

None

### **24/2026. Minutes of the Meeting of the 11<sup>th</sup> February 2026**

The Council resolved to accept the minutes of 11<sup>th</sup> February as a true record of the meeting. The minutes were then signed by the Chairman.

### **25/2026. Chairman`s Report**

The report was read to the room and can be seen at Appendix One.

### **26/2026. Parish Clerk`s Report**

The report was read to the room and can be seen at Appendix Two.

## **Planning Matters**

To agree comments for:

### **27/2026. Planning Application [PA/2026/0157](#)**

**Harleydene, Ashford Road, Bethersden, TN26 3BD**

Construction of Single storey rear extension, side extension and front porch and changes to fenestration

The proposed comments had been previously circulated. They were read to the room and the Council resolved to agree the following comment for submission:  
*In our opinion, the proposed extensions (and other alterations) to this detached property are modest and well designed. We have no further comments.*

## 28/2026. Notice of Planning Appeal Outcome

### PA/2025/1205

Little Etchden, Etchden Chase, Etchden Road, Bethersden, Kent TN26 3DS  
 Conversion of a garage to an independent residential dwelling with a garden area and parking

**BPC: No Comment (not notified at application stage)**

**ABC: Refused**

**Inspectorate: Allowed**

## 29/2026. Planning Decisions

### PA/2025/2278

Princes Pond, 1 Bears Green, Bears Lane, Bethersden, Ashford, TN23 3US –  
 Conversion of loft space including installation of rooflights to front and rear elevation, and construction of single storey rear extension

<https://ashfordboroughcouncil.my.site.com/pr/a0hTw000003yhV0IAI>

**BPC: Representation comment made – no overriding concerns**

**ABC: Approve**

## Financial Matters

### 30/2026. Financial Transactions

Income		Amount £
None		0.00
Expenditure		
*Lloyds Bank	Bank Charges	8.75
Paula Cowperthwaite	Salary & Expenses	930.41
Alastair Boyd	Expenses	10.00
Countrywide	March Maintenance	703.50
Chris Buckman	February Maintenance	120.00
Bethersden Village Hall	March Room Hire	31.00
D Wood Building Ltd	Pavilion Refurbishment	3,340.00
KALC	Chairmans Conference	84.00
SLCC	Internal Audit	66.00
Xeinadin	February payroll	54.00

\*Payments already made

The Council resolved to note the payments already made and approve the items due for payment.

### 31/2026 Tennis Club

Following correspondence between the Parish Council and the Tennis Club, a discussion was held around the costs involved for both sides. There was disagreement over the figures and it was therefore agreed that a working group be formed to go through the details. The Council resolved that the Clerk and Cllr Cracknell will arrange a date to meet with the Tennis Club to discuss further. The Council resolved that the token charges will continue at the current rate of £5.

### **32/2026 CCTV repairs**

The work required to fix the CCTV cameras was explained and the Council resolved to approve the work, provided the correct name and address is applied to the resulting invoice.

### **33/2026 Churchyard Maintenance funding**

The Council resolved that £1200 funding should be provided to the churchyard for general maintenance costs. £300 of which will come from the allocated churchyard budget line, and £900 from the s137 budget line.

### **34/2026 S106 Funding**

An update was given on the progress of the current application against the Mill Road s106 monies, and the plan to then apply for funding against the Courtlands s106 monies was outlined.

### **35/2026 Finance regs**

The Council resolved to accept the updated version of the Financial Regulations, once an administration error had been corrected in Section 11.6

### **36/2026 Kent Pension Fund**

The details of the pension fund had been circulated to councillors and were discussed.

The Council resolved to be a participating employer in the Local Government Pension Scheme (i.e. the Kent Pension Fund administered by Kent County Council), as permitted under the LGPS 2013 Regulations Schedule 2, Part 2, Number 2, and the Council are designated to having an entitlement to be members of the LGPS, from December 2025. The Fund actuary has certified a contribution rate of 19.2% which we agree to pay and accept that this will be reviewed every 3 years in line with the Funds triennial valuation. The Council's participation in the Kent Pension Fund is to be closed to new members, and is for Paula Cowperthwaite only, and the Council understands the implications of this decision. In making this resolution Bethersden Parish Council understands it is resolving to be bound by the statutory provisions of the LGPS and all of the obligations under such, including early retirement strain costs and exit liabilities.

### **37/2026 Working From Home Allowance**

The Council resolved to agree to directly pay the working from home allowance from the start of the 2026/27 financial year following the cessation of the ability of the Clerk to claim it from HMRC.

### **38/2026 European Art Work**

A member of public gave an update on the proposed art project. The Council discussed possible sites to house the finished art work, and any possible financial or logistical support that may be involved.

The Council resolved to suggest the George Field as an installation point for the final art piece(s), provided the appropriate legal powers are available and insurance can be arranged. Transport of the finished piece(s) to the George Field will be arranged by the artists.

### **39/2026 Local Government Reorganisation consultation**

The LGR consultation information was shared and councillors were encouraged to complete the consultation.

**40/2026 Parking around Bethersden Primary School**

The issues of parking around the primary school, and any possible solutions were discussed, but it was noted that any solutions were probably outside the remit of the parish council.

**41/2026. Correspondence**

None

**42/2026. Items for next meeting**

- Resilience plan

**43/2026. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on THURSDAY 16<sup>th</sup> April 2026 in Bethersden Village Hall at 19:00hrs.

**44/2026 Resolution to Exclude the Public and Press**

The Council resolved that, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item(s) as they involve the likely disclosure of confidential information.

**45/2026 Subject Access Request**

The Clerk shared an update on the response to the recent Subject Access Request, and the next steps.

The meeting ended at 21:15pm.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix One

# Bethersden Parish Council

## Chairmans Report

March 2026

At last, the rain has stopped and the countryside has awoken with a flurry of colour. and everyone is grateful for the break in the weather.

The fruit trees that became a meal for the rabbits in the George Field last summer, have been replaced and suitable deterrents in place. One of the seats in the George Field is rotting and is going to be replaced.

The Bull stables continue to deteriorate and really look sad and very neglected. We continue to press Ashford Borough Council for reparations, but a series of new planning applications stops constructive repairs.

We are in discussions with local parish councils regards to the proposals for unitary authorities in Kent. We were advised that Parish level would not change but the difficulties we have with the authorities now can only be amplified when this is sorted out.

We have an opportunity for members of the European Sculpture Path coming to Bethersden. Further detail is <https://www.art-moves-europe.eu/> the wooden structure would remain in Bethersden and such sculptures are highly valued for the public enjoyment.

We hope that repairs to the recreation field security cameras will be concluded shortly.

A virtual meeting between the Parish Council and the KCC Highways Improvement Plan officer will be held on Thursday and the Parish Council will put forward a number of outstanding safety points including safe crossings of the A28 for our school children and young people, Speed controls, safety measures regards Bull Lane junction, and Mill Road etc.

The pavilion away changing room, which had to be stripped out due to asbestos in the walls, has now been restored to working order and contact to the Bethersden Football team restabilised.

We have a contractor lined up to clean out the George Field Ditch and its surroundings Work will start as soon as soils conditions improve.

Work proceeds with the construction of a resilience plan for the parish. With international threats abound this along with the minor problems, may become a valuable document for future safety and resilience planning for or community.

## **Appendix Two**

### **Clerks Report – March 2026**

Dear Councillors, I have spent much of the last month dealing with finance matters and the recent Subject Access Request.

With regards to the finance, I am confident that the year-end process should be straightforward. The financial regulations to be approved tonight take on all the changes discussed at last month's meeting, and should make the financial administration of the Council more efficient. The other finance matters, and the SAR will be discussed as agenda items.

My discussions with our IT support suggest the use of OneDrive may be the most cost-efficient way of storing and sharing online information. I will be looking into this more closely next month, please do let me know if this will cause any issues for members.

Work has been carried out in the Recreation Ground pavilion; I have only seen photos but intend to visit as soon as possible. I am also in the process of arranging a date to meet with the football team who plan to use it. This is positive news indeed.

I will continue to visit The George every other Wednesday to meet with councillors and residents alike. I'll also be regularly updating our Facebook page, which is gaining followers and likes and getting the message of the Parish Council out there.