



# Bethersden Parish Council

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

## Meeting of Bethersden Parish Council, held on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2026 at 19:00hrs in Bethersden Village Hall

### MEETING MINUTES

**PRESENT:** Cllrs Boyd (Chairman), Cracknell, Crannis, Henderson, Light, Peters.  
Cllr Blanford (ABC) and three members of public.

Reports from County and Borough Councillors.

Cllr Blanford reported that the Chilmington developer, Hodsons, have gone into administration. The Wastewater Treatment Works still doesn't have an EA permit to discharge, but the development is now nearing 700 dwellings which is the maximum number of houses that could have waste water discharged to the Bybrook treatment plant.

The Bull Inn appeal has been upheld. A reserved matters application is now due.

Cllr Blanford was asked to call in the Norton Lane application. However, the planning officer isn't minded to approve and is waiting for additional info from Southern Water.

There is no progress at the Bull Stables site. Cllr Peters enquired at which point a Listed Building Preservation Order may be issued.

Cllr Blanford will look into the issue of parking by the primary school.

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).

#### **46/2026. Apologies**

Cllrs Allen, Jordan, Light.

Cllr Pickering (ABC)

The Parish Council resolved to accept the apologies.

#### **47/2026. Declarations of Interest**

None

#### **48/2026. Minutes of the Meeting of the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

The Parish Council resolved to accept the minutes of the meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> March 2026 as an accurate record of the meeting. These were signed by the Chairman.

#### **49/2026. Chairman's Report**

The Chairman's Report was read to the room and can be seen at Appendix One.

#### **50/2026. Parish Clerk's Report**

The Parish Clerk's Report was read to the room and can be seen at Appendix Two.

### **Planning Matters**

To agree comments for:

**51/2026. Planning Application [PA/2026/0354](#)**

25, Rosedale, School Road, Bethersden, TN26 3AH

Two-storey side and single-storey rear extension and relocation of front door following demolition of existing garage.

The Parish Council resolved to agree the following comments for submission.

*In our opinion, the pitched roof design fits well with both the existing property and the nearby/surrounding street scene. That apart, we would wish to raise no further comments on the application from the Parish Council's perspective.*

**52/2026. Planning Application [PA/2026/0472](#)**

Waylands Farm, Ashford Road, Bethersden, TN26 3AP

Single storey extension to existing children's care home

The Parish Council resolved to agree the following comments for submission.

*It is our view that the design and general scale of the proposed single storey, pitched roof extension, placed at the far end of the existing building, and in the location of a former outdoor swimming pool/sunken garden, blends well with the existing structure.*

*Our only other comments relate to the need for the Council, in making its decision on the application, to be mindful of:-*

- (i) whether the increased size of the accommodation will put pressure on the availability of on-site car parking and*
- (ii) whether any intensification in the use of the car home (by virtue of the proposed extension) will materially impact on the point of access to the site off the busy A28.*

**53/2026 Planning Application [PA/2026/0550](#)**

Cherry Trees, Norton Lane, Bethersden, Ashford, TN26 3AL

Erection of 3 self-build dwellings, together with all associated landscaping and infrastructure

The Parish Council resolved to agree the following comments for submission.

*We wish to express our objections to the proposed development as follows:-*

**Traffic/highway use and dangers and an unsustainable form of development**

*The proposed development is shown served off the very narrow Norton Lane which is already heavily trafficked and hence is entirely unsuited to provide access to additional development off this lane. The existing traffic includes substantial movements associated with access through this part of Bethersden to and from Pluckley Station, plus the large numbers of twice daily car movements relating to the local primary school, and the proximity of the nearby scout hut, plus the large, heavy lorries (and plant) associated with the Sewage Works (located opposite the southern part of the application site).*

*Furthermore, from both (i) a traffic/pedestrian danger and (ii) an "unsustainable development" point of view, Norton Lane, as like all lanes in the vicinity, is entirely unlit with narrow or non-existent verges, frequent bends and with no foot or cycleways. It would consequently be highly unattractive and entirely unsuitable for use by pedestrians or cyclists from or to the proposed development. As a result of these considerations, occupiers of the development are most likely to use the private car for the vast majority of their day-to-day trips, both adding to the traffic dangers and underlining the unsustainable nature of the scheme.*

**Design and visual intrusion/impact on surrounding rural countryside and edge of village**

*The proposed height and mass of the proposed large and substantial houses as shown in the application, especially by virtue of being on rising land on the east side of Norton*

*Lane, represents an unacceptable level of visual impact and harm as a result of the significant consolidation of built form along this sporadically developed section of country lane on the outer edge of the village. Furthermore, the height/scale of the development would adversely affect the open vista over the open space serving St Margaret's Place, particularly as viewed from the east, where the open countryside beyond is an important aspect to maintaining the rural character and setting of the edge of the village settlement. As a result of both these factors, the proposed development would serve to blur the clear existing distinction between its rural location and the outer edge of the village character and thereby represents further encroachment into the open countryside, resulting in a visually harmful urbanising effect that would materially erode the spaciousness and rural character and appearance of the site and surrounding area.*

Other material issue

*Finally, we wish to raise our concerns that the residential use of this site (including the three dwellings themselves and their respective extensive curtilages) would not be acceptable, given their proximity to the Bethersden Sewage Treatment Works. In light of this, we submit that any new occupants of the three houses and gardens would be subject to unacceptable levels of odour, resulting in materially poor and sub-standard levels of amenity and environmental quality.*

Conclusion

*We are satisfied that the balance of (i) the planning policies adversely affecting this scheme, (ii) the fact that it does not benefit from the presumption in favour of sustainable development, and (iii) all other material planning considerations, are such that they stand firmly balanced against the proposed development. We therefore respectfully submit that the application should be refused.*

**54/2026. Planning Decisions**

To note the planning decision for:

**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

**PC – No specific comments to make**

**ABC – Approve with Conditions**

**Financial Matters**

**55/2026. Financial Transactions**

To note or approve the financial transactions

<b>Income</b>		<b>Amount £</b>
ABC	S106	9,978.00
<b>Expenditure</b>		
*Lloyds Bank	Bank Charges	4.75
*PCC Of Denswood	Churchyard Maintenance Support	1,200.00
*Canva	Annual Subscription	100.00
Parish Clerk	Salary and Expenses	1,006.21
Countrywide	March Inv 685407	318.78
Countrywide	March Inv 685408	419.89
C Buckman	March Invoice	150.00
Xeinadin	March payroll	54.00
Cllr Boyd	Padlock + CCTV	39.94

Bethersden Village Hall	April room hire	31.00
KALC	Annual subscription	878.64
KALC	Training for Cllr Light	60.00
Rialtas	Year End Close Down session	648.00 + VAT
Rialtas	Annual Support Contract	252.00
HMRC	Q3 Tax and NI	1,049.93
HMRC	Underpayment of Month 8 Tax	354.86

\*Payments already made

The Parish Council resolved to note the payments made, and to authorise the payments due.

#### **56/2026 Bleed Kits**

The Parish Council resolved to purchase 3 x St John's Ambulance bleed kits to be co-sited with the parish defibrillators. A promotional campaign will follow their distribution.

#### **57/2026 S106 Funding**

The update on current s106 funding progress was read to the room.

#### **58/2026 ACRE Crowdfunding**

The Parish Council resolved not to take part in the Kent ACRE crowdfunding appeal at this time due to the Council's current financial situation and lack of clear outcomes of the new organisation.

#### **59/2026 Purchase of Microsoft 365 license**

The Parish Council resolved to approve the purchase of a Microsoft 365 license for the Parish laptop.

#### **60/2026 Memorial Tree Policy**

The Parish Council resolved to agree the Memorial Tree policy once some administrative changes have been made.

#### **61/2026 Grant Funding policy**

The Parish Council resolved to agree the Grant Funding policy once some administrative changes have been made.

#### **62/2026 Update to previously agreed meeting minutes**

The Parish Council resolved that the approved minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2023 be amended to correct Minute 130/2022, so that the wording reads: "The Clerk appraised Members of the projects for which he was bidding for S106 funding. There was a need to make these applications as many are shortly to expire.

Members were further advised that because of the issues that had been raised by a *member of public*, the recent S106 funding for the George Pub has now been stopped. This happened after the September meeting. As the cheque had already been issued it was felt the Council had no option but to meet this from its *existing* budget.

The Clerk is currently sorting out the repayment of this funding with the S106 Officer." The italicised wording is the amended wording, and this will be added to the website once updated.

**63/2026. Correspondence**

- Thank you message from St Margaret’s Church regarding the recent grant award.

**64/2026. Items for next meeting**

To agree any items to be included on the next meeting agenda.

- Resilience plan
- Youth Shelter
- Timber trail

**65/2026. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2026 in Bethersden Village Hall at 19:00hrs.

The Annual Meeting of Electors will start at 6pm, also in Bethersden Village Hall.

**66/2026 Resolution to Exclude the Public and Press**

*To resolve 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.*

The Parish Council resolved to exclude public and press from the remainder of the meeting.

**67/2026 Payment review for village handyman**

The Parish Council resolved to agree an increase in the hourly rate of the village handyman.

**68/2026 Clerk overtime**

The Parish Council resolved to agree the Parish Clerk’s overtime claim. Noting that this has been due to exceptional circumstances and does not represent the usual workload expected of the role.

The meeting ended at 20:40pm.

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

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

# Bethersden Parish Council

## Chairmans Report

April 2026

Council members met “virtually,” i.e., online, for one hour with the Kent Highways Officers regarding the Parish Highway Improvement Plan.

Regardless of the KCC officers wishes to deal with only one matter, we covered (i) the safety of the crossing of the A28 at the junction of school road and A28, by school children at school times, (ii) the moving of the speed limit signs at the Bull Bridges to the Tenterden side of the bridge to avoid misleading traffic from Bethersden to speed up as they approach the blind bend on the bridge, (iii) the improvement of highway safety at the Junction of the Bull Lane with the A28, and (iv) provision of a footpath on the A28 that would require a non-returnable donation to KCC by the Parish Council to fund the research.

The only “success” was the agreement to consider the extension of the existing Mill Road 30 mph speed limit from the entrance to the recreation ground up to the junction with Surrenden / Pluckley Road. The parish council has circulated these proposals to the community living on Mill Road and is awaiting KCC's assessment. Regrettably, “slow” signs painted on the Surrenden Road approaching the crossroads were not acceptable to KCC

The council is to meet the tennis club representatives, whom we have welcomed, and we are awaiting their availability date.

Investigations are ongoing into using the garage space adjoining the local authority houses opposite the school to allow parking in front of unused garages, thus leaving the school road much safer (with much improved forward visibility) on the bend.

Enquiries have been expressed regarding the occupation challenges and opportunities of Hardy House

Regarding Hoads Wood, this report has been received from the Environment Agency: *“Progress is going very well, generally. Nearly 25,000 tonnes of waste has come off site and we are moving into the final phases of waste removal in the coming weeks. All is going in line with the timeline and programme we have agreed with Acumen.”*

The Scout Hut is the subject of a very bad report regarding its structural condition.

The European Art project is moving forward strongly. The Adams Trust has offered one of its dead oaks for the carving project, subject to the trunk's condition.

Regretfully, the planning appeal regards ABC's refusal for the outline development of up to 32 new dwellings at land adjoining the Bull Inn has been allowed by the Planning Inspectorate after a two-day Hearing. . The Ashford Borough Planning officers defended the planning refusal on a limited number of grounds compared to the original refusal. A representative from the Parish Council and one local resident (and his advisor) attended both days of the Hearing and spoke vigorously against the development, but sadly to no avail. The inspectors report stated:

*“The Ashford Borough Council refused the application on grounds of landscape and visual impact, heritage impact, residential amenity, highway and pedestrian safety, and absence of a legal agreement. However, the Council subsequently resolved only to contest the first issue. In terms of heritage, they found that the less than substantial harm arising would be outweighed by the planning benefits of the scheme”.*

The Parish Council resilience plan is progressing

The parish council meetings will be held on the second Wednesday of the month again from next month. Next month's (May) meeting will be preceded by the Annual Parish Meeting at 6 pm, where members of the community are invited to participate if they wish.

Please remember that there is no council meeting in August

## **Appendix Two**

### **Clerk's Report**

Happy belated Easter. Thank you for coming out on a Thursday for this meeting. All future meetings will revert back to the second Wednesday of the month.

### **SLCC AGM**

I attended (and helped to organise) the SLCC Kent AGM in March. As well as the official AGM business, we heard updates from KALC on Local Government Reorganisation and had a helpful session on asset management, a subject which is rapidly working its way to the top of my to-do list.

### **HIP update**

A meeting took place with the KCC Highways Improvement Team. You will hopefully have seen the consultation on the extension of the 30mph zone on Mill Road. This will close on 30<sup>th</sup> April, and assuming feedback is generally positive, the scheme will go ahead shortly after. We have received seven emails and six facebook comments to date, mostly supporting the scheme. Any negative comments have generally been around why it hasn't been done before, and why it can't also be done elsewhere. I will communicate the reasons for this in due course.

Cllr Boyd has mentioned the other schemes currently under discussion.

### **Finance and IA update**

I have started work on financial year end, I have a session booked with Rialtas next week to close the year on the financial system. I have also volunteered to take part in a national trial for implementing a new digital AGAR system. The paper system is recognised as outdated and the move online will happen next year, but a small number of clerks have been asked to test it out this year, which means the process will be slightly different to previous years.

I have a meeting with the Internal Auditor on 15<sup>th</sup> May to go through the audit checklist, this will be keeping me busy for the next few weeks.

### **SAR/DPA/Assertion 10**

In light of recent correspondence, and in preparation for Assertion 10 of the AGAR, you have all been sent a link to Data Protection training provided by the Information Commissioners Office. Please can I urge you all to complete this before March next year. If you have done similar training through employment or volunteering, please let me have the details so I can include it in my evidence of completion.

### **Paula Cowperthwaite**

### **Clerk to Bethersden Parish Council**