BETHERSDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Bethersden Parish Council

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Meeting of Bethersden Parish Council

Held on Wednesday 9th September 2026 at 19:00 hours

At Bethersden Village Hall

MEETING MINUTES

PRESENT: Cllrs Allen, Boyd (Chairman), Buss, Cracknell, Crannis, Henderson, Light. Cllr Blanford (ABC), Beat Officer Hopkins, and 5 members of public.

To receive reports from County and Borough Councillors.

- Cllr Pickering (ABC) sent his apologies.
- Cllr Blanford (ABC) noted the current pause in the Local Government Reorganisation Process. Cllr Blanford is now on the Chilmington Management Organisation Board and plans to attend the AGM next Wednesday.

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).

- Beat Officer Hopkins gave a report. There has been a spike in catapult crimes across the whole of Ashford over the summer months. A 15yo male involved in a recent Bethersden incident was interviewed and is being dealt with by the Rural Task Force. Two other individuals have also been issued a warning.
  There have been no recent nuisance driving or theft of motorbikes, but speeding has been an issue along the A28. Speed checks will be carried out regularly along the A28. The Parish Council intends to advertise for a new Speedwatch volunteer group.

135/2026. Apologies

No apologies given.
It was noted that Cllr Jordan had not attended a meeting of the Council for a period of six consecutive months and under Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, had ceased to be a member of the Council from this date.

136/2026. Declarations of Interest

- Disclosable Pecuniary (Leave room, abstain from voting)

None

- Other Significant Interest (Declare interest, remain but not vote)

None

137/2026. Minutes of the Meeting of the 8th July 2026

The minutes of the meeting of 8th July 2026 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

Propose	Cllr Light	**Second**	Cllr Buss	**Motion**	Carried

138/2026. Chairman`s Report

The Chairman's Report was read to the room.

139/2026. Parish Clerk`s Report

The Parish Clerk's Report was read to the room.

Planning Matters

To agree comments for:

140/2026. Planning Application PA/2026/1059

Bethersden Cricket Club, Ashford Road, Bethersden, Ashford, TN26 3BQ

Siting of a timber clad converted shipping container (9.8m x 2.4m) for use as a WC and changing facility and retention of two small storage containers

The Parish Council resolved to submit the following comments:

Bethersden Parish Council confirms that the relevant previous comments made continue to stand and should be included as part of this response. Also, to clarify, the previous comments were supportive, and not objection comments as clicked on. Whilst the Parish Council raises no objection in principle, it requests that Ashford Borough Council remain mindful of the cumulative visual impact of container based structures at the site.

Propose	Cllr Boyd	**Second**	Cllr Allen	**Motion**	Carried

141/2026. Planning Application PA/2026/1429

The Old Saw Mill, Pluckley Road, Bethersden, TN26 3DD

Variation of condition 2 (approved plans and documents) of planning permission PA/2024/0820 for "4 no dwellings with associated hard and soft landscaping and other works following demolition of all existing buildings" to allow for minor amendments to the approved plans, including changes to unit layouts and siting, windows, chimneys, rooflights, external materials, and refuse and cycle storage arrangements.

The Parish Council resolved to submit the following comments:

The Parish Council considers that the proposed amendments have the potential to improve the functionality and appearance of the development through revisions to layouts, materials, windows, roof features, and storage arrangements. Subject to Ashford Borough Council being satisfied that the revised details maintain a high standard of design and are consistent with the character of the surrounding area, the Parish Council supports the application. The Parish Council nevertheless notes some concerns regarding the cumulative effect of the alterations on the rural character of the site, particularly where changes to siting, materials, rooflights, and chimneys could affect the appearance of the development. The Council would therefore welcome careful assessment of these matters before any approval is granted.

Propose	Cllr Allen	**Second**	Cllr Light	**Motion**	Carried

142/2026. Planning Application PA/2026/1533

Whiston House, Whiston Avenue, Bethersden, TN26 3LA

Installation of no. 2 windows and door to the outbuilding (regularise works already taken place)

The Parish Council resolved to submit the following comments:

Bethersden Parish Council notes that this proposal is limited in scale, relating only to the insertion of two windows and a door within an existing outbuilding, and does not involve expansion of the building footprint or wider redevelopment of the site. The Council considers that the works are capable of preserving the significance and ongoing use of the property. Notwithstanding its support, the Parish Council notes that the application is retrospective in nature, seeking to regularise works that have already taken place. The Council would expect Ashford Borough Council

to carefully assess whether the appearance, materials and detailing of the installed openings are fully sympathetic to the character and significance of the listed building and its setting and whether the use of uPVC is suitable in these circumstances.

Propose	Cllr Allen	**Second**	Cllr Boyd	**Motion**	Carried

143/2026. Planning Application PA/2026/0870

Buildings South of Tyde Brook Farm and North East of Bliberry Farmhouse, Wissenden Lane, Bethersden

Alteration of vehicular access and the laying of hard surfacing to existing vehicular access and area next to existing agricultural buildings. (retrospective)

The Parish Council resolved to submit the following comments:

Bethersden Parish Council raises concerns that sufficient information has not yet been provided to demonstrate that the extent of the proposed hard surfacing and access alterations are necessary, proportionate, and capable of being accommodated without adversely affecting the character of the rural area. The site is located within open countryside, and the introduction of additional engineered surfaces has the potential to alter the rural character of the landscape. The Council also notes that the site lies within an area at risk of flooding, and considers that further hard surfacing may warrant careful assessment in relation to surface water management and flood risk. The Parish Council wishes to note that there are currently four mobile homes present on the site. The Council further notes that retrospective applications can give rise to concerns regarding public confidence in the planning process and the consistent application of planning controls. As this application forms part of a number of recent planning applications relating to the property, the Parish Council requests that a planning officer undertakes a site visit in order to gain a fuller understanding of the site and to assess the cumulative impact of the various proposals and developments associated with it.

Propose	Cllr Boyd	**Second**	Cllr Buss	**Motion**	Carried

144/2026. Planning Application PA/2026/1502

2 Bailey Field, Ashford Road, Bethersden, TN26 3AS

Erection of a single storey side-and-rear extension, removal of existing chimney, following demolition of outbuilding and sunroom.

The Parish Council resolved to submit the following comments:

The Parish Council supports this application. The proposal relates to the extension and improvement of an existing dwelling within an established residential area and does not introduce a new dwelling or alter the prevailing residential use of the site. The Parish Council considers that, subject to the use of appropriate materials and detailing, the single-storey form of the extension is likely to respect the character of the existing property and surrounding development. The Parish Council notes, however, that there may be some limited impacts on neighbouring occupiers through changes to outlook, loss of light, or increased built form close to shared boundaries, and that access to the rear may become problematic. Careful consideration should therefore be given to ensuring that residential amenity is adequately protected through the final design and any necessary planning conditions.

Propose	Cllr Light	**Second**	Cllr Buss	**Motion**	Carried

145/2026. Planning Application PA/2026/1501

The Vine, Ashford Road, Bethersden, TN26 3AZ

Detached garage with ancillary storage above. Following the demolition of the existing detached garage.

The Parish Council resolved to submit the following comments:

Bethersden Parish Council supports this application in principle. The proposal replaces an existing garage structure on a residential property and therefore represents a modest domestic development rather than a significant intensification of the site. Subject to Ashford Borough Council being satisfied regarding scale, design and the impact on neighbouring amenity, the development appears capable of preserving the character of the locality and maintaining the site's residential function. The Council notes, however, that storage accommodation above the garage could give rise to concerns if it were capable of future independent occupation or if overlooking, dominance or loss of privacy were experienced by neighbouring properties. Appropriate planning conditions should therefore ensure the accommodation remains ancillary to the main dwelling and that neighbouring amenity is protected.

Propose	Cllr Boyd	**Second**	Cllr Allen	**Motion**	Carried

146/2026. Planning Application PA/2026/1519

Waylands Farm, Ashford Road, Bethersden, TN26 3AP

Proposed change of Use to C2 and single-story extension

The Parish Council resolved to submit the following comments:

Bethersden Parish Council notes that the proposal would bring an existing rural property into a Class C2 use, providing accommodation and care-related facilities that can contribute to meeting identified community and social care needs within the borough. The Council also notes that the proposed extension is single storey in nature, which has the potential to limit visual impact when compared with larger forms of development. Subject to the proposal demonstrating an appropriate design, landscaping, parking provision and protection of residential amenity, the development could represent a sensitive adaptation of an existing site. However, the Parish Council remains concerned about possible impacts on the rural character of Ashford Road, traffic generation, and the adequacy of on-site parking and servicing arrangements. The site already has a poor exit onto the A28. These matters should be carefully assessed by Ashford Borough Council, with any necessary mitigation secured through planning conditions.

Propose	Cllr Light	**Second**	Cllr Allen	**Motion**	Carried

147/2026. Proposed Diversion Public Footpath AW264 at Bethersden

To note the proposed footpath diversion and agree any comments

The Parish Council resolved to submit the following comments:

The Parish Council are generally neutral about the footpath, we understand that it is in the landowners interest. However, we have received various comments from residents which all cover the fact that the alterations make the footpath longer, and therefore more inconvenient for school runs and carrying heavy shopping back from the village centre.

Propose	Cllr Boyd	**Second**	Cllr Allen	**Motion**	Carried

148/2026. Planning Decisions

To note the planning decision for:

NOT/2026/0733

Vine Hall Farm, Office At, Woodchurch Road, Bethersden, TN26 3JY – Prior approval for the change of use and conversion of an agricultural building and land within its curtilage to two dwelling houses and associated operational development.

https://ashfordboroughcouncil.my.site.com/pr/a0hTw000004cqheIAA

BPC: Representation

ABC: Prior Approval Given

149/2026. Planning Appeals

Planning Appeal AP-90846

Listed Building Consent for replacement of the existing non-original windows, by new double-glazed, traditionally detailed sash windows.
Vitters Oak, Old Surrenden Manor Road, Bethersden, TN26 3DW

Financial Matters

150/2026. Financial Transactions

INCOME – to note

Date	Source of payment	Description	Amount (£)
09/07/2026	Resident	Sculpture project donation	125.00
30/07/2026	HMRC	VAT Reclaim	6,548.15
17/08/2026	Bethersden Tennis Club	Annual rent second payment	2,416.26

EXPENDITURE

Payments to note

Date	Payee	Description	VAT (£)	Total payment (£)
13/07/2026	Giff Gaff	Mobile phone SIM	1.00	6.00
09/07/2026	FSF Fencing	Picnic Benches x 2	182.56	1,095.34*
20/07/2026	Lloyds Bank	Bank Charges	0.00	4.25
23/07/2026	St Johns Ambulance	Bleed Kits	34.20	205.20
24/07/2026	Amazon	Printer Cartridges	1.80	10.79
27/07/2026	Business Stream	Water services	0.00	54.54
03/08/2026	HMRC	Tax & NI	0.00	1,429.29
11/08/2026	Giff Gaff	Mobile phone SIM	1.00	6.00
17/08/2026	Smartest Energy	Electricity Supply	21.06	442.20
18/08/2026	Lloyds Bank	Bank Charges	0.00	4.25

Payments for approval

No.	Payee	Description	VAT (£)	Total payment (£)
1	P Cowperthwaite	Salary & Expenses, July & Aug	0.00	1,829.84
2	C Buckman	Hours Worked Inv 43 & Inv 44	0.00	445.52
3	Xeinadin	Payroll July & August	19.00	114.00
4	Bethersden Village Hall	September Room Hire	0.00	31.00
5	Countrywide	Grounds Maintenance INV 703697, 704496, 708336, 709084	246.22	1,477.34
6	Cllr Boyd	Expenses	0.00	123.96
7	Parish Noticeboard Company	Noticeboard	233.00	1398.00
8	Eventbrite	KALC Finance Conference	28.00	168.00
9	P S Lyons	IT Services	0.00	409.92
10	Krystal Hosting	Annual web and email hosting	22.00	132.00

The income and payments for information were noted. The Parish Council resolved to approve the items listed for payment.

Propose	Cllr Light	**Second**	Cllr Cracknell	**Motion**	Carried

151/2026 Local Housing Needs

Following a brief discussion, it was agreed to defer the Local Housing Needs working group proposal until such time there is specific action that the Parish Council can take.

Propose	Cllr Boyd	**Second**	Cllr Light	**Motion**	Carried

152/2026 Standing Orders and Code of Conduct

The Parish Council resolved to approve the Standing Orders and Code of Conduct documents.

Propose	Cllr Light	**Second**	Cllr Cracknell	**Motion**	Carried

153/2026 Recording at meetings policy

The Parish Council resolved to approve the recording at meetings policy

Propose	Cllr Boyd	**Second**	Cllr Henderson	**Motion**	Carried

154/2026 Timber Trail

A discussion was held over the possible costs of replacing the timber trail, and potential user numbers. It was resolved that with budgets currently tight, quotes will be obtained to either level the ground as it is, or to retain the remaining sturdy features and level the ground around them. Then to assess the level of need of a new timber trail in a future financial year.

Propose	Cllr Light	**Second**	Cllr Allen	**Motion**	Carried

155/2026 Sculpture Trail

Details of the latest work to move and install the sculptures were given to the room. Quotes were shared for the work involved and the Parish Council resolved to approve Quote 1 and to work towards an October installation date.

Propose	Cllr Light	**Second**	Cllr Henderson	**Motion**	Carried

156/2026 Additional finance approvers

To ensure robust procedures for approving financial transactions through Lloyds, the Parish Council resolved to add Cllr Allen and Cllr Cracknell to the online approvers list.

Propose	Cllr Boyd	**Second**	Cllr Light	**Motion**	Carried

157/2026 Regular Payment Approval

To ensure timely payments to staff, regular contractors, and ongoing subscriptions, the Parish Council resolved to agree the provided list of regular payments for the next six months.

Propose	Cllr Light	**Second**	Cllr Cracknell	**Motion**	Carried

158/2026. Correspondence

- None

159/2026. Items for next meeting

- First Aid Training

160/2026. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday October 14th, 2026, in Bethersden Village Hall at 19:00hrs.

The meeting ended at 21:30pm

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix One

Bethersden Parish Council

Chairman's Report - September 2026

At last the weather has broken, and the green shoots are appearing. Many members of the community have suffered greatly from the continual record-breaking heatwaves.

The boys' antics with catapults appeared to have escalated from killing wildlife to breaking windows in a part of the village. It is understood that action has now been taken to curb this activity. Our thanks are given to our Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator, Peter New, and our local police Beat Officer.

KCC Highways have indicated that action will take place to strengthen the safety features at Spratts Farm Corner to warn traffic of the approaching dangerous corner. Work is proceeding on plans to extend the 30 mph limit to the Mill Road/Pluckley Road crossroads.

KCC has not accepted the Parish Council's proposal regarding moving the 30/40 mph sign forward at the A28 Bull Bridge.

Further attempts have been made to curb speeding on the A28; the police briefly conducted a speed check, and speeding vehicles were reported.

The Highways Authority suggests reconstituting the speed watch group. This is a simple online virtual exercise to qualify to use the equipment safely. We have an interest but too few to action; anyone else who is interested in this important voluntary work, please contact the clerk.

We hope to get the European Art sculptures erected in the George Field by the end of September. Unexpected funding issues have arisen and are being addressed. This is not a parish council project, but assistance is being offered.

Grave concerns regarding the curtailment of the parish council’s ability to ask the Borough Councillor to “call in” parish planning applications where the parish council feels strongly that planning officers may make an error, in the parish council’s view, regarding the decision on an application, after October the Parish Council will not be able to ask that it be referred to the Borough Council planning committee for a final decision. The planning officers within the authority will make most planning decisions. This is a national government ruling.

The government has ruled that Kent Borough and County Councils will be abolished and replaced by four Unitary Authorities. It remains to be seen what the private individuals' representation, other than the Parish Council, will be going forward.

Arrangements for a first aid course are in an advanced stage, and arrangements will be notified shortly

Minor repairs have been carried out to the playground, and quotes are being received for the repair of the timber trail.

Conversations with the tennis club have been concluded regarding the tenancy agreement and lighting.

The Bethersden Football Club is playing at Kennington for the time being, as the Football Association insists on two separate changing rooms for players, and discussions with the tennis club regarding sharing accommodation failed.

The official adoption of the old telephone box into Parish Council property is almost complete.

The boundary fence between the George Field and George Grove still drags on!

Appendix Two

Clerk's Report
September 2026

Welcome back to Parish Council meetings following the August break. I hope you all managed/enjoyed the very warm weather.

A few items to update you on, that are not included on tonight's agenda.

Local Government Reorganisation – Cllr Light sent round a detailed summary of the recent LGR webinar. If you haven't already read it, please do. And then please think about any Kent or Ashford assets you think would be better managed under parish council control.

Audit – I have had some questions from the External Auditors regarding our submission. These have been answered and I should receive our completion notice before the end of the month.

Planning – we have a few applications to discuss this evening. A substantial update to the National Planning Policy Framework was published last month and will affect the Parish Council in some ways. There will be an emphasis on approving development going forward, unless it goes against a clear policy. This will be the last meeting at which Borough Councillors will be able to 'call in' planning applications to the ABC Planning Committee as this process is being removed to speed up decision making.

Cllr Light and I had a productive meeting with the Tennis Club mid-August. As I have been working half hours through the summer, I haven't been able to progress any follow up work but will be doing so shortly.

I have made a few changes to the agenda layout. The finance changes were explained in the cover email. The other change is to how Cllr interests are declared. Going forward these will be declared under the correct heading, along with a description of the interest. I will also be recording the proposer and seconder in the minutes when a resolution is made. I will shortly send out an email to remind you all to review your current Interests on the Ashford Borough Council website and make any updates as necessary. If you have any questions about this, please drop me an email or whatsapp message.

And finally, please be aware that the October agenda will also contain the start of discussions for next year's budget. So please have a think about anything you would like to see budgeted for from April 2027.

Paula Cowperthwaite
Clerk to Bethersden Parish Council.