Bethersden Parish Council

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

Meeting of Bethersden Parish Council

Held on Wednesday 14th October 2026 at 19:00 hours

At Bethersden Village Hall

MEETING MINUTES

PRESENT: Cllrs Boyd (Chair), Crannis, Cracknell, Light, Allen, Buss.
Cllr Blanford (ABC), Cllr Pickering (ABC) and four members of public.

To receive reports from County and Borough Councillors.

- Cllr Blanford reported that work on the next Ashford Local Plan has started and is currently focussing on the town centre. The sites put forward under the Call For Sites process were discussed at a recent Council meeting.
- Cllr Pickering updated on the new planning call in processes. He also confirmed that the Hoads Wood clearance has been completed and roads should soon start reopening in the area. Cllr Pickering confirmed that the Oldbury planning application would be heard again at the next planning committee and that he would object to the proposed operating hours.

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).

- A member of public enquired as to the status of the Local Housing Needs survey. It was noted that funding had been put aside for the work, but that it was not a current priority.
- It was also noted that the new Speedwatch group was in the process of being trained and registered and new members are welcome.

161/2026. Apologies

Cllr Henderson – family commitments

62/2026. Co-option for Casual Vacancy

The Parish Council noted the casual vacancy for Bethersden Parish Council following the departure of Cllr Jordan. There were no potential candidates present.

163/2026. Declarations of Interest

Disclosable Pecuniary (Leave room, abstain from voting) - none

Other Significant Interest (Declare interest, remain but not vote) - none

164/2026. Minutes of the Meeting of the 9th September 2026

The minutes of the meeting of 9th September 2026 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

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

165/2026. Chairman`s Report

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

166/2026. 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:

167/2026. Planning Application PA/2026/1489

Elizabeth House, The Street, Bethersden, TN26 3AE

Listed Building Consent for the cleaning and specialist inspection of accessible exposed beams, and refurbishment and installation of external lighting.

Bethersden Parish Council generally supports application PA/2026/1489. The Council notes that the proposal is limited to conservation-led maintenance works and minor alterations to a Grade II listed building, comprising the careful cleaning and inspection of historic timber beams together with the refurbishment of external lighting. The submitted Heritage Statement and Building Survey demonstrate a clear need to inspect concealed timbers following evidence of historic wood-boring insect activity, and the proposed methodology adopts a minimum intervention approach consistent with Sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The works are reversible, retain significant historic fabric, do not alter the building's form, scale or appearance, and are considered likely to preserve the significance of the listed building and its contribution to the Bethersden Conservation Area. The proposal is therefore broadly consistent with Ashford Local Plan 2030 policies relating to the protection and enhancement of heritage assets. However, the Council notes that six additional eaves-mounted lights are proposed and, whilst intended to be discreet and downward-facing, they would result in a noticeable increase in artificial lighting within this historic and predominantly dark rural setting. The Council therefore questions whether the number of proposed lights is necessary and requests that, should permission be granted, a condition is imposed requiring any external lighting to be positioned at ground floor level only and controlled by either motion sensors or timers. This would help minimise light spill and protect the character of the area.

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

168/2026. Planning Application PA/2026/1568

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

Proposed vehicular crossing and associated hardstanding

Bethersden Parish Council objects to this application due to concerns that exiting via a layby would create a dangerous entrance/exit onto a busy A road and agree with comments from KCC Highways regarding lack of visibility and loss of existing on street parking.

The proposal may also result in the loss of permeable surfaces and landscaping, potentially increasing surface water runoff in an area prone to localised flooding, if appropriate mitigation measures are not secured.

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

169/2026. Planning Application PA/2026/1727

4 St Margarets Place, Bethersden, Ashford, TN26 3EB

Single-storey outbuilding (Partially retrospective)

Bethersden Parish Council supports this application for a hobby room outbuilding at 4 St Margarets Place. The proposed building is located within the existing rear garden and is clearly intended to be used alongside the main house rather than as a separate dwelling. The Council notes that it is positioned behind the house, helping to limit its visibility from the public realm, and that traditional materials such as timber cladding, clay roof tiles and timber-framed windows have been proposed. These design features are considered appropriate for the setting and should help ensure

that the development sits comfortably within the character of the Conservation Area and surrounding neighbourhood. The Parish Council notes, however, that the building is partially retrospective and is relatively large for a domestic outbuilding, with a ridge height of approximately 4.9 metres. Should planning permission be granted, the Parish Council would request that consideration be given to a condition requiring a reduction in the overall height of the building, if practicable, in order to lessen its visual impact. The Parish Council would also strongly support a condition restricting the use of the outbuilding to purposes ancillary to the main dwelling only, and preventing its use as a bedroom, self-contained living accommodation, or a separate dwelling in the future.

Propose	Cllr Allen	**Second**	Cllr Cracknell	**Motion**	Carried

170/2026. Planning Application PA/2026/1756

New Barn Farm, Pluckley Road, Bethersden, TN26 3EU
Lawful Development Certificate - Existing - Confirmation of lawful commencement of the planning permission 22/00972/AS

Bethersden Parish Council raises no objection to this application for a Lawful Development Certificate. It appears that work has been carried out, which may count as a valid start to the development under planning law. Provided Ashford Borough Council is satisfied that the evidence submitted is accurate and sufficient, the Parish Council supports the application.

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

171/2026. Planning Decisions

To note the planning decisions for:

NOT/2026/1476
Tyde Brook Farm, Wissenden Lane, Bethersden, TN26 3EN -
https://ashfordboroughcouncil.my.site.com/pr/a0hTw000005793hIAA
PC: No comments made, prior notification application
ABC: Withdrawn

NOT/2026/1477
Tyde Brook Farm, Wissenden Lane, Bethersden, TN26 3EN -
https://ashfordboroughcouncil.my.site.com/pr/a0hTw000005795JIAQ
PC: No comments made, prior notification application
ABC: Withdrawn

PA/2025/2265
Vitters Oak Barn, Old Surrenden Manor Road, Bethersden, TN26 3DW – Change of use of agricultural building and land within its curtilage to a custom build dwellinghouse, side patio canopy extension, changes to fenestration and the erection of a detached ca
https://ashfordboroughcouncil.my.site.com/pr/a0hTw000003yJndIAE
PC: Object
ABC: Approve

PA/2026/1059
Bethersden Cricket Club, Ashford Road, Bethersden, Ashford, TN26 3BQ -
https://ashfordboroughcouncil.my.site.com/pr/a0hTw000004rjCnIAI
PC: Support
ABC: Approve

PA/2026/1502
2 Bailey Field, Ashford Road, Bethersden, TN26 3AS -
https://ashfordboroughcouncil.my.site.com/pr/a0hTw0000058YknIAE
PC: Support
ABC: Approve

Financial Matters

172/2026. Financial Transactions

INCOME – to note

Date	Source of payment	Description	Amount (£)
04/09/2026	Clare And The Fox	Sculpture project donation	378.00
21/09/2026	Peter Adams Trust	Grant payment for noticeboard	1,165.00
30/09/2026	Ashford Borough Council	Precept 2nd half payment	39,500.00
09/09/2026	Lloyds Bank	Interest on Savings Account	9.68

EXPENDITURE

Payments to note

Date	Payee	Description	VAT (£)	Total payment (£)
11/09/2026	Giff Gaff	Mobile phone SIM	1.00	6.00
11/09/2026	Amazon	Wood Protection Oil	5.43	32.57
15/09/2026	Smartest Energy	Electricity	2.45	51.73
21/09/2026	Lloyds Bank	Bank Charges	0.00	4.67

Payments for approval

No.	Payee	Description	VAT (£)	Total payment (£)
1	P Cowperthwaite	Salary & Expenses, September	0.00	421.17
2	C Buckman	Hours Worked Inv 45	0.00	148.50
3	Xeinadin	Payroll March & September	23.30	139.80
4	Bethersden Village Hall	September Room Hire	0.00	31.00
5	Countrywide	Grounds Maintenance INV 713302, 714355	123.11	738.67
6	Cllr Boyd	Expenses	3.83	33.60
7	Trevor Laws	George Field Gate Post Repair	0.00	393.00
8	Gallagher Insurance	Annual Insurance Renewal	0.00	2350.14
9	Cleverly & Spencer	War Memorial Repairs	39.00	234.00
10	LGPS	Staff Pension (staff and council cont. backpay)		3768.27

The Parish Council resolved to note the payments made and approved the items for payment.

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

173/2026 Pay Increase

The NJC Pay Scale Increase for 2026/27, backdated to 1st April 2026, was noted and the Parish Council resolved to approve the pay increase for the Clerk.

Propose	Cllr Allen	**Second**	Cllr Buss	**Motion**	Carried

174/2026 Bank Reconciliation Q2

The Parish Council noted the bank reconciliations for all accounts as at 30th September 2026

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

175/2026 Budget for 2027/2028

The 2026/27 spend to date was shared with councillors, ideas and estimated numbers were discussed around website development, football pitch improvements, the pavilion at Mill Road, a community garden, the timber trail, the youth shelter, and a comprehensive tree report. These will be added to a draft budget to be discussed at the November meeting.

176/2026 Completed AGAR for 2025/2026

The Parish Council noted receipt of the completed Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2025/2026 and the report contained within it.

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

177/2026 Sculpture Trail

A discussion took place over the old, and new, proposed locations of the sculptures following discussions with the nearby residents. Uplighters were discussed as possible deterrent to potential vandalism.

The Parish Council resolved to choose the locations noted by pink stars on the George Field map.

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

178/2026 Resilience Plan

A meeting was held between the Clerk and Cllrs Henderson and Boyd. Further work will now be completed and an update given at a future meeting.

179/2026 Mill Road 30mph scheme

The Parish Council noted the deposit documents for formal consultation of the Mill Road 30mph scheme.

Propose	Cllr Boyd	**Second**	Cllr Cracknell	**Motion**	Carried

180/2026 Changes to bank accounts

A discussion was held on the various bank accounts currently held by the Council and ones available for future use. The Parish Council resolved to close the coop account and to open a 32-day notice savings account with Lloyds.

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

181/2026. Correspondence

- A letter drafted by the Chairman of Pluckley Parish Council to Ashford Borough Council regarding water supply issues was shared. Bethersden and other local villages have been approached to also sign the letter to demonstrate a shared concern. The Parish Council resolved to sign the letter.

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

182/2026. Items for next meeting

- Co-option
- Youth shelter

183/2026. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday November 11th, 2026, in Bethersden Village Hall at 19:00hrs.

The meeting ended at 21:00pm

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix One

Chairmans Report

October 2026

As the summer heat and its problems subside, we now move into the autumn and winter months. The summer heat kept our village handyman, Chris Buckman, busy with his buckets, keeping the young fruit trees in the George Field alive – thank you.

The decision on the siting of the sculptures created by the European Sculptures Group and presented to the Community is pending, with the sculptures awaiting their new home in the George Field. Representations have been made regarding their final exhibition site, and a decision will be made at the October meeting.

Concerns have been expressed regarding the safety of the figures from mischief that was occurring in the parish.

We thank the Police and the Neighbourhood Watch for the control that has taken place out of sight, following the killing spree of birds and suspected breaking of windows in Forge Fields. But we do ask you to let your councillors know if it starts up again.

The Parish Resilience plan is being shared with Ashford Borough Council to plan actions to mitigate the effects of public service outages, and we hope to publish it shortly. We thank Councillor Henderson for the great effort in preparing it.

The Bethersden Football Team has had to play its matches this autumn at Kennington because there is only one changing room, where two are required by Football League rules at our Mill Road site. Work is underway to find a way around this problem.

Hoads Wood restoration is fast approaching its conclusion. All the waste material, in excess of the 25000 tons estimated at the start, has been removed to a dump site in the Midlands and East of England. The concrete pad in the yard is being broken up, and the land is being converted back into an arable field. It is expected that the road will reopen in a few days.

The payment system for lighting the tennis court is changing, and where the tokens can be purchased from will be decided shortly

A group of volunteers, led by Vice Chairman Phil Light, is being formed to restart the Speed Watch Group to encourage reduced traffic speeds on the A28 and in neighbouring areas. If you wish to join the group, please get in touch with the Clerk.

Councillor Andew Jordon has left the Parish Council. We thank him for his service as a Councillor and one-time Vice-Chairman. There is now a vacancy on the Parish Council.

Appendix Two

Clerk's Report
October 2026

Welcome to autumn everyone!

Just a few things to cover in tonight's report.

Planning – in future I will be forwarding on planning applications within a few days of receiving them. This will allow you all to think about comments, but also to visit the site if you wish to. I can provide support and objection comments based on legislation and local guidance, but it is you as councillors who have the local knowledge and history to make a convincing case under the new NPPF process coming in at the end of this month.
Also to note that the Oldbury planning application will be going back to the ABC planning committee on 21st October.

Local Government Reorganisation – there is an update announcement due on this at some point this week, but there is a training course on offer for councillors on 16th November, please contact me if you would like to attend, the details are in your inbox.

Tennis Club – the tennis club have been sent our final offer regarding hire costs and we await their response.

First Aid – please don't forget the First Aid course running this Saturday at 9:45am at Bethersden Village Hall