

Minutes of the Meeting of Hothfield Parish Council

Thursday 13th March 2025 at Hothfield Village Hall

01.03.25 Present Cllr Pollock, Cllr Sutcliffe, Cllr Cox, Cllr Hook, Cllr Fletcher, Borough Cllr C Bell, Mrs M Norris (Clerk)

02.03.25 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Lloyd, Cllr Jepheart & Cllr Bowker

03.03.25 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

04.03.25 Approval of Previous Minutes

The minutes of the 13th February were accepted by all, and were signed as a true record by Cllr Pollock

05.03.25 Public Session

Several residents from Chapel Road and Chapel Row attended the meeting to express their concerns about the current parking situation on their streets. The primary concerns raised were:

- The lack of available parking spaces on both Chapel Road and Chapel Row.
- The impact of the potential building work for the Lakeside Care Home development, particularly with the expected increase in traffic from lorries and construction vehicles.
- The already narrow road which may become further congested with the movement of large vehicles, worsening the parking issue.

Residents emphasized that the heavy construction traffic, including lorries travelling up and down the narrow roads, will worsen the already strained parking situation. Many voiced concerns that the situation will become increasingly unsafe for pedestrians and drivers, particularly given the limited space available for both vehicles and pedestrians. The Parish Council and Borough Cllr Clair Bell acknowledged the concerns raised and Cllr Bell agreed to discuss with highways Officers at KCC potential solutions to alleviate the parking issues. Suggestions for follow-up actions included:

- Exploring options for temporary parking arrangements during construction.
- Engaging with the developers to address traffic management plans and minimize disruption.
- Investigating the possibility of introducing alternative parking measures or restrictions to better manage the current and future parking demand.

The clerk took contact details from the residents who attended and will update them as soon as a date for a meeting between residents and the developer can be arranged.

Cllr Bell reported that she had spoken with the planning officer at ABC, who was unaware that the developer had contacted residents requesting that they refrain from parking outside their homes during ongoing works. The planning officer confirmed that there was no provision for this in the planning approval, meaning that Ashford Borough Council has no authority to grant such a request. Upon further inquiry, the planning officer contacted the developer's agent, who also stated that they were unaware of any such proposal.

Additionally, the Construction Traffic Management Plan which is prepared by the developer and submitted to ABC will be carefully managed to minimize disruption to local residents.

Furthermore, regarding parking at Chapel Road Cllr Bell has inquired whether land on the common, which is owned by ABC, could be used for temporary parking, and a response is currently awaited. ABC are also exploring the option of resurfacing the area at the top of Chapel Road currently used by local residents for parking.

06.03.25 Borough Councillors Report

Colleagues had been paying tribute to Charlie Simkins, who sadly passed away. The PC expressed their condolences. No by-election will take place as the new council will be chosen on May 1, 2025.

Cllr Bell reported that, although Kent was not selected to have a Mayoral Strategic Authority, the government has requested that the council submit proposals to divide the county into one or more unitary authorities by 21 March . A public consultation will follow although no further details are known at this stage.

Regarding upcoming commemorations and plans for VE Day. Any Parish Council applying to close a street for a street party celebration will have the fees waived, and an application form to apply for a street or road closure will be sent out soon.

It was reported that the Government Transport Select Committee is reviewing street works and ways to improve coordination. Katie Lam, our MP, is a member of the committee and KCC has been invited to submit input.

Regarding the Village Hall lease, Cllr Bell reported that she had contacted the Borough solicitor who responded that the deeds were not currently available. They advised that the Parish Council approach the Land Registry for further information. Additionally, they stated that, if HPC as the tenant, wishes to amend or alter the current legal arrangements, they would need to instruct an independent solicitor.

Cllr Cox suggested requesting ABC to modify the lease so that it is directly between ABC and the Village Hall Charity. The Parish Council reiterated their eagerness to finalize the lease with Cllr Pollock keen to understand the next steps. It was agreed that the matter would be reviewed at the May meeting and if no further progress has been made in terms of finding the lease, the Parish Council would look to take legal advice in order to begin the process of drafting a new lease document.

Cllr Cox also enquired whether the minutes from the time that the original lease was signed were available. The clerk advised that the minutes of meetings and historical records are held at the Kent Records Office. Cllr Cox and Cllr Fletcher volunteered to make an appointment to review the minutes spanning a 5 year period and gather any relevant information.

Cllr Cox raised concerns about the condition of Bears Lane, with Cllr Bell noting that he has reported the issue twice. He will forward the details to Clair who kindly agreed to follow-up.

07.03.25 Items for Planning

No applications for planning had been received by HPC this month.

08.03.25 Financial Report

The clerk reported that the balance at the bank as of 13th March:

Natwest Business Reserve Account	£1065.86
Current Account	£100.00
HPC Business Account	£55,840.98
Total £ 57,006.84	

Receipts received since the last meeting:

Natwest Business Reserve Account	• £1.20
HPC Business Account	• £64.23
Total £65.43	

Authorisation of Payments for March 2025

Payee		Chq No	Amount
M Norris	Salary	1926	524.46
K Marden	Salary	1925	366.75
HMRC	Contributions	1928	91.80
Publicstar	Newsletter Print	1927	196.76
M Norris	Stamps	1926	13.20
			£1, 210.97

The listed payments were authorised and the PC noted the direct debit of £18 to EDF energy

09.03.25 CCTV

Cllr Cox reported that the site meeting between himself and the CCTV engineer had been postponed. However, both Cllr Lloyd and Cllr Cox have been in contact with the CCTV company and are working to arrange a new meeting. The goal of this meeting is to enable the parish council to gain a clearer understanding of the various types of cameras available and determine which would best suit the village's needs.

In addition to the initial installation costs, the councillors are keen to explore the ongoing costs associated with maintaining the CCTV system. Particular attention will be given to the storage and monitoring of the CCTV footage, especially if it is not handled by the Ashford monitoring office. The councillors aim to ensure that any solution chosen is both effective and sustainable for the village's long-term needs.

Cllr Sutcliffe advised that the village hall have confirmed that the computer held in the office was broken and could not be used as a hard drive to store any data from the cameras.

Cllr Pollock inquired whether any further engagement regarding CCTV had been included in the newsletter, no additional updates had been published. Cllr Hook requested that CCTV be added to

the agenda for the May APCM. Cllr Pollock emphasized the importance of prioritising public engagement for CCTV and support for the initiative before the PC were to make a final decision

Cllr Hook suggested that, alongside awaiting information from the current contractor, the Parish Council should seek additional quotes, as a clear specification for the type of system we would need is now in place. Additionally, Cllr Hook agreed to contact the police to gather further information on crime data within the village. This could then help the pc and residents make an informed decision on whether the village needs CCTV and, if so, where.

10.03.25 Hothfield PC Strategy Paper

Cllr Hook and Cllr Pollock presented the first draft of the Hothfield Strategic Plan, which outlines the six priority funding themes for the Parish Council (HPC) and seeks to set a budget. The document was sent to all councillors prior to the meeting for their review and consideration.

Cllr Hook and Cllr Pollock emphasised that this document is a preliminary draft, and they were keen to receive feedback and suggestions from other councillors to help shape the final version. Councillors agreed to provide their comments and suggestions on the draft to help refine the plan moving forward.

11.03.25 Muga

Cllr Fletcher mentioned that it appeared one of the floodlights was not working and might have been smashed. The clerk will contact Kenny to investigate the issue and determine whether the light is smashed or just requires a replacement bulb. Cllr Pollock agreed to look for a contractor who could replace the lightbulb if smashed.

12.03.25 Coronation Orchard

Cllr Cox reported that the current status is that an agreement has been made to relocate the trees from the playground to the other side of the path. Roger Batho from ABC will be attending the site to assess the situation. Cllr Cox expressed a preference for limiting tree removal to only those within the playground, rather than including those on the edge, as several trees are situated behind rocks at the edge of the woodland and do not impact the playground. He also noted that the parish council is responsible for pruning the trees, meaning that any trees near the path will be maintained, with lower branches being trimmed as needed. Cllr Pollock suggested that he, and Cllr Cox, walk the site again to reassess the trees, as while they are currently not an issue, they may become disruptive to the newly installed play equipment when in full bloom with apples. Additionally, some trees have been vandalized, with two having been completely uprooted. Aspire, the council's contractor, will remove the trees within the play area, and Cllr Cox confirmed that Aspire will replant them on the other side of the path.

Cllr Cox asked if he should report the deliberate destruction of the two young trees to the police. The PC felt it should be reported and a photograph taken and it put in the newsletter.

Cllr Cox advised that no watering equipment was sent with the trees and he proposed that HPC write to local houses to volunteer to water the trees in a dry spell. Cllr Pollock felt that a letter was not appropriate, but a good news story should be written for the newsletter also mentioning the trees that had been destroyed and asking that in dry spells local residents' water the young trees.

13.03.25 Hothfield Newsletter

The editor had sent apologies for the delay in issuing the newsletter this month this was due to a problem at the printers. Hopefully everyone has now received their copy. Just a reminder that the newsletter can be viewed online on the Parish Council website just search under the newsletter tab, and physical copies can also be collected from the post office.

A volunteer to deliver to Beech drive was still needed. Please let Ian know if you wish to volunteer.

14.03.25 Report from Hothfield Village Hall Meeting

Cllr Sutcliffe reported that hall bookings are going well but raised concerns about the worsening condition of the flooring. It was noted that 18 months ago, ABC sent a surveyor to assess the structural integrity of the building, including the floor. However, the Village Hall Committee has not seen a copy of the report. Cllr Bell agreed to investigate who commissioned the survey and whether a copy of the report could be shared with the village hall committee.

At the last meeting, it was also confirmed that the community warden would not be permitted to use the village hall as a temporary base whilst in the village. The committee sent their apologies but it was felt that the current terms and conditions of hire expressed that hirers have sole use of the hall during the hire period Cllr Sutcliffe requested that Cllr Cox inform the community warden's supervisor of this decision.

15.03.25 Annual Parish Meeting

The clerk confirmed that the village hall has been booked for Saturday 17th May. Now that a date and venue are confirmed, the clerk will invite speakers. Cllr Pollock agreed to contact Andrew Howard to invite him to speak. Cllr Sutcliffe expressed her apologies as she would not be able to attend the meeting on that date.

16.03.25 Asset Register

Following a recent car accident in Church Lane in which a vehicle struck a grit bin, the clerk is awaiting confirmation on whether the bin is owned by KCC or the parish council as it is not listed on the asset register. If the bin is confirmed to be owned by the parish council, the clerk will contact the police to obtain the crime number in order to proceed with an insurance claim for the damage.

17.03.25 Correspondence Received

The following emails were brought to the attention of the PC

- K Brock / Egerton PC Pot hole success
- V Hillier / Trees in the play area
- Zumba at the village Hall
- Church at Village Hall

The clerk will contact Egerton PC to ask about their pot hole success and report back at the next meeting.

Trees in the play area this matter is in hand.

Zumba at the village hall; an advert has been included in the newsletter and the timetable of events update to show the class.

The clerk will contact Liberty Church and advise them that PC meetings are open to the public and they are very welcome to attend and raise any matters with the PC directly.

18.03.25 KALC Meeting

Cllr Cox had attended the last meeting however It was noted that the agenda item regarding the report from KALC was no longer required. This is because the minutes produced by KALC following their meetings are comprehensive and provide all necessary details. These minutes are already issued to all PC members, ensuring that everyone remains informed of what is happening at KALC meetings. As a result, it was agreed that this agenda item would be removed from future meetings.

19.03.25 Forum for Information

Cllr Cox requested permission to purchase a village map with pavement widths. This was approved.

20.03.25 Items for Next Agenda

- Ivy covered trees
- Private Hedges impeding on the road.

Items for the next agenda should be sent to the clerk 7 clear days before the meeting

There being no other business the chairman thanked all for attending and closed the meeting at 9.30pm

Hothfield Parish Council – Actions List (March 2025 Meeting)

Public Session - Parking & Traffic Management

- Cllr Bell to discuss parking concerns on Chapel Road & Chapel Row with KCC Highways.
- Cllr Bell to arrange a meeting between residents and the developer.
- Cllr Bell to follow up on the use of common land for temporary parking.

Village Hall Lease & Records

- Cllr Bell to check who commissioned the survey on the Village Hall and obtain a copy of the report.
- Cllr Cox & Cllr Fletcher to visit Kent Records Office to review old meeting minutes.
- Parish Council to review lease status in the May meeting and consider legal advice if no progress.

CCTV

- Cllr Cox & Cllr Lloyd to reschedule site meeting with the CCTV engineer.
- Cllr Cox to gather additional quotes for CCTV installation.
- Cllr Hook to contact the police for village crime data.
- Clerk to ensure CCTV is on the May APCM agenda.

Village Hall & Facilities

- Clerk to contact Kenny to inspect the damaged floodlight at the MUGA.
- Cllr Pollock to find a contractor for floodlight replacement if needed.
- Cllr Cox to report vandalised saplings to the police and submit a photo for the newsletter.
- Cllr Cox to provide a good news story Coronation Orchard for newsletter
- Cllr Cox to include a request in the newsletter for residents to water new saplings.
- Cllr Cox to inform the community warden's supervisor that they cannot use the village hall.

Events & Public Engagement

- Clerk to invite speakers for the Annual Parish Meeting (17th May).
- Cllr Pollock to invite Andrew Howard to speak at the meeting.

Other Actions

- Cllr Cox to purchase a village map with pavement widths.

- Clerk to confirm ownership of the damaged grit bin and, if PC-owned, obtain a crime number for an insurance claim.
- Clerk to remove KALC report as a regular agenda item.
- Clerk to add “Ivy-covered trees” and “Private hedges impeding the road” to the next agenda.