

Minutes of Meeting 2025-11 held on Monday 17 November 2025 in-person & in-public at The Community Room, Newchurch Village Hall, Newchurch, Romney Marsh, Kent TN29 ODP.

Unique Minute Number	Agenda Heading	Record	Action by whom & timescale
2025-11-1	In attendance	<p><b>Parish Councillors</b> Colin Woollard (Chair), Scott Fielding (Vice Chair), Michelle Barden</p> <p><b>Invited speakers</b> County Councillor David Wimble &amp; District Councillor Tony Hills;</p> <p><b>Clerk &amp; Finance Officer</b>, Alison Prentice.</p> <p>No apologies for absence received</p>	
2025-11-2	Declarations of Interest	The Chair reminded all Parish Councillors to declare any conflicts of interest in the business before them. Scott Fielding declared that he had an interest in Mill Lane planning item as it was a neighbour	
2025-11-3	Approval of previous meeting minutes	The minutes of the previous meeting in October were approved. Proposed Scott Fielding, seconded Michelle Bardon.	ACTION Clerk to file & update notice board and website.
2025-11-4	Matters Arising	These were raised during later agenda items.	
2025-11-5	Invited speakers & public participation	<p><b>Cllr Wimble (KCC Division member)</b> provided a short written report.</p> <p>Over the past two months, my workload has been extensive both across the Romney Marsh and within my Cabinet responsibilities for Kent County Council.</p> <p><b>Local Matters on the Marsh</b></p> <p>I have continued to deal with local issues, including the reporting and follow-up of fly-tipping and wider household waste concerns. These have increasingly become a burden on local residents, and I am pressing officers to ensure quicker enforcement and clearance where possible.</p> <p>A key issue has been the future use of Peacock House, which has been scheduled to operate as a reception centre for unaccompanied asylum seekers under the age of 16 from next spring. Understandably, this has been a highly sensitive and political subject. As with the situation at Napier Barracks in Cheriton, this decision was not driven by local authorities but imposed upon us, and I continue to push for the highest safeguarding standards and transparency as it progresses.</p> <p><b>Nuclear and Energy Planning</b></p> <p>My Cabinet work has become increasingly active, particularly regarding New Nuclear for Dungeness. I have held regular meetings with David Godfrey and am seeking representation on the NDA committees and NuLeaF to ensure Kent County Council has a voice in national planning.</p> <p>We have attended several cross-party briefings at Westminster focusing on long-term UK energy resilience and the national strategy towards achieving Net Zero over the next 25 years. Dungeness remains strategically important, and I am ensuring that Romney Marsh remains firmly on the government’s radar.</p>	

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		<p><b>Reuse Centres &amp; Waste Savings</b>  You may have seen recent press and broadcast coverage of the opening of another KCC Reuse Centre. These sites divert usable items from incineration, saving the council approximately £165 per tonne. Our reuse shops have already generated around £20,000 for local charitable causes, and it is our ambition to open a further five centres within the next 12 months.</p> <p>In addition, I am heading up a major initiative to improve recycling rates and reduce cross-contamination in waste streams. In Folkestone &amp; Hythe alone, a 5% improvement in household recycling would save the council more than £2.8 million. This remains a key financial priority.</p> <p><b>Heritage &amp; Geopark Status</b>  I recently took part in the launch of the new Kent–France Geopark partnership at Dover Castle, which aims to unlock educational, environmental and tourism opportunities across the Channel region. We are also working with community organisations to transition Kent County Council’s eight historic windmills into a Kent-wide Windmill Trust. This will protect their future as public heritage assets while keeping them in the ownership of the people of Kent.</p> <p><b>Agriculture &amp; Rural Affairs</b>  This summer I attended the Kent County Show and spoke at several seminars on the challenges facing farming communities, particularly the widening gap in government support.</p> <p>On National Farming Day, I was invited onto BBC Radio 4 to speak about mental health and suicide in the farming sector, raising awareness of the support networks that are available. It’s vital this issue continues to be discussed publicly.</p> <p><b>Environmental Funding</b>  I have helped secure £39,557 to plant 6,000 new trees across Kent, strengthening canopy cover and biodiversity. A further £150,000 has also been granted to develop work with “Growing in Kent and Medway” on solar-powered propagators and improved composting systems.</p> <p><b>Workload &amp; Attendance</b>  I am pleased to report that I still hold a 100% attendance record for all Kent County Council meetings at Sessions House. My diary has involved extensive travel — approximately 700 miles per week — attending meetings and representing Romney Marsh and Kent across the county and beyond.</p> <p><b>Personal Note</b>  Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks for the many messages of congratulations I have received regarding my forthcoming wedding on 22 November. I will be out of the office from that date until 13 December, although urgent matters will continue to be monitored.</p>	

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		<p>Should any council require supporting information on any of the above topics, I would be more than happy to provide it.</p> <p><b>District Councillor Tony Hills (FHDC Ward joint Member)</b> attended the meeting &amp; reported Matters I have been engaged with, Romney Marsh ward.</p> <p><b>Water Quality</b> I attended the Kent Flood &amp; Water Management Committee last Wednesday on behalf of F&amp;H DC. We had presentations from the Environment Agency, Southern Water and Southeast Water. I'm hopeful that the Environment Agency will give Dymchurch and St Marys Bay beaches a 'satisfactory' if not good rating for next year. At the meeting I asked Richard Penn (acting regional head of the EA) if he had early indications how our local beaches fared, he declined to comment...but I believe that this year's results are the best we have had in four years for St Marys Bay. We have a meeting of concerned water users and partners organised by Southern Water coming up later this month at the Varne Boat Club, Littlestone. Over the last year these meetings have been effective in showing the problems our local beaches have. In an email from the leader of the F&amp;H DC Jim Martin last Friday thanked Southern Water for their work in organising and running these meetings...but in the future he thought that F&amp;H DC should take over the management and running of these meetings. I believe that this is a good move to make sure that we 'drill' down to understand the problems the Marsh has with water quality. So, rest assured I will continue to press all the organisations involved to make sure the quality our local sea water is the best it can be.</p> <p><b>Solar Farms</b> This is not job done; the next round of consultations will be next year. We need to keep these issues front of mind, keeping pressure on our MP to support and fight for the Marsh against industrialising the farmland. Yes, we need to generate power, but destroying what we have, is not the answer, I had a meeting last Thursday organised by the Nuclear Restoration Services to look at Dungeness A power station and what should it be replaced with. I suggested following my meeting with the water companies on the previous day telling me that we will face serious freshwater shortages, in the not too distant future, that a small modular nuclear reactor powering a desalination plant would be a good option for the Marsh generating power, fresh water and jobs.</p> <p><b>Local Government Reform</b> On the 28th of this month Jim Martin leader of F&amp;H DC will send to government his recommendation for a new unitary council. I'm hoping for '3A' to be recommended this would consist of three unitary councils for Kent, in this area it would be Ashford, Folkstone &amp; Hythe, Dover, Thanet and Canterbury. This would give us a strong coastal council of nearly 800,000 people for east Kent.</p>	

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		<p>The government will consider the options, and we should hear by next spring what it intends to do.</p> <p>Tony Hills, F&amp;H District councillor for Romney Marsh Ward. Home Telephone 01797 321246 Mobile 07860 295730</p> <p>Councillors put questions on various matters, at the conclusion of which the Chairman thanked Cllr Hills for attending.</p>	
2025-11-6	Newchurch Village website administration	Noting the excellent job undertaken by Andrew Cragg (whilst as a former parish councillor, in addition to the present time) in creating and maintaining Newchurchvillage.org & history site. It was agreed timely to transfer that responsibility back to The Clerk of Newchurch Parish Council.	ACTION: Chair to arrange handover of Newchurchvillage.org responsibilities to Newchurch Parish Council Clerk.
2025-11-7	New Clerk contract arrangements	The meeting welcomed Alison Prentice back as Clerk to Newchurch Parish Council and agreed new contract arrangements in line with similar Parish Clerk positions of £16.10 per hour salary point 19 on SCP scale for 20hrs per month x 12 months of the year. Paid 1 month in arrears with annual incremental progression review in line with KALC guidelines.	ACTION: Clerk to update HMRC, Pension (opting out)
2025-11-8	Replacement Clerk laptop	The laptop was over 15 years old and failing. The meeting agreed to replace at the cost of £238.98 Microsoft Surface Pro 7 12 inch refurbished laptop 8 gb	
2025-11-9	FINANCIAL REPORTS	<p><b>A.</b> Alison Prentice as new Finance Officer informed Councillors that she had not been able to access online statements and transfer over details from the previous clerk so the monies in the bank on 17 November would be as last meeting totalled <b>£5,661.40</b> less expenditure that meeting. Details to be accessed/updated/reconciled at next meeting.</p> <p><b>B.</b> Ratification of payment made since last meeting as above</p> <p><b>C.</b> Cheques for payment:  Clerk computer KAD £238.98 (£39.83 VAT) cheque 000793  Hopkins Defib £137.10 (£22.85 VAT) cheque 000794  Alison Prentice clerk wages £257.60, Ink for printer £33.90 (VAT xxxx) &amp; Neighbourhood watch stickers £4.40 total= £295.90 cheque 000795  Clerk HMRC Tax £64.40 cheque 000796  <b>(4 cheques in total value £736.38)</b></p>	ACTION: Clerk to change over bank Finance Officer details and provide info for next meeting.
2025-11-10	Planning	<p>25/1926/FH Mill House Farmhouse supported</p> <p>25/2003/FH Willow Farm House supported</p>	ACTION: Clerk to update planning portal with comments
2025-11-11	Jubilee Fields mowing 2026	<p>Quotes were received for mowing Jubilee Fields for 2026 from Brooker Farms £650.00 plus VAT, Connor Dunne £1080, Robert Miller £2750.</p> <p>The Clerk had notified Brooker Farms that a final 2025 cut was required around the Play equipment owing to the successful turfing of grass.</p> <p>On the topic of Jubilee Fields the Chair reported that he would review and resolve the issue with the climbing net.</p>	<p>ACTION: Clerk to accept best quote Brooker Farms and update.</p> <p>Chair – climbing net</p>

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2025-11-12	AOB	<p><b>Spinney memorial flag &amp; history board:</b> Following a complaint from a member of the public, regarding the flag &amp; history board maintenance. The Clerk notified the meeting that her husband Paul Prentice had provided flags over many years as a personal tribute to those who served. He had recently had an eye operation so had been unable to replace the flag until recently. In addition Cllr Bardon and separately the Clerk had cleaned the history board from moss. The Clerk confirmed she had notified the member of the public who was very pleased.</p> <p><b>Proposed Community Medical Diagnostic Centre New Romney Town Council:</b> NPC wrote in support of New Romney Town Council undertaking plans for this facility for the benefit of the Romney Marsh.</p> <p><b>Highways:</b> The Clerk reported that she had requested <b>replacement signage for Mill Lane &amp; Church View</b> from Folkestone &amp; Hythe District Council as the signage was very worn, in addition to requesting KCC Highways <b>routinely refill all 3 salt bins</b> (2 in The Street &amp; 1 at the junction with Clarklands) &amp; install 6ft x 6" width restriction signage at the junction Eastbridge Road to The Street, to match that installed in The Street by the church. Consistent messaging to prevent large vehicles entering the village from Bonnington Oak and damaging the bridge.</p> <p><b>Dog bin &amp; sign shrub clearance:</b> The Clerk reported she had cut down shrubs covering the Newchurch sign by Clarklands, The Street sign at the junction with Clarklands, around the dog bin at the junction with Clarklands (noticing and reporting that the bin lid was requiring maintenance).</p> <p><b>Neighbourhood watch scheme:</b> The Clerk reported that she had checked and no scheme existed in Newchurch Parish so she enrolled the village and would post information on both website, Facebook Newchurch (Kent) Community pages and where appropriate the village notice board. 50 Neighbourhood watch scheme stickers had been purchased for £4.40 and distributed in the parish. A further 50 stickers would be obtained to distribute to remaining properties in the parish.</p> <p><b>Internal Drainage board representation:</b>The Clerk notified the meeting that Newchurch Parish Council were not represented at this forum (previous Cllr Andrew Cragg was in attendance as an independent person). Chair volunteered to represent NPC at the meeting and noted the next date of 20 November 2025.</p>	<p>ACTION: Clerk purchase 50 more stickers</p> <p>ACTION: Clerk to notify IDB secretary of Colin Woollard's representation of NPC.</p>
	NPC ICT/IT Policy	At the previous meeting Councillors reviewed the draft Policy required in advance of the end-of-year Audit Assertion 10. They unanimously RESOLVED to adopt it. They discussed the future adoption of a Document Disposal Policy.	ACTION Clerk to review website, ensure guidance circulated
	NPC FR amendments	At the previous meeting Councillors reviewed the proposed amendments to align with mobile banking practices. After due debate, they RESOLVED unanimously to amend the NPC Financial Regulations.	ACTION Clerk to review and ensure the amended FRs on website.
2025-11-13	Date, time & place of next meeting	Monday 1 December 2025 at 7.30pm in the Community Room, Newchurch Village Hall.	

The Chair thanked all those present and declared the Parish Council meeting closed at 8.45pm.