

MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL ON
MONDAY 13th April 2026 IN THE PEGGY PIKE ROOM, ELHAM
VILLAGE HALL STARTING AT 7.30pm.

49.26 Those Present: Councillors: K Lamb (Chair), C Chapman (Vice Chair) B Swan, G Clements, J Osbourne, C Francis, and seven members of the public.

Apologies: K. Allen

50.26 To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI), Other significant interests (OSI's) or a voluntary interest relating to items on the agenda.
None were declared.

51.26 Minutes

The Ordinary meeting of the Parish Council held on 2nd March 2026 were **approved** and signed as a true record by the Chair of meeting.

The meeting was adjourned 34.26.

52.26 Public Contribution

The meeting was reconvened to discuss 52.26 onwards.

53.26 Chairman's Report - *(Please note, no decisions can be made on items under this heading).*

No report, as all topics to be covered by Agenda items

54.26 Finance

1. The Accounts from March 2026 were **agreed** as true record and were signed by the Chairman of the meeting.
2. The Bank Reconciliation from March 2026 was **agreed** as true record and was signed by the Chairman of the meeting.
3. A contribution of £50.00 to the Little Stour and Nailbourne River Group was discussed and **agreed**.
4. The March 2026 invoices were **agreed**, and payments were approved. *Please see appendix 1.*

55.26 Planning

1. The following applications were considered and comments agreed:

26/0296/FH – Weavers, Exted Hill, CT4 6YG – Single storey detached outbuilding.

Agreed views and comments of the Parish Council: NO OBJECTION

26/03331/FH/TCA – Windmill House, Cullens Hill, Elham CT4 6UJ – works to trees in conservation area. **Agreed views and comments of the Parish Council: NO**

OBJECTION

26/0332/FH – The Laynes, Lickpott Hill, Elham CT46TY – Two storey extension including two Juliet balconies, single storey extension with balcony above, two front dormer windows. **Agreed views and comments of the Parish Council: NO**

OBJECTION

26/0371/FH – 3 New Inn Cottages, High Street, Elham CT4 6TD – Retrospective planning for a garden building. **Agreed views and comments of the Parish Council: OBJECTION – recommended planning officer consider Local Planning policies HB1 & HB8**

26/0476/FH/TCA – The Old Vicarage, Vicarage Lane, Elham CT4 6TT – works to trees in a conservation area – T3 Norway Maple pollard to eight metres, T7 Ash reduction by four metres & T14 Cherry fell to ground level. **Agreed views and comments of the Parish Council: NO OBJECTION**

2. The following application was received since the agenda was issued, comments agreed:
26/0526/FH – Hill House Farm, Bladbean, CT4 6LU -Listed building consent for the conversion of the Cow Shed/ Dairy to form holiday let together with the erection of an extension. **Agreed views and comments of the Parish Council: NO OBJECTION but provided the reason the building was initially Grade II listed is preserved.**
3. To **note** any decisions made by Folkestone and Hythe District Council
25/2316/FH – 2 The Orchards, Elham, CT4 6TR – single rear storey extension- **FHDC Decision – Approved with conditions.**

56.26 Highways – The Chairman, Cllr Allen and Cllr Francis met with Kent County Councillor, Chris Hespe, and representatives from KCC Highways, along with residents, to highlight and discuss the following ongoing issues:

- General damage to roads and infrastructure caused by SWA tankering operations. This was discussed at length. Councillor Hespe assured everyone that KCC intend to make sure SWA accept liability for damage caused to the roads, kerbs, and verges and would collaborate with all stakeholders to ensure timely reinstatement.
- Damage to layby surface and verge at Worlds Wonder, which had recently been made good by KCC.
- Duck Street – long standing problems with continued flooding. Ottinge & Shuttlesfield suffering from same issues.

- Drainage problems at North Elham – blocked gulleys by the main road causing flooding issues into houses near the village pond which has been a recurring problem for five years plus.
- Various potholes throughout the village – though these are slowly being repaired.
- Vicarage Lane – degraded verges and passing places which is a safety issue for pedestrians accessing the area on foot.
- Parking issues in the Square. We have contacted the Road Safety Department to discuss solutions. A representative of the senior management of the Kings Arms attended the meeting to explain that they were monitoring the parking situation in the square during busy periods and are keen to work with the parish council to explore potential options. They are sending emails/ texts to all diners to please park respectfully and considerately.

57.26 Twinning – The Chair of Elham Twinning Association outlined plans for a visit by ten members of the Ambleteuse Twinning Association and requested that funding of around £700 be made by the Parish Council. A contribution of £10 per Elham participant was also proposed by the twinning chair to further support catering and annual membership. It was noted that the Parish Council's twinning representative had not been included in recent planning meetings and discussions. Apparently, this was an oversight. Councillors expressed some concern that catering arrangements consisted of sourcing food including a takeaway from outside the valley, feeling this may miss an opportunity to support local businesses. In response, the Chair of the Twinning Association indicated that they would prefer to cancel the event rather than amend the current plans. The Council is very supportive of the twinning efforts and would have much preferred to have been able to grant a more significant sum had the planning been more adventurous and inclusive of local suppliers and businesses. However, the council subsequently agreed to provide funding up to £500, in addition to covering the cost of the Village Hall hire (£90). Looking ahead, it was advised that, for continued Parish funding, the Parish Council's representative should be included in all future meetings and communications, and that greater consideration be given to engaging with local businesses and reflecting the interests of the Elham community.

58.26 Defibrillator – it was agreed that we would get quotes to increase the number of defibrillators throughout the village covering from Ottinge through to North Elham. To report back at the next Parish Council meeting.

59.26 Burial Ground – to be deferred to next Parish Council Meeting. GC to report back following a request from a parishioner to plant a memorial tree in the burial ground.

59.26 War Memorial – to receive additional quotes for repairs to the unsafe concrete to the base of the Memorial and to review at next Parish Council Meeting. Currently have two quotes for cleaning and repointing. (£1374 & £2000)

60.26 Allotments – no actions required at this moment.

61.26 Insurance – it was agreed that we would get additional quotes to compare with the renewal quote received from Zurich. Renewal date 01.6.2026. CF to report back at next Parish Council meeting.

62.26 Staffing – staffing committee to meet to review procedure and recruitment of new Clerk. In the meantime, the workload will need to be distributed amongst the councillors.

63.26 Village Hall – Parish Council meetings will be held in the Peggy Pike Room going forward, having spent the last +5 years in the school. Meeting at the school is logistically no longer viable due to opening & closing of the hall on the night.

64.26 Annual Meeting of the Parish / Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council – these two meetings will be held on Monday 11th May at 6.30pm. CC to send out emails inviting the various organisations to present their annual report.

65.26 Environment Group – a request was received for wood chip for the herb garden & seeds to create a wildflower meadow at the end of the churchyard. This was agreed by Council but KL to speak to CB regarding an option for a mixture of plugs now and seeds in the Autumn to help initial establishment and longevity.

66.26 Community Orchard – to agree a maintenance plan for the orchard plus receive quotes for tree identification. Will report back at next meeting.

67.26 C&A meeting –In response to a question from a parishioner about the timetable for planned C and A meetings the Chairman advised that these meetings are for when businesses is delegated to the committee. If all the points are covered in an Ordinary Parish Council meeting, there is no need for a committee or subcommittee meeting.

68.26 To hear verbal reports from

County Councillor – C Hesse – no report available at time of meeting.

District Councillor - J Butcher, S Scoffham – see below.

D Godfrey – apologies received.

Report from District Council Cllr Stephen Scoffham, F&HDC

UNESCO Geopark bid

I attended an event last month to promote the bid for the UNESCO Geopark which, if approved, would give international recognition to the Kent Downs, along with the chalk downlands of Pas de Calais. One angle which seems particularly promising concerns sustainable tourism, which could have implications for our own area. The twinning with Ambleteuse and the impending visit from the French twinning team fits into this wider agenda. I gather that the UNESCO bid might be considered in the summer, so we eagerly await the result.

Sustainable Futures Forum

The next Sustainable Futures Forum will be on 21st April 6-8pm at the South Kent Community Church in Folkestone. This will be a chance to hear about environmental and sustainability projects that have already been undertaken across the district. It will also mark the launch of the next round of the highly successful green grants scheme which will be open for bids for the next couple of months. The Forum is usually very well attended and a great chance to network. Another event worth noting is the Big Green Fair which is being organised by Sandgate Environmental Group on 7th June where there will be dozens of stalls and speakers.

Southern Water

The tankering operations have now stopped but the underlying problems to do with sewage and drainage remain. Many of you will have seen the Channel 4 docudrama 'Dirty Business' and will have been as outraged as I was by what it reported. Sadly, our own experience locally is not vastly different to the experiences portrayed in the film. We continue to consult with Southern Water as constructively as we can whilst holding them to account. One interesting idea which has been mooted recently concerns reducing the amount of effluent that goes into the system through the use of anaerobic digestors. We are investigating whether this is feasible.

Heritage Ponds

The Acrise Environmental Group have started restore a couple of local ponds. This has involved a certain amount of clearing and dredging, sampling the water for wildlife and undertaking an archaeological survey. Sarah Harrington-Jones from the Kent Downs National Landscape team will be talking about the project and what is going on elsewhere on 28th April in the Village Hall at 7.30pm,

Ward grants

The next round of ward grants for the 2026-27 period will be launched shortly. I am always pleased to support community projects and initiatives which need a boost with a one-off expense so please do get in touch if you have a plan which would you like to discuss.

Cllr Stephen Scoffham stephen.scoffham@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

Report from District Council Cllr James Butcher, F&HDC

North Downs Forum

The North Downs Forum brings together community groups, local councillors, small businesses, and interested individuals, sharing ideas and expertise – anyone is welcome to join, so if you think you might be interested, drop me a line.

At our April meeting we had an update on the South Kent Food Partnership, which focuses on emergency food distribution, avoiding food going to waste, and encouraging health eating & sustainable growing. And linked to that, we heard about the work of the Thoughtful Food group in Lyminge. We also looked at the potential in our area for

community energy projects, which allow communities to own and benefit from locally generated energy.

Back in March we met with the consultants who are helping F&HDC with a project to assess the economic challenges and opportunities around the district, to lead to recommendations for what the council can do in response, recognising how different our three main geographical areas are - Folkestone & Hythe, Romney Marsh, and North Downs. The report should be out later this month.

Tourism

We now have a tourism map for the North Downs area, to complete the series of maps that cover the rest of the district – the map was produced with the help of the North Downs Forum and comes as a pad of tear-off sheets. It is being distributed to cafes, shops, and other outlets across the area – let me know if you have somewhere that could stock the map.

The bid to get UNESCO Geopark status for the chalk landscape of the North Downs - and the connected landscape of the Parc Naturel Regional des Caps et Marais d’Opale in France - has been submitted. Whether the bid is successful or not, there are all sorts of opportunities to encourage visitors who have an interest in landscape and ecology to visit our area, and the district council is starting a project to work with local businesses on more sustainable approaches to tourism.

Funding available

The Rural England Prosperity Fund provides capital grant funding for both businesses and community projects in rural areas. There are still some funds remaining, although we are processing a lot of expressions of interest – if you are looking for funding for a project, you can find details at www.folkestone.works

As reported last month, the first year of Green Grant scheme supported almost forty organisations with grants ranging from a few hundred pounds to £20,000. The scheme is being extended for a second year and will be launched at the Sustainable Futures Forum on 21 April.

It looks like the new financial year will see an increase in the ward grant budget that each district councillor has to allocate, which will allow us to support more community projects. The scheme will open next month, with details on the F&HDC website. Do contact any of us individually if you have a project, you think we could help with.

Town of Culture

F&HDC has now submitted an “expression of interest” to the government to be considered for the UK Town of Culture 2028, which brings with it a £3m investment pot. Back in February we held an engagement event at the Leas Cliff Hall with over ninety individuals and organisations participating and helping to shape the ideas in the bid. We should hear in the next few weeks whether we are through to the next round.

The proposed Town of Culture programme inevitably focuses on Folkestone itself, but many of the cultural organisations in the town are keen to extend their reach across the district. For example, I previously used some of my ward grant budget to support a series of songwriting workshops in Elham, run by Folkestone Music Town. If you have ideas about ways to support the cultural life of the community, do get in touch.

69.26 Correspondence

All correspondence received covered within the agenda items.

70.26 Date of next meeting and Close - The next meeting will be the Annual Meeting of the Parish at 6.30pm and the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish at 7.30pm on Monday 11th May 2026.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.00pm.

Appendix 1 – Approved Invoices and Payments
March 2026 invoices approved on April 26 meeting

Payee	Cheque No.	Amount	VAT	Net	Comments
Clerk salary **	ONLINE	£2476.35	£0.00	£2476.35	Salary
HMRC**	ONLINE	£1011.08	£0.00	£1011.08	NI/Tax
Hopkin's	ONLINE	£105.00	£17.50	£87.50	Defibrillator
St. Mary's Church Hall	CHEQUE	£24.00	£0.00	£24.00	Room Hire
KALC	ONLINE	£833.68	£138.95	£694.73	Subscription
Harmer and Sons	ONLINE	£327.00	£62.00	£310.00	The Gore
Viking Direct	ONLINE	£85.77	£14.31	£71.46	Stationary
Reliable Networks	ONLINE	£50.16	£8.36	£41.80	Microsoft License
TOTAL		£4958.04	£241.12	£4716.92	

Direct Debits 2025/2026

NEST (Clerks Pension)

LGPSR 2013 (SI 2013/2356)

Date Taken	Payee	Amount
09.04.25	NEST	£103.45
08.05.25	NEST	£126.56
06.06.25	NEST	£119.16
09.07.25	NEST	£106.42
07.08.25	NEST	£103.45
09.09.25	NEST	£99.00
07.10.25	NEST	£143.57
10.11.25	NEST	£113.86
05.12.25	NEST	£125.11
08.01.26	NEST	£96.62
08.02.26	NEST	£96.69
06.03.26	NEST	£97.30

