



**Full Council Meeting of
Birchingdon Parish Council
Tuesday 9th September 2025 at 18.30 hrs
at the Library, Birchingdon**

Present:

Cllr Nick Blankley - Chairman
Cllr Max Houghton
Cllr Colin Brown
Cllr. Phil Fellows
Cllr. Neville Hudson
Cllr Bob Prebble
Cllr. John Tiley
Cllr. Linda Wright

Jane Bevan Clerk to the Council
Bill Anderson Deputy Clerk

KCC Cllr Luke Evans
TDC Cllr Emma Dawson
TDC Cllr George Kup
TDC Cllr Reece Pugh
Ward Police Officer PC Steve England
6 x Members of the public

FC/2025/55: Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Jim Moore and Community Warden Jason Gordon

FC/2025/56: Declarations of Interest

None.

FC/2025/57: Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th July 2025 were presented and were **Agreed** as a true record.

FC/2025/58: Chairman's Report and Public Participation

A member of the public raised concerns at cars exceeding the speed limit in Alpha Road and asked for an update on the re-introduction of speedwatch in Birchingdon. The Chairman replied that the number of volunteers had recently increased and that General Purposes Committee would be looking into the viability of reintroducing speedwatch. The Chairman said progress would be reported at the next Full Council meeting.

The Chairman provided his report. He said that he had attended numerous committee meetings recently including the Thanet Area Committee annual meeting where he was pleased to announce that Cllr Phil Fellows had been elected as Chairman. He said he had

also attended the Powell Cotton Museum annual reception and the VJ Commemoration event. He said he had also chased up TDC re the conservation area review of Birchington as there had been no progress for over a year. Finally, he reported that Cllr Marcel Pooke had resigned from the Parish Council and that TDC had been informed. The Parish Council were now awaiting a response from TDC as to the next steps to be taken.	Clerk
FC/2025/59 Internal Auditor's Report 2024/25 (Clerk). The Clerk referred to the Internal Auditor's report and said there were some outstanding actions that had to be undertaken by the Parish Council. These actions had now been addressed and the Internal Auditor had since confirmed these actions were sufficient to address his concerns. A response was still awaited from the External Auditor. The Clerk said she would be circulating a reminder to all members about their responsibilities regarding general conduct and an overview of the KALC training which members received in January 2025.	Clerk
FC/2025/60 Membership of Committees and Meetings Calendar (Cllr Blankley). The Chairman confirmed that an updated calendar of meetings had been circulated. He said a nomination had been received for Cllr Hudson to be appointed to the Planning Committee. Following a vote, it was unanimously agreed for Cllr Hudson to be appointed to the Committee.	
FC/2025/61 Standing Orders Para 3a Meetings (Cllr Brown) Cllr Brown proposed that the minimum 3 working days notice for the publication of meeting agendas was increased to 5 working days. He said this would allow more time for members to read supporting documentation. A vote was taken and it was unanimously agreed to extend the notice of meetings to 5 days.	Clerk
FC/2025/62 AGAR Assertion 10 - Digital and Data Compliance (Clerk). The Clerk said she had circulated a document to members which provided an update on Assertion 10 of AGAR for 2025/26. She said there were a number of compliance actions that the local councils including the Parish Council had to demonstrate. One of them was that Councils must have an email account on an authority owned domain e.g. .gov.uk. and this must be used as a generic email address. She said BPC already complied with this. Other compliance actions were ensuring Websites met Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2A; personal data must be processed with care and in line with the principles of Data Protection legislation and that smaller local councils must have an IT policy in place which explained how everyone should conduct authority business in a secure and legal way. The Clerk said that she would be undertaking work to address these issues.	Clerk
FC/2025/63 Committee Reports. Please see Appendix 1 The Chairman noted the agreed minutes of the following standing committee meetings:: Environment 9 June 2025; General Purposes 16 June 2025; Finance 1 July 2025; Planning 15 July 2025	
FC/2025/64 OL/TH/20/1755 - 1,600 New Homes in Birchington (Chairman). The Chairman said that since his last update he had made further representations to the new Secretary of State and also the new Housing Minister. He said the correspondence included new information that has come to light regarding the ownership of the land and whether St John's College had the right to sell the land as it had originally been left in trust to them. He said the trust was made in the 17th Century and there was no evidence that the trust had been amended or extinguished. He said he had requested a meeting with Bob Porter ,	

Director of Place at TDC to ascertain what verification checks TDC undertook re land ownership when the original planning application was received and how far they had progressed with S106 funding which were legal and binding agreements. FC/2025/65 Local Government Review (Chairman). The Chairman referred to a letter received from the Leader of TDC, Cllr Rick Everitt about the Local Government Review which had been circulated to members and was noted by them. FC/2025/66 National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Annual Pay Award (Clerk). The Clerk reported that NALC had confirmed the annual pay award which was noted by members. FC/2025/67 Reports from District Councillors. Cllr Wright reported that she had been appointed to the TDC Drainage Board. Cllr Dawson spoke about how TDC are endeavoring to address anti-social behaviour in Thanet particularly use of abusive language in public spaces and also fly tipping. Cllr Pugh said he and Cllr Kup had been addressing several issues in Birchington including the removal of seaweed by TDC at Minnis Bay. Another issue was the overnight parking of camper vans at Minnis Bay and the restrictions placed on them by the previous administration at TDC which was having a knock on effect on local businesses. Cllr Kup had submitted a motion to remove some of these restrictions. Another issue was camper vans and caravans parking in residential roads and disposing of their waste in drains. He said that he and Cllr Kup recently had a site meeting with TDC Officers to discuss the continued closure of Coloeman Stairs footpath and the alleyway at Spencer Road. Following representations made by him and Cllr Kup, TDC are now intending to replace the bus shelters in Canute Road and at Minnis Bay. Cllr Fellows commented on the continued illegal parking along Station Road and on a recent Friday evening counted 30 cars parked illegally. He said he was also dealing with complaint from a resident that there were insufficient disabled parking bays in Albion Road Car Park although the current number did exceed the minimum requirements. FC/2025/68 Reports from KCC Councillors. Cllr Luke Evans spoke about a £67 million investment in highways in Kent and said the County Council would be adopting a proactive approach rather than a reactive approach. A recent example of this was the resurfacing of Canterbury Road in Birchington where large stretches of road were completely resurfaced rather than undertaking patchwork resurfacing. He referred to Local Government Reform and said KCC were not in favour as the cost of it would outweigh the benefits. He also spoke about the Sealink proposal for Minster Marshes, a new highways reporting app, and the KCC budget planning for 2025/26. FC/2025/69 Ward Police Officer and Community Warden Reports. PC Steve England provided an update. He said following intelligence received a man was arrested for drug dealing in Crispe Park. He also provided details of a cold calling fraud on an elderly resulted which resulted in 2 men and 4 illegal immigrants being arrested. He praised Community Warden, Jason Gordon for organising the successful multi-agency event on Dog Acre in August. He also praised the Scripture Union for their annual visit to Birchington and the waterfight event at Minnis Bay which he and his colleagues participated in. FC/2025/70 Clerks Correspondence. The Clerk said she had been approached by a resident who would like to arrange a regular farmers market on Dog Acre. Another resident had approached her and said the Barclays banking facility at Westgate Town Council offices would shortly be withdrawn. The resident	Chairman
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asked if the Parish Council could investigate the possibility of such a facility in Birchington. FC/2025/71 To receive the Monthly Bank reconciliations with payments for July and August 2025 (Clerk). The monthly bank reconciliations for July and August were presented, approved and signed. FC/2025/72 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC The Committee is requested to pass a resolution to exclude the Press and Public from the remainder of the meeting pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings Act) 1960, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. FC/2025/73 To receive a report from the Chairman of the Staffing Committee (Cllr Hudson). Cllr Hudson said the office staff that the Clerks had not had an appraisal in 2024 and subsequently had not had contractual incremental pay increases since November 2023. He said the Staffing Committee recommended these awards and that they had already been budgeted for. The Chairman moved a motion that the Council honoured its contractual responsibilities to implement the recent NALC pay award and to progress the incremental scale which had been recommended by the Staffing Committee. A vote was taken. 6 were in favour and there were 3 abstentions. The motion was carried. Cllr Hudson said the Staffing Committee also recommended that an external evaluation of the job role and pay of the Clerks be undertaken. A vote was taken and was unanimously agreed. FC/2025/74 Code of Conduct Complaint (Cllr Blankley). The Chairman reported The Parish Council has been notified by Thanet District Council of a Code of Conduct complaint against a Parish Councillor which under Standing Order Section 14 must be reported to Council. He said it had since transpired that TDC had not undertaken due process in reporting the outcome on their website. The Parish Council were awaiting a response from TDC. FC/2025/75 Date of next meeting. Tuesday, 25th November 2025 at 6.30pm in the library. Signed by the Parish Clerk Jane Bevan Dated: 22 September 2025	Clerk Clerk
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Appendix 1 Committee Reports

Finance Committee (Cllr Prebble)

The Committee met on 2nd September. Expenditure to budget for the period April to August 2025 is where we expect to be. As Finance Chairman I will do an analysis of operative expenditure so far this year so that we have a better understanding when setting the budget for next year. Will Committee Chairman please make a start thinking about activity and anticipated expenditure for next year, we will have a budget meeting in November.

Chairman Nick Blankley has prepared a paper entitled High Value Asset Acquisitions and this is now put to Council for adoption.

The Library working group has met and decided to check with Kent County Council whether or not the Birchington Library is available. We are advised that this matter is under review, KCC assets are not available for disposal unless they have been first declared as surplus.

At this time the library is not surplus. In the circumstances no further activity is planned.

BPC pays rent and contribution to running costs of the library, which provides us use of the Burley Gallery and the library for meetings. Birchington Heritage Trust use the Burley Gallery and make a contribution to BPC. The current agreement with the Heritage Trust is due for review next year, 2026. We will be checking the timeframe of our rent agreement with KCC because it might not be the best value or way to have office/meeting space.

Memorial Recreation Ground; football continues to be enjoyed again at the recreation ground. Four teams are signed for the new season making a contribution towards running cost and providing positive health and welfare benefits. Toilets now in use which means an end to renting portaloos. The compound base needs to be resurfaced, the planning material is not suitable, the preferred option is a tarmac surface and we have a quotation for approval by Council. This is not a budgeted item but a virement will be used.

There are some changes to GDPR for next years AGAR. We already meet some of the changes eg email addresses but there is an impact on our Website and we have this under review.

As an employer we follow the NALC model employment contract and Local Government Services Pay Agreements. We include in our budget anticipated Pay Agreements for cost of living and incremental reviews. Unfortunately a year ago only cost of living pay changes were made, appraisals were not carried out. The staffing committee will address this issue to ensure employees are not disadvantaged.

Environment committee (Cllr Tiley)

New Notice Boards

Two new notice boards have been erected and one of the old boards has been renovated to be installed at the MRG as a notice board for The MRG and contain information like football fixtures list

New planters

These have now been completely installed and planted along station road and are doing well and improving the environment.

Dog Acre

The final tree that was of concern has now been felled and we are looking into the replacement of the tree lights in the trees at Dog acre to improve the nighttime safety and improve the ambience.

MRG

The works at the MRG have now been completed for the time being with just the resurfacing of the football storage compound outstanding. A wide range of tree works have been carried out around the perimeter to remove dangerous trees and to cut back trees with very low branches that were overhanging residents gardens. We are having a few problems with fly tipping at the MRG and if anyone sees anything or has any intelligence

that could be helpful in apprehending the offenders please contact the Clerk. Maintenance and safety repairs to the Play Park have been carried out and completed.

Allotments

All going well at the allotments with a few plots changing hands. We are thankful to the SU for help in getting a work party to clear some abandoned plots prior to re-allocation on their recent summer camp.

Shelters

We are slowly completing the planned shelter re-painting and making good progress. There has been a spate of vandalism to the shelters but we have repaired and re-painted where needed. We are also looking at the feasibility of adding more wheelchair positions in the shelters and are working with TDC in this matter.

CCTV

We are looking at some upgrades and replacements to our CCTV system to improve the resilience and coverage in the village.

Finance Committee (Cllr Prebble)

The Planning Committee have commented on Parish planning applications. One application in particular caused several objections from residents consequently it was called in for decision by the District Planning Committee. The issue was potential over and infill development. Generally our consultee observations match the decisions of the District planning authority. We are monitoring our committee meeting dates to the deadlines for comment, we may need to make a change at the six month review.

Regarding the 1600 housing development, there is correspondence still current questioning the true ownership of the land. Probably not much more can be done by the Parish Council. The next stage of the application is anticipated to be this autumn.

The Thanet Link Road proposal, associated with housing development, was recently confirmed by central government to be on the priority list. We understand the Highway Authority is preparing the business case for government funding.

Allied to the housing development we have been concerned about the ability of utilities to manage the additional waste and fresh water demand. From a meeting with Southern Water they confirmed that they will be able to meet the demand for connections to mains supplies. South East Water have current plans for a new reservoir in the Broadoak, Canterbury location. A public consultation is due this autumn or winter, the reservoir to be operational by 2035.

We wish our Conservation area to be extended. Thanet District Council Cabinet have approved (July 2024) but progress has been slow to action the consultation. We continue reminding TDC.

General Purposes Committee (Cllr Fellows)

At our recent meeting (11th August '25) we discussed a number of topics.

Cllr Brown gave us an update of his Health and Wellbeing group which goes from strength to strength and aligns with our Chairs vision for the village. There are a number of ongoing initiatives and it's building to be a great group in its own right with lots of support from various village organisations.

The clerk confirmed she had received and banked a £50 donation from the WI for the Disability Awareness Group.

With regards to events, VJ day took place after the last meeting but a big well done to all involved. We were the only parish I believe that put on such an event and the morning ran to plan with many residents coming out in the sunshine to commemorate.

There doesn't appear to be many or any national 'events' over the next year apart from Remembrance which runs to a pre-agreed template under the guidance of the clerk.

If necessary BPC can set up a working group for any event that BPC feels it would like to participate in. So for the moment the Events Working Group will be stood down.

Separately, Cllr Wright is looking into a twinning trip to La Chappelle for Remembrance, she can update us on that... We discussed the filming of meetings. Trial runs have taken place and apart from an initial issue with Wi-Fi we should be live at Full Council on 9th September. This is a new concept for BPC so it will take time to perfect. The working group for streaming of meetings can be reformed to now look at the update of BPC's website. With regards to an item on Standing Orders. The committee discussed the publication of agendas. The committee agreed to recommend to Full Council that Standing Orders be changed from a minimum of 3 working days to 5 working days for the publication of agendas. Our work programme going forward will include looking at a review of our community halls, and a review of our recreation and leisure strategy. The village appraisal was discussed, next one is due in 2027/28. BPC will look to set up a working group in due course. It was felt the new website was in place first, this could enable the appraisal responses to be collated. As always suggestions for GP are invited from all councillors. As with all committees, GP is only advisory and any final decisions are made by Full Council. Cllr Wright referred to the Twinning visit to La Chapelle on 10th November 2025 to participate in the service of Remembrance and said she was currently awaiting confirmation of numbers and would provide an update in due course. Cllr Brown wanted to place on record his thanks to the Veterans Association for allowing free use of their meeting rooms for the Health and Wellbeing sub group meetings.	
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