

HERNE & BROOMFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Office, Herne Centre, St Martin's View, Herne CT6 7AP

Minutes of the meeting of Herne & Broomfield Parish Council held at the Herne Centre on Thursday 9th April 2026 at 7.30pm, for the purpose of transacting the following business.

Present:

Cllr Davis (Chairman)

Cllr Wilson (Vice Chairman)

Cllr Binstead

Cllr Blatherwick

Cllr Checksfield

Cllr Collins

Cllr Davison

Cllr Lambkin

Cllr Maslin

Michele Nicholson (Parish Clerk)

063/26 To receive apologies for absence and accept reasons.

Cllr Austin who has resigned from the parish council.

Cllr Hill, Cllr Strong, and Cllr White.

Canterbury City Council (CCC) Cllr Jones.

Apologies and reasons for absence were accepted.

064/26 To receive declarations of interest on items on the agenda and requests for dispensations.

None.

065/26 To confirm the minutes of the Council meeting held on 12th March 2026.

The minutes were agreed as a correct record.

ADJOURNMENT FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO SPEAK ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

One member of the public was present.

They had been invited to speak regarding agenda item 075/26.

066/26 Chairman's Announcements.

The Annual Parish Meeting will take place next Thursday (16 April), it would be good if all councillors could attend. I have asked all the chairs of committees to send me a short report on the challenges and successes of the past year, to be included in my annual report.

Congratulations to our Assistant Clerk, Jo McCann for passing her CiLCA, especially as she was dealing with some difficulties at the same time.

067/26 To receive reports from County Cllr Mulvihill, City Cllr Jones and City Cllr Paget. City Cllr Paget

City Cllr Paget reported that she had attended the parish council Parking Meeting on 25th March 2026, along with City Cllr Jones. City Cllr Jones has raised some queries with CCC officers and is awaiting a response.

She also attended the Canterbury Community Safety Partnership Annual Conference on 18th March 2026. One of the items discussed was anti-social behaviour, particularly catapults, which will be raised with PC Melia.

Would like to arrange more litter picks in the parish, so please pass on any suggestions of areas to target.

County Cllr Mulvihill.

County Cllr Mulvihill reported that the Kent County Council cabinet had been reorganised. He is now the Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment, Coastal Regeneration and Public Health. The new portfolio should include responsibility for Herne Mill.

The A299 carriageway repairs are due to begin in June 2026 through to July 2026, with overnight road closures. Once completed the reduced speed limit will be removed. This will be a temporary fix until a more permanent solution to the ground movement can be found.

Members agreed to move agenda item 075/26 to this point.

075/26 To discuss the future of Herne Mill following the Kent County Council (KCC) Windmill Divestment meeting held on 24th March 2026.

Cllr Davis said that members should have received a copy of the slides regarding the process of how KCC is wanting to divest themselves of the 8 Kent Heritage Windmills that they are currently responsible for.

Members agreed to allow Monica Blyth (Secretary to the Friends of Herne Mill) to take part in this item, to answer any questions raised.

The Friends of Herne Mill (FOHM) are hoping to work with the parish council to put in an Expression of Interest. Following consultation with residents, it is hoped that a bid can be submitted to keep Herne Mill as a community asset. A business plan will be needed as there will be an impact on the precept.

Monica Blyth provided a report.

The process of Divestment by KCC of 8 Kent Windmills will start soon. After a meeting with KCC in March 2026 “interested parties” will be able to submit an expression of interest, due to start in April, to put a proposal to KCC to take over any of the 8 Mills. There is a six-week period to register. This is a six-month process in total where KCC will be transparent about the condition of the Mills, provide historical “costs of ownership” and cooperate with those who make an expression of interest to facilitate a transfer process of individual mills. The expression of interest must be done by the group that registered it as an Asset of Community Value (ACV), i.e. Friends of Herne Mill, however the bid process can include other parties.

BACKGROUND

Herne Mill was nominated by the Friends of Herne Mill as an ACV and then listed as such by Canterbury City Council. As an ACV it is protected to allow it to be purchased for the community, hence the six-month time limit.

The divestment has to pause for six months, to give time to submit a proposal to acquire the asset.

Under KCC's Heritage policy there is a duty to protect the historic fabric and machinery of the windmills, and to ensure they are safe. They should be maintained for use by the community for events, lettings and access (open days), and as a continued key learning resource (educational visits). Herne Mill also needs to be preserved and maintained as a key part of our economic heritage and an iconic geographical marker.

BENEFITS FOR HERNE AND BROOMFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

1. Acquisition of an iconic Grade I listed heritage asset (built approximately 1789) for a token capital cost.
2. KCC preferred option is Freehold (no outstanding liabilities) not Leasehold.
3. Under KCC's heritage policy for windmills, Herne is currently undergoing major repairs to rebuild the unsafe cap, repaint the smock, repair and reinstate a working fantail, refit the repaired cap and fit previously manufactured stocks and sweeps. Hopefully, by the end of the summer everything will be put back and functioning as it was previously.
4. FOHM's definition of a "working mill" is a windmill that can harness wind power to turn existing millstones to mill flour and that is what KCC will be expected to provide prior to divestment. This should be a condition in any bid.
5. Currently waiting for KCC to provide costings for the last few years to establish what finance needs to be raised annually to keep the mill in good condition. FOHM has been assured that the figures will be available soon.
6. FOHM, its experienced committee and volunteers, are committed to working with the parish council to secure the mill for the future and are very much hoping that it will remain in public ownership for many years to come. The working groups are willing to continue with the everyday maintenance when they meet on a Wednesday morning and would be happy to take any councillors around for a guided tour.

There has always been a good, well-established relationship with KCC heritage officers and the parish council.

FOHM currently has a committee member who is experienced in both Health & Safety and Fire Risk Maintenance (currently KCC's responsibility), who would be happy to work with the parish council on these.

The group has a longstanding track record of performing the role of custodian on behalf of KCC and would like to continue this with Herne and Broomfield Parish Council.

FOHM has about 25 volunteers in total, including 4/5 new members; 10/12 undertake the regular work/repairs, others volunteer for the open days. The cost to insure the mill is about £1000.00, which is paid by KCC.

The mill raises an income of about £2,000.00 per year through open days, events, room hire etc. If KCC do not receive any bids, then the mill could be sold on the open market. However, KCC would have to change its Heritage Policy to do this.

Members agreed to support in principle, subject to the figures received from KCC.

068/26 Clerk's Report/Correspondence.

The report had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Congratulations to the Assistant Clerk Jo McCann on passing her Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA). She has worked so hard to achieve this, despite having to deal with some difficult times.

Parking Meeting on 25th March 2026

The draft meeting notes had been circulated and a draft action plan put together.

From the feedback received the meeting was constructive and residents felt listened to.

The absence of Herne Infant School was particularly noted.

It was useful having Spencer Dixon (KCC Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport) attending the meeting. He will enquire about some of the suggestions discussed.

CCC Cllr Robert Jones has asked CCC officers about extending the zig-zag lines. A request can be submitted for inclusion in the next Annual Parking Review. This would be subject to sufficient resident support.

The online meeting with Briony Chaplin ((KCC Highways Community Engagement Officer (Canterbury)) had to be cancelled. A new date will be arranged in due course.

Herne Centre Deputy Manager

The interviews took place on 31st March 2026.

Four people were shortlisted for interview, with three attending.

Assistant Clerk's report

The report had been circulated prior to the meeting.

I am pleased to report I have completed and passed my CiLCA. Paired with the good news about my health it has been a good month. I am hoping now I am qualified I will be able to help Michele a lot more with her duties.

We held the parking meeting at the end of March, this was overall very positive, and we have come away with some actions which we hope to progress. These include:

- *the possibility of using the Herne Infant School car park at the weekends for football teams,*
- *the possibility of a Schools Street Scheme,*
- *A day of action and enforcement with parking wardens and emergency services,*
- *extension of free parking at School Lane car park,*
- *as well as other possible improvements with signage and footpaths in the area.*

Work has commenced at Broomfield Community Park with the steps being cleared and a footpath has been created from the top step to join the main path round the park – this was always extremely slippery in bad weather and has been very positively received by residents. Works to the fence at the back of the site should now also be complete and I will check this on return from leave. The BMX fencing is being repaired after the school holidays.

Michele and I attended the SLCC Kent branch AGM at Bobbing in mid-March. This is always a useful event, as there were updates on the audit and we received a useful asset register that we can use going forward. We have also received online audit training from SLCC which was helpful.

Unfortunately, we have had to cancel the garden safari due to lack of gardens this year so we will look to reinstate it next year. We are trying to organise an alternative event at Curtis Wood with Kentish Stour Countryside Project, but I am still awaiting a response from them.

I have also applied for the National Lottery Grant for the Broomfield Community Park and will update the Parish Council when I have a response. This would cover the additional seating, wildflower meadow, animal habitats and additional signage. I have requested £11,000.

069/26 Finance.

To ratify payments made since last meeting; payment schedule supplied.

Payments were ratified.

To approve payments presented at this meeting; payment schedule and bank reconciliation supplied.

Payment schedule and bank reconciliation were approved.

To report on any income received; income schedule was supplied.

Income schedule was received.

070/26 To receive the minutes of the Finance & Resources Committee meeting held on 19th March 2026 and to discuss any points of note.

The draft minutes had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The draft minutes were received.

071/26 To receive the draft minutes from the Planning and Highways Committee meeting held on 2nd April 2026 and to discuss any points of note, and any other planning and highways issues.

The draft minutes had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The draft minutes were received.

Cllr Wilson reported that members had strongly objected to application 26/00305 120 Ridgeway Road, due to the scale of the proposed development.

With respect to application 26/00370 Forge House, members raised concerns regarding the design of the windows.

Regarding the question about the formation of a car park in Cherry Orchard Playing Field, Cllr Davis explained that this had been explored in 1998. CCC refused due to access, safety, and the impact on the football pitches. Members agreed to enquire about this again. **Action: Clerk.**

072/26 To receive reports from Council representatives on outside bodies and other organisations.

There were no reports.

073/26 To receive information regarding any environmental issues, including reports from the Tree & Pond Wardens.

Cllr Davis reported that she had sent out some information regarding the Citizen Science at Curtis Wood Park program being run by the Kent Stour Countryside Partnership. She asked members whether the parish council should promote this. Members agreed to promote the program. The Clerk was asked to speak with the Herne Centre Manager regarding whether there was any availability to hold an event at the Herne Centre. **Action: Clerk and Centre Manager.**

074/26 To discuss the outcomes of the Parking Meeting held on 25th March 2026 and propose an action plan.

The draft meeting notes and action plan had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Cllr Blatherwick reported that it had been a positive meeting, with some good ideas raised. The absence of Herne Infant & Nursery School was very disappointing. Herne Bay Harriers Football Club is working on some solutions, some of which are being implemented. Herne Junior School has tried various things over the years. The CCC and KCC councillors have taken some suggestions to investigate further.

The Clerk reported that letters had been delivered to residents in Streetfield regarding extending the yellow zig-zag lines at the junction with Palmer Close. Some responses have been received objecting to the proposal.

076/26 To discuss the maintenance of the external wooden seating and damaged bollards at the Herne Centre.

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Cllr Blatherwick advised that the rope fencing might need to be extended to minimise the risk of falls. The gazebo also needs refurbishing. Cllrs Collins and Lambkin reported that new plants continue to get destroyed. This is due to children climbing through the fencing and swinging on the ropes.

Members approved the removal of the seating adjacent to the garden.

There was a short discussion regarding the damaged bollards. Members agreed to use a high visibility chain secured via the metal railings as an interim measure until other options can be explored. **Action: Herne Centre Manager.**

077/26 To discuss whether to open the Herne Centre on bank holidays and the staffing implications.

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting.

After a short discussion members agreed that the Herne Centre could open on bank holidays. It was agreed that if staff were prepared to work on a bank holiday they would be paid at the rate of 1.5 x normal hourly rate. The additional staffing costs would be charged to the hirer. **Action: Herne Centre Manager.**

078/26 To discuss the Gentle Workout classes.

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The Gentle Workout class runs on a Thursday as a subsidised community exercise class, which has proved very popular. A proposal has been made to run an additional subsidised community exercise class on a Tuesday. This would be different from the Thursday one, so there would be no duplication.

The Gentle Workout classes were initially run by the Amenities Assistant, as part of their hours, with the income going towards supporting other community activities. Although the Amenities Assistant has resigned their post they have continued to run the classes, however, agreement is needed on how these are to be run from now on.

Members approved the recommendation that the Gentle Workout classes be kept as subsidised community exercise classes, with the parish council paying a fixed rate per session. Any excess income would be kept by the parish council to fund other community activities. **Action: Clerk.**

The Clerk confirmed that a formal agreement would be written and signed by both parties.

Members agreed that an additional class be run, but with a trial period set. **Action: Herne Centre Manager.**

079/26 To discuss undertaking a tree survey in the Wildlife Area and agree the quote provided.

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting.

There was some discussion regarding what the long-term aim is likely to be for the Wildlife Area, as a plan does need to be agreed.

Members requested that additional quotes be obtained from local tree surgeons. The tree surgeons to be asked for suggestions to improve the area. **Action: Assistant Clerk.**

080/26 To approve the lectern style information panel at Broomfield Community Park and agree a quote.

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Members approved the recommended quote of £2,061.90 (excl. VAT), for a timber framed A0 size lectern information panel. **Action: Assistant Clerk.**

081/26 To approve the sign for the Sarah-Jayne Memorial Play Area and agree a quote.

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Members approved the recommended quote of £568.07 (excl. VAT), for a 900mm x 900mm metal bow-topped sign on posts, with fixings, and with a white background. The price quoted also includes an anti-graffiti coating. **Action: Assistant Clerk.**

082/26 To approve the following policies: Dealing with Difficult & Vexatious Residents, and Recruitment & Selection.

Both policies had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Members approved the Dealing with Difficult & Vexatious Residents and Recruitment & Selection policies.

083/26 To discuss the interviews for the Herne Centre Deputy Manager.

This item will be preceded by a resolution Under Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, to exclude the public and press due to the confidential nature of the business being discussed.

The Clerk reported that out of the seven applications put forward for shortlisting four people were selected for interview, with three of these attending.

Members approved the recommendation of the interview panel to appoint Phill Morris as the Herne Centre Deputy Manager.

084/26 To receive any reports from Parish Council members.

Cllr Davis reported that nominations should have been requested for the Annual Parish Meeting Award for Outstanding Contribution. The names of two of the Cafe volunteers had been put forward. The Clerk reported that they both also deliver the Herne & Broomfield Community News newsletter.

Members agreed to the nominations.

085/26 The next meeting of the Parish Council will be on 14th May 2026. This will be the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

Meeting closed at 9.20pm.