



Coxheath Parish Council

**Minutes of a Meeting of Coxheath Parish Council held on
Tuesday 30 September 2025 at 7.15 p.m.**

Present: Cllrs: N. Gardner (Chairman), D. Carpenter, K Laponder, S Thomas, H Weaver
In attendance: Ward Member Claire Kehily, Louise Goldsmith (Locum Parish Clerk),
7 members of the public.

MINUTES

104/25

Administration

Fire Exits, Fire Meeting Point, Mobile Phones, Intention to Record.
It was noted that Cllr. Gardener is recording the meeting.

105/25

Apologies for absence, Declarations and Dispensations

a) Apology for absence:

An apology for absence was received from Cllr. Parker and the reason for absence was accepted.

b) Declarations of Interest:

Disclosable Interests: Under the Localism Act 2011.

The Clerk reported that Cllr. Weaver has completed a Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests which will be published on the website in due course.

Cllr. Carpenter declared an interest as a Trustee of the Village Hall.

Other Significant Interests: None received.

Other Interests: None received.

c) Requests for Dispensations:

None received.

106/25

Minutes of the last meetings

Resolved: That the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on the 29 July 2025 and the Extraordinary Meeting held on the 5 September 2025 be approved and confirmed as a true and accurate record.

107/25

Chairman's Report

Cllr. Gardner publicly thanked ex-Councillors Crickett and Bird for all their hard work over many years as Parish Councillors. Cllr. Gardner also publicly thanked the former Parish Clerk, Irene Bowie, for all her hard work and advised that Members had jointly paid for and presented Irene Bowie with a card and gift.

Cllr. Gardner advised the members of the public present that the Parish Council is keen to build a closer working relationship with all the organisations in the village and engage more widely.

To this end Cllr. Gardner attended the Coxheath Community Forum held on the 8 September 2025 and has visited the Library and Health Centre and several shops to introduce himself and promote the Parish Council.

Cllr. Gardner has also met and engaged with local residents on various walkabouts.

Cllr. Gardner was very keen to stress that the Parish Council is keen to engage and receive ideas and suggestions. Cllr. Gardner advised that he is assisting with the

running of the Facebook page and website and that the Parish Council is keen to receive information on local events to post on both social media and the website. Cllr. Gardner advised that the Parish Council is actively seeking new Councillors and that a former Councillor, Richard Webb, may rejoin.

Cllr. Gardner met with representatives from the Church on the 23 September 2025 and had a positive discussion about the way the Parish Council can work with them. Topics discussed included the arrangements for Remembrance Day and the Christmas lights.

Cllr. Gardner attended the KALC West Kent Area Committee meeting held virtually on the 29 September 2025. Topics discussed included the Local Governance Review and a discussion on whether to have three or four Unitary Authorities.

The upcoming five year housing review was also discussed and concern was raised that previous rejected planning proposals could be resurrected

Cllr. Gardner will be representing the Parish Council at the Parish Conference due to be held at Maidstone Town Hall on the 10 November 2025.

108/25

Clerks Report/Past Matters (Information purposes only)

The Locum Clerk introduced herself to the members of the public.

109/25

County Councillor/Ward Member Report

Ward Member Claire Kehily advised Members that MBC will be meeting next month to decide whether it supports a three or four Unitary Council model.

Ward Member Claire Kehily was pleased to report she had recently received no reports of incidents of ASB and in particular catapulting. Ward Member Claire Kehily advised Members that she continues to receive correspondence from residents concerned about the buildouts on Heath Road and that local services are being stretched with the additional of the new housing.

110/25

Open Session:

Several members of the public expressed their concerns about a planning proposal, (Ref: 25/503464/LDCEX), for a Lawful Development Certificate for the existing use of the land for overnight storage of lorries and plant vehicles at Forstal Park, Well Street, Loose. Members of the public disputed the claim that the land has been used for this purpose for the last ten years. Members of the public also expressed their concerns about the number of lorry movements to and from the site taking place outside working hours and affecting the residential amenity of people living in the area. The Locum Clerk advised that Coxheath is not a statutory consultee but will ask MBC if the Parish Council can be granted an extension to formally consider and respond to the planning proposal.

A member of the public asked if the Parish Council could consider a suggestion to reduce the speed limit to 20mph on Workhouse Lane. The Locum Clerk will discuss this suggestion with East Farleigh Parish Council.

111/25

Committees/Working Groups

a) Planning Committee

Cllr. Weaver reported on the Planning Committee Meeting held before the Full Council Meeting.

b) Staffing Committee

i. Minutes of the meeting held on the 22 September 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on the 22 September 2025 were noted. It was noted that the meeting was convened to comment on the draft documents for the recruitment of a new Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer. Cllr. Laponder reported that the Committee discussed the disadvantages and advantages of separating the roles of the Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer. However, it was agreed that it would be difficult to separate the working hours and responsibilities but to consider appointing a Deputy Clerk if and when required.

ii. Recruitment of new Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)

Members considered the draft Job Description for the Clerk/RFO, Person Specification, Key Terms, Job Advertisement and Application Form. Members considered and approved the job advertisement prepared and circulated by the Locum Clerk. It was agreed for it to be published on the KALC website, noticeboards, the Parish Council website and social media. It was also agreed to circulate the job advertisement locally.

Resolved:

- **To adopt the Job Description for the joint role of a Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer.**
- **To adopt the Person Specification and application form.**
- **To agree the terms of offering the role on grades SCP28-SCP32, (subject to experience), and 20-25 hours per week.**

c) Finance Committee

i. Bank Mandates:

The Locum Clerk reported that Cllr. Parker and Gardener are signatories on the Unity Bank Account and as agreed at the Extraordinary meeting held on the 5 September 2025 an application to add Cllr. Thomas as a signatory has now been submitted. The Locum Clerk will try and find out which current Members are signatories on the Natwest Account.

ii. Unity Bank:

Resolved: To ratify a decision between meetings to add the Locum Clerk as an administrator to the Unity Bank Accounts.

iii. To note the completion of the Limited Assurance Review for year ending the 31 March 2025

Members were pleased to note that the External Auditor has completed the review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) and have concluded that the information is in accordance with Proper Practices and that no other matters have come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

However, the Locum Clerk reported that Mazars, the External Auditor, have identified the following minor scope for improvement in 2025/2026 and will ensure that this is addressed for the next audit:

Box 11b of Section 2 of the AGAR has been incorrectly completed. The Council has ticked "No" to this box, which should have been marked as "N/A" since the Council does not act as sole managing trustee of any trust funds, as correctly indicated by the "No" response to box 11a. While the correct interpretation can be inferred from the rest of the AGAR, the Council is reminded that all boxes must be completed accurately, using "N/A" where appropriate, to ensure clarity and compliance with the AGAR completion requirements.

Notice of Conclusion of Audit

The Clerk has arranged for the Notice of Conclusion of the Audit to be displayed on the website and noticeboard along with the relevant sections of the AGAR.

iv. Finance Committee Meeting

It was noted that Monday 20 October 2025 at 7pm has been provisionally set for the date and time of the next Finance Committee meeting

v. To receive the bank reconciliation as at the 31 August 2025

The Locum Clerk is in the process of checking all the payments and invoices for the financial year. The Locum Clerk is currently unable to access any of the bank accounts to do a bank reconciliation. It was noted that a Bank Reconciliation has not been presented to Full Council this financial year which is a breach of the adopted Financial Regulations.

vi. To receive a payments list for ratification and approval

The invoices and the payment schedule appended to the minutes had been circulated prior to the meeting and checked. It was noted that the previous Clerk has been paid for outstanding holiday entitlements and a backdated pay award.

Resolved: To ratify a decision between meetings for Cllr. Gardener and ex-Cllr. Crickett to authorise the payments online. Cllr. Gardner as the Chair, initialled the payments list in accordance with the adopted Financial Regulations.

d) Recreation and Open Spaces Working Group.

i. RoSPA Annual Inspection Reports to receive an update

Cllr. Weaver reported that Cllr. Parker has analysed the RoSPA reports for both the playground and had inspected the items on a recent walkabout. Cllr. Weaver reported that it has been agreed to remove the graffiti but that other items to include remedial works to the swings and vegetation would be addressed. A further walkabout is due to take place on Thursday 23 October 2025. A discussion was held about the condition and future of the storage containers on the recreation ground and it was agreed to revisit a proposal to remove them at the next working group meeting. The Clerk had been advised that the last inspection of the MUGA took place over three years ago. The Locum Clerk has arranged and will attend the inspection due to take place on Tuesday 21 October 2025.

ii. Tree Surveys

It was suggested that the recommended bi-annual inspection of trees is overdue. The Locum Clerk agreed to investigate when the

last inspection of trees on Parish Council owned land took place and to report back at the next meeting. Cllr. Carpenter advised Members that a diseased tree near to the hall on land maintained and owned by the Village Hall is going to be removed.

iii. Ground Maintenance Contracts

The Locum Clerk suggested that the ground maintenance contract is reviewed to ensure that it fulfils the current requirements and for the Parish Council to also consider entering into a three year long term agreement with a contractor. The Clerk will obtain and circulate a copy of the current specification.

The Locum Clerk was asked to make contact with the Football Team and discuss the arrangements for hiring the pitch and whether a schedule of matches could be provided.

e) Traffic and Community Safety Working Group

i. Highways Improvement Plan

Cllr. Gardner reminded Members that the Parish Council had accepted the recommendation from KCC Highways and have agreed KCC to progress with the design phase of wig wags on the existing school warning signs. Cllr. Gardner advised that the Parish Council has also requested an extension to the double yellow lines in Stockett Lane, Heath Road and Aspen Drive and to consider ways of prohibiting HGVs on Forstal Lane/Mill Lane.

8:28pm. It was agreed to lower Standing Orders to allow a member of the public to speak.

8.34pm The meeting resumed

At the request of a member of the public it was agreed to discuss a proposal for double yellow lines on the corner of Stockett Lane and Orchard Close at the next HIP review meeting.

The Locum Clerk was asked to request an update on the current priorities in the Highways Plan with the new Community Engagement Officer.

ii. Faults

The Locum Clerk advised Members to forward details of any faults to her to report on the portal.

f) Events and Communication Committee

i. Christmas Lights

The Locum Clerk reported that the previous Clerk has advised the contractor, Gala Lights, that the Christmas Lights 'Switch On' will take place on the 30 November 2025. Cllr. Gardner advised that the 'Switch On' will now be taking place on Sunday 7 December 2025. The Locum Clerk will notify the contractor. The Locum Clerk has paid the licence fee of £41.00 to KCC and has supplied the required specification and data sheets and has asked if any further information is required. Ward Member Claire Kehily suggested that the Locum Clerk should approach the contractor in Marden that supplied and donated the Christmas last year to see if this was an option this year.

ii. Remembrance Service

The details for the Remembrance Day Service due to take place on Sunday 9 November 2025 were confirmed. It was noted that Cllr. Carpenter is arranging a wreath and Cllr. Gardner will represent the Parish Council.

iii. Social Media and Communications Policy

It was noted that the Locum Clerk has prepared and circulated a draft Social, Media and Communications Policy. It was agreed that the Clerk should arrange a Committee meeting at which the draft policy and the arrangements for the Christmas lights and tree can be discussed in more detail. Cllr. Gardner reported that he has made some aesthetic improvements to the website and is regularly posting useful updates and information on the Parish Council Facebook page. The Locum Clerk now has access to the website and is an administrator on the Facebook page and will post updates and information.

g) Pavilion Working Group

It was agreed to review the membership of this group when more Councillors have been co-opted. The Locum Clerk was asked to contact the S106 team at MBC and update Members at the next meeting on the S106 allocation available for this project.

112/25

Administration

a) Policy Register:

It was noted that the Locum Clerk has prepared and circulated a copy of the Policy Register. The Locum Clerk offered, and it was agreed, to review the policies on a piecemeal basis for adoption at future meetings.

b) Email accounts and .gov.uk domain

The Locum Clerk advised Members of the requirements of the Practitioner's Guide in relation to email management and the use of '.gov.uk' domains. The current version of the Practitioner's Guide state that all Parish Councils are eligible to use, and are advised to use, a .gov.uk domain for their websites and email communications and that community, suppliers and partners will now reasonably expect a Parish Council to have a .gov.uk domain name.

In addition, to assist with compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), it is advised that Clerks provide official .gov.uk email accounts to their Members, which must only be used for official Council business. While the Practitioner's Guide does not mandate the use of '.gov.uk' email addresses, the external auditor would expect Members to have a generic email address to use for official Parish Council correspondence. A failure to do this would result in either a qualification or other matter on the AGAR.

Members were in agreement that it would be beneficial for the Parish Council's website and email accounts to be .gov.uk domain. The Locum Clerk advised Members that the current website provider, Hugo Fox, could offer a .gov.uk domain and email addresses. It was noted that most Members are experiencing issues with the current email provider which is also quite costly. At the suggestion of the Locum Clerk it was agreed, in the short term, to investigate the services and cost of different providers for email accounts and domains and to postpone a final decision to when the new Clerk is in post.

It was noted that a resolution was passed in June 2025 to purchase a new printer for the Clerk and to obtain a costing for five dedicated devices for Members. It

was noted that neither resolution has been actioned and it was agreed to discuss this further at the next Finance Committee meeting.

113/25

Parish Matters

a) KALC Community Award Scheme 2026

Resolved: To adopt the KALC Community Scheme and for the Locum Clerk to draft an online survey for members of the public to nominate local residents for the award.

b) Local Government Reorganisation

The Locum Clerk advised that a vote of Kent Council Leaders on 3 September 2025 resulted with the decision to prepare two business cases for Government - one that would create three Unitary Authorities and another that would create four Unitary Authorities. KCC is also proposing a single Unitary Authority covering the whole of Kent and Medway. The decision to have either three or four Unitary Authorities will affect the borough of Maidstone. Three Unitary Authorities would consist of Dartford, Gravesham, Medway and Swale in the north; Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells in the west; and Ashford, Canterbury, Thanet, Dover and Folkestone and Hythe in the east. Four Unitary Authorities would consist of Dartford, Gravesham, Medway in the north; Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling, Tunbridge Wells in the west; and Ashford, Swale, Maidstone and Folkestone and Hythe in the middle and Canterbury Thanet and Dover in the east. KPMG, the appointed strategic partner, and the Councils are working closely together to draw up business cases for each of the options. Each Council will then decide which option it supports. The deadline for the full proposal to be sent to Government is the 28 November 2025.

c) Kent Police

The Locum Clerk suggested that Kent Police are asking Local Beat Officers to attend Parish Council meetings at least every 3 months to provide updates on local crime. Members could not remember the last time a Beat Officer attended a Parish Council meeting. Ward Member Claire Kehily advised Members that the Parish Council should be invited to Cluster Meetings that take place with a group of parishes, representatives from Kent Police and Martyn Jeynes, The Community Protection Manager. The Locum Clerk will follow up on this.

d) Litter Picking

Cllr. Weaver reported that the litter pickers were out and litter picked after the Custard Pie event and have pencilled in some dates in October. Cllr. Weaver, on behalf of the litter pickers, thanked the Parish Council for the litter picking equipment recently provided. Cllr. Weaver advised that notices will be placed on the noticeboard about the litter picking dates and giving information on how to volunteer.

114/25

Representation at Meetings

a) Village Hall Committee

Cllr. Carpenter advised Members that sadly there has been further incidents of anti-social behaviour around the village hall which have included young people climbing on to the flat roof and smashed glass in the pre-school outdoor area. Ward Member Claire Kehily offered to help with reporting any future incidents to Kent Police and urged the Committee to report everything. Cllr Carpenter advised that unfortunately two regular hirers have cancelled because of concerns about anti-social behaviour. The next Village Hall Committee meeting is due to take place on the 14 October 2025.

b) KALC Area Committee

See item 107/25. It was noted that Cllr. Gardner attended the KALC Area Committee held virtually on the 29 September 2025. It was agreed for Cllr. Gardner to continue to attend these meetings as one of the two representatives for the Parish Council. It was noted that the KALC AGM will be held on Saturday 22 November 2025.

c) Coxheath Community Group: See item 107/25.

d) Other Meetings

It was noted that Cllr. Weaver met with Giacomo Maza, Headteacher of Coxheath Primary School and Sally Lang, the school receptionist, as part of an initiative for the Parish Council to improve its engagement local organisations and residents. Possible joint projects were discussed to include litter picking, environmental initiatives and attendance of Members at school events. A suggestion for some school children to sing at the Christmas Lights Switch On was discussed and Cllr. Weaver offered to follow up on this. The Headteacher suggested that the School Council could be interested in Cllr. Gardner, as Chairman, attending a meeting to discuss the role of the Parish Council.

115/25

Correspondence/Consultations

KALC AGM Call for Motions: Noted.

Annual Policing Survey: Noted.

116/25

Date of Next Meeting:

Full Council: Tuesday 28 October 2025

With no further business to transact the meeting closed at 9.26pm

Signed:

Date:

Payment List - August/ September 2025

Ref:	Payee	Description	Gross
BACs Payments for ratification on 30 September 2025			
BACS 09-01	Irene Bowie	Expenses: Vodafone £27.45, IONOS £70.20, Adobe £19.97, £59.47 Litter Supplies	177.09
BACS 09-02	HMRC	PAYE & NIC August & September	2,376.01
BACS 09-03	Irene Bowie	Salary * 1st to 15 September 66 hours, *91.4 Hours Accrued Holiday not Taken, *30 Hours Holiday carried over from 2024. *NALC Pay award Backdated to 1st April 2025 Less overpayment of £6.40	CONFIDENTIAL
BACS 09-04	C. Mickleburgh	MUGA Honorarium 2nd Instalment	520.00
BACS 09-05	Neil Gardner	VE Day Expenses	60.00
BACS 09-06	David Mann	Grounds Maintenance	1,533.00
BACS 09-07	DM Payroll	Payroll 1 April to 30 September	72.00
BACS 08-01	David Mann	Grounds Maintenance	1,683.00
For Approval			
BACS 09-08	Louise Goldsmith	Reimbursement: Ionos: £72.41; KCC: £41.00; Key replacements £13.95; Magnets: £10.98	138.34
TOTAL			9,788.72

Date	Payee	Description	Gross
Direct Debits and Standing Orders for ratification 29 September 2025			
31/08/2025	Unity Trust	Service Charge	7.65
20/08/2025	Irene Bowie	Clerks Salary August	CONFIDENTIAL
08/08/2025	ICO	Annual Subscription	47.00
TOTAL			1,929.65

Signed:

Date: