

**MINUTES OF THE CHIDDINGSTONE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
MONDAY 18TH MAY 2026 AT 7.30PM IN CHIDDINGSTONE VILLAGE HALL**

Present: Cllr J. Roper (Chairman), Cllr P. Myers, Cllr T. Nunn, Cllr C. Shamwana, Cllr P. Vicary and Cllr H. Williams
Apologies: Cllr I. Henderson, Cllr K. Outlaw, County Cllr R. Mayall and District Cllr M. Silander
Absent: Cllr S. Andrews
In attendance: Mrs L. Kleinschmidt (Clerk). District Cllr R. Streatfeild attended part of the meeting.

Closed Session:

1. a. **Election of Chairman for year 2026/27**
Cllr Nunn proposed that Cllr Roper be re-elected as Chair for the year 2026/27. This was seconded by Cllr Williams and there were no other nominations. Members unanimously voted to accept the proposal. Cllr Roper said that he was willing to stand and was duly elected.
- b. **To receive Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office**
Cllr Roper signed the Chair's Declaration of Acceptance of Office, which was countersigned by the Clerk.
2. **Election of Vice-Chairman for year 2026/27**
Cllr Roper proposed that Cllr Outlaw be re-elected as Vice-Chair for the year 2026/27. This was seconded by Cllr Vicary and there were no other nominations. Members unanimously voted to accept the proposal. The Clerk reported that Cllr Outlaw is willing to stand and she was duly elected.

The Closed Session was suspended for the Open Session

Open Session

Report by District Cllr R. Streatfeild

District Cllr Streatfeild reported that the new Chair of SDC has been elected, this is District Cllr Margot McArthur, who represents Edenbridge South and West. The Vice-Chair is District Cllr Penny Cole, who represents Hartley and Hodsoll Street. The Finance and Investment Advisory Committee has held a closed meeting to discuss the land to the east of the High Street in Sevenoaks. Information in the public domain is that there will now be a 9 month gap in leisure provision in Sevenoaks for financial reasons, this is a change in policy because continuity of leisure provision had been promised. The project is a zero gain development as the provision of housing will fund the provision of a £23m leisure centre complex. This change in leisure provision has not been consulted on but it is understood that the scheme is viable. D.Cllr Streatfeild asked a question at the SDC full council meeting regarding the future of Edenbridge Leisure Centre. The People & Places Advisory Committee will meet tomorrow and will discuss leisure procurement in the district. Sevenoaks and Swanley are included but Edenbridge has been removed from the list. At Kent County Council, the new contract for road maintenance has just started this week. Roads are in a poor state currently but hopefully this will change under the new contract.

Report by County Cllr R. Mayall

The Clerk reported that County Cllr Mayall has provided two documents detailing how Reform have performed at County Council level, and these documents have been circulated.

Closed Session

3. **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Henderson and Cllr Outlaw and members accepted their reasons for absence. Cllr Andrews was absent. Apologies for absence were also received from County Cllr Mayall and District Cllr Silander.
4. **Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest / Non-Pecuniary Interest on matters to be discussed**
Cllr Roper declared a NPI in item 10(viii) as he is the Chair of the Crandalls Trust.

Cllr Shamwana declared an NPI in item 12(iii) as a relative may carry out this service for the Parish Council.
Cllr Williams declared an NPI in item 12 (iv) as a relative has emailed the Parish Council regarding a fence.

5. **The minutes of the Chiddingstone Parish Council Meeting held 20th April 2026** were approved and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr Nunn, seconded by Cllr Williams and all were in favour.

6. **To discuss meeting dates and venues for Chiddingstone Parish Council meetings**
Members agreed to change the meeting date to the second Wednesday in the month and hold all meetings in St. Luke's Parish Room in Chiddingstone Causeway, starting at 7.30pm. The Clerk undertook to book the hall and amend the meetings timetable.

7. **Appointment of Committees and representatives to other bodies**

Members approved the following appointments:

Planning Committee: Cllr Trevor Nunn (Chair)
Cllr Paul Myers
Cllr Jonathan Roper
Cllr Chris Shamwana
Cllr Howard Williams

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee Cllr Trevor Nunn (Chair) Mrs Anna Bullen
Cllr Kerry Outlaw Mrs Catherine Fleming
Cllr Chris Shamwana Mr Tim Kemp
Cllr Howard Williams Mr Ollie Waddington

District Local Plan Committee: Cllr Jonathan Roper
Cllr Trevor Nunn

Finance Committee: Cllr Jonathan Roper (Chair)
Cllr Iain Henderson
Cllr Paul Myers
Cllr Kerry Outlaw
Cllr Paul Vicary

Affordable Housing Committee: Cllr Jonathan Roper (Chair)
Cllr Kerry Outlaw
Cllr Howard Williams

Representatives to other bodies:

Liaison between Parish Council and Parochial Church Council: Cllr Howard Williams

Kent Association of Parish Councils, Sevenoaks Area Committee: All

Chiddingstone Tennis Club: Cllr Paul Vicary

Eden Valley Museum Trust: Cllr Howard Williams

Margaret Hyde Almshouses: Cllr Kerry Outlaw

Chiddingstone Village Hall Management Committee: Cllr Suzanne Andrews

Chiddingstone Causeway Village Hall Management Committee: Vacant

Chiddingstone Sports Association: Cllr Chris Shamwana

Cllr Paul Vicary

Chiddingstone Emergency & Resilience Plan Cllr Kerry Outlaw

Cllr Jonathan Roper

CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England): Cllr Trevor Nunn

Countryside Access Wardens: Cllr Howard Williams Mr David Hunt

Mr Rob McCoy

Chiddingstone Community SpeedWatch: Cllr Jonathan Roper	Clerk
Cllr Howard Williams	Mrs Abby Brunning
Cllr Kerry Outlaw	Mr Dan Brunning
Mrs Gilly Roper	Mr Steen Carndorf
Mr Andy Major	Mr Chris West
Mr Jeremy Pearce	Mrs Kathie Foster
Mr Scott Evans	Mr Dean Beardon
Mr Martyn Jackson	

8. To confirm that the Parish Council remains eligible to use the General Power of Competence

The Clerk reminded members that the General Power of Competence gives authorities the power to take the reasonable action they need 'for the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area'. Under the provision a local authority has power to do anything that individuals generally have full legal capacity to do. To remain eligible, the Parish Council has to confirm that:

- (a) the number of members of the council that have been declared to be elected, whether at ordinary elections or at a by-election, is equal to or greater than two-thirds of the total number of members of the council;
- (b) the Clerk is qualified in the Certificate in Local Council Administration;
- (c) the Clerk has completed the relevant training.

There are some restrictions: to abide by statutory duties such as considering the likely effect of crime and disorder and conserving biodiversity, and to abide by legislation, such as employment law, health & safety, equality and data protection.

Members agreed that the Parish Council remains eligible to use the General Power of Competence.

9. Planning:

i. To consider planning applications received

- i. SE/26/00880/FUL: Land North of Keepers Cottage, Hill Hoath Road, Chiddingstone - access track and parking. Members had no comment to make on this application.
- ii. SE/26/00966/WTPO: Chiddingstone Castle, Hill Hoath Road, Chiddingstone TN8 7AD - various works to trees. This application has already been approved.
- iii. SE/25/03528/FUL and SE/25/03529/LBCALT: 1 Little Hale Cottage, Hale Oak Road, Chiddingstone TN8 7AX - demolition of existing extension and erection of replacement extension to listed building. Demolition of existing barn and shed and erection of replacement outbuilding with associated change of use, change of use to residential garden land. This is an amended application and comments have already been submitted.
- iv. SE/26/00387/FUL: Bough Beech Sailing Club, Winkhurst Green Road, Bough Beech TN8 7AN - construction of new four bay portal frame building to store rigid inflatable rescue boats along with the replacement workshop shed. Hardstanding. Cllr Nunn undertook to look at this application and make a recommendation to the Planning Committee. Deadline for responses 02.06.26.

ii. To report SDC notifications of planning decisions

- SE/26/00370/LDCPR: 6 Hever Road Cottages, Hever Road, Bough Beech TN8 7NS - proposed single storey side extension, proposed single storey rear extension (prior approval granted for 6m to the rear) proposed loft conversion all within PD guideline. Application approved.
- SE/26/00751/WTPO: Chiddingstone Castle, Hill Hoath Road, Chiddingstone TN8 7AD - Works to Trees covered by a TPO - Large Willow tree, fell to ground level because the willow has out grown its location posing a risk to neighbouring property and utilities, leaving stump in situ. Application approved.
- SE/26/00966/WTPO: Chiddingstone Castle, Hill Hoath Road, Chiddingstone TN8 7AD - Works to Trees covered by a TPO Various works to trees. Application approved.

iii. To report planning appeal notifications

Appeal ref: APP/G2245/C/24/3345427 and APP/G2245/C/24/3345428

Grove Close, Hampkins Hill Road, Chiddingstone, Edenbridge TN8 7BA

The appeal is made under section 174 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) by Ms Sarah Clifford-Baynes and Mr Richard Clifford-Baynes against an enforcement notice issued by SDC.

The notice was issued on 8 May 2024. The breach of planning control as alleged in the notice is, without planning permission, the operational development within the last 4 years; the erection of a stables and a storage building, and a hexagonal walking area. The requirements of the notice are:

- 1) Demolish buildings A and B (shown as the hatched black areas on the site plan that accompanies this notice) in their entirety;
- 2) Remove the hardstanding surrounding buildings A and B, and the section of hexagonal walking area marked in blue on the plan; and
- 3) Remove from the land all resultant materials originating from steps 1) and 2) above.

Planning permission for stables and storage across four buildings was refused under application 22/02461/FUL in late 2022. This refusal was subsequently appealed and dismissed under appeal APP/G2245/W/23/3317614 in February 2024, following which an enforcement notice was served in light of the retrospective nature of the development. This latest appeal decision relates to the enforcement notice.

Appeal Decision: Enforcement Notice Quashed

The enforcement notice required the removal of two of the four buildings, in addition to hard standing around the buildings as indicated on the map supporting the enforcement notice. The Inspector has quashed the enforcement notice and therefore allowed the appeal.

The main issue is that the Inspector takes issue with the reasons for the notice, whereby the notice refers to significant harm to the openness of the Green Belt. The inspector considers that if this applies to buildings A and B, then it must equally apply to buildings C and D, yet no distinction is drawn within the enforcement notice. Procedurally, the Inspector confirms that the notice should have appended the Block Plan from the planning application, which annotates the stables, walking area, and menage, then list the breaches of planning control in full. It would then allow for various elements if not included within the steps for compliance being granted planning permission by default. The Council's Statement of Case did highlight that the focussing on two stables was following various pre-application meetings as to what the Council would consider acceptable. However, this appears to have been disregarded in light of the lack of clarity on the matter within the notice itself. Finally, the Inspector raises concerns the enforcement notice refers to hard standing when the site simply comprises rubber matting which is readily reversible. In light of the decision the Council will look to re-issue an enforcement notice covering the points raised by the inspector.”

Clerk to contact the planning officer for an update.

iv. To hear update on potential breaches of planning policy

The Clerk updated members regarding potential breaches of planning policy in the parish.

v. To hear update on the Chiddingstone Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Nunn reported that the Steering Committee had a productive meeting, agreeing a number of draft policies and objectives/aspirations. The next stage will be to complete the draft policies for approval by the Steering Committee before bringing them to the Parish Council for approval. The draft plan is then sent to SDC for comment before launching a six week public consultation event, including drop-in events in the village hall to demonstrate that the public has been adequately consulted. Members agreed to employing the services of a planning consultant when required using CIL funding, this has been agreed with SDC as an appropriate use of this funding.

vi. To hear update on the Chiddingstone Housing Needs Survey

Cllr Nunn reported that the HNS has now closed and there have been 114 responses. He gave a snapshot of the results and undertook to prepare a report which will be posted on the Parish Council's website.

Members thanked Cllr Nunn for all his work on these two projects.

vii. To discuss the SDC Draft Local Plan

The Clerk reported that the Regulation 19 consultation will be launched in the summer. The Regulation 19 Draft Local Plan will go to the Development & Investment Advisory Committee on 30th June and the agenda and papers for that meeting should be available on 23rd June. It will then go to cabinet on 7th July and full council on 14th July, then to public consultation. Cllr Roper asked D.Cllr Streatfeild for his comments and he said that the strength of responses across the district has been high. SDC want to adopt their Local Plan before Local Government Reorganisation comes in with the new unitary authorities in place in May 2028.

viii. Bartlett School of Planning

The Clerk reported that she and Cllr Roper have been approached by Professor Nick Gallent of the Bartlett School of Planning. He is part of the group of students and professors who came to Chiddingstone Causeway.

He said: “Following on from our discussion about the grey belt / green belt rules in Chiddingstone in March, I am working up a research proposal to look at the implications of the PPG Green Belt for smaller villages. We have in mind a study that looks at how the definition of grey belt may leave villages vulnerable to an excess of development and therefore how policy might be adjusted and how villages, and development partners, might respond. We would like to use Chiddingstone as a case study and name you as partners. Would you be agreeable to this in principle? The project would involve visiting several villages across England, holding consultations on the current situation, with clerks and chairs, as well as other elements including interviews with local authority planning departments.” Cllr Roper reported that he has said that the Parish Council would be happy to be included in the case study. Members agreed.

District Cllr Streatfeild left the meeting at 8.29pm.

10. Finance

- i. To approve 2025/26 Year End Accounts
Members reviewed and approved the Year End Accounts, proposed by Cllr Shamwana, seconded by Cllr Roper, and all in favour.
- ii. To review the effectiveness of the Parish Council’s Internal Control Procedures
Members reviewed the Internal Audit Procedures and agreed that they remain effective. Proposed by Cllr Myers, seconded by Cllr Shamwana, and all were in favour.
- iii. Audit for year ending 31st March 2026: To consider and agree Annual Governance Statement 2025/26
Cllr Roper read the statements as set out on the Annual Governance Statement and members responded as appropriate. Proposed by Cllr Nunn, seconded by Cllr Vicary, and all were in favour.
- iv. Audit for year ending 31st March 2026: To consider and approve Accounting Statements 2025/26
Cllr Williams proposed that the Statement of Accounts be approved, this was seconded by Cllr Shamwana, and all were in favour.
- v. To discuss the Year End Internal Audit report 2026
The Clerk reported that the Year End Internal Audit was carried out by Mulberry & Co on 28th April and the report has been received and circulated. The report states: “Our testing did not identify any procedural errors requiring reporting to the external auditor at this time, nor did we observe any material weaknesses in internal controls that would pose a risk to public funds. In fact, the processes and procedures together with own built in compensating controls are robust, strictly followed and in many respects a model of good practice. We are pleased to report that overall, the systems and procedures currently in place are appropriate and effective. While this report may include recommendations for improvement, these should not be viewed as indicators of significant deficiencies. Rather, they are intended to support the continued development of what is, in our view, a well-managed and robust governance framework.” There were two recommendations: Under Digital and Data Compliance: (i) I recommend the Privacy Notice and Website Accessibility Statement are updated. (ii) I recommend the council ensures that a data audit is conducted during 2026/27 to comply with GDPR regulations. This may be an audit test under Governance Assertion 10 next year.” Members discussed the internal audit report and the recommendations made. Members agreed to accept the recommendations and make the necessary changes.
- vi. To approve membership renewal to KALC: £737.23
Members approved this subscription renewal, proposed by Cllr Nunn, seconded by Cllr Williams, and all were in favour.
- vii. To approve insurance policy renewal: £596.25
Members approved the insurance policy renewal, proposed by Cllr Roper, seconded by Cllr Shamwana, and all were in favour.
- viii. To consider application for grant by Chiddingstone School
Cllr Roper reiterated his NPI in this matter. He said that he has been approached by the school as chair of the Crandalls Trust about the possibility of some grant funding towards new astroturf at the school and a new floor for one of the classrooms. A formal application from the school has not yet been received and so item will be discussed at a future meeting.

- ix. To approve cost of a new planter in Chiddingstone Causeway
Members approved the purchase of two pre-rusted Corten Steel trough planters with feet to replace the wooden planters in Chiddingstone Causeway and at the crossroads at Gilwyns. The cost is £274.98 + VAT.
- x. To approve list of payments
Cllr Williams proposed that the list of payments be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Myers, and all were in favour. Cllr Roper and Cllr Outlaw to authorise the payments online.

11. Affordable Housing provision in the parish

- i. To hear update regarding the Chiddingstone Affordable Housing schemes
The Clerk reported that English Rural Housing Association has provided the following update: “Bassetts site in Chiddingstone Causeway: “(i) I have been speaking to Sean Mitchell, the planning officer, weekly and he has committed to issuing the draft conditions in the next two weeks. We have therefore pushed the contractor's tender deadline back to 9th June to allow time to them to price for the conditions in their tender return. The draft S106 has been issued to Charles' solicitor for comment. Assuming that the tenders are in line with our appraisal, the planning approval and S106 are agreed and the acquisition proceeds smoothly we are programming a start on site for November 2026. (ii) I am still chasing the planning officer for the draft conditions which were promised by 8th May, now calling the office daily as we need to issue them to be contractors in time for them to amend their tender sums to reflect the conditions. We are still due to receive the tender returns by the 9th June and the S106 is ticking along.”
- ii. To discuss measures to mitigate flooding in Redleaf Close
The Clerk reported that she emailed Sarah Robson, Deputy Chief Executive & Corporate Director of Communities, Place and Economy at SDC, who has offered to hold a meeting with us and with WKHA. Cllr Outlaw is in the process of sending all the relevant information prior to arranging the meeting.

12. Highways and Rights of Way

- i. To hear update regarding applications for speed reduction measures in Bough Beech and on Camp Hill
The Clerk reported that KCC is in the process of changing contractors and there is a delay in the start date.
- ii. To hear update on Chiddingstone SpeedWatch
The Clerk reported that the next session is on Thursday morning. One of the volunteers has signed up as another co-ordinator to help with the admin.
- iii. To consider using the services of a local person to clean roadside signs
Cllr Shamwana reiterated his NPI in this item. The Clerk reported that a local person is setting up his own business to clean road signs. He has quoted £35 to clean the big white sign opposite the church in Chiddingstone Causeway and as a further example of cost £30 to clean the 3-arm metal fingerpost in Leigh. Members agreed to let the Clerk know with a what-3-words location of any signs that need cleaning and item to be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting.
- iv. To discuss the erection of a fence on the footpath in Chiddingstone village running to Somerden
Cllr Williams reiterated his NPI in this item. The Clerk reported that a complaint has been received about the new fence erected alongside the footpath. Members agreed that it is the landowners' right to erect fences to protect their land and no action will be taken in this regard.
- v. To discuss a proposal for a Rail Link Bus from Crawley to Tonbridge
Email from the Uckfield & East Grinstead Lines, Tonbridge to Reigate Line and Communication Support Officer of South East Communities Rail Partnership: “Our partnership is currently looking to explore the possibility of creating a Rail Link bus (limited service) that starts in Crawley and ends in Tonbridge, taking in attractions along the route and we would like to gather some support for this proposal. This would be a pilot scheme with initial timing being July to October. However, sustainable take up could result in more services being available. I am writing to ask if you would you be willing to submit a letter of support? This would need to be completed quickly as our potential funder is seeking further confirmation from the community. We already have the support of the attractions.” Members asked for more information on this project and it was agreed that a decision on whether to support this proposal would be taken via email before the next Parish Council meeting.

13. To discuss correspondence received

The Clerk reported that lists of correspondence received have been circulated and drew members' attention to the following:

- i. Item 3: SDC News Release: SDC has introduced a community asset transfer scheme and invited applications from town and parish councils for the ownership of property and land assets. This scheme is voluntary and was introduced at the Council's discretion. Where it is appropriate to do so, the scheme aims for community assets to be devolved as close to local communities as practical. Transferred assets should promote or improve the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of District residents, and are transferred at an appropriate value. At its meeting held on 21st April 2026, SDC's Cabinet agreed to transfer the following local assets:
 - The Shambles, Sevenoaks – transfer to Sevenoaks Town Council
 - Oliver Crescent, Farningham – transfer to Farningham Parish Council
 - Alban Crescent, Farningham – transfer to Farningham Parish Council
 - Saddlers Park, Eynsford – transfer to Eynsford Parish Council
 - Vernon Close, West Kingsdown – transfer to West Kingsdown Parish Council
 - Caxton Close, Hartley – transfer to Hartley Parish Council
 - Hale Lane Recreation Ground, Otford – transfer to Otford Parish Council."
- ii. Item 4: KALC training events, all online:
 - Introduction to Planning - £50 + VAT. 20th May 2026 10.00am-1.00pm.
 - The Essentials of being a Good Employer - £50 + VAT. 16th June 2026 10.00am-12.00pm.
 - Mastering Planning Application Responses - £50 + VAT. 25th June 2026 6pm-8pm.
 - Doughnut Economics from theory to practice for Local Governments £15 + VAT. 9th July 2026 10am-11am.
 - Procurement and Writing Contracts - £50 + VAT 24th September 2026 10.00pm-12.00pm.
 - The Nuts and Bolts of Parish Councils for Councillors - £50 + VAT. 6th October 2026 6.00pm-7.30pm.
 - The Nuts and Bolts of Parish Councils for Clerks - £50 + VAT. 22nd October 2026 10.00pm-11.30pm.
 - Funding for Parish and Town Councils - £50 + VAT. 29th October 2026 10.00am-12.00pm. Cllr Roper wished to attend this event.
 - Managing Projects - £50 + VAT. 12th November 2026 10.00am-12.00pm.
 - Addressing the Biodiversity Crisis - £50 + VAT. 1st December 2026 10.00am-12.00pm.
- iii. Item 5: Email from Peter Brook, New Edenbridge & District Residents Association (NEDRA): "Please pass on my thanks to the Parish Council for your generous grant to the water testing programme. Not only is it a great help on the practical front but it is encouraging for us to know that our local community cares about our work and supports it. It will also strengthen our hand when we apply to other organisations for funding."

14. To hear report and discuss Parish Projects, including approval of costs:

- i. Chiddingstone Carpark
The Clerk reported that a meeting has been arranged with the Chiddingstone Castle Trustees to discuss car parking options.
- ii. Litter Pick, Bulk Refuse Freighter, Flytipping
Members agreed that the next litter pick will be on 4th July at 9.30am.
- iii. Rural Swathe Cutting Contract
The Clerk reported that the contractor's public liability certificate has been approved by KCC. The contractor has increased the price due to increased fuel costs. Members agreed.
- iv. Summer Family Fun Play Event
The Clerk reported that this will be on Friday 7th August on the Chiddingstone Causeway Sports Field from 10.30am to 1.30pm.

15. Items for reporting or inclusion in future agenda

Cllr Shamwana reported that the Ben Campbell-Johnson memorial rugby match was held and it is hoped that £10,000 will be raised for local charities. Chiddingstone Dairy kindly donated burgers free of charge.

The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Wednesday 10th June 2026 at 7.30pm in St. Luke's Parish Room, Chiddingstone Causeway.

The meeting closed at 9.05pm.

Chiddingstone Parish Council – 18th May 2026

List of Payments since last meeting (figures inclusive of VAT)

Payment Number	Date	Payee	Amount inc. VAT	VAT
839	18.05.26	Clerk – salary	£1,548.64	
840	18.05.26	HMRC – PAYE	£408.72	
841 SO	18.05.26	Kent County Council – pension contribution	£334.55	
842	18.05.26	Clerk – mileage and reimbursement Zoom renewal	£157.14	
843	18.05.26	Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd – Internal Audit	£195.00	£32.50
844	18.05.26	KALC membership renewal	£737.23	£122.87
845	18.05.26	Zurich Municipal – insurance renewal	£596.25	
846	18.05.26	Chiddingstone Village Hall – hall hire	£70.00	
			<u>£4,047.53</u>	<u>£155.37</u>

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