

**MINUTES OF THE CHIDDINGSTONE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 8TH JULY 2026 AT 7.30PM IN ST. LUKE'S PARISH ROOM, CHIDDINGSTONE CAUSEWAY**

Present: Cllr J. Roper (Chairman), Cllr I. Henderson, Cllr C. Shamwana and Cllr H. Williams
Apologies: Cllr S. Andrews, Cllr K. Outlaw, Cllr P. Myers, Cllr T. Nunn, Cllr P. Vicary and District Cllr M. Silander
In attendance: Mrs L. Kleinschmidt (Clerk). County Cllr R. Mayall attended the Open Session only and District Cllr R. Streatfeild attended the meeting until 8.08pm.

Open Session

Report by County Cllr R. Mayall

County Cllr Mayall reported as follows:

- Kent County Council is setting up a water resilience group for Kent and Medway to oversee the resilience of the water supply across the County. It will examine the supply, infrastructure, cleanliness and future investment in things such as water storage across the County. It will have the ability to summon officials from water companies and the environment agency.
- A decision has been made to raise the price of Kent Travel Saver for school travel. The Travel Saver is a bus pass that can save parents and pupils up to 50% on the cost of travel to and from school. For most children's journeys, this pass will save around 50% of the cost of an annual season ticket from a bus operator. Outside London this remains one of the most generous schemes in the country despite significant cost to KCC. Without this subsidy, the cost would exceed £1000 per child. The price increase for low-income families will amount to £35 or 18p per day.
- Ringway, which has taken over the contract for maintaining Kent roads, has purchased some new gritting vehicles for the winter, which should be an improvement.
- On 10th July KCC will be hosting a conference on fly tipping with a number of county wide organisations including district and borough councils, the Environment Agency and farmers. Hopefully some good policies and actions will come out of this.
- KCC is asking for people's views for what they want to see in the 2027/2028 budget, see www.kent.gov.uk.

Report by District Cllr Streatfeild

District Cllr Streatfeild reported as follows:

- The Regulation 19 public consultation was discussed by Cabinet last night, and the consultation will run from 23rd July until the 17th September.
- The rollout of wheelie bins has started and residents will receive their bins before the end of October.
- The leisure centre in Sevenoaks will close and there will very likely be a 9 month gap in leisure provision. More houses are planned and the library area will not be included in the scheme.
- SDC is spending £250,000 to improve Edenbridge Leisure Centre and £2m will be raised from CIL generated from new development in the town. There are plans to improve the astroturf and the changing areas which are not fit for purpose.

Closed Session

27. **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Andrews, Cllr Myers, Cllr Outlaw, Cllr Nunn and Cllr Vicary and members accepted their reasons for absence. Apologies for absence were also received from District Cllr Silander.
28. **Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest / Non-Pecuniary Interest on matters to be discussed**
None.
29. **The minutes of the Chiddingstone Parish Council Meeting held 10th June 2026** were approved and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr Henderson, seconded by Cllr Shamwana, and all were in favour.

30. Planning:

Members agreed to change the agenda order to discuss this item first:

- i. To discuss the SDC Draft Local Plan and Regulation 19 consultation including Chiddingstone Causeway sites
Cllr Roper reported that the SDC Draft Local Plan Regulation 19 public consultation was discussed by SDC at their Development & Infrastructure Advisory Committee on 30th June and Cabinet on 7th July. It is due to be considered by the full council on 14th July but it is not expected that there will be any changes to the draft as published. The public consultation will run from 23rd July to 17th September. Members discussed the sites in the parish included in the consultation, namely:

- Land to the rear of the Little Brown Jug: 34 dwellings (1.16ha)
- Land at Station Yard: 44 dwellings (0.86 ha)
- Land at the Highways Depot: 10 dwellings (0.21 ha)

Cllr Roper pointed out that the Parish Council is not and has never been anti-development per se and referred to the developments at Millbrook, Causeway House and Bassetts all of which the Parish Council have supported. Looking ahead, Cllr Roper said that, after taking account of the homes that will become available at the Causeway House and Bassetts sites, the recent Housing Needs Survey identified a need for 22 new dwellings, including affordable housing, for people with a local connection to the parish over the next ten years.

Members agreed to suspend the Closed Session in order to allow District Cllr Streatfeild to comment.

District Cllr Streatfeild said that the Regulation 19 consultation will consider whether the Draft Local Plan is sound. There are two definitions for sites, either deliverable (brought forward within the next 5 years), and developable (brought forward in the next Local Plan, ie between 2033 and 2043) but possibly identified after the first 5 years of this Local Plan cycle, and the sites held in a land bank. The Closed Session resumed.

After some discussion on parish housing needs, members agreed to reiterate that as things stand, the stance taken in the Regulation 18 consultation would be repeated in the Parish Council's Regulation 19 response, and will object to any development on the Land to the rear of the Little Brown Jug site in its entirety, and will object to the proposed numbers specified on the Land at Station Yard site and Land at the Highways Depot site, both of which are previously developed land, having agreed that some development on these two sites should be supported but not at a high density. Members also agreed to use the services of the planning consultant again for the Regulation 19 consultation and if necessary at the Inquiry, and pay her reasonable costs.

District Cllr Streatfeild left the meeting at 8.08pm.

- ii. To consider planning applications received

- i. SE/26/01463/AGRNOT: Vexour Farm, Hampkins Hill Road, Chiddingstone TN8 7BB - agricultural extension to the existing farm building range, forming a covered agricultural storage structure required for the existing mixed farming enterprise at Vexour Farm. The extension will provide two straw storage bays, one covered muck store/farmyard manure bay (not for slurry or sewage sludge storage), one dry goods store and one grain store. The additional covered storage is required due to the increased scale of the holding and increased livestock numbers, which have created a greater operational need for straw, manure, dry goods and grain storage. Part of the proposed roofing over the muck store is supported by Catchment Sensitive Farming capital grant funding, as the covered muck store will improve farmyard manure management, reduce rainwater entering stored manure, and help reduce the risk of nutrient runoff and pollution. The Clerk reported that this has already been determined - Prior Approval Not Required.
- ii. SE/25/02940/FUL: Bore Place Conference and Study Centre, Bore Place Road, Chiddingstone TN8 7AR - new toilet and shower block with hardstanding together with repositioning of existing toilet on wooded deck. Members had no objection to this application
- iii. SE/26/01297/HOUSE: 6 Hever Road Cottages, Hever Road, Bough Beech TN8 7NS - proposed single storey side and rear wrap around extension. Addition of one window on the front elevation on the 1st floor. Proposed hip to gable loft conversion with box dormer to the rear and roof lights at the front. The Planning Committee undertook to look at this application and agree a response before the deadline.

- iv. SE/26/01624/WTCA: Tye Cross, Hill Hoath Road, Chiddingstone TN8 7AB - Veteran Twin Stemmed Redwood to reduce height by 5-7m, to relieve stress from the twin stem. Members had no objection to this application.
- iii. To report SDC notifications of planning decisions
- SE/26/00880/FUL: Land North of Keepers Cottage, Hill Hoath Road, Chiddingstone - access track and parking. Application approved.
 - SE/25/03023/FUL: Watstock Farm, Wellers Town Road, Chiddingstone Hoath - conversion of part of the existing stables into two dwellings. Parking. Alterations to fenestration. Internal alterations. Landscaping and raised beds. Fencing. Application approved.
 - SE/26/00603/MMA: Land North of Highway Depot, Tonbridge Road, Chiddingstone Causeway – Minor Material Amendment to SE/24/01501/FUL - following on-site investigations in coordination with utility company Southern Water it has been established that a distance of 4m from the roadside boundary is required. This distance is required to meet safety requirements due to a nearby rising main running along the boundary of the site. Application approved.
 - SE/26/01463/AGRNOT: Vexour Farm, Hamkins Hill Road, Chiddingstone - agricultural extension to the existing farm building range, forming a covered agricultural storage structure required for the existing mixed farming enterprise at Vexour Farm. The extension will provide two straw storage bays, one covered muck store/farmyard manure bay (not for slurry or sewage sludge storage), one dry goods store and one grain store. The additional covered storage is required due to the increased scale of the holding and increased livestock numbers, which have created a greater operational need for straw, manure, dry goods and grain storage. Part of the proposed roofing over the muck store is supported by Catchment Sensitive Farming capital grant funding, as the covered muck store will improve farmyard manure management, reduce rainwater entering stored manure, and help reduce the risk of nutrient runoff and pollution. Decision: Prior Approval Not Required.
- 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
The Clerk reported that following the meeting held on 30th June, Cllr Nunn is updating the draft policies in line with the Parish Council's comments.
- vi. To hear update on the Chiddingstone Over-65's Survey
The Clerk reported that the 65+ Survey went out in the parish magazine and hopefully there will see a good number of completed surveys. There are drop off arrangements at the two shops and The Castle Inn.
- vii. To hear update on the research project on Green Belt and Grey Belt policy
The Clerk reported that Chiddingstone Parish Council has been invited to join UCL and the University of Liverpool in a research proposal to look at the implications of the PPG Green Belt for smaller villages. They 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. They are seeking a grant towards this research proposal from the Economic and Social Research Council's funding stream, which is aimed at projects that "can deliver real-time evidence that helps public sector leaders make informed decisions and respond effectively to emerging challenges." An unforeseen impact of the green/grey belt reform is that villages are left vulnerable to expansion. The revised planning policy guidance on green belt is likely to have the effect of restricting growth near developed towns but permitting it near villages. This itself could be interpreted as conflictual with other policy goals, though many in housing and planning circles may not fully realise this. The intention of the project is to develop evidence as to how and why this is happening, the impact on villages, and to highlight strong examples of appropriate housing development in villages that is commensurate with local needs, of high quality and design, and in keeping with local amenity and infrastructure. They would host three events at the conclusion of the project - one in each of the case study villages - and one nationally in London where they would highlight the findings of the research and implications of the revised policy for villages to a range of stakeholders involved in planning policy, development and delivery. The intention is to develop research evidence that can inform and influence local and national policy decisions. It is hoped that this would be beneficial for the communities involved, including in local policy consultations and decision making, and for other villages experiencing similar challenges.

31. Finance

- i. To consider sponsoring the Edenbridge & Oxted Show
The Clerk reported that for the last two years, the Parish Council has sponsored a class in the show as a message of support for our farmers. The cost is £150 to sponsor the Any Other Native Longwool Sheep class. Members approved, proposed by Cllr Henderson, seconded by Cllr Shamwana and all were in favour.
- ii. To discuss application for grant from GACC
Members agreed to give a grant of £600. Proposed by Cllr Williams, seconded by Cllr Shamwana and all were in favour.
- iii. To hear update on the pledged grant to Kent ACRE
The Clerk reported that not enough pledges were made to support Kent ACRE and therefore the Parish Council's grant of £300 will be returned. Cllr Outlaw has advised that Kent ACRE trustees have agreed to update the website and open up membership packages instead. This will likely be in September and they will be engaging with Town & Parish Councils in due course.
- iv. To approve list of payments
Cllr Shamwana proposed that the list of payments be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Williams and all were in favour. Cllr Roper and Cllr Outlaw to authorise the payments online.

32. 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:
(i) Bassetts: "The tender process for the builders has finished and there are two companies who are being asked for more information, one is a local firm based in Tonbridge. The S.106 agreement is being finalised and planning approval is imminent."
(ii) Millbrook: The easement for the new outfall pipe was agreed last week and this will be carried out jointly by the landowner and ERHA. The year one snagging has been done. The 3 open market plots have been on the market and completion is anticipated next month. Both the landowner and ERHA have promised to cut back overgrown vegetation on the PROW but this hasn't been done and the Clerk has chased both.
- ii. To discuss measures to mitigate flooding in Redleaf Close
The Clerk reported that Cllr Outlaw has advised that the Housing Ombudsman will accept cases referred to them within 12 months of the second stage complaint being received, so this will be end March 2027. Cllr Outlaw will email Sarah Robson, who is Deputy Chief Executive & Corporate Director of Communities, Place and Economy at SDC, to see if she is still willing to mediate, and will also contact the residents to see if they are willing to support this process.
- iii. To hear update regarding Chiddingstone Parish Council presentation at a Rural Housing Week seminar
The Clerk reported that she was asked to speak at a seminar yesterday on rural affordable housing, this was with other Town & Parish Councils mainly but some district/county representatives there. She said that she spoke about the process taken to achieve schemes in Bough Beech and Chiddingstone Causeway.

33. Highways and Rights of Way

- i. To hear update regarding applications for speed reduction measures in Bough Beech and on Camp Hill
No update.
- ii. To hear update on Chiddingstone SpeedWatch
The Clerk reported that the SpeedWatch volunteers continue to meet and monitor speeds.
- iii. To discuss quote to remove an Ash tree with Ash Dieback and reduce 4 Ash and Hawthorn overgrown hedgerow stems to reform hedge on the Village Green in Chiddingstone
The Clerk reported that RWE Rural Services have provided a quote to remove the Ash tree on the village green in Chiddingstone and leave the stump at stool height, and to reduce 4 Ash and Hawthorn trees which are overgrown and leaning, these will be formed into a hedge. This is a safety issue. Permission from SDC already received for this work. Price: £1,150 + VAT. Members approved.
- iv. PROW SR518, Chiddingstone
The Clerk reported that the permissive path is blocked off because a branch from an Ash tree fell and the remainder of the tree is unstable. The landowner blocked the path for safety reasons and re-routed the path along the formal route, which is through a pedestrian gate and down the Rectory drive.

KCC are improving the steps on the small bank up to the gate. The Clerk said that she has been in touch with the KCC PROW officer to ask for timescales. The Churchwardens are very concerned about this, and a letter has been sent from the Diocese to KCC PROW.

34. To discuss correspondence received

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

- i. Item 2: GACC newsletter, which states that their Judicial Review Claim challenging Gatwick Airport Expansion has been refused. Peter Barclay of GACC says "Because of the far reaching and significant detrimental impacts of the expansion, which effectively grants Gatwick a second runway and a 60% plus increase of throughput at the airport, we will be looking to appeal this decision. The Development Consent Order (DCO) made by the Secretary of State for Transport on 21st September 2025 was challenged by GACC on 5 grounds:
 - failing to understand and apply the government's own aviation policy, which specifically rejected a second runway at Gatwick,
 - failing to act in accordance with the purpose of the statutory scheme envisaged by the Planning Act 2008 and Climate Change Act 2008 by applying an out-of-date national policy statement,
 - failing to comply with the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations and to take adequate account of Greenhouse Gas Emissions;
 - failing to lawfully assess the need for and economic benefits of the development, in circumstances where GACC and the New Economics Foundation (NEF) had shown Gatwick's economic case to subject to considerable doubt; and
 - misinterpreting noise policies and reaching irrational conclusions on noise.
- ii. Item 3: SDC News Releases: (1) New milestone for new Sevenoaks Leisure Centre and town centre regeneration. SDC's Cabinet has agreed to appoint Wates as its preferred contractor to take forward ambitious plans to regenerate the Land East of Sevenoaks High Street and deliver a brand-new leisure centre for the town. Working with Wates, SDC wants to enhance the Buckhurst Lane and Suffolk Way areas, helping to make the town an even more vibrant and welcoming place to live, work and spend time. At the heart of the project will be a brand new, energy-efficient, modern leisure centre providing high quality facilities to safeguard and enhance the town's leisure offer for decades to come. The project also includes a new cultural hub and market hall at 96 High Street, improved public transport links, new public green spaces, including a new green corridor to Knole Park, and new energy-efficient homes. The value of the overall project is estimated to be around £138 million, and it is expected to be self-financing with income from the new homes paying for the leisure centre and the other public improvements. Subject to planning consent, construction could begin in 2028. (2) SDC has agreed to one of the biggest investments in Edenbridge Leisure Centre since it opened, securing its future and enhancing facilities for years to come. At its meeting on 11th June 2026, the SDC's Cabinet agreed to a major 'renew and replenish' investment programme that could see around £2.2 million invested in the centre up to 2027. The funding will be used to improve key facilities, upgrading essential plant and ensuring the long-term operation of the site. The work builds on improvements already delivered over the past year, including a refurbished gym, new fitness equipment, cycle studio and café area. The Council will continue to seek external funding, including Community Infrastructure Levy contributions from developers, to support further improvements such as investment in the all-weather pitch.

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

- i. Chiddingstone Carpark
The Clerk reported that the meeting that had been arranged with the Chiddingstone Castle Trustees to discuss car parking options was postponed and a new date has been arranged.
- ii. Bough Beech car parking area at Chequers Cottages
Item to be discussed at the September Parish Council meeting.
- iii. Litter Pick, Bulk Refuse Freighter, Flytipping, Litter Bins
It was agreed that a very successful parish litter pick was held on Saturday 4th July at 9.30am.

Regarding litter bins, the Clerk reported that she has asked SDC to empty the litter bin in Chiddingstone village twice a week in the summer months because it overflows. The cost is currently £26 per quarter for this bin emptying once a week, this will rise £48 for twice weekly emptying. The Clerk has also asked for the bin on the village green to be replaced, this will be replaced with a new metal dual litter and dog waste bin with animal flaps.

The small litter bin on the side of the churchyard wall, opposite the drive to the village hall, will be removed.

iv. Rural Swathe Cutting Contract

The Clerk reported that the invoice has been received, and approved under Finance. However, members were not happy with the standard of workmanship and agreed that although they are paying this invoice, they will not pay the invoice for the autumn cut if the standard of work does not meet the cluster's expectations.

v. 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.

vi. Parish planters

The Clerk reported that the two new planters were put together and installed in Chiddingstone Causeway and at Gilwyns.

36. Items for reporting or inclusion in future agenda

- i. The Clerk reported that the Lockskinners Country Fair raised £7,000 for charity, and the Big Weekend has raised approximately £9,000, both for charity. Cllr Shamwana reported that the Ben Campbell-Johnson rugby event raised £12,000 for charity. Members were very pleased that these local events have been so successful.
- ii. Cllr Henderson reported that he has been asked to join a group formed to raise funding for the repair of the tower at St. Mary's Church, Chiddingstone.
- iii. Cllr Roper reported that there has been a small village upset as the Parish Council has been told they are no longer able to hire the Causeway Hall. It is hoped that this will change to allow the Parish Council to use the hall for adhoc meetings and large community events, such as public consultation events.

The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Wednesday 9th September 2026 at 7.30pm in St. Luke's Parish Room, Chiddingstone Causeway.

The meeting closed at 8.51pm.

Chiddingstone Parish Council – 8th July 2026

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

Payment Number	Date	Payee	Amount inc. VAT	VAT
857	08.07.26	Clerk – salary	£1,527.84	
858	08.07.26	HMRC – PAYE	£429.52	
859 SO	08.07.26	Kent County Council – pension contribution	£450.99	
860	08.07.26	Clerk – mileage petty cash	£124.70	£5.36
861	08.07.26	KALC Chairmanship Conference KO	£84.00	£14.00
862	08.07.26	Ashley Brigdale – rural swathe cutting for cluster	£3,770.00	
			<u>£6,387.05</u>	<u>£19.36</u>

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