MINUTES OF UPCHURCH FULL PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON **THURSDAY 02 JULY 2026** AT 19:30 IN UPCHURCH VILLAGE HALL

Present:	Cllr Ripley, Cllr Denny, Cllr Lewin, Cllr Bodycomb, Cllr Rosewell, Cllr Easton, Cllr Horton
Officer:	Clerk, Nina Henley
External Attendees:	Cllr C Palmer
Apologies:	Cllr Sheppard, Cllr Berntsen

540-FCM/07/26 To receive apologies for absence

Cllr Sheppard (unavailable) Cllr Berntsen (unavailable) Members RESOLVED to accept apologies. Cllrs Sheppard and Berntsen sent reports on respective areas. Noted.

541-FCM/07/26 To receive declarations of interests and lobbying

None

542-FCM/07/26 Minutes

To receive as correct and approve for signature the minutes of the Full Council Annual Meeting held on 4 June 2026.
Members RESOLVED to approve the minutes.

543-FCM/07/26 Public Participation

There were 7 members of the public present.

544-FCM/07/26 External reports and updates

Cllr Chris Palmer gave verbal report.
Cllr Richard Palmer KCC report – Appendix 1
Report received from PC Boosey – Appendix 2

545-FCM/07/26 Correspondence

I. Email correspondence from Ilos developers Solar Farm Hartlip. Noted.
II. Email correspondence from SBC Kent Downs National Landscape Public Consultation. Noted.
III. Email correspondence from Kent Community Foundation. Noted.
IV. Email correspondence from SBC Adoption of Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document (HMO SPD) Noted.

546-FCM/07/26 Planning

To receive updates on planning matters

I. 26/500852/OUT Land North of Forge Lane – any updates. Communication received from Planning Officer.
Cllr Rosewell reported email from resident at Lower Halstow regarding issues they have found with the sewage pipe in this area. These concerns have been reported to the Planning Officer.
II. 26/502371/FULL Pear Tree House Otterham Quay Lane Upchurch Kent ME8 8QW
Demoltion of 4.no former agricultural buildings, and the erection of 1no self-build dwelling and 1.5 storey car barn, with associated hard and soft landscaping including the relocation of access point.
UPC supports this application.

III. Any reports from Cllr Rosewell. Planning meeting 24 June 2026 regarding 22/503654/EIOUT land to west of Bobbing. It was reported that SBC had approved he application. Cllr Rosewell reported that SBC has approved this application.

547-FCM/07/26 Upchurch Parish Council Reporting

I. Paddock and Recreational Ground – to receive update.
   (a) Play area inspections – report circulated. Cllr Easton reported that she has reviewed the highlighted medium and low risk reports. Clerk to clarify one part regarding the safety surface by the swing. Members RESOLVED that on clarification of safety surface it is agreed to remedy all medium risk actions reported. Total costs to be confirmed.
   (b) To consider quote for 26/27 inspections Safeplay Members RESOLVED to accept quote from Safeplay for 26/27 inspections. Two inspections at £146.45 per visit.
   (c) Gate to Paddock – to consider options to repair / replace. It was RESOLVED for Cllrs Rosewell and Ripley to action immediate remedial repairs to the gate bolt and to budget for replacement gate in 26/27 budget.

II. Burial Ground & Churchyard – to receive update.
   (a) Request for memorial bench – update. Cllr Denny reported she had met with the family and they had agreed all terms. Clerk reported she was waiting for inscription to be received, then will invoice and order on receipt of payment. Noted.

III. Highways & Street Lighting – to receive update.
   (a) Cllr Horton reported that the village gates were with the design team at KCC. Cllr Horton reported that potential developer contributions could be sought if the village gates were to be extended in 2027.
   (b) Cllr Berntsen reported that no updates on energy suppliers but was following up with another option and will report back.

IV. Footpaths – no updates,

V. Environment – to receive update
   (a) Village floral displays reported all completed in the village. Cllr Horton reported that addition pole baskets are to be sited in the village. It was reported that the floral displays have been received positively with the community.

VI. Allotments – to receive update.
   (a) Following discussion of the circulated draft tenancy agreement, it was RESOLVED to approve the agreement, subject to the inclusion of a clause relating to bonfires. The agreement will state that open bonfires are not permitted. The use of enclosed incinerators will be permitted for the forthcoming year only, after which the arrangement will be reviewed. During this period, the Parish Council will investigate and cost environmentally friendly alternatives, including the potential for grant funding through Kent Community Foundation. Clerk to circulate final draft for approval. It was further RESOLVED that the tenancy agreement will make clear that all activities undertaken by tenants at the allotments are carried out entirely at their own risk. Upchurch Parish Council accepts no liability for any injury, loss or damage arising from tenants' activities, as the Council's insurance only provides cover for Parish Council employees and those working directly on behalf of the Council. Tenants will be advised that they may wish to obtain their own Public Liability Insurance if they consider it appropriate.
   (b) It was noted that all plots are now fully occupied.

VII. Village Defibrillators – Cllr Sheppard reported all working – The Circuit has been updated.

548-FCM/07/26 Finance Reporting

I. Financial review – bank statement and reconciliation were received and signed by Cllr Lewin. Noted

II. Cheques for approval litter picker: £ 53.80

III. Schedule of payments for approval:

Payee	Date	Method	Reference	Reason	Amount
Hugo Fox	19/06/26	PAID DD	28636	Website hosting	£ 11.99
G Pettett	04/06/26	BACS	002	Landscape Contractor	£ 1380.00
Maylow Const	02/07/26	BACS	08217	Equipment Repair	£ 192.00
Safeplay	02/07/26	BACS	35005	Equipment Inspection	£ 171.00
Lynne Balcomb	02/07/26	BACS		Caretaker	£ 174.85
RECEIPTS					
Allotment				RENT	£ 14.00
Unity				Interest	£ 209.55

All Payments agreed proposed by Cllr Horton seconded by Cllr Lewin.
Members resolved to approve the schedule of payments.

549-FCM/07/26 Village Appraisal

I. Members reviewed the report from the Clerk. Following a discussion, it was RESOLVED that at this time no further consideration will be given to a full village appraisal. Clerk to investigate time / costs associated with other parishes Village Design Statements and report back.

550-FCM/07/26 Items to be considered for inclusion on the next Full Council agenda

Poppies for Remembrance Day – to confirm installation date and reorder poppies.

551-FCM/07/26 Date of next meeting

Thursday 3 September 2026 Full Council Meeting

552-FCM/07/26 Meeting closed 21.20

Appendix 1

Parish Council Report - July 2026
County Councillor Richard Palmer — Swale West Division
Introduction — July 2026
Welcome to my July 2026 parish council report. This month brings significant news on the county's finances, with KCC launching its annual budget consultation and asking residents across Kent to have their say. There is also important news from my own Cabinet portfolio on Trading Standards enforcement and community safety in Swale, alongside updates on highways, economic development and Kent businesses.
As always, please get in touch if there is anything you would like me to take forward on behalf of your parish.
1. KCC Budget Consultation 2027–28
KCC has launched its annual budget consultation, asking residents across Kent to help shape how over £2.8 billion is spent on services for more than 1.6 million people in 2027–28. The consultation runs for ten weeks until 7 September 2026.
Services covered by the budget include adult and children's social care, home-to-school transport, waste recycling, public health, libraries and roads. Social care alone now accounts for two thirds of KCC's entire budget, and the council is facing a projected funding gap of £100 to £120 million by 2027–28 if council tax is not increased.
Brian Collins, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, said that setting the budget has never been more challenging. Demand for essential services continues to rise while costs are increasing faster than income. Although the Government has announced a multi-year settlement for local councils, it falls well short of what is needed to cover the pressures KCC faces.
The administration has repaid £142 million of debt since taking office in May 2025, reducing future interest costs. But further savings, income and cost reductions will be needed, and difficult decisions will have to be made. The consultation asks residents to share their views on three things:

- Priorities for making savings across different service areas
- Ideas for how KCC could save money or increase income
- Council Tax options

Responses will be considered by councillors at Cabinet Committee meetings before budget proposals go to Full Council for approval in February 2027.
Take part in the consultation: www.kent.gov.uk/budget
Read the media release: Putting Kent people first — residents urged to help shape £2.8bn of County Council spending
KCC Newsletters — Spotlight Reports
Each month Kent County Council publishes newsletters across its service areas. Below are highlights from the July 2026 editions that are particularly relevant to our division and residents across Swale West.
Spotlight: Kent Highways & Transport — July 2026
Check roadworks in Swale West: one.network/uk/kent
Report a highway problem: kent.gov.uk — Report a highway problem
Highway Performance & Asset Management
The Department for Transport has released its transparency reporting requirements, which will be used to assess performance and determine eligibility for incentive funding. KCC is now working to collate the data and update the Highways Asset Management Plan, with a report due to DfT by 10 September 2026. A fuller update on the Asset Management Plan will follow after September, ahead of a key decision by the end of the financial year.
A299 Structures and Galley Hill

The draft Structures Fund submission covering the A299 overbridges, tunnels and carriageway has been sent to DfT for feedback. A separate submission for Galley Hill has also been submitted. Work on options to reopen Galley Hill Road continues at pace, with the major projects team working closely with consultants on planning and design. Local members receive monthly briefings and work to ease traffic congestion in the area is already under way. In addition to the funding bid, KCC's legal team is pursuing compensation for the cause of the cliff collapse.

Consolidated Highways Funding

Following the DfT announcement in December 2025 on grant allocations, the consolidated funding package has now arrived. The money will be used across a range of highway services. Detailed plans for the use of the funding must be presented to DfT by 31 October 2026. Key priorities include:

- Highway asset maintenance
- Active travel improvements
- Bus services — maintaining existing routes, service enhancements, and capital programmes to improve the passenger experience

Kent Travel Saver

The Kent Travel Saver was briefly delayed due to a scrutiny committee call-in, but the scheme is now open for applications. Families in Swale West are encouraged to apply — the scheme continues to offer exceptional value for concessionary travel. Details are available on the KCC website.

Free Shuttle Bus — Maidstone to Sittingbourne for the Kent County Show

KCC is funding a free shuttle bus service between Maidstone and Sittingbourne to make it easier for people from across Swale to visit the Kent County Show. As well as improving access to the show, the service will help reduce congestion on nearby roads during the event.

Winter Service — New Fleet Arriving

Although it may seem early to be thinking about winter, this is when the preparation happens. Ringway has ordered a brand-new fleet of gritters which will be arriving in Kent over the coming months. Unlike the previous contract where gritters were leased as standard units, Ringway is purchasing the fleet to its own specification, meeting high standards of safety for both drivers and the public. New salt stocks are on order and a new salt barn has been commissioned at the Faversham depot — directly relevant to our area. Ringway drivers and KCC Winter Duty Officers will be trained on the new vehicles and systems over the summer. The Annual Winter Policy and Plan will be shared in the autumn.

Operation Brock & Summer Border Delays

As in previous summers, the Kent and Medway Resilience Forum (KMRF) is working to manage the large numbers of tourists heading through Kent to Eurotunnel and the Port of Dover. Operation Brock is installed on the M20 to regulate HGV flow to the portals during peak periods.

At May half term this year, queues were worse than usual due to new EU Entry Exit System (EES) border checks at French customs at each portal. The technology for dedicated EES kiosks is not yet fully operational, meaning registration is still being carried out at customs booths and adding significant time at the border. This summer, the portals have forecast likely long delays over many weekends from mid-July until late August. Residents and businesses across Swale West should be aware that queues of traffic to each portal are likely throughout the summer. The KMRF partners will continue to work together to reduce the impact on local people and businesses as much as possible.

Spotlight: Community & Regulatory Services — July 2026

This is the first edition of the Community and Regulatory Services newsletter under my Cabinet leadership. I am particularly pleased to highlight work that has had a direct impact in Swale. The full newsletter is available from the KCC news website.

Read the full newsletter: news.kent.gov.uk

Trading Standards — Major Doorstep Crime Prosecution

Two men have been jailed following a major Kent Trading Standards prosecution for doorstep crime. Samuel O'Hanlon received 10 years in prison and a 12-year company director disqualification, while Jack Sargeant was sentenced to 5 years and 9 months with a 10-year directorship ban. These are the longest sentences ever handed down for doorstep crime in Kent.

The pair operated under several company names, pressuring householders into paying large sums upfront for building and home improvement work that was unnecessary, overpriced or left incomplete. Some victims were left living in partially dismantled homes. The investigation also identified the movement of money in ways designed to conceal its origin. Residents are encouraged to always use a trader registered with KCC's Trading Standards Checked scheme.

Community Wardens — Swale Event on the Isle of Sheppey

I am pleased to highlight work that has had a direct impact in Swale. Community Wardens organised a major community event on the Isle of Sheppey called Your Engagement, Activity and Health (YEAH!), bringing together a wide range of partners including Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, Live Well Kent and Medway, SATEDA domestic abuse charity, Sure Care, IPS Employment Support and Sheppey Matters. Recognising that many residents on the Isle of Sheppey find it difficult or costly to travel off the island, the Wardens brought services directly into the community in a local, accessible venue provided free of charge.

More than 150 residents attended, and 95% said they found the event useful and enjoyable. Residents could access advice on health, social care, financial support and employment — all in one place.
This is a clear example of early intervention in action, and I want to thank our Community Wardens and all the partner organisations involved for their commitment to supporting Swale residents.
Community Safety — Domestic Homicide Reviews
KCC's Community Safety Team has led on Domestic Homicide Reviews across Kent and Medway since 2011. Following new government guidance in 2022, four recent reviews have been assessed by the new national Quality Assurance Board and all four have successfully passed, with highly complimentary feedback on the quality and professionalism of the process. Publication will follow, taking account of sensitive dates for families.
Positive Wellbeing — Social Prescribing for Isolated Residents
Positive Wellbeing is a free social prescribing service for Kent residents aged 18 and over, tackling loneliness and social isolation. Delivered by Community Wardens on a one-to-one basis, the programme supports people in building confidence, joining local groups and accessing services. The service continues to show positive results, with reductions in loneliness reported following participation.
Find out more: Positive Wellbeing — Kent County Council

Libraries — James Pearson Appointed President of Libraries Connected
James Pearson, Head of Service for Kent Libraries, Registration and Archives, has been appointed as the next President of Libraries Connected, the national membership body representing library services across England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Crown Dependencies. This is a significant national appointment that reflects the quality of leadership within Kent's library service.
More information: librariesconnected.org.uk
Kent Film Office — Major Productions This Summer
The Kent Film Office generated an estimated £8.6 million for the local economy in 2025–26 across 827 filming days. Two major releases arrive this summer. Heartstopper Forever, filmed in Herne Bay, is released on Netflix on 17 July 2026, generating an estimated £99,000 for the local economy. Spider-Man: Brand New Day, filmed at The Historic Dockyard Chatham, is released on 31 July 2026 and generated around £1.7 million for the Kent and Medway economy.

Spotlight: Economic Development News — July 2026
Read the full newsletter: kent.gov.uk/business
Project Gigabit — KCC Calls for Government Action
On 26 May, the Government announced it would scale back parts of Project Gigabit with CityFibre, meaning fewer homes and businesses will receive publicly funded broadband connections. A £112 million contract was awarded to CityFibre to connect over 50,000 rural homes and businesses across Kent and Medway. However, despite the contract being awarded in January 2024, only 2,300 premises have been connected to date. The programme is now expected to be reduced to around 8,000 properties, leaving 80,000 premises outside any planned upgrade.
KCC has written to the Minister to request an urgent meeting to understand how the Government plans to address the reduction and restore progress for residents and businesses across Swale and the rest of Kent.
Read more: Kent calls for urgent Government action on broadband rollout
Local Growth Plan — 200 Stakeholders Shape Kent's Future
More than 200 stakeholders came together to help shape the future of Kent and Medway's economy through a series of Local Growth Plan workshops hosted by the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership between 11 and 15 May 2026. Sessions covered Digital and Technologies, Agri-food and Agri-tech, Energy, Ports, Transport and Logistics, and cross-cutting priorities. The insights gathered will directly inform the Local Growth Plan, shaping future investment and partnership working across the county.
Skills Bootcamps — Strong Results from Wave 6
Of the 500 learners who enrolled in Wave 6 between July 2025 and March 2026, 92% successfully completed their training and achieved a qualification, exceeding the national average. 43% have already secured a positive outcome, including new employment, career progression or additional work. Wave 7 is now under way.
Find out more: Skills Bootcamps — Kent Adult Education
Connect to Work — First Year Results
The Connect to Work programme has supported 1,946 participants within its first eight months since delivery began in June 2025. The most commonly identified barriers to employment are mental health conditions, autism and learning disabilities. Early employment outcomes are encouraging, with delivery now expanded to include Forward Trust and Shaw Trust alongside The Education People.

Kent & Medway Business Fund
Between 20 February 2024 and 31 March 2026, the fund recommended 80 loans totalling £9.75 million, supporting businesses across East Kent (£2.77 million), Mid and North Kent (£1.02 million) and West Kent

(£1.15 million). 38 of those loans, valued at £4.94 million, were recommended during the 2025 to 2026 financial year alone.
More information: Kent and Medway Business Fund — Standard Loans
Taste of Kent Awards 2026 — 20th Anniversary
The Taste of Kent Awards 2026, now in their 20th year, were launched at the University of Greenwich's Natural Resources Institute in Chatham Maritime. This year's awards cover 24 categories across food and drink products, dining experiences and independent retail. The awards ceremony will take place on 8 October 2026 at the GlassBox Theatre in Medway. Kent's food and drink sector has deep roots in Swale, and these awards celebrate the best of the county's independent producers and businesses.
Find out more: tasteofkentawards.co.uk
Village and Community Hall Grant Scheme
KCC's Village and Community Hall Grant Scheme, which has supported local projects for almost 30 years, continues to invest in community facilities across Kent. Recent awards have supported village halls with accessible toilet facilities, off-road parking, drainage improvements, pre-school spaces and boiler replacements. If any parish in Swale West has a community facility that might benefit from this scheme, contact mark.reeves@kent.gov.uk for more information.

Contact Your County Councillor
I am here to help. If you have issues to raise, questions about KCC services, or matters you would like me to take forward on behalf of your parish, please get in touch.
County Councillor — Swale West Division
Cllr Richard Palmer
Email: Richard.Palmer@kent.gov.uk
Kent County Council, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, ME14 1XQ
Roadworks enquiries: one.network/uk/kent
Report highway problems: kent.gov.uk — Report a highway problem
This report covers the Swale West Division: Borden, Bobbing, Lower Halstow, Iwade, the Meads, The Grove, Hartlip, Newington and Upchurch.

Appendix 2

Due to the Nature of this Ward, my events are often spread out between the villages. Do not hesitate to contact me via MCV or email as required. Upcoming surgeries: • 27/07/2026 – Age UK Memory Café in Newington July 2026 Your local officer is Police Officer Jacob Boosey • 05/08/2026 – Rainbow Café in Upchurch What's going on in your area • In relation to Police Matters in the entire area this month, there does not appear to be any distinguishable or significant patterns in terms of Crime Type. The majority of recorded and investigated Crimes were of a Domestic Nature. • Reports of 'scrap metal dealers' accessing people's Property/Land and taking metal that was not intended for disposal. The image of those responsible has been disseminated to see whether they can be identified. A reminder for all residents and contractors are encouraged to securely store building materials and tools in locked buildings or containers, particularly overnight. Where possible, use security lighting, CCTV and keep valuable items out of sight. If you would like informal crime prevention advice or a security visit, please feel free to get in touch. We are happy to discuss measures to help protect your property and reduce the risk of theft. Further to this, there are concerns that persons have been scouting around the Upchurch area for items of scrap such as Gas Bottles etc. I will be attending sites which may be vulnerable, such as Beckenham park, to mark these up suitably as a deterrent. • There was also a High Value theft of goods from inside a vehicle in the Ward this month. A reminder to residents: o Please ensure your vehicle is locked and secure whenever it is left unattended. o Do not leave valuables, bags, tools, or other personal items on display inside your vehicle.