



MINUTES OF UPCHURCH FULL PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 08 JANUARY 2026 AT 19:30PM IN UPCHURCH VILLAGE HALL

Present: Cllr Ripley, Cllr Denny, Cllr Horton, Cllr Lewin, Cllr Rosewell, Cllr Easton, Cllr Berntsen,
Officer: Clerk, Nina Henley
External Attendees: None
Apologies: Cllr Sheppard, Cllr Bodycomb

449-FCM/01/26 To receive apologies for absence

Cllr Sheppard (unavailable) Cllr Bodycomb (unwell) Members RESOLVED to accept apologies.

450-FCM/01/26 To receive declarations of interests and lobbying

None

451-FCM/01/26 Minutes

To receive as correct and approve for signature the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 11 Dec 2025.

Members RESOLVED to approve the minutes. Unanimous.

452-FCM/01/26 Public Participation

There were 3 members of the public present.

Member of the public discussed footpath through Golf Club with uneven ground. Clerk to report.

453-FCM/01/26 External Reports and Updates

Written report from KCC Cllr Palmer – Appendix 1

454-FCM/01/26 Correspondence

- I. Email correspondence from SBC Parish Council Liaison Forum. Noted
- II. Email correspondence from Southern Housing – rubbish Oak Lane. Noted.
- III. Email correspondence from SBC Planning newsletter. Noted
- IV. Email correspondence from KCC Road Safety and Active Travel Newsletter. Cllr Horton requested this newsletter to be added to the minutes.

455-FCM/01/26 Planning

To receive updates on planning matters

- I. Development Croudace Homes, Forge Lane – no updates.
- II. Any reports from Cllr Rosewell. Cllr Rosewell discussed 2 applications submissions of details pursuant to application 21/501839 Land off Otterham Quay Lane. UPC has no comment.

456-FCM/01/26 Upchurch Parish Council Reporting

- I. Paddock and Recreational Ground – to receive update.
 - (a) Equipment repairs - update. Cllr Denny reported that repairs actioned satisfactorily. Noted.
- II. Burial Ground & Churchyard – to receive update.
 - (a) Maintenance to tree / hedges in Burial Ground – Cllr Denny reported work yet to start but imminent. Cllr Denny reported paving slabs in Burial Ground creating potential trip hazard. Clerk to inform contractor and ask for quote to repair.

- III. Highways & Street Lighting – to receive update.
 - (a) Update on streetlight maintenance. Cllr Berntsen reported that the work was due to be completed next week. Cllr Berntsen will request contractor review the damaged lamp post in Chaffes Lane and quote to replace.
- IV. Footpaths – to receive update noted resident report of footpath at Golf Club.
- V. Environment – to receive update
 - (a) Overflowing bins village centre – no updates.
 - (b) Rubbish accumulation Oak Lane – Email received from Southern Housing and SBC. Clerk to follow up.
 - (c) Cllr Ripley gave note of thanks to councillors who assisted with the village Christmas Tree and lights and to Jascom who assisted with the electrics. Furthermore, thanks to the Barnes family and The Crown public house for sponsoring the tree.
 - (d) Cllr Berntsen reported that the drains / culverts needed to be cleared at the junction of Pool Lane and The Street and that the salt bin was missing at the same junction. Clerk to report to KCC.
- VI. Allotments – no updates.
- VII. Community Awards 2026 – Members RESOLVED to action the annual Upchurch Parish Council Community Awards. Clerk to put application form on website and invite nominations from the community. The UPC Community Awards is to acknowledge and give recognition to a resident/group of Upchurch Parish who has/have made a significant contribution to this community over a period of years. The award and certificate will be presented at the Parish Meeting on Thursday 9 April 2026. Nominations to be received by 23 February 2026.
- VIII. Village Defibrillators – Cllr Berntsen reported that the new cabinet was due to be fitted after 16 January 2026.

457-FCM/01/26 Finance Reporting

- I. Financial review – bank statement and reconciliation were received. Noted
- II. Cheques for approval litter picker: £ 50.40
- III. Schedule of payments for approval:

| Payee | Date | Method | Reference | Reason | Amount |
|----------------|----------|---------|-----------|------------------------|-----------|
| Hugo Fox | 18/12/25 | PAID DD | 21386 | Website hosting | £ 11.99 |
| UVH | 08/01/26 | BACS | 7282 | Hall Hire | £ 40.00 |
| Safeplay | 08/01/26 | BACS | 32231 | Play Area inspection | £ 171.00 |
| Clerk Expenses | 08/01/26 | BACS | | Postage (insp sheets) | £ 3.35 |
| Clerk Expenses | 08/01/26 | BACS | | Postage (Burial Grant) | £ 3.35 |
| Lynne Balcomb | 11/12/25 | BACS | | Caretaker | £ 163.80 |
| Staff Costs | | | | | £ 1820.07 |

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

458-FCM/01/26 Budget Working Group

Cllr Lewin reported that the Budget Working Group has circulated an updated budget with amendments agreed at the December Meeting. The budget produced a precept calculation of £53876 an increase of 1.8% on a band D property. Cllr Horton reported that the new project for additional floral displays would be split with maintenance as a revenue budget and the pole planters and village gate as a one-off capital expenditure. Members RESOLVED to agree the precept request and the Clerk to action the request with Swale Borough Council. Unanimous.

459-FCM/01/26 Items to be considered for inclusion on the next Full Council agenda

Upchurch Spring Clean

460-FCM/01/26 Date of next meeting

Thursday 5 February 2026

The Annual Parish Meeting 2026. Members RESOLVED to hold the Parish Meeting for residents and local groups following the Parish Council Meeting on **Thursday 9 April 2026** – the Council meeting to commence at earlier time of 7pm with Parish Meeting following at 8pm. Clerk to request refreshments from the WI and offer donation towards this of £50.00.

461-FCM/01/26 Meeting closed 8.05pm

The big item for 2026 is the KCC budget, which is being set on the 12th of February. We at KCC aim to set a balanced budget, and to highlight some savings made from re-negotiating contracts and contract delivery or by bringing some services back in house. The aim is not to have any reduction in services while making saving and reducing the massive debt (£740 million) that we inherited.

Questions and issues raised with Cabinet Members

These questions are submitted to the Kent County Council Cabinet members as they relate to matters affecting the Swale West Division.

Question to the Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport

For the past four years, residents of my Swale West Division in Sittingbourne, Kent have experienced sustained disruption due to prolonged and overlapping strategic roadworks, including the M2 / A249 junction improvements, the Grovehurst Junction works at Kemsley / Iwade, and the A2 / A249 Key Street junction works.

As a result, the villages of Borden, Bobbing, Hartlip, Iwade, Lower Halstow, Newington and Upchurch have experienced exceptional levels of displaced traffic, including HGVs using rural lanes as rat-runs.

Can the Cabinet Member confirm:

- A) That a targeted programme will be implemented to repair damaged rural lanes across Swale West, including a defined pothole repair schedule.
- B) That the A2 from Key Street to the Medway border will be prioritised for full resurfacing.
- C) That gullies and storm drains along this corridor will be cleared of weeds and debris.
- D) That footways will be cleared of overgrown hedges and vegetation to ensure pedestrian safety.

Bus Services:

Residents of Danaway have raised concerns about the loss of their local bus service. Will the Cabinet Member or their Deputy agree to meet a representative group of residents to discuss realistic options for restoring local bus provision?

Question to the Cabinet Member for Education & Skills

Residents of Swale West have raised ongoing concerns regarding school admissions, transport entitlement, and future secondary capacity.

Can the Cabinet Member confirm:

- A) What steps have been taken to ensure parents are clearly informed about how and when to apply for school places, the importance of applying for the nearest school, and how free school transport eligibility can be affected.
- B) How parents are informed about non-KCC schools, including Medway schools, where these are realistic options.
- C) What assurances can be given that sufficient secondary school places are available for

Sittingbourne and Sheppey.

D) The current delivery timetable for the proposed Quinton Road secondary school in Kemsley, and whether Grampian (pre-occupation) conditions will be requested if further delays occur.

Question to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Public Health

Can the Cabinet Member explain why some residents are discharged from Medway Hospital without a suitable care package in place, and what steps are being taken to improve discharge planning?

Public Health & Environmental Risk:

Residents have raised serious concerns regarding illegal waste activity at:

- Happy Pants Ranch – involving land contamination following unlawful waste dumping.
- Raspberry Hill, Lower Halstow – a significant illegal waste site (not fly-tipping), reported in Kent Online and KM Group titles during 2024–2025.

Can the Cabinet Member confirm whether formal public health risk assessments have been undertaken, and if not, commit to ensuring suitable and sufficient assessments are carried out urgently, with enforcement and remediation action taken where risks are identified.

Question to the Cabinet Member for Environment

When will residents of Sittingbourne have access to a local Reuse Shop? If the Sittingbourne Household Waste Recycling Centre is suitable, will residents be clearly informed how to donate items and provided with full details of nearby Reuse Shops?