



**MINUTES OF UPCHURCH ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 09 APRIL 2026 AT 8PM IN UPCHURCH VILLAGE HALL**

Present: Cllr Ripley Cllr Denny Cllr Lewin Cllr Rosewell Cllr Bernsten Cllr Bodycomb  
Officer: Clerk, Nina Henley  
External Attendees: Cllr C Palmer Cllr R Palmer  
Apologies: Cllr Sheppard Cllr Horton  
External Apologies: PC Boosey

**1-APM/04/26 Welcome to the meeting by Cllr Tyrone Ripley**

Cllr Ripley welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were over 40 members of the public including representatives from Upchurch Players, Upchurch Choral Society, Upchurch Horticultural Society, Upchurch Running Group, The Rainbow Café, St Mary's church, Friends of St Mary's, WI and the Rapid Relief Team of Plymouth Brethren.

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**2-APM/04/26 Minutes**

To receive as correct and approval of the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 10 April 2025. Minutes were signed by Cllr Denny as a true representation.

**3-APM/04/26 Upchurch Parish Council Annual Report**

Cllr Ripley gave verbal report – attached appendix 1

**4-APM/04/26 Borough Council**

Borough Council Councillors Chris and Richard Palmer gave verbal report.

**5-APM/04/26 County Council**

Borough Cllr Palmer Kent County Council gave verbal report.

**6-APM/04/26 Local Community Groups**

- I. Written report from PC Boosey
- II. Verbal report received from Upchurch WI.
- III. Verbal report received from Upchurch Horticultural Society.
- IV. Verbal report received from Rapid Relief Team of Plymouth Brethren.
- V. Verbal report received from Upchurch Players.
- VI. Verbal report received from Upchurch Running Group.
- VII. Verbal report received from Upchurch Choral Society.
- VIII. Verbal report from The Food Bank, Rainbow Café and Happy Hour.
- IX. Verbal report from NSD Running Club.

## 7-APM/04/26 Open Forum

- I. Residents reported concerns with the planning application in Forge Lane.

## 8-APM/04/26 UPC Community Award.

Cllr Lewin presented this year UPC Community Award. Councillor Lewin announced that four deserving residents had been nominated for recognition. After careful consideration, the UPC members voted and agreed this year's winner would be David Candy and Cllr Lewin presented the Certificate of Recognition for his outstanding contributions to the community.

For over 35 years of dedicated service to the Upchurch Community including founding the Upchurch Players and editing The Gabriel Village Magazine fostering community spirit and local engagement.



9-APM/04/26 Meeting closed 9pm followed by refreshments kindly provided by Upchurch WI.

## Chairman's Report 2026

### **Welcome**

With regards to Parish life, projects and achievements.

Firstly, a note of thanks to Helen Boakes for her time served at UPC and we wish her all the best for her future endeavours.

We offer a warm welcome to our new Councillor Sarah Easton, who I am sure will become a valid member to the Parish Council.

### Allotments

I would like to thank Cllr John Bodycomb for his commitment with allotment issues. The Council continues to be committed to improving the standard of our allotments. A note of thanks to the Tenants who do work incredibly hard in maintaining the site.

### Paddock and Recreation Ground.

I would like to thank Cllr Pam Denny for her constant supervision of the Paddock and Recreation ground ensuring it is always well maintained. We have carried out tree works as and when required throughout the year.

Dog fouling is still, at times, a problem for the village. The Parish Council asks that dog owners ensure that they clean up after their dogs and put the waste in a litter bin or take it home.

We hope the residents have enjoyed the new play equipment especially for the older children.

### Christmas Tree

The Village Christmas was kindly sponsored by the Crown Public House and the Barnes family this year for the Village to enjoy. A note of thanks goes to the dedicated team of councillors who helped with the tree's installation and the festive lighting.

### Village in bloom

Our regular Cascade planter in the heart of the village will continue, with further barrier baskets along the fence line at the Recreation ground to provide the springtime blooms throughout the village.

UPC, especially Cllr Horton are currently working on further floral displays in other locations within the village.

### Poppies

The Council had a wreath laid at the service in Upchurch and a wreath sent to Ferques once again, thanks to Cllr Gerry Lewin for again organising this important event. Thank you to the councillors who assist me every year with installing poppies on lamp posts through the heart of the village.

### Village Caretaker

Our thanks go to Lynne Balcombe who continues to work diligently to help make Upchurch a great place to live. She works closely with the Clerk and regularly reports issues to her.

### Burial Ground

Our thanks to Cllr Pam Denny and Cllr Gerry Lewin for their constant supervision of this area. With an additional note of thanks to David Kew for his constant role with regards to rubbish and bin duties ensuring order is kept within the burial ground.

The pathway project in the burial ground is due to commence over the next few weeks.

### Street Lighting

Particular thanks to Cllr Ernie Berntsen who ensures the streetlights are in working order for the village. Promptly resolving issues should they arise.

UPC are currently looking at new suppliers, ensuring we secure the best value.

### Defibrillator

The Parish Council has replaced a number of Defibrillators in the Village, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Cllr Neil Sheppard for his constant role in ensuring they are all operating as they should.

Thank you for arranging and managing the new cabinet and defibrillator installation recently.

### Planning

Thank you to Cllr Gary Rosewell who is the Chairman of the Planning Committee, he regularly attends Swale chambers representing UPC on behalf of the village.

### Highways

Cllr Alan Horton has taken a keen lead in the Villages Highways Improvement Plan with close correspondence with KCC Highways, which is a challenge in itself, raising issues within the Parish as and when they arise.

This year we added to the HIP the new village gates display, KCC have agreed to fund one and UPC will fund the other with a third planned for 2028 ensuring the entrances to the village look inviting when passing or visiting Upchurch.

### Church Clock

Another brief note of thanks to Cllr Alan Horton for ensuring the clock is maintained and in working order for the village.

All this would not be possible without the help, support and commitment of the Parish Councillors. There are many things which go on behind the scenes to ensure the Parish Council effectively serves its community. Councillors give freely and tirelessly to maintain the facilities within the village and also by supporting residents with issues they may have.

So my personal thanks to them all along with a huge thank you to our Clerk Nina.

### Report PC Boosey Kent Police

Firstly, I would like to extend my apologies to yourselves and the residents in regard to missing the Meeting Last night. I had intended to attend, despite it being my rest days, as I knew it was the Parish meeting, however some family health concerns arose and I was unable to make it.

I did not send over the Newsletter as I thought I would be there in person to update you all and take any questions or issues from the public; but can see how ultimately you were left with neither.

I will send over the report as soon as possible, and as always, my inbox and metaphorical 'door' is always open to any resident who sees me around or has in issue.

Update in Short:

- Ongoing issues with Youths in Beckenham Park, unsure where they are coming from so have been in touch with local residents and will liaise with Medway counterpart should they be coming from Rainham. This area has seen increased patrols since the reporting of these incidents.
- Continued Nuisance Motorbike issues – Issues across the county have increased heavily due to the good weather. Groups travel between areas and often go 'through' the villages to get to other green spaces. Liaising with Rural Task Force to see what can be done in regard to catching them when they are out in the woods/fields/marsh as this is particularly difficult for myself alone, especially as this is an issue across all my wards and some locations are around a 15/20 minute walk from the nearest road network. Any information about these bikes, such as when, where and who, would be most appreciated to see if there are better opportunities to tackle them elsewhere.
- CO-OP Burglary 08/03 – All three suspects were located on scene and arrested. All three have been charged with the relevant offences.

### Horticultural Society

Chris and Steve from the Upchurch Horticultural Society  
Would just like to share some information about what the UHS is.

We have 35 members within the group and are always looking for and welcoming new members, whether you are beginners, novices or experienced growers who are interested in developing new skills in planting, trying out new ideas and having the satisfaction of growing their own vegetables and being able to eat them as they taste so much nicer than what we buy in the supermarkets. The growing of amazing flower displays, and also to have a bit of fun of what does well and what did not grow so well.

This year is our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary here in Upchurch and possibly one of the longest running society within the village.

We have three shows each year July September and October, this year the theme is celebration for our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary we are also affiliated members of, the Royal horticultural society, NVS, Kent federation horticultural society, dahlia society and the chrysanthemums society. This gives members the opportunity to grow and show their produce, floral displays, crafts, home baking for the show awards and rosettes and yearly awards.

We are very lucky that some of our members grow for national competitions, the quality and standard which they grow to is unbelievable, and they are very willing to share their knowledge and expertise with all members and for members to pick up new tips and tricks.

We meet the first Wednesday of the month at the barn here in Upchurch, which is a very social friendly event, having guest speakers giving talks throughout the year.

We do a yearly plant sale with plants supplied by shoregate nursery and members donating plant which they have grown themselves. This year it is 18<sup>th</sup> April in the paddock 9-12.30hrs, we will have tea and coffee van and cakes supplied by the WI so you are all welcome to come along and have a look.

We have trips arranged, this year its restoration house in Rochester which is a private house with extensive large gardens.  
Farm trip to a local fruit farmer farm.

UHS In partnership with the Forest school part of the main Holywell school of Upchurch. Donated several pieces of equipment to them and given advice. Also they are entering classes in our shows improving their learning skills for the future.

We have social events throughout the year, we have a BBQ in the summer, and a Christmas meal paid for by the society at the crown pub.

if you are interested in joining we always welcome new members and you can join with an annual fee of £10.00.

For any further enquires please email [upchurchsociety@gmail.com](mailto:upchurchsociety@gmail.com)

### **Upchurch WI**

We celebrated our 95<sup>th</sup> Birthday this year and fortunately we continue to be a very active WI. Although some of our long-standing members have gone into homes or sadly died, we have however had an influx of new ladies and our numbers currently remain at 57.

Throughout the year, Karen Taylor who manages our speakers provides us with an array of interesting and diverse speakers. From Blood Runners, Great Mysteries and conspiracy theories, the history of Pantomime, to the work of a Funeral Director.

We continue to have our popular monthly lunches, and we have just resumed our Kurling evenings to which anyone is welcome on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month. We also have 3 active book clubs running.

We are fortunate to have some wonderful crafters in our group and so we have wonderful Christmas and Easter trading stalls.

Last year our annual outing was to the Horniman Museum and Gardens in Forest Hill which was much enjoyed. We usually travel with village company 4 gems who give great service and always choose a route which makes the journey as well as the destination very enjoyable. This year we are going to the London Docklands Museum and Canary Wharf.

We still hold 2 quizzes a year, this year they are on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> April and 16<sup>th</sup> October and we have a pop-up cake stall at the Horticultural society plant sale which will be on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April.

We are active in the life of our federation East Kent attending, its annual conference, Summer Garden Day, Zoom talks and outings.

We hold a May coffee morning for members, a June barbecue and games evening and usually an August Posh Tea. This year however we are hosting our Newington Group of WI's tea in the Village Hall on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July and we are then holding a Murder Mystery event in the evening. This will be available to book soon and we hope you will all support us.

We continue to have our very popular Pamper Day on a Saturday which is held at a member's house. Treatments are done throughout the day by member Cherry Randle and her daughter Heidi along with our essential coffee and cake.

We now have a yearly craft evening, and last year we painted shells, pebbles or made a driftwood hanging. This year we are painting tote bags.

Any lady who wishes to join WI can come for three meetings before deciding if it is for them.

Helen Eldridge  
President of Upchurch WI

For information contact : [helen.eldridge@icloud.com](mailto:helen.eldridge@icloud.com)

### **Rapid Relief Team**

RRT Delivers hope and relief to people across the globe. Whether it be fire, flood or humanitarian need, RRT expands their support services to meet the need at hand.

Mission: to serve people with care and compassion in their time of need.

Vision: For the Plymouth Brethren Christian Church to express Christian principles of care and compassion by the way of benevolent relief to people in need.

Values: Global Team / Community Care / Compassion / Consistency

Who we support – Emergency disaster relief / Health & Disability / Youth / Homelessness, Poverty & Hardship.

### **Foodbank**

Thank you Upchurch village for your amazing support and generosity over the years. I wait in the layby opposite the church, 4 the 1st Wednesday of every month between 10.30 am and 11.30 am; and every month I am humbled by your kindness.

Thank you also to Holywell school who remember those in need every Harvest.

And thank you Upchurch for the extraordinary kindness and generosity last Christmas, which enabled us to fill 4 large hampers with Christmas goodies and gifts, for those whose Christmas would have been very grim without you.

### **Rainbow Cafe**

Second Thursday of every month. 2pm - 4.30pm St Mary's Church.

Our cakes and savouries are homemade and delicious. You won't find anywhere else where you can get a slice of cake and a hot drink for £2. We also have a fantastic snack deal for the kids. They get 5 items plus a drink for £1. And the good news doesn't stop there, because our income pays the school fees and buys school uniforms for 3 children in Uganda. Where else would eating cake make you feel so good.

### **Happy Hour**

First and third Mondays 6.30pm - 7.30pm Lower Halstow Memorial Hall (except bank holidays).

This is an hour of pure joy. We have a fantastic time singing some wonderful contemporary and gospel songs, old and new. We lift the roof and rock the walls. This is for anyone who wants a little joy. You don't have to be able to sing. Everyone is welcome. It's £2 or £3 for a family.

Gill Gay

### **NSD Running Club**

NSD is a local community running club, set up in 2021 from 4 members we've grown to about 40! There are people of all different ages from 16 to 60 and a complete mix of abilities.

We run a 5k loop of the village every Tuesday evening 7:30pm from the Crown pub and groups often run at the weekend too. There is a beginner group on Mondays 6pm.

We are planning an Upchurch 10k in the autumn and have a number of other events, both running and social.

If you want to know more, please visit our Facebook page or email [nsdrunners@gmail.com](mailto:nsdrunners@gmail.com)