

The Parish Council of St Margaret's At Cliffe

Minutes of the Ordinary Monthly Meeting of the above Parish Council held on Monday 9th December 2024 at 7pm at St Margaret's Village Hall

Present: Cllrs Rebecca Simcox (in the chair), Nikki Fulford (V Chair), Peter Blake, Terry Gilham, Mick Luckhurst, Brian Pearce, Lisa Smith, Anne Wheeler

Also Present: District Cllr Oliver Richardson

Apologies: Cllr Tony Fielding, County Cllr Steve Manion, District Cllr Martin Bates

Clerk: Orla Checksfield

Public Participation:

- A resident raised the issue of potholes on the junction of the Dover Road / Deal Road and the one in the Reach Road car park and also mentioned how much they enjoyed the Christmas Lights On
- Another Resident in attendance also wished to thank the Parish Council on a general basis for all the hard work they do, and did this in the spirit of representing the wider community as they felt they would if they were in attendance.
- A third resident raised the issue of the footsteps on the PROW behind the Coastguard pub which leads to the beach (ER37) by the Pill Box which remains closed. This is a KCC PROW issue, but the Parish Council are aware the St Margaret's Bay Conservation Area are actively pursuing KCC PROW for updates and working with the owners of South Sands house whose land runs adjacent to the footpath to try to control the vegetation and protect the pill box and the Napoleonic wall there.

Actions:

1. None
1. The minutes of the previous Parish Council meeting, having been circulated to all Councillors, were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting.
2. No declarations of interest were made on the agenda items

Report from the County Councillor covered the following topics:

1. **Bird Flu Prevention:** Bird keepers must register birds, report signs of flu (Defra: 03000 200 301), and maintain cleanliness to help stop the spread. See GOV.UK for details.
3. 2. **Pensioner Support:** Kent pensioners on low incomes not eligible for benefits can apply for £200 vouchers for food/energy via the *Just Missing Out* scheme.

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Report from the District Councillors covered the following topics:

Local Highlights

- a) **Bay Car Park:** Keith Watson is arranging a site meeting with KCC's Thomas Williams to address the issue.
- b) **Rural Bus Funding:** Previously raised; refer to Item b in the District Highlights for further context.
- c) **Station Road Bollards:** Following a 6th December site meeting, details have been sent to Property and Planning Services for a quote. Pavement safety by the village shop is also under review due to Health and Safety concerns.
- d) **War Memorial Access Road:** No updates; Ollie is following up.
- e) **Reach Road Car Park Pothole:** Keith Watson confirmed repair work was scheduled for the weekend after 5th December.
- f) **White Cliffs Hotel Condition:** Enforcement Officer contacted owners on 11th November to demand repairs, with potential enforcement action pending. Update requested by Martin.
- g) **Faulty High Street Streetlight:** Property Services confirmed repair during the last maintenance run.
- h) **Roman Painted House Parking:** Property Services noted the lack of a designated car park but may address this for the museum's 2025 reopening.
- i) **Bay Hill Road Closures:** January closures prompted letters to KCC leaders highlighting resident impact. Responses and further discussions occurred at SMBCA's 2nd December meeting. Additional representations are ongoing.
- j) **Cliff Tunnel Entrances at the Bay:** Breached entrance reported to DDC Property Services, who will ensure it is secured again to mitigate Health and Safety risks.

District Highlights:

- a) **DDC Energy Switching Scheme:** Residents can register for DDC's collective energy switching scheme to save on bills. Free to join and no obligation to switch. Potential savings average £140/year with the cheapest 12-month fixed tariff. Visit the DDC website for details or call 01304 872332 by 9th December with your latest energy bill.
- b) **Community Transport Grant 2024-25:** KCC invites applications for funding to improve or establish community transport schemes. Bids must address local transport needs and ensure accessibility. Applications open 2nd December and close end of January, with funding awarded by February 2025. Details sent to parish clerks.
- c) **Christmas Parking:** DDC offers free parking from 4pm on Christmas lights event days in Dover, Deal, and Sandwich, plus one hour free parking with purchases of an hour or more from 14th Dec to 1st Jan.
- d) **Winter Health Advice:** Winter Well Roadshow events offer health and cost-of-living support. Upcoming events: Riverside Centre, Dover (8th Dec) and Jubilee Centre, Sandwich (10th Dec).

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- e) **Dover Beacon Project:** Construction has started on "The Bench" in Dover as part of the £90m Dover Beacon development, bringing jobs, skills, and education benefits.
- f) **Dover Fastrack:** Launched in November, this rapid bus system links Whitfield to Dover Town Centre and Priory railway station, supporting sustainable transport goals.
- g) **Deal Leisure Centre:** DDC gathered over 950 resident inputs during engagement for a new leisure centre. Findings will be presented to the Cabinet in January 2025.

PC Rhys Clarke was in attendance to introduce himself to the council as he is taking over from PC Sophie Bramble as the local Neighbourhood Police Officer for Guston, Kingsdown & St Margaret's. PC Rhys reminded us to sign up to My Community Voice. This service allows residents to receive updates directly from their local police teams about issues affecting their area, such as crime trends, safety advice, upcoming events, and local initiatives.

He will be performing patrols around the community in both marked and unmarked vehicles and left the meeting after a few minutes to do just that.

Actions:

1. Clerk to circulate details of My Community Voice to Councillors and another reminder on Social Media

Clerk's Report

Without duplicating actions taken in respect of correspondence which of course was all dealt with

- **Planning** application consultee responses were submitted, and extension requests were made for two reviews set to expire before the next meeting.
 - Welcomed PC Rhys Clarke as our **Community Safety Unit** officer and invited him to the Lights On event while suggesting a formal meeting in December or January.
 - Helped connect a resident and the **Church Warden** to resolve overhanging tree issues in the churchyard, which DDC maintains as a closed churchyard in a conservation area.
 - Sent a follow-up email to **Cllr Gough** regarding prior communication about highway matters and received an acknowledgment.
 - Booked **training** for Cllrs Pearce and Fulford on burial law and chairmanship topics for early 2025.
 - Updated **SMBCA** on correspondence with Cllr Gough and inquired if attended their December meeting. We discussed road closures, their conservation appraisal, and potential collaboration on Design Guides. SMBCA also requested a link to their website on our Parish Council site.
 - Shared information on a **£500 Active Kent & Medway Small Grant** opportunity with various local groups and organizations.
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- Ordered salt and grit for the cricket club's garage and flagged the need to repair a damaged grit bin lid.
- Published **Christmas waste collection dates** and the 2025 calendar on our website and Facebook.
- Updated the **defibrillator circuit register**
- Posted a new **Memory Café** poster at the Post Office Corner.
- Supported **Kent Libraries'** volunteer recruitment campaign by sharing their materials online.
- Coordinated **raffle prize deliveries**.
- Reported **faded lines in Reach Road Car Park** (reference #1145440) and followed up with **Waste Services regarding leaf removal**.
- Informed a resident about ongoing efforts to fix a **pothole** in Reach Road Car Park, which was scheduled for repair last weekend.
- Continued attempts to contact Idverde about the extra cut needed in Alexander Field, now awaiting a response from their new Customer Services manager.

Special thanks to Team Christmas for putting up the Tree at Post Office Corner.

Financial Regulations

- Reviewed and approved revised Financial Regulations

Actions:

1. Clerk to update Financial Regulations on Parish Council Website

Planning:

- a. New Applications

The variation of condition 2 (approved plans), condition 5 (construction traffic management plan), condition 6 (access visibility splays) and condition 8 (access design) of planning permission 22/00668 (The erection of a solar farm with battery storage and associated infrastructure for a period of 40 years) to allow the temporary access to be moved. Also, consequential amendments to the wording of conditions 3,4,9,10,11,12,13, and 15, which have already discharged

5.

[Land North East And South East Of, The Lane, Guston, CT15 5EX](#)

No objection provided that:

- 1) a satisfactory ecological assessment is submitted which includes effective and viable measures to mitigate ` adverse effects on 50 metres of hedgerow.
- 2) conditions can be imposed to ensure traffic flow to the site does not result in congestion on the A258.

Erection of a single storey side extension with integral garage (existing side extension to be demolished)

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[La Manica Vista, 5 Sea View Road, St Margarets Bay, CT15 6EE](#)

No Objections

Erection of single storey rear extension

[Cledge, The Avenue, St Margarets At Cliffe, Dover](#)

No Objections

Conversion of garage to annex and erection of a single storey rear extension

[5 Royston Gardens, St Margarets At Cliffe, Dover, CT15 6AD](#)

No Objections

b. Glebe Field –

A number of residents have contacted the Clerk to complain about the condition of the field. Cllr Richardson agreed to raise this matter with Roger Walton, Strategic Director (Place and Environment), DDC to understand if there is anything that can be done

Actions:

1. Clerk to deal with responses to new planning applications once finalised
2. Parish Clerk to share summary of the concerns raised by residents iro Glebe Field with Cllr Richardson
3. Cllr Richardson to share concerns, upon receipt, with Roger Walton, DDC

Finance & Accounts:

The council reviewed and approved all payments and receipts since the prior meeting

Items to Note:

6. Regarding **Dover Security Services** Cllr Fulford is going to speak with the contractor to ask for a general update on the services provided and the nature of incidents being dealt with.

The DDC SLA for Public Conveniences: The SLA was approved for the Clerk to sign and return, noting the Clerk has asked for additional clarity regarding the large water bill incurred in May 2024. As of the date of the meeting no response had been received.

The setting of the precept for 2025/2026 The first round of budget discussions took place on 21st November, during which the Parish Council reviewed several

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costly projects proposed for consideration. To keep precept levels reasonable, some tough decisions will need to be made.

The Council also discussed guidance from KALC regarding setting aside reserves for building maintenance. While this approach will help smooth future financial demands, it is not a practice the Parish Council has historically undertaken, so it will not provide immediate relief.

In light of a modest year-on-year increase in cash balances which may result from the reserves, the Council is exploring options to place savings in accounts offering better interest rates to maximize returns for the community particularly prudent in terms of the Cemetery reserves.

It was felt the proposal to replace the existing **Spirit of St Margaret's** was going to prove too challenging to take forward both in terms of negotiating with KCC who own the turning circle on which the existing boat is sited and financially. Generally, the Parish Council felt another effort should be made to source a like for like replacement as the current boat is much loved. Cllr Blake will speak with the village contractor regarding taking over the upkeep. Cllr Gilham will also explore costs to find a replacement boat.

Proposal from **Cricket & Tennis Club Regarding Storage at KGV Field** – Cllrs Luckhurst & Blake – They want more storage but not yet in a position to move this proposal forward.

Proposal to approve costs for **external storage boxes for Defibs at Bowls Club and Alexander Pavillion** – The council approved in principle to order the two x defib cabinets at an estimated cost of £450 each. The installation costs are not yet available, but the council members understand these will be provided at the next meeting for review and are comfortable with this two-stage approach given the knowledge of prior installation costs.

The council also approved the cost of **Fireproof Cabinet for Clerk's Office at Village Hall** of approximated £650 for Village Hall office.

Village Maintenance Items were presented for approval £1,500 for playground repairs relating to the recent ROSPA inspection with a likely additional £1,000 for parts relating to the swings.

£1,265.00 for pointing the Parish Council Garage at the KGV Field was also approved

Actions:

1. Cllr Fulford to call Dover Security Services for a service review/update and will feedback at a later meeting

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2. Clerk to sign and return DDC SLA for public convenience in Reach Road Car Park
3. Cllr Blake to speak with Village Maintenance Contractor regarding upkeep of turning circle and any replacement for Spirit of St Margaret's
4. Cllr Gilham to cost replacement boat for Spirit of St Margaret's

Correspondence

- **Glebe Field Concerns:** A number of residents emailed to raise concerns about the deteriorating condition of the field by the Village Hall, asking for the Parish Council's support.
- **Residents Correspondence**
 - How to cancel their subscription to the Parish News.
 - Call about the non-working streetlight outside the Old Fire Station. KCC directed them to the Parish Council, and we will follow up.
 - A former resident reached out for information on applying to Ash Grove.
 - Emailed about overhanging trees from the Churchyard.
 - Several residents contacted the Council to share their views or seek details on the Sherleys' Farm application.
 - A resident reported excessive leaves in the Reach Road car park and a pothole on the exit.
 - An email from a gentleman sharing fond memories of staying at the St Margaret's Holiday Camp in the 1950s.
 - A young resident expressed interest in volunteering for next year's Christmas Lights On event and VE Day Commemorations.
- 7.
 - **CPRE Invitations:** We received invitations from CPRE to attend their AGM on 22nd November 2024 (or vote by proxy) and to their Christmas lunch, along with information about their cards and lottery.
 - **KALC Updates:** Weekly bulletins for 15th and 22nd November 2024 have been shared, as well as details of the 77th AGM which took place on the 30th November. List of KCC Highways Managers & Stewards
 - **Pétanque Piste Planning:** Mohammad Harris from DDC confirmed that a planning application will be needed for the proposed Petanque Piste.
 - **Community Policing:** PC Rhys Clarke, additional member of the Community Support Unit PC, introduced himself via email and shared the latest newsletter. He hopes to attend our Christmas Lights On event.
 - **Village Hall Solar Panels:** The Village Hall Committee initially requested financial support for solar panels but later decided to withdraw the request.
 - **Spirit of St Margaret's:** Put forward a request for financial support to replace existing structure
 - **Highways Correspondence:** An email was sent to Cllr Gough (KCC Leader) following an exchange between Cllr Mannion and the Highway Manager.

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- **KCC Historic Treescape Grant:** Updates on this grant opportunity were shared.
- **Stagecoach Discussions:** Correspondence with MP Mike Tapp and Cllr Bates included updates on Stagecoach timetables and funding allocations for bus infrastructure.
- **Staple Parish Council** shared their formal complaint regarding planning and enforcement issues at DDC.
- **DDC Annual Town & Parish Council Meeting** Slides were shared
- **Square card reader fees** are increasing from 1% to 1.5% as of January 2025.
- **Stagecoach Connect:** Cllr Bates emailed with information regarding Stagecoach Connect and referenced the government has provided KCC with a further £23m to help the public bus infrastructure in the county.
- **Active Kent & Medway Small Grant and Workforce Development Fund** - Dover Parish Councils - £500 Small Grant Opportunity
- **SMBCA** - Invite to the SMBCA Committee Mtg on 2nd December

Actions:

- None

Reports from Councillors

Cllrs Simcox & Smith – **Christmas “Lights On”**

- Fantastic Event, Great Feedback
- Concerns over the size and we need to look at how we can limit the size as we are victims of our own success.

Cllr Fulford – **Stagecoach Buses**

- MP Mike Tapp's office is scheduling a call in January 2025 and he was very pleased with the constructive approach taken by St Margaret's so far.
- Awaiting an update from Stagecoach regarding the extra two buses from Dover to St Margaret's and back, to see if we can get those to go through to Deal
- Confirmed 82A – School bus from Deal to St Margarets to come back at 1530 which can be used by the general public.

Cllrs Fielding & Simcox – **Highway Improvement Plan**

- There is a meeting on Tuesday 10th December with Highways to validate / explore requests put forward.
- Cllr Simcox noted she is stepping away from Highways
- The council thanked Cllr Simcox for all her work on Highways to date.

Cllrs Fielding & Wheeler – **Design Guides, Local Plan including Bay Landscapes Appraisal**

- Very disheartening meeting with DDC Policy office

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- Design guides will not help protect the elements of the village as we had hoped.
- Suggested a limited Neighbourhood Plan as the alternative
- These are expensive – as you need a specialist advisor paid for by the parish
- They are also not a quick fix, they take time to get approved.
- SMBCA are looking to move forward with the Landscape Appraisal to finish the Bay Conservation Area Appraisal. They are currently experiencing some push back from DDC Policy Office due to resourcing issues, but they are hoping to address those shortly.

Cllr Blake – **Cemetery Resilience Planning**

- The Registrar is happy for Cllr Pearce to shadow him and be able to provide cover for emergencies.
- Cllr Pearce will contact the Mr Miller to arrange a time to run through the process.

Cllr Fulford – **Data Privacy & Security**

- A series of meetings have taken place to review the nature of data held by the council.
- There is a long list of actions to be undertaken, largely by the Clerk but there is also training which the whole council will need to undertake.

Actions:

- Cllrs and VJ to discuss how to structure next year's event to reduce overcrowding
- Cllr Pearce to contact Mr Miller to arrange time to run through the process of the Registrar

Village Maintenance and Matters affecting the Parish

Playing Field Inspection

- Fencing is back up at the KGV field – memorial plaque previously attached to the wall needs to find a new home.

South Foreland Valley

9.
 - Next Volunteering Day is 19th December
 - Cllr Wheeler will take photographs and gain consent to use for volunteering drive

Resilience Planning

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- There has been a round of training to support the planning preparation with Cllrs Fulford, Luckhurst and Wheeler attending the following training sessions between them:
 - Emergency Planning part 1
 - Flood Warden
 - Climate Change Conference (strong focus on Fire)
 - Emergency Planning part 2
- Planning to speak to Cllr Sarah Waite-Gleave from Walmer Town Council, who is a member of the Climate Emergency Working Group

Highways – Road Closures

- Finally had a response to our letter of 29th October to the KCC Leader's Office from Neil Baker on the 26th November giving more details of the closures on Bay Hill
- A lot of them are in fact overnight works with the roads remaining open during the day for access – so very disruptive to residents.
- There are some which close the road completely and have diversions using Granville Road / Hotel Road / Bay Hill which we know to be impassible in pretty much any 4-wheel vehicle.
- As the responses still failed to acknowledge the key issue of lack of communication / collaboration by the Highways Manager we have replied accordingly on the 3rd December and invited Cllr Baker to come and meet with us in the village prior to the works to see first-hand the challenges our unique location presents. As yet there has been no acknowledgement of this communication.
- Cllr Bates (via Cllr Richardson) offered to read a statement on behalf of St Margaret's at the Dover Joint Transport Advisory Board Meeting on Thursday 12th December outlining the concerns raised.
- The council expressed their thanks to the Cllrs for their support.

Parking Bay by Village Shop – Bollards

- A meeting took place on the 6th December with Cllr Bates and Cllr Gilham and the Clerk to clarify the request and reconfirm the quote for works.
- A new quote has been received at £17,836.51 ex VAT just prior to the meeting. This still includes elements the council wishes to challenge.

KALC Community Awards Scheme 2025

- Councillors were reminded they need to come to the January meeting ready to nominate and vote.

VE Day

- The Clerk and Chair of the council approved a payment of £100 deposit to secure entertainment for VE Day celebrations.

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- The use of an entertainer was discussed at the precept / budget meeting and although final budgets have not been agreed for 2025 it was felt prudent to pay the deposit at this time to secure the date.
- The VE Day budget will be approved as part of the 2025 budget discussions.

Actions:

1. Cllr Pearce to share photograph of the Memorial Plaque at the KGV field with the councillors
2. Cllr Wheeler to take photographs of SFV Volunteers and gain consent to share on social media.
3. Cllr Blake is going to provide his key of the Alexander Pavillion to Cllr Pearce
4. Clerk to circulate quote received for works to Parking Bay by Village Shop to enable Cllr Gilham to review in detail with a view to raising queries back to DDC.
5. Clerk to provide Cllr Bates with a written statement to read at Dover Joint Transport Advisory Board meeting taking place on Thursday 12th December outlining concerns iro Highways.

Information received since last meeting. Anything raised to be added to the next meeting agenda.

10.
 - The council's attention was drawn to the slides shared post DDC Town & Parish Council.

Minute of Appreciation for Christmas Volunteers

The Chair, on behalf of the Parish Council, extended heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers who made the recent Christmas Lights On event a resounding success. This included those who helped put up the Christmas trees at the Village Hall and Post Office Corner, set up the festive lights around the village, and distributed and donated beautiful food and mulled wine on the day. Appreciation was also expressed for the volunteers who stayed behind to tidy up, those who generously donated safety lights for the car park, and everyone who went above and beyond to ensure the evening was enjoyable and safe for all. A special thank you went to the community for embracing the Christmas spirit, attending in such great numbers, and giving generously to support those in need.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.30pm

Confirmed by the Chair:

Date: