

The Parish Council of St Margaret's At Cliffe

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the above Parish Council held on Monday 8th
December 2025 at 7pm at St Margaret's Village Hall

Present: Cllrs Nikki Fulford (in the chair), Mick Luckhurst, Lisa Smith, Anne Wheeler

Also Present: County Cllr Bridget Porter, District Cllr Oliver Richardson

Apologies: District Cllrs Martin Bates, Cllrs Peter Blake, Tony Fielding, Terry Gilham and Brian Pearce,

Parish Clerk: Orla Checksfield

Public Participation:

6 members of the public were in attendance and raised the following concerns

- Called to attention the transport of static caravans through the village from the Park Dean holiday park, which didn't appear to have any escort, despite being a wide load.
- A resident queried how much money is being held in the accounts, which was answered by the Clerk. The resident then enquired as to the plans for the money? The Chair confirmed the plans would be discussed later in the meeting under the finance section.
- Resident was in attendance to understand the position relating the adverse possession claim in the village. The Clerk confirmed additional information has been received since the last meeting which will be discussed at the end of the meeting.
- Resident also raised a concern regarding the same adverse possession and the challenge they will now experience to access their land which is beyond the adverse claim. The same resident also raised the concern for those with accessibility requirements if the claim goes ahead, as understood, as the footpath will not be wide enough to meet the minimum standards for a wheelchair or child's pushchair.
- A Resident raised concerns regarding the same adverse claim and spoke to the history of footpaths in the area. They also provided the councillors with background to the work they had done with Kent PROW to establish ER28 across their land to ensure ER275 connected to the unadopted highway The Avenue which at the time met the end of ER28. The Resident is the owner of Wildside and talked to the usage of Wildside as a publicly accessible space often used by the Nursery, as an example. They key can be requested from the Resident. The Resident asked the Parish Council to consider lodging a caution to ensure an accessible footpath would remain between The Avenue and ER28 connecting ER275 going forward.

Action:

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- Parish Clerk to contact to Parkdean to highlight resident's concerns regarding transit of static through the village without an escort.

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.

Parish Council Vacancy

Cllr Fulford asked the Council to formally note the receipt of Cllr Simcox's resignation effective 13th November. The Clerk was asked to record the Council's thanks for their service and contributions during their time in office.

3. It was also noted the District Council have been notified and a Notice of Vacancy has been on display since the 24th November 2025 in line with the statutory vacancy process. The Electoral Services Officer will be in touch to advise on the outcome of the notice post the 12th December 2025. In the meantime if anyone would like to express an interest in the vacancy they were encouraged to let the Clerk know.

Civility and Respect Pledge

The Chair reminded Members of the Parish Council's commitment to the Civility and Respect Pledge. Councillors noted that the Pledge affirms the Council's responsibility to uphold high standards of behaviour in all dealings, promoting a culture of respect, courtesy, and professionalism.

4.

Report from County Councillor covered the following topics:

▪ **Highways and Transport**

KCC has reported significant activity on the county's road network since June, including 210,000m² of resurfacing, 250,000m² of patching, and 22,000 potholes repaired. Residents are encouraged to continue reporting potholes and defects using the updated online reporting tool on the KCC website. A £67 million investment programme is planned for the current year.

5.

Cllr Fulford asked Cllr Porter to escalate the state of the potholes outside the schools on Sea Street and on Dover Road towards Westcliffe. Cllr Porter confirmed she is seeing Highways Engagement Officer later this week and will mention it then.

▪ **Department of Local Government Efficiency (DOLGE)**

reported progress on delivering better value, including the implementation of Kent's first Commercial Strategy and increased use of Kent-based suppliers. There are no plans to close Kent libraries. An unpaid £73m Adult Social Care (ASC) debt is being addressed, and ASC

costs are expected to rise. KCC is working with the NHS and district councils to improve support for people leaving hospital and to expand the use of technology to help residents remain in their homes longer.

- **Household Waste and Environment**

96% of users rate the Household Waste and Recycling Centres as satisfactory, and KCC aims to extend opening hours. Three new ReUse shops have opened, benefiting local charities. 6,000 trees have been planted so far this year. Discussions continue regarding an overseas trucks levy to bring Kent in line with neighbouring countries.

Cllr Fulford queried if any additional monies would be directed to Dover in light of the port being here? Cllr Porter mentioned different options are being looked at including a toll on Jubilee Way.

Cllr Porter also took the opportunity to wish those in attendance a 'very frugal Christmas and an optimistic New Year' and the Parish Council wished her Many Happy Returns.

Report from the District Councillors covered the following topics;

Local Issues:

- **White Cliffs Hotel**

No recent activity reported. A site visit to check completion of external painting had been planned for September.

- **St Margaret's Bay Car Park**

The bid for DDC capital programme funding was unsuccessful. Some palliative repairs may still be undertaken using remaining Parking Services budget.

- **Access to Bay Tunnels**

Unauthorised access was reported and Property Services have removed the rope that was enabling entry.

- **Townsend Farm Planning Application**

The attempt to call in the reserved matters application was refused under paragraph 293 of the DDC Scheme of Delegations. Democratic Services will request a constitutional amendment for clarity on call-in rights. Parish Council representations have been acknowledged, and the developer has been asked to redesign their layout.

- **Road Safety Signage Request**

A resident's request for signage outside the primary school has been referred to the Parish Council for consideration within the Highways Improvement Plan.

- **DDC Parking Strategy (CAB 63)**

Overview & Scrutiny recommended delaying implementation and building further evidence. Cabinet rejected this and confirmed adoption of the Parking Strategy, associated changes to charges, additional

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disabled bays, and continued work on phases 2 and 3. The decision stands and cannot be called in again. A public awareness campaign on the implications is underway.

Cllr Fulford asked Cllr Richardson to provide clarity on the timing of Phase 2? Cllr Richardson said at this stage this was still unknown, but he would of course advise as soon as he knew more.

District Wide Issues:

- **Christmas Parking**
Free parking will be available in DDC car parks between 3pm–6pm on Christmas lights event days in Deal, Sandwich, and Dover.
- **Local Government Reform**
DDC supports the creation of four unitary councils for Kent and Medway (Option 4b), recognising both the benefits and challenges of Option 4d.
- **Immersive Exhibition**
At The End of History, an accessibility-focused exhibition exploring the stories of disabled people in Dover, is open at Dover Museum until 26 January 2026.
- **'New Year, New Hobby' Event**
A free community event will take place at Dover Maison Dieu on Saturday 17 January, offering taster activities, volunteering opportunities and performances, supported by DDC and Arts Council England.
- **The Council Tax Support Scheme** has gone back out to consultation.

Cllr Richardson, on behalf of himself and Cllr Bates, wished everyone a Happy Christmas and the Parish Council wished them both Many Happy Returns.

Clerk's Report

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

1. Governance, Compliance & Administration

1.
 - Uploaded the **September Minutes** and **November draft Minutes** to the website.
 - Uploaded **payments in excess of £500 (YTD)** to the website.
 - Submitted the **Annual Return** for the year ending 31 March 2025 for **King George's Field, St Margaret's at Cliffe (Charity No. 1084458)**.
 - Renewed the **DDC Small Society Lotto Licence** for 2026 and followed up with DDC Licensing regarding renewal under the new process as Parish Council's are not covered as an option.
 - Submitted **Change of Address for Service** to HM Land Registry for Title Deeds: *K114713, K157745, K164138, K260692, K269979, K330752,*

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K391354, K441751, K741648, K847387, K852804, K903493, TT75466 (no fee applicable under new Business Account and no need to employ solicitor either).

- Contacted **Mazars** to chase the outstanding audit invoice.
- Updated the **CCTV Policy** (review dates only) and posted it to the website.

2. Planning & Land Matters

- Responded to planning applications **25/01150, 25/01166, and 25/01030**.
- Wrote to the resident making an **adverse possession claim impacting ER275**, requesting a copy of their claim - TT182132
- Contacted **HM Land Registry** regarding the pending first registration **TT182132**, seeking details of the claim and was advised claim has been cancelled.
- Sent the Parish Council's **Response to Notice of Objection** regarding Title Number **TT184050** – impacting ER275

3. Property, Assets & Maintenance

- Contacted **DDC Property Services** regarding street lighting.
- Advised the contractors and the Bowls Club of the Council's decision on the **Kingsdown Pavilion roof**, and visited the pavilion to ensure works were progressing as planned on the date of works.
- Liaised with the **SFV volunteer and contractor** to arrange hedge trimmer servicing.
- Confirmed to the **Cemetery & Village Maintenance Contractor** the works approved at the November meeting.
- Queried an invoice from **Idverde** that exceeded the agreed contract; invoice subsequently withdrawn.

4. Community, Engagement & External Relationships

- Wrote to the resident offering to assist with groundworks for a bus stop at the Hope Inn, thanking them but declining the offer.
- Attended the **DDC Town & Parish Council Meeting** with Cllr Fulford.
- Visited **Stagecoach** offices with Cllr Fulford.
- Attended the **St Margaret's Bay Conservation Association** meeting:
 - They continue to follow up with DDC regarding flooding and surfacing issues in the Bay Car Park.
 - PROW issues remain open around Long Steps and the steps near the Pillbox.
 - Members are working with the Pillbox owners to clean the structure.
 - Their refreshed website is available and the Clerk encouraged councillors to review.

5. Insurance & Events

- Provided the tractor insurer with event dates for **Christmas Lights On** and the **Santa Express** to arrange and pay for the additional cover.

6. Staff & Office Arrangements

- The Parish Clerk will be on **annual leave from 15–23 December 2025**.
- The Parish Office will be **closed from 24 December 2025 to 2 January 2026** in line with District Council closures.

Policies

The agenda reviewed the following policies and approved them for adoption. The Privacy Policy may require some adjustments following the implementation of the new website in early 2026.

- Community Grants Policy
- Privacy Policy

Actions:

1. Clerk to publish Community Grant Policy and Privacy Policy to Parish Council Website

Planning:

a. New Applications were agreed as follows:

T1 - Common Lime, the subject of Tree Preservation Order No 13 of 2007, - remove epicormic growth around base and crown lift to 6 metres above ground level; T2 - Sycamore - fell; T3 - Common ash - fell; T4 - Sycamore - fell; T6 - Common Ash - fell; T8 - English Elm - prune back canopy to fence line; T9 - Sycamore x 2 - prune back canopies by a maximum of 3 metres to boundary fence; T10 - Leyland Cypress - fell and recoppice adjacent Hazel; T11 - Sycamore - Fell, all the subject of Tree Preservation Order No 8 of 2004.

2.

The Old Vicarage, St Georges Place, St Margarets At Cliffe, CT15 6GG [25/01105]

Delegate to the Tree Officer

Outline application for the erection of two dwellings (landscaping to be a reserved matter) (existing dwelling demolished) (self build)

White Hill, 23 Salisbury Road, St Margarets Bay, Dover [25/01054]

Object on the following grounds:

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1. There is no Design & Access or Planning Statement to explain why the existing bungalow should be demolished,
2. There is concern the height of the proposed pair of houses will cause overlooking of neighbours,
3. This application for 4 bedroom dwellings does not meet needs identified in the 2024 St Margaret's Housing Needs Survey.
Included link to Housing Needs Survey in the submission

Raise crown to 5 metres above ground level and crown thin by 20% of a row of Beech the subject of Tree Preservation Order No 3 of 2023.

Villa Gris Nez, Bay Hill, St Margarets Bay, CT15 6DU [25/01275]

Delegate to the Tree Officer

Update – New Townsend Farm, St Margaret's [25/00968]

Cllr Fulford updated the Council following correspondence from DDC Planning concerning this application. The request for the application to be referred to the Planning Committee was declined, as reserved matters applications are not eligible for call-in by District Councillors under the DDC Planning Constitution.

However, Planning officers have acknowledged the concerns raised by the Parish Council. The case officer has already contacted the applicant and identified a number of issues that will need to be addressed. It is anticipated that a revised scheme may differ significantly from the plans currently under consideration.

Planning officers have offered to meet with Cllr Bates and representatives of the Parish Council to discuss the concerns in more detail at the appropriate stage. It was noted that some of the issues raised at this point fall outside the scope of the reserved matters process.

Actions:

1. Clerk to respond to planning applications

Finance & Accounts:

- a) The Council reviewed and approved all payments and receipts since the previous meeting

3. **To Note:** A resident indicated during the meeting that they had been unable to hear parts of the discussion relating to parish finances and requested clarification. The Chair and Clerk agreed to meet with the resident outside the meeting to summarise the points covered, solely to ensure they had access to the information presented.

It was noted that this arrangement is being made as a one-off courtesy due to the resident's difficulty hearing during the public session. The Council reaffirmed

that all matters of public finance will continue to be discussed transparently at properly convened Parish Council meetings. The other members of the public in attendance confirmed they were comfortable with the level of detail and transparency provided.

b) **Village Maintenance Items for Approval**

No urgent items for approval, all other items are under planning with the Village Maintenance Working Group who will present their draft budget to the Budget Working Group on the 17th December 2025.

c) Items/Invoices for approval

None

Actions:

1. Cllr Fulford & Clerk will arrange to meet with the resident in the New Year to summarise the points covered, solely to ensure they have access to the financial information presented.

Correspondence

1. Highways, Drainage & Public Realm

4.
 - Copied into correspondence from the **St Margaret's Bay Conservation Association (SMBCA)** to **DDC Property Services** highlighting flooding issues in the Bay Car Park.
 - Cllr Fulford contacted local business owners, following a discussion with the **KCC Drainage Team Lead**, to advise that **KCC Highways** will be focusing initial drainage works on the High Street within the next month.
 - A resident raised concerns regarding the condition of the highway outside **Portal House** and **St Margaret's Primary School**, as well as vehicle speeds and the design of the 20mph scheme. The Clerk responded with reassurance regarding the scheme's design by KCC Highways and provided KCC Councillor contact details for further escalation.
 - Received **Highways Factsheets** on *Connected Vehicle Data* and the *Crash Remedial Measures (CRM) Programme*.
 - Notification the **Dover Joint Transport Advisory Board (DJTAB)** was cancelled again but a copy of the Highways Works Programme was shared by Cllr Bates at least.
 - **KALC News** December

2. Footpaths, Land & Property Matters

- Response received from **Gill Turner Tucker** regarding the **Right of Access request** over the King George V Approach Road.

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- A resident contacted the Council asking whether it intended to appeal the decision on footpath claims **C493** and **C494**.
- The same resident emailed again querying the lack of response to earlier correspondence on these claims and the Council's plans to contact individuals who submitted PROW evidence. Cllr Wheeler contacted the resident to explain that changes in councillors and clerk since the original claims resulted in a loss of "council memory." Available information is published on the Council website. The Council will review its internal processes for handling such claims in future.
- Resident has raised queries relating to **St Margaret's Free Down**. Requires some research to respond as it relates to decisions undertaken by the council in mid 1970s (exact decade to be confirmed)
- A resident requested an update on the **Sycamore tree** at Alexander Field.
- **HM Land Registry** confirmed that the **first registration TT182132**, which also impacted **ER275**, has been cancelled. Although I have since had correspondence from the resident who is not aware of this and have advised them of the update received by the Parish Council.

3. Community Engagement & External Meetings

- Invitation received to the **Dover District Community Resilience Plan Workshop** on 18 February 2026.
- Invitation received to a **Pesticide Action Network** presentation.
- Invitation received to a **Bathing Water Quality Stakeholder Meeting**.
- **CPRE Kent** November 2025 newsletter received.
- A local resident expressed interest in filling the **vacancy on the Parish Council**.

4. Schools, Safety & Local Issues

- A member of **St Margaret's-at-Cliffe Primary School** contacted Cllr Bates regarding road safety signage around the school. The information was shared with the Parish Council and responded to by Cllr Fielding.
- December **Defib checks** received from Volunteer Simon Creed with thanks

5. Grants & Community Funding

- Responded to an enquiry from a local applicant regarding the **Community Grant Scheme**, providing timelines and advising them to await the December policy review before completing the application.

6. Legal, Licensing & Permissions

- Cllr Fulford contacted **DDC Legal Services** regarding the licence required for land use associated with the proposed **Pétanque pitch**.

7. Banking & Finance

- Notification received that **credit card terms are changing**: cashback will only be paid where spending exceeds £2,000 per billing cycle and the credit limit is £2,000 or more. These conditions do not apply to the Parish Council so now cashback will no longer be paid.

Local Government Reorganisation – Update and Considerations

5. DDC unanimously decided to put forward 4 unitary authorities forward to central government. Public consultation will happen in the New Year with a decision is expected April 2026. A year of the new unitary authority working alongside the existing structure will then take place before the new unitary authority becomes the sole operating structure.

Reports from Councillors

1. **Christmas – Cllr Smith**
Lovely occasion, the new format seemed to be greeted positively. Circa £1,000 raised for local charities – St Margaret's Nursery, The Memory Café and St Margaret's Scouts. One lesson learned this year was to engage with the charities earlier to drive better engagement with them.
A minute of thanks for all the volunteers involved around Christmas and it should be especially noted several commercial/agricultural businesses also give up their working hours to support the council – Lyons Farm, Ross Purchase, Holyer Services, R C Claringbould & Sons, D A Tree Surgeons, Owl House Stables and The Village Hall.
6. 2. **Highways Improvement Plan – Cllrs Fielding & Gilham**
Postponed to next month due to apologies.
3. **Highways – Drains – Cllr Fulford**
Work going on today in Sea Street. Good engagement with the Highways Drainage Engineer to undertake a survey of the drains in the High Street to see what work needs to be done to avoid future flooding. Cllr Fulford will follow up again with Highways for an update.
4. **Stagecoach – Cllr Fulford**
Met with Commercial Director and Operations Lead for Dover. They were very sympathetic to community being excluded by lack of bus service. They understood the points being raised in respect of isolation for young adults as well as those of any age who don't have cars and therefore cannot travel late in the evenings on Sundays or Bank Holidays.
Stagecoach are looking at how they might be able to add another service on a trial basis from Easter, but stressed longer term it would certainly be a

case of 'use it or lose it' as they couldn't sustain a longer term service which didn't at least break even.

5. KALC Community Award 2026 – Cllr Fulford

Nominations are due for next year's award in January 2026. Cllr Fulford asked Councillors to come to the January meeting with having considered who they may wish to nominate for the 2026 award.

Councillors asked if there was an opportunity to invite the community to make nominations? Clerk would explore how/if this could be done using existing social media platforms.

6. Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Facility Strategy – Cllr Fulford

The survey completed is actually feeding into a 5 year strategy and Cllr Fulford is trying to arrange to meet with the Open Spaces Officer next week to discuss St Margaret's in more detail now the wider context of the survey is understood post their presentation at the DDC Annual Town Parish Council meeting.

7. DDC Annual Town & Parish Meeting – Cllr Fulford

Community Governance Review was discussed at the meeting. It will start its pre consultation period on 28th January 2026 at which time the draft Terms of Reference will be shared with the Parish Council and we will understand the full scope of the review, but this will be the opportunity to consider the existing structure of our own Parish Council.

8. Dover Design Code Community Panel – Cllr Wheeler

Based on public focus groups, but was found to be rather difficult to control the meeting as the public took an opportunity to complain about previous planning decisions rather than be constructive about moving forward. Not entirely sure the consultants will have got what they need to make informed representations to DDC. Cllr Wheeler will provide further updates once received.

Action:

- Clerk to explore ability to use existing social media to allow wider community to make nominations for KALC Community Awards 2026

Village Maintenance and Matters affecting the Parish

● **Playing Field Inspection**

Cllr Luckhurst agreed to undertake the Playground Inspection during Cllr Pearce's medical leave.

7.

● **South Foreland Valley**

No Update

● **Alexander Memorial Field & Pavilion**

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No Update

- **Kingsdown Road Pavilion**

Roof has now been repaired and the contractor has been paid accordingly.

- **King George V Playing Field & Pavilion**

Biffa bin has now been delivered, collections are every two weeks at present. Parish Clerk will likely switch to monthly collections post Christmas Lights On event. Additionally, it was considered advisable to erect some fencing to secure the Biffa bin to avoid unauthorised use.

- **KGV Approach Road – Residents Request to extend driveway access**

Further to the request received earlier in the year from a resident seeking permission to widen their driveway across the verge of the King George V Approach Road, the Parish Council has now received legal guidance regarding the relevant Deed of Access.

The Council was advised that it must grant the request for access. However, the Deed also specifies that the access road must not be obstructed. This may present challenges during the initial construction works, particularly given the likely increase in builders' traffic and the potential future works associated with the resident's outline planning permission for an additional dwelling on the site.

The legal advice also confirms that the applicant should bear the cost of any repairs required due to damage caused by heavy goods vehicles using the access during the works.

Members expressed concern that, in light of the Parish Council's ownership of the land, consideration may need to be given to updating the relevant risk assessments, recording the condition of the road prior to the commencement of any works by a resident, and post their works, as well as reviewing the numerous obstructions currently present on the verges. The periodic use of the approach road by Biffa refuse collection vehicles was also noted.

Additionally, any response to the resident must take account of the operational requirements and scheduled use of the KGV Pavilion by the Cricket and Tennis Clubs.

- **The Civic Cemetery**

None

- **Village Ponds**

None

Actions:

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1. Cllr Smith to update KGV Risk Assessment to include KGV Approach Road and considerations raised during the meeting.
2. Cllrs Luckhurst and Blake to confirm peak operating times for Tennis and Cricket Clubs
3. Upon completion of above actions Clerk will draft a response to resident for the council's consideration.

Further information was received since last meeting on Claim TT182132

- HM Land Registry appear to have misunderstood the Parish Council's objections, and urgent clarification is required due to the time critical nature of the matter under consideration. Although the matter was not listed on the agenda for this evening's meeting, as correspondence arrived after the agenda was posted, the Council agreed that Cllr Fulford should contact HM Land Registry to clarify the points previously submitted. No further actions were agreed at this stage, and the Parish Council's original objections remain in full.
- 8.

Action:

Cllr Fulford to contact HM Land Registry to clarify the objection previously submitted.

9. There are no additional items for inclusion on next month's agenda

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.21pm

Confirmed by the Chair:

Date: