

Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden Parish Council

The Minutes of the Meeting of Hoo Saint Werburgh and Chattenden Parish Council
Held at Chattenden Community Centre on Thursday 6th February 2025 at 7.00pm.

Councillors present: Cutting
Dunkley
Francis
Fray
Gissing
Hopson
Mitchell
Pearce
Sands
Styles
Tildesley
Williams
Wood

Also: Sherrie Babington - Parish Clerk, and members of the public.

The meeting was chaired by Councillor Sands.

1. Apologies.

Members who cannot attend a meeting shall tender their apologies to the Parish Clerk prior to the meetings, under Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, the members present must decide whether the reason(s) for a member's absence shall be accepted.

Apologies were received, and reasons for absence accepted from Cllrs Koroma (personal reasons), Chester (sickness), Sparkes (work) and Barton (work).

2. Declaration of Interest.

To receive Declarations of Interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda, in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 in respect of members and in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect of officers.

No interests were declared.

To consider any Dispensation requests received by the Parish Clerk and not previously considered.

No dispensations were considered.

3. Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting.

To consider the minutes of the previous meeting and if in order sign as a true record.

The Minutes of the previous meeting were circulated to all present.

It was proposed by Cllr Cutting to accept these as a true record, seconded by Cllr Styles and agreed by all present.

The approved Minutes were then signed and dated by the Chairman.

4. Matters arising from the Minutes.

a. Hoo Academy Road Safety Meeting.

Cllr Wood updated members on a recent site meeting with officers from Medway Council regarding road safety outside of Hoo Academy. He confirmed that Medway Council had stated that no additional crossings could be installed beyond the existing one due to driveways and footpaths, and the extension of the footpath was not feasible due to a drainage ditch.

He informed members that he had challenged Medway Council to explore alternative solutions and was awaiting their response.

He stated that a covenant protected the verged area outside the school. Members discussed the ongoing parking issues, and Cllr Wood confirmed that the possibility of a designated drop-off and pick-up area had been considered the previous year, however, the school's expansion had resulted in the loss of several parking spaces causing parking challenges on-site.

5. Public Participation.

To discuss any questions received by members of the public.

A resident attended the meeting to inquire about the installation of dog bins at the Four Elms development. The Chairman confirmed that a request had been submitted to Medway Council, but this may take some time to progress. The resident also raised concerns regarding the issue of dog mess at the play area on the development.

Members discussed the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO), which covers areas within the parish, such as recreation grounds, but this was not extended to private play areas.

The resident raised concerns about housing developments on the Peninsula and the lack of supporting infrastructure. The Chairman reiterated that the PC had responded to all consultations on this matter, as it shared concerns regarding inadequate infrastructure provision associated. He informed the resident that Medway Council Leader, Vince Maple, would be holding an event at Hoo Academy in March, with tickets available for the Medway Matters Live event.

He thanked the resident for attending the meeting and for his contributions.

6. Police and PACT Report.

To receive a report regarding police matters and the PACT.

No matters were raised.

7. Urgent Matters (if any with the Chairman's consent).

To consider any urgent matters raised by members.

The Chairman raised the urgent matter of Medway Councils Community Infrastructure Framework, which was currently at the consultation stage. He reported that copies of the document were available in the library, and he had also requested copies for the Parish Council.

He spoke regarding the report and the importance of retaining independent villages on the Peninsula and preserving their unique character rather than allowing them to merge into one. Concerns were raised that this appeared to be predetermination of the Local Plan. It was also noted that there were a number of spelling mistakes in the published document and the consultation period was short, however this had now been extended to 16th March 2025.

A general discussion took place, and it was agreed that further advice should be sought from Planning Consultant Dave Chetwyn. It was resolved to ask him to prepare a full response to the consultation on behalf of the Parish Council. This was proposed by Cllr Fray, seconded by Cllr Pearce, and unanimously agreed by those present.

Action: Clerk to liaise with Dave Chetwyn regarding representing the Parish Council in the consultation process.

8. Financial Matters.

a. To consider the monthly financial statement.

Financial Statement will be circulated in paperwork at PC meeting.

The bank balances and payments were considered by members, these were approved, proposed by Cllr Dunkley, seconded by Cllr Williams, and agreed by all present.

b. Grant Request.

To consider the following Grant request for £480:

Hi Kent Community Hearing Aid Support Clinic held at The Walter Brice Centre, Tilley Close, Main Road, Hoo, Rochester ME3 9AE

This Hearing Aid Support Clinic is provided free of charge to Hoo residents of all ages living with hearing loss, and will be held monthly on Tuesdays in 2025:

14 January, 11 February, 11 March, 8 April, 13 May, 10 June, 8 July, 12 August, 9 September, 14 October, 11 November, 9 December

and run by our fully trained volunteer, to provide batteries for NHS aids and a full cleaning and re-tubing service to ensure that aids are fully functioning. The Clinic runs from 10am to 11am each month but our volunteer is always happy to extend this time to ensure that each client receives the time and attention they deserve.

Signposting is given to other free services provide by Hi Kent such as Assistive Equipment, Lipreading Classes, Tinnitus Support Groups, Digital/Technical Support and Social Groups.

Hi Kent aims to help people with hearing loss live fulfilled lives socially and in employment, and to enable them to overcome the socially isolating aspects of being or becoming deaf. Deafness causes a number of issues which result in disadvantage and deafness is often known as the 'invisible disability' because often there is no outward sign that someone has a hearing loss. People who are deaf are often isolated and fearful and suffer from depression. Nationally 1 in 5 people have a hearing loss, and this rises to 1 in 4 people over the age of 50.

Our Support Clinics benefit those people living in Hoo who are living with hearing loss and require expert help to look after their NHS hearing aids in order to ensure they work effectively for them. Hearing aids that are regularly maintained and work well give the wearer more confidence in their ability to cope better with everyday life and enjoy social situations secure in the knowledge that their aids help them pick up the sounds/pitches they have lost.

Home visits are provided free of charge for people unable to travel to the Clinics due to illness or frailty.

Our services are provided locally where the need exists and free of charge with no appointment needed.

Members considered a grant application from High Kent and approved a grant of Â£480. This was proposed by Cllr Wood, seconded by Cllr Francis, and agreed by all present.

Action: Grant of £480 approved.

9. Clerks Report.

To receive the Clerks Report.

Child-Friendly Medway

The request to hire the recreation ground was approved on 21st August 2025.

Funfair request 2025.

Requested return visit to pottery road recreation ground - 12th-19th MAY 2025

The request from the fair was discussed. Following complaints about noise from the previous hire and issues with equipment being left on site, members agreed to increase the deposit to £600 and request that the hirers review noise levels. The hire was approved subject to the new conditions, proposed by Cllr Fray, seconded by Cllr Gissing, and agreed by all present.

Email from Medway Council regarding the Closure of Hoo Village Hall Recycling Point

I'm writing to advise you of the upcoming closure of the recycling point and subsequent removal of recycling banks at this site on the formal request of the landowner:

- Hoo Village Hall, Pottery Road

I have already been to the site and affixed notices on the banks advising users of the upcoming site closure and the alternative locations in Medway to avoid confusion or complaints. The closest sites are:

- Hoo Village Shoppers Car Park – 0.5 mile away
- Lower Upnor Car Park – 3.5 miles away

I would like to take the opportunity to confirm:

- All the materials collected at this facility can be recycled via the domestic weekly collection services, or other recycling points and Household Waste and Recycling Centres.
- Medway Council provides all householders with containment for recyclables, and we deliver a roll of clear sacks to all properties every 13 weeks.
- We also provide, blue and white re-usable sacks for householders use in containing recyclable materials, these are available from libraries or by ordering online or by phoning 01634 333333.

In the longer term, we will continue to monitor site usage across all remaining sites, as to ensure best value for our public services.

Members noted the intention to close the recycling area and remove the recycling bins from the Hoo Village Hall car park.

10. Chairman's Report.

To receive the Chairman's Report.

The Chairman gave an update on the parish van, he stated that there had been issues with the DPF filter. The van was taken to the garage under warranty, where they found a cracked turbo pipe was causing the issues. With the MOT due in March and the repair costing over £300, he stressed the importance of the working group moving ahead with purchasing a new van as soon as possible to avoid further problems.

This was agreed by the council.

He spoke about a recent Ward Climate Change Working Group meeting he attended, where Tree Officer Mike Sanktas had offered to visit a future PC meeting.

He gave an update on the tree planting event at Deangate and reported that there had been some issues with trial bikes in the area.

11. Parish Council Committees.

To receive reports and recommendations from PC Committees.

a. Events Committee.

To receive and note a report from the Events Committee.

Cllr Cutting provided a report on the planned events for the forthcoming financial year. She confirmed that there would be no Easter Hunt in 2025, with the Events Committee focusing on the VE/VJ commemorations in May, a Harvest Tea, and the Christmas on the Green events. These plans were approved by the Parish Council.

She also informed members that she had submitted an expression of interest for a pantomime in January 2026.

She reported that she had applied for a £19,000 Lottery Grant and was actively seeking sponsorship and donations to support future Parish events.

Cllr Cutting asked that Cllr Pearce return the Silent Soldiers so they could be repaired and stored in the Parish Councils garage.

She reported that there was a remaining balance of £1169.12 in the 2024/25 events budget and outlined additional expenditure to be covered from this.

She also provided an update on the 2025 pantomime, which was noted as a successful event.

Cllr Gissing tendered her apologies and left the meeting at 8:26 pm.

b. Environment Committee.

To receive and note a report on Environmental Matters.

1. Noticeboards:

Specifications have now been sent out and we are in the process of seeking quotations for this work.

2. Footpaths:

A tender document is being prepared to invite quotes for the new pathways at Kingshill Recreation Ground and for the replacement/repair of the Pottery Road Recreation Ground footpath.

Work in progress on Tender document.

3. Tree Management Kingshill Recreation Ground.

Medway Valley Countryside Partnership has booked Thursday 6th February 2025 to carry out woodland work at Millennium Wood, Kingshill Recreation Ground.

c. Finance, Audit and General Purposes Committee.

To consider the report and recommendations from the FA&GP Committee:

No matters to report.

12. Planning Matters.

a. Planning Applications Received.

MC/25/0122 - 5 Webb Close, Hoo St Werburgh, Rochester, Medway, ME3 9HW

Construction of a two-storey side extension and a single storey front extension and off-road parking to the front of the dwelling.

No Objections.

b. Planning Applications Decisions by Medway Council.

TPA/25/0004

29 Flack Gardens Hoo St Werburgh Rochester Medway ME3 9AX

Tree 370 - Oak - Reduce the 3 elongated laterals growing over the neighbour's property from 6m to 3.5m

Approval with Conditions

MC/24/2294

1 Butt Haw Close Hoo St Werburgh Rochester Medway ME3 9BA

Partial conversion of the garage into habitable living space and part storage, including raising of the garage roof height.

Approval with Conditions

c. Appeals.

No appeals to consider.

d. Other Planning Matters.

To consider other planning matters.

13. Memorial Garden.

To receive and note an update on the Memorial Ground.

Cllr Williams reported that the fencing around the Memorial Garden was now complete.

He advised that the Working Group had met to discuss the next steps and agreed to hold a site meeting to finalise landscaping, pedestrian gate and access requirements, pathways, and the overall site layout.

He stated that a small ramp was required to improve accessibility through the pedestrian access gate on Stoke Road.

The Clerk reported that a grant application for £2,000 had been submitted for the Memorial Stone, though a decision was still pending.

It was agreed that the immediate priority was signage for the site, with the preferred design being a wooden surround with a plastic information board insert.

The possibility of installing memorial benches was also discussed, and the Clerk was asked to draft policies and guidelines for consideration.

Action: Clerk to arrange a site meeting for further discussions on landscaping and access.

Action: Clerk to draft policies on memorial benches for review by the working group.

14. New Community Centre.

To receive and note an update for the new Community Centre.

Cllr Williams updated members on the recent Community Centre Committee meeting. He reported that the Architect had held a pre-planning meeting, which resulted in the submission of a list of consultants required for drafting reports for the planning application. The committee had reviewed these and agreed that further clarification was needed regarding the preferred appointments, and a response was awaited from the Architect.

He also provided an update on the Section 106 funds, stating that Medway Council had raised further queries regarding the legal agreement. As a result, a meeting had been requested with Medway Council to address these matters, and the Parish Council was currently awaiting confirmation of a meeting date.

Action: Date to be arranged for meeting.

15. Whoo Cares Heritage signs.

Cllr Dunkley to report on this item.

Cllr Dunkley spoke regarding the successful bid submitted by wHoo Cares for the installation of heritage signage boards across the Peninsula, including one for Hoo and one for Chattenden. He reported that he had attended a meeting regarding this and confirmed that the signs would be freestanding, mounted on a faux wood frame.

He stated that the Parish Council needed to determine suitable locations for the signs in both areas. It had been agreed that the preferred site for the Hoo sign would be the Village Green. For Chattenden, it was proposed that the sign should be positioned near the Community Centre, with the Chairman tasked with liaising with Ian Dunkley to confirm the location.

A representative from wHoo Cares attended the meeting and provided further details on the project.

16. Village Hall.

A report was circulated to all members regarding the Village Hall. This was considered and approved as the agreed way forward. With the Village Hall retaining its current Charity Status and the Parish Council as Sole trustees.

The recruitment of staff was considered priority, and the personnel Committee was appointed to oversee the recruitment process.

The report was proposed by Cllr Cutting, seconded by Cllr Tildesley and agreed by all present.

Action: Clerk to instruct solicitor to proceed in line with the agreed actions.

17. Ward Councillors Report.

To receive a report from the Ward Councillors Sands, Pearce and Crozer.

- He reported that grit bins had been installed on Walters Road.

- Updated on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, including plans to widen a section of footpath past Haig. He highlighted concerns that the proposal would require the removal of mature hedging and stated he was making representations on this issue.
- He raised concerns about bus services, noting that buses were not arriving and that routes were changing without notice. He stated that he was setting up a Bus Watch initiative to gather evidence on this matter.
- He reported that 3,500 trees had been planted at Deangate as part of a planting project.
- Noted that trial bikes were using the Deangate area and confirmed that the issue was being addressed by police and Medway Council.
- Devolution – He reported that Kent and Medway were not selected for fast-track devolution, meaning the process was on hold for now. He confirmed that elections for Medway Council would take place as usual in 2027.
- He reported that Medway Council needed to find £8 million in the current financial year to balance the budget.

18. Date of the next meeting – Thursday 6th March 2025 at Hoo Village Hall.

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman closed the meeting to the press and public at 9.10pm.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____