

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF GUSTON PARISH COUNCIL

held on Tuesday 9th December 2025 at Guston Village Hall- 6.30pm

PRESENT: Parish Councillors: Chair: Cllr. Tracey Creed, Cllr. Keith Gowland, Cllr. Matthew Sweetman, Cllr. Angela Surendorff, Cllr. Martin Bates, Cllr. Bridget Porter

Parish Clerk: Mrs Glynis Farthing.

ABSENT:

MEMBERS OF THE PRESS/PUBLIC:

None

4668 Apologies for absence:

Cllr. Claire Gurraj (recent operation), Cllr. Oliver Richardson

4669 Declarations of Interest

As in previous Minutes.

4670 Minutes of the last meeting

Proposed for acceptance by Cllr. Sweetman, seconded by Cllr Gowland

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 28th October 2025 be accepted, proposed by Cllr Sweetman and seconded by Cllr.Gowland signed by the Chairman.

4671 Planning

- Brompton House, The Street, Guston, CT15 5ET

Proposal : Erection of single-storey rear/side extensions, two storey rear extension, rear balcony with glass balustrade, outside kitchen, front porch, installation solar panels to the roof, external weatherboarding and alterations to windows/doors (existing porch and rear conservatory to be demolished)

Application Granted

- Erection of single storey rear extension (existing conservatory to be removed)
Downs Gate Dover Road Guston Dover Kent CT15 5EH
Ref. No: 25/01081

This does not appear to cause any reason to comment.

4671 Public Participation

Chairman closed the meeting for public participation.

No public present.

Chairman reopened the meeting

4671 Matters arising from Minutes of the last meeting

Nothing that isn't already on the agenda

4672 Solar Park

James Jenkison from Greentech has been in regular contact and updates have been sent to residents and added to the parish website.

The Clerk, Chair and Vice-Chair have been invited to the Groundbreaking ceremony and lunch on Friday 28th November.

4673 Dover District Council –Cllrs. Bates/Oliver Richardson

1). BIO SECURITY CHECKS AT THE PORT OF DOVER

The content and conclusion of both the EFRA Committee's report on 'Biosecurity at the border: Britain's illegal meat crisis' on [8 September](#), and the latest report on 'UK-EU trade: towards a resilient border strategy' ([15 Sept](#)), bring home the stark reality of what is happening at our borders, why it is happening and what urgent action is needed now.

The reports echo DDC's and the DPHA's longstanding concerns around the significant risks illegal meat present to GB biosecurity at Dover – to public health, animal health, and national food safety - and calls for urgent action to protect our border. They confirm critical issues at Dover where significant volumes of illegal meat are seized (with year on year increases in seizure volumes), with a lack of resources to provide sufficient operational cover at the port, unsatisfactory facilities and the absence of enforcement powers. DDC commends the Committee's conclusions and recommendations and looks forward to the Government and DEFRA putting in place a plan to address the critical points in the reports, including:

- Repurpose Bastion Point to support DPHA's enforcement activities
- Provide DPHA with interim emergency funding to at least double its operational cover for anti-meat smuggling operations at the border.
- Transfer enforcement powers and funding for personal imports of illegal meat to port health authorities.
- Fine and prosecute repeat offenders or those who attempt to smuggle significant volumes of illegal meat.
- Clarify Sevington's future and support affected local authorities

2). NEW BLOOD TEST SERVICE IN VICTORIA HOSPITAL DEAL

Residents of Deal and the surrounding areas will be able to access blood tests at Victoria Hospital, Deal from 27 October 2025. The new community phlebotomy service will be provided by Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust and will complement routine blood tests already available through general practice, increasing local access to testing. There is no change to the routine and diagnostic blood tests currently offered by general practices, which now offer more blood testing appointments than ever before. However, the introduction of this service at Victoria Hospital will provide additional appointments for specific needs.

The specialist service will launch in two phases, with phase one running four days within the first month and including:

- **Urgent testing** - tests that need to be prioritised due to clinical urgency.
- **Difficult venipuncture** - also referred to as 'difficulty obtaining a blood sample', often due to factors like small or fragile veins.
- **Fasting** - where the patient must avoid food and drink for a specified period before the blood test.
- **Glucose tolerance testing** - a specific test that measures the body's response to sugar over time.

The second phase, incorporating a children's clinic, is planned for January 2026.

All appointments will be available through referrals from GPs or other health professionals.

3. HEALTH INNOVATION FUND

Dover District Health Alliance has now launched its Health Innovation Fund and is accepting applications.

This funding offers grants of up to £10,000 per organisation to support new or adapted community projects that addresses one or more of the following local health priorities:

1. **Healthy Weight / Healthy Lifestyle (priority wards - Town & Castle, St Radigunds, Tower Hamlets)**
Target group: Children in Reception and Year 6 in wards with the highest obesity levels
2. **Healthy Minds (priority wards – district wide)**
Target group: U18s awaiting ASD/ADHD diagnosis

3. **Long Term Health Conditions (priority wards - Aylesham, Eythorne & Shepherdswell, Walmer)**

Target group: prevention of cardiovascular disease in adults 50+ in specific district wards

Application window:

Open: 15th September 2025

Close: 31st October 2025

Please note: They are only accepting applications through the Social Impact Gateway. The link to sign up to this free platform is here: <https://app.plinth.org.uk/application/q8dJJIL.EbThnyrw0dWvG>

We encourage you to apply or share this opportunity with others who may benefit.

If you have any questions or need support with your application, feel free to get in touch.

4. RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUND

Small businesses and community organisations in the district are being invited to apply for funding to boost investment in rural areas and support local communities. The Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) grant scheme has opened for applications for 2025/26, with over £120,000 REPF funding available to support rural businesses and communities in the district. The fund is being used to generate employment opportunities and business growth, strengthen community cohesion and resilience, and improve local facilities and amenities.

Grants are available for:

- Rural Businesses - small businesses with less than 50 employees and a turnover under £10m can apply for: capital funding for equipment that directly supports job creation and retention; up to 50% of their costs
- Rural Communities - voluntary organisations, registered charities and parish councils can apply for: funding for equipment that benefits local communities; up to 100% of their costs.

The maximum grant is £10,000 and projects must be completed by 31 December 2025. Application forms must be returned to DDC by **mid-day on Friday 7 November 2025**. For more information, or to make an application, please see the REPF page on the DDC website at www.dover.gov.uk/repf

5. COUNCIL TAX CONSULTATION

Proposals to modernise and simplify the current Council Tax Support scheme are being considered by Dover District Council – and your views all residents throughout the District are sought. Council Tax Support (CTS) helps people who cannot afford to pay their Council Tax. It assists people who qualify for the scheme with a discount, mainly based on the income of the household.

Each council must devise its own Council Tax Support scheme for working-age people, (people who have not yet reached state pension age). DDC is consulting on a new scheme for working-age people for 26/27, which aims to maximise the support available to residents. It is estimated that the proposed changes would result in an additional £1m of Council Tax Support for people in Dover District.

The changes seek to bring the scheme in line with Universal Credit and would see eligible, working-age households able to claim up to 100% discount from their Council Tax payment. Under the existing scheme the maximum claim is up to 90%.

The consultation is open to all, however the council is writing directly to households in the district currently in receipt of CTS, and other key stakeholders to inform them of the proposals and to encourage them to respond. The proposals, background information and online survey are available on the DDC website. Printed copies of the survey can be made available upon request.

The deadline for comments is 28 November 2025. For more information, please see the DDC website at www.dover.gov.uk/consultations

LOCAL ISSUES

1). DOVER FAST TRACK

During the coffee morning last Friday I was approached by a resident who is very keen to have a footpath introduced that will connect the bus stop at Burgoyne Heights with the village so that people can walk to it safely and take the DFT into Dover and Whitfield. I did advise her that the ultimate decider on this is KCC not DDC, that I have raised this request before and been rebuffed. Nevertheless, I will raise it again at the Local Bus Group meeting tomorrow (29/10). By now the fleet of electric buses should have been delivered to Stagecoach and I will be checking on that also.

2). SCHOOL BUS

The number 93 is no longer serving the children at St Eds, Dover Girls and Dover Boys. Schools close early now on Thursdays and bus timetables have not been updated to reflect this. Parents will be needing to arrange collection on this day. No. 93 serves Guston, Martin, East Langdon and St Marg.

4674 Kent County Council – Cllr. Porter

LGR Update

<https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation>

Kent's 14 Councils are set to abolish themselves under Government proposals and be replaced by 3 or 4 new, larger unitary councils.

The majority of Councils opted for 4 new Councils, namely North, West, Mid and East Kent. However North Kent (Dartford and Gravesend), Medway and KCC want their models taken forward..

KCC preferred option for LGR, a single unitary council covering Kent and Medway, to include 3 Area Assemblies will now be taken to the next stage after a discussion at the Kent Leaders Forum.

KCC Leader has made the case for a single unitary authority, believing that multiple authorities would not be cost effective. The Government will have the final say.

Cllr Chrisp Hespe added "we will always put the residents of Kent first.

Climate Change Initiative

On 18th September KCC Members voted to rescind the Climate Change Initiative agreed in 2019 by the previous administration.

Previously the designation had been that KCC had endorsed the anthropogenic climate catastrophic agenda, pushed that narrative through its policies and practices, such as procurement to the detriment of small local suppliers.

There are simply too many anomalies evident in climate catastrophism ideology for KCC, as a serious body, to continue with its declaration of climate emergency.

Campaign for Ashford and Ebbsfleet

On 26th September KCC united with council partners, MP's local businesses and stakeholders to demand the return of International Rail services to Ashford and Ebbsfleet.

The people of Kent have waited long enough. It's time to open the door to competition.

KCC Leader Linden Kemkaren joined a powerful coalition including Lord Hendy, potential new train operators, French National Assembly deputy Vincent Caure to advance the case for Kent, thus boosting trade, tourism and employment.

The Minister reiterated his firm backing for international services returning to Ashford and Ebbsfleet and confirmed the government's support. This formal position already detailed in his letter to the Office of Rail and Road which states "reopening Kent's stations is an important consideration for allocating depot space to competition from other providers"

KCC are more confident than ever that a compelling case for Kent has been made.

A petition organised by local campaigners has attracted more than 75,000 signatures, underlining the strength of public demand for the return of this vital service. If you haven't already signed and wish to, please visit

www.change.org/p/bring-back-eurostar-train-services-to-kent

Debt

In May 2025 KCC debt was £732 million.

In September after negotiation with Barclays Bank, a loan taken out by the previous administration was repaid 40 years early, saving £670,000 per year in interest payments. This equates to a saving of £1820 per day. Debt in 2026 will fall to £650million.

4675 Feedback from Council Representatives and Matters arising from previously circulated material.

KALC Area meeting held on October 22nd. Minutes circulated. This included a useful presentation from Border Engagement Force Team. This team are part of Kent Police. They urge the public to report any suspicious/out of the ordinary activity.

Nothing further to report on the Parish Charter.

Cllr. Gowland and Clerk attended a meeting with Planning Enforcement on Wednesday 10th September at 2pm. This was extremely useful as was the presentation to Parish Representatives on Tuesday 30th September. (Presentation circulated). Cllr. Gowland attended a finance day and gave a brief resume of the main points raised during the day. Discussion of transfer of assets related to Local Government reorganization. Budget setting in the context of setting Precepts for the next financial year.

Clerk attended a meeting with DDC Community Team on Thursday 11th September at 1pm. This is a useful forum for sharing issues that are common to most Parishes.

4676 Highways Improvement Plan

Highways team have sent through information regarding the possible locations of a 'wildlife' sign but as yet we have no idea of the cost this will incur. One location is on church land on the left-hand side of The Street. The second is on the Langdon Road beside the newly built house opposite Guston Court Farm. We will monitor the situation

Clerk has reported the flooding on the Langdon Road following the heavy rain last week. This is never satisfactorily repaired/cleared.

Logged Date: 23/10/2025 12:44:36

Enquiry Number: 907894

Enquiry Subject: Drainage and Flooding, Road Flooded – Minor/Rural

Location: East Langdon Road

The weeds on the bridge have been reported and continue to await attention. Will report again.

Logged Date: 26/10/2025 12:20:03

Enquiry Number: 908318

Enquiry Subject: Weeds, Obstruction to cway/fway

Location: Dover Road

4677 Financial Reports/Accounts/Payments

- a) The Financial statement for September has been prepared and circulated to Cllrs.

The balance on current account as of 28th October 2025 = £98,989.65

- b) Items for payment: to be made by electronic payment.

MSCAPE – October Maintenance £663.42 (SO)

Cloud Next (website hosting) £119.98

Cloud Next (domain name) £60.00

Total: £843.40

Above payments all made

G. Farthing (October salary £998.40+£12 exp £3.00 copier paper) £1,013.40

Keith Gowland (Expenses for KALC course) £36.00

Total: £1,892.80

Payments proposed for acceptance by Cllr. Sweetman, seconded by Cllr. Surendorff

- c) Consideration of setting up a savings account. With reference to the email Clerk circulated with information regarding current savings rates. Cllrs discussed this suggestion and agreed that if there are no adverse tax implications then it would be a good idea to set up a savings account. Clerk will carry out the necessary checks.

RESOLVED: (b) To approve payments, and Clerk to raise electronic transfers for dual authorisation

RESOLVED:(c) To set up a savings account if there are no adverse tax implications.

4678 Roads, Footpaths and other Parish Matters

- Guston Green-. the zip -wire ramp parts have been installed
- First meeting with PC Sophie Bramble, Community Warden Martin Dadd and Dog Warden /Environmental health officer, Stuart. This went well considering that the weather on the day was dreadful. Attended by Cllr Gowland, Cllrs Bates and Richardson and five Guston residents.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 20th November 1pm – 2.30pm

- A resident has asked if the Chance is able to make use of the village hall car park when they have events as parking is very limited in the village. Clerk has suggested that this **might** be possible provided that the hall wasn't hired for use. It would have to be done on an event by event basis but would have to be confirmed by the Cllrs at the meeting.

Cllrs discussed this request, however there were concerns raised related to the fact that the car park is in a dreadful state and the village hall does not have the money to carry out refurbishment. It encourages everyone to start using the VH grounds as a free car park. Exceptions could be made to the Chance if parking benefits a residents booking, ie, christening party, wake, etc, but not available generally.

- Cllr. Creed contacted the Dog Warden and has arranged for a larger sign to be placed on Guston Green advising that dogs were not permitted. She also raised concerns regarding some dogs which had been rehomed in Guston.
- Village Hall redecoration – this is now becoming necessary. A quote has been received and is being considered. Discussion about the payment for this work.
- Cllr. Sweetman is continuing to look into the siting of a flag pole at Burgoyne Heights. He has approached the planning department at DDC for information.
- Advent service – to remember relatives who have died. Rev Sheffield has proposed holding a special service just before Christmas time and link it to the tying of ribbons on the village Christmas tree. Clerk will liaise with Mark at Mscape to find out when the tree will be installed so that a date can be finalised.
- Remembrance Service at St Martin's – Sunday 9th November. Cllr. Creed will attend but Cllr Sweetman is unable to attend following recent surgery and Cllr. Gowland is involved with wreath laying commemoration in the town.
- Burgoyne Heights residents association/committee – Cllr. Surendorf mentioned that some residents are intending to hold an informal meeting this week to discuss issues related to the estate. Cllrs recalled the meeting held some years ago and the issues raised by the fact that the PC does not own any land at BH and the difficulties in getting things done. Cllrs Surendorf and Sweetman are hoping to attend and liaise on behalf of the PC. Clerk will email the Minutes of the previous meeting.

4679 Items for consultation and other correspondence received

All email correspondence and consultation documents forwarded to Cllrs. All consultation items and news articles have been added to the parish website for information.

Town and Parish meeting scheduled for Thursday 13th November at 6pm at DDC offices. 2 representatives able to attend. Clerk has a prior engagement that evening.

4680 Dates and venues for future meetings

Parish Council Meeting: Tuesday 9th December 6.30pm, Tuesday 20th January 2026

This meeting closed at 20.15pm

CHAIRMAN

DATE