

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF GUSTON PARISH COUNCIL

held on Tuesday 28th 2025 at Guston Village Hall- 6.30pm

PRESENT: Parish Councillors: Vice-Chair: Cllr. Keith Gowland, Mr. Matthew Sweetman, Mrs Angela Surendorff, Mrs C Gurraj, Cllr. Martin Bates, Cllr. Oliver Richardson, Cllr Bridget Porter

Parish Clerk: Mrs Glynis Farthing.

ABSENT:

MEMBERS OF THE PRESS/PUBLIC:

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4653 Apologies for absence:

None

4654 Declarations of Interest

As in previous Minutes.

4655 Minutes of the last meeting

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

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 9th September 2025 be accepted, proposed by Cllr Sweetman and seconded by Cllr Gurraj signed by the Chairman and Vice-chairman.

4656 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)

This is largely out of view from the road and unlikely to impact on neighbouring properties.

The field on the Lane adjacent to Guston Green has been sold back to Guston Court Farm along with other acreage. Meadowcroft is now back on the market at £1.1m There is still a considerable amount of land along with the property.

4657 Public Participation

Chairman closed the meeting for public participation.

A resident has proposed the installation of low maintenance fitness equipment on Guston Green. This would be available for residents to use .

He delivered the Cllrs with some proposals and information. Background information, equipment and pricing supplied.

Two types of equipment suggested. Funding streams are available and the PC has already had grants from the various sponsors listed. £29,000 is the suggested figure necessary.

Rationale provided with some evidence related to adult fitness and current rates of obesity in the local area. Dover is a deprived area with high levels of need.

NHS guidelines on exercise necessary to improve adult fitness.

Cllrs thanked the resident for his presentation. Cllrs asked a number of questions related to the proposals. He is happy to seek evidence for his proposals. Cllr. Creed provided information as to how time consuming the fundraising application process is and how difficult it is to get things started. Cllr. Richardson provided some suggestions for moving forward. Burgoyne Heights would be a more suitable location. The PC would be responsible for the upkeep, insurance and maintenance of any equipment installed. The PC will carry out some investigations into the proposals. Cllrs suggested using the space outside the village hall as an alternative to Guston Green. Resident and Cllr Creed looked at this and agreed that it was definitely worth considering as there was adequate space and parking available.

Suggested that a further meeting takes place in December .

Chairman reopened the meeting

4658 Matters arising from Minutes of the last meeting

The Solar Park construction will commence at the end of September. Road closures will be added to the website and information sent to residents

4659 Dover District Council –Cllrs. Bates/Oliver Richardson

1. Highways & Transport Network - Public Satisfaction Surveys

This year, for the eighth year running, Kent County Council is taking part in the NHT Public Satisfaction Survey on highways and transport services. Whilst the main survey is being carried out by Ipsos, who are sending forms to a representative sample of households, they have also opted to take part in six web-based surveys on specific issues:

- Highway maintenance
- Accessibility
- Walking and cycling
- Public transport
- Road safety
- Tackling congestion

These surveys are publicly available online and will remain open until the end of February 2026. They may be accessed via our website using this link:

[National Highways and Transport Survey 2025-26 | Let's talk Kent](#)

The greater the take-up of the surveys, the more useful they will be in helping us to understand the priorities and concerns of people who live or work in Kent, so please feel welcome to complete any of the surveys which interest you, and to use your work and personal contacts to publicise them and to encourage other people to take part.

If you have any questions about the surveys or about how best to publicise them, please feel welcome to email or speak to me:

Sara E Fletcher CEng MICE | Asset Management Project Leader | Highways Asset Management and Inspections Team | Highways & Transportation | Kent County Council | Internal: 416756 | External: 03000 416756 | www.kent.gov.uk/managing-highway-infrastructure

2. COMMUNITY GRANTS

A total of around £50k has been awarded to 72 different groups as part of Dover District Council's Community Grants Scheme. This will be followed by another round of funding in the winter months, when a further £50k will be available for local groups under the continuing Cost of Living Community Impact Fund.

The grant pot of £100k includes funding of £45k from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Community groups that benefit the local area were [invited](#) to apply for grants of between £100-£5,000. The scheme encourages and supports community-led activities that result in a direct community benefit for Dover District residents. Successful applicants benefitting from this latest round of funding include: Royal British Legion, Dover White Cliffs branch; Deal Speaking Up Group; the Jubilee Centre in Sandwich; the Alkham Valley Community Project; and Home Start in Dover District.

The grant recipients were recommended by the Community Grants Scheme Appraisal Panel and agreed by the Cabinet Member for Community. For more details on the funding [decision](#), please see the DDC website, or for more information on DDC community funding, please see the [community](#) pages.

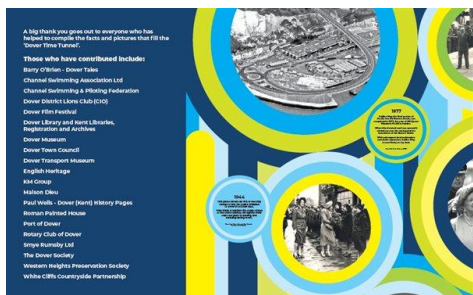
A further round of grant funding will start on 15th September.



3. DOVER UNDERPASS RENOVATION

Preparation works are underway for the installation of a colourful new ‘Dover Time Tunnel’ artwork as part of key improvements to renovate the Townwall Street underpass. The artwork complements the multi million pound development of the [Dover Beacon](#) project alongside it, that remains on target for practical completion in 2026, and for ‘topping out’ (reaching the highest point in its construction) in September 2025.

The Dover Time Tunnel has been designed in-house by DDC and gives a fascinating insight into Dover’s past. The bold and creative design includes an array of information and pictures from a whole range of partner organisations and individuals.



Contractors are starting work on fixing the base boards on which the new artwork will be attached over the next few weeks. The artwork features panels either side of the underpass, (sections of which are shown here).

The project is part of a range of works included in the [underpass renovation](#) launched in June as part of work to help better connect the high street and waterfront, and support and promote investment for the future.

The underpass works follow a range of consultation in 2023 through events and an online survey.

For more information on regeneration, please see our [regeneration](#) pages, or for more details on the underpass, please see the [underpass](#) pages on the DDC.

4. EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

As DDC work with their partners to prepare for the next Big Jobs Fair in the autumn, three new job clubs are being introduced across the district to provide invaluable free support to residents looking for work. The new job clubs will include qualified staff to be on hand to assist with job searching, CV writing, filling out application forms and interview practice. The monthly clubs, starting from September 2025, will take place in the following locations:

- Deal Welfare Club, Cowdray Square – every fourth Friday of the month starting from 26 September (24 October, 28 November, 28 January, 25 February etc)
- Dover Charlton Centre, working in collaboration with Dover Big Local – every first Monday of the month starting from 1 September (6 October, 3 November, 1 December, 5 January, 2 February etc)
- Sandwich Jubilee Centre, Jubilee Road – every third Friday of the month starting from 19 September (17 October, 21 November, 19 December, 16 January, 20 February etc)

The Big Dover Jobs and Volunteering Fair is coming to Cruise Terminal 2 at the Port of Dover on Wednesday 8 October. Dover District Council, the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP), Port of Dover, and Stagecoach are teaming up once again to showcase job opportunities, and a variety of volunteering opportunities across the area. Over 50 employers

and volunteer groups are expected to exhibit, with a whole range of local jobs and volunteering opportunities available. The event is free to attend, and thanks to Stagecoach, a free shuttle bus will run throughout the event from Dover town centre to the cruise terminal. More details will follow soon.

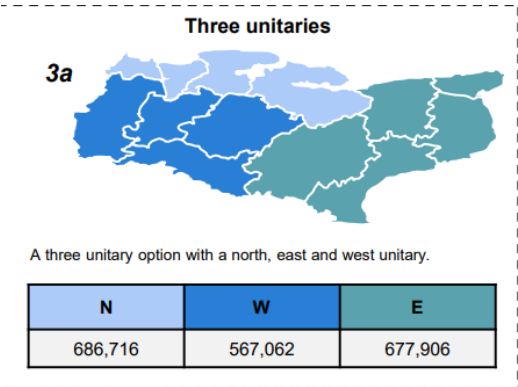
The Jobs Fair is being funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. For further information, visit www.dover.gov.uk/jobclub

5. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION AND DEVOLUTION

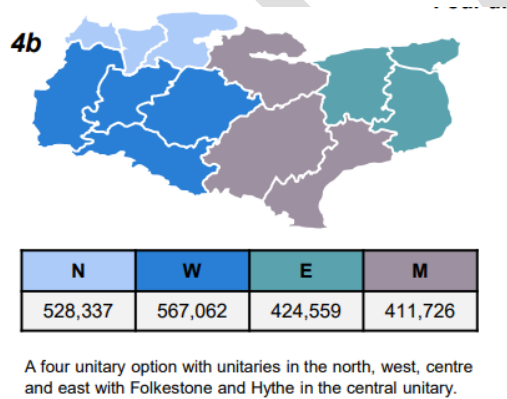
The government set a deadline of Friday 21 March 2025 for Kent’s initial plans. Kent’s full proposals and business plan need to be with ministers by Friday 28 November 2025. There will be a Town and Parish Council meeting on 13th November to discuss this issue along with planning enforcement and the full council of DDC will be holding an extraordinary meeting on 19th November. The government will then take the decision about how many unitary councils there are and which areas they cover. When we get a decision, work will start in earnest on combining existing councils to create the new unitaries. Those new unitary councils could start delivering services from April 2028.

At an extraordinary meeting, on 3rd September, of all Council Leaders within Kent a list of 7 possible options were reduced to two which will now go to completion of full draft business cases. The two chosen options were:

3A: For our unitary it will include: Dover, Thanet, Folkestone and Hythe, Ashford and Canterbury.



4B: For our area this will include Dover, Canterbury and Thanet



6. TEN DAYS OF FREE ENTRY INTO MUSEUMS IN DOVER

Heritage Open Days 2025 will run from **12 to 21 September**, offering **free access** to historical sites across England, including several in the **Dover District**. The event celebrates architecture and community heritage, with thousands of volunteers and organizations participating nationwide.

In Dover, key sites include:

- **Maison Dieu (Dover Town Hall):** Recently restored, it will be open daily with special events such as a historic embroidery workshop (20 Sept), an exterior building tour (18 Sept), and guided visits to the Mayor's Parlour (13–14 Sept), managed by The Landmark Trust. A collaborative model-building activity and medieval tower craft sessions will also be available.
- **Dover Museum & Bronze Age Boat Gallery:** Features the new “Museum in Miniature” exhibition and displays the world's oldest known seagoing vessel, estimated to be 3,500 years old. Open daily.
- **Roman Painted House:** Dating to around AD 200, this site showcases Roman frescoes and underfloor heating. It will have extended opening hours throughout the festival.

A total of **35 activities** are planned in Dover, coordinated by local volunteers including The Dover Society. Accessibility varies by site, with alternative presentations available where needed.

More information and booking details can be found at the **Heritage Open Days** website and **White Cliffs Country** tourism page.

LOCAL ISSUES

1). DOVER FAST TRACK

I received confirmation on 20th August that the overgrown vegetation had been cut back. KCC have confirmed that the buses are scheduled for delivery to the UK on October 20th. There will be a short period of testing and pairing with the chargers before heading into service. Once Stagecoach have them in the UK, KCC will be confirming the start date.

Cllr Creed asked how many penalty notices had been issued. Cllr Bates will investigate this.

2). EXCAVATION WORK BEHIND DOVER LEISURE CENTRE

This site was granted planning permission for a “commercial building with flexible uses” in 2022. The report does not say what the building will be used for but there are references on the Planning website to it accommodating up to 70 employees. There were very few objections with Whitfield PC supporting it.

3). BUS WAITING TIMES

I must declare an interest in this one as I am employed on a casual basis as an invigilator with Dover Grammar School for Girls and have been since 2019. The fact that closing times had changed to 3.20 was news to me particularly a decision to send students home at 2.25 on a Thursday. I cannot liaise with the school direct because of my association with them but did make enquiries with Stagecoach who apparently know nothing about the changes to school hours. They have liaised with KCC Public Transport who also knew nothing. Public Transport are now checking with KCC Education to see whether they were advised of any changes.

4660 Kent County Council – Cllr. Porter

KCC held its inaugural Devolution and Local Government Committee meeting on 28th July 2025

There is widespread concern about the timescale being imposed on Kent in such a significant issue.

Members are concerned about the potential costs to residents of Kent in terms of transitional and operational costs falling on residents.

KCC and districts have been invited by the government to submit their proposals for Local Government Reorganisation by 28th November 2025. The government has yet to inform Kent of its required timetable for devolution.

KCC and Districts are working with KPMG who will be producing business cases for 7 options for Local Government Reorganisation.

These 7 include a new hybrid model which emerged at the Committee Meeting.

KCC Members remain unconvinced of the merits of LGR but will continue to work with partners to see if a workable solution can be found.

KCC Members believe strongly that there should be thorough consultation with the public and impacted organisations but this could be better carried out when there is further clarity on options, costs and any benefits.

Linden Kemkaren ,Leader of KCC met with District Leaders on August 13th .

A Questionnaire is available on Budget Consultation 2026-27 on www.letstalk.kent.gov.uk.

I met with Tom Williams and Lezanne Cesar on 30th July. We discussed Highways Improvement Plans for villages in Dover North. So far they have met with Guston PC and Great Mongeham PC to schedule works to be carried out by KCC.

Cllr Peter Osborne ,Cabinet Lead for Highways and Transport has invested £67 million to repair Kent roads. This money will go towards repairing potholes, road resurfacing and preventing further damage.

Cllr Diane Morton has been focusing on Blue Badges for the disabled with the intention of making things easier and turnaround times quicker. Now 42% of applications are completed within 15 days provided they are straightforward.

Cllr David Wimble and Cllr Dean Burns opened their first ReUse shop at Romney Marsh Household Waste Site. KCC plan to rollout this initiative at all Household Waste Sites.

On 26th August KCC hosted a seminar in partnership with Women's Safety Initiative and other Violence Prevention Charities to discuss the real issues of Violence Against Women and Girls, which covered topics of Domestic Violence , Coercive Control and Drinks Spiking . A lively discussion followed with Questions and Answers from the audience.

4661 Feedback from Council Representatives and Matters arising from previously circulated material.

KALC Area meeting held on July 23rd. Minutes circulated. Cllr Gowland raised his concerns about the lack of Joint transportation Committee meetings. These have been cancelled on a regular basis.

Cllr Gowland and Clerk have a scheduled meeting with Planning Enforcement on Wednesday 10th September at 2pm. Clerk has a meeting with DDC Community Team on Thursday 11th September at 1pm. This is for parish clerks in the Dover area.

4662 Highways Improvement Plan

Clerk had an online meeting with Highways department on Monday 4th August. This was very productive and helpful to discuss face to face. Updated HIP completed with notes from Highways team have been circulated to Cllrs. Clerk has reported a number of issues via the online reporting system and many works are now underway. The weeds on the bridge have been reported and await attention. Verges by Fastrack have been cut and look much improved.

4663 DDC-Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Facility Strategy Survey

Clerk has completed this survey on behalf of the PC. It relates to adult sports facilities (which the PC does not have). The PC do not have available land to offer adult sports facilities. The only land available in the parish is not controlled or owned by the PC.

4664 Financial Reports/Accounts/Payments

- a) The Financial statements for July and August have been prepared and circulated to Cllrs.

The balance on current account as of 9th September 2025 = £104,622.09

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

Glasdon- (Bollards) £2,601.51

Home Heroes (VH cleaning) £125.00

MSCAPE – August Maintenance £663.42 (SO)

G. Farthing (August salary £998.40+£12 exp) £1,010.40

Bank charges -£8.00

MSCAPE (Invoice 348 -Bollard installation) £1,680.00

MSCAPE (Invoice 349 – Churchyard maintenance) £350.00

Total: £6,438.33

Above payments all made

G. Farthing (Sept salary £998.40+£12 exp) £1,010.40
HMRC (PAYE) £1,122.75
Broxap (Zipwire parts) £2,382.00
MSCAPE – September Maintenance £663.42 (SO)
Home Heroes (VH cleaning July & August) £200.00

Total: £5,378.57

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

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

Completion of Annual Audit

Clerk has received the audited accounting papers and completion notice. These have been circulated to Cllrs and added to the Parish website. Cllrs discussed the minor scope for improvement recommendations. Clerk clarified the error which had been identified by Mazars and was immediately rectified by return email.

4665 Roads, Footpaths and other Parish Matters

- Bollards for the village green have now been installed
- Guston Green-. the zip -wire ramp parts have been delivered and await installation.
- Proposed meeting with PC Sophie Bramble
- Flag pole – Cllr. Sweetman has investigated this and can supply some costings. Land is owned by the Land Trust and would require planning permission based on height.

4666 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.

4667 Dates and venues for future meetings

Parish Council Meeting: Tuesday 28th October, Tuesday 9th December 6.30pm.

This meeting closed at 20.30pm

CHAIRMAN

DATE