

**SHIPBOURNE PARISH
COUNCIL**

SARAH HUSEYIN
Clerk to the Council

**Gable Cottage, Ismays Road
IGHTHAM, TN15 9BE**

Telephone: 01732 886402
email: shipbourneparishcouncil@gmail.com

MINUTES

Meeting of the Parish Council held at 7.00 p.m. on Monday 8 December 2025

Present: Cllr Redman (Chair), Cllr Leach (Vice Chair), Cllr Bond, Cllr Dagger, Cllr Davis, Cllr Hollobon, Cllr Oram, The Parish Clerk, County Cllr Rayner, Borough Cllr Lark

1. **Apologies for absence** - Borough Cllr Crisp
2. **Dispensations and Declarations of Interest** - None
3. **Report from Beat Officer** - No report
4. **Reports: County Councillor & Borough Councillors.** Borough Cllr Lark reported that the Home Farm application had been withdrawn. TMBC had indicated that it would have been rejected on the adverse effect on the natural landscape and for highways reasons. The Local Plan is out for consultation and ends on 2nd January 2026. The Leader of TMBC has given 24 presentations to local parishes including Shipbourne and Plaxtol and Hadlow. The submission for Local Government Reorganisation has now been submitted by TMBC with their preferred option of 3 Unitaries in Kent. We await a decision from central government. Cllr Lark has requested another speed check from the police on Stumble Hill. Cllr Lark left at 7.05pm.
Cllr Rayner reported that a HIP review meeting is scheduled with Demi Richards in January 2026. Stumble Hill has been added to the plan. Regarding flooding at Little Budds, drainage appears to be adequate for now, so no action is being taken by Kent Highways. Cllr Rayner reported various local road closures in early December. At KCC, 9 Reform members have now been suspended or expelled, leaving 49 members. The budget hasn't yet gone through and is due in early January; it is anticipated that some cuts will have to be made. Reform is looking to cancel a significant number of committees. Cllr Rayner left at 7.10pm.
5. **Minutes** of the Parish Council meeting on 11 November 2025 were approved and signed as a true record.
6. **Public Open Session** - No members of the public were present.
7. **Highways & Footpaths - Highways Improvement Plan (HIP)** - The Clerk is attending a meeting on 15 January 2026 with Demi Richards. We have received a request to add Back Lane to the HIP due to speeding and this was agreed. At the very least, we would like to request school children warning signs to alert drivers to the nursery and school on Back Lane.
We have requested verge clearing on Stumble Hill, however, this has been turned down by KCC on grounds of health and safety. We requested reinstatement of the kerb by the car park on Upper Green Road and this was turned down on grounds of cost.
8. **Matters arising**
 - 8.1. **Grass Cutting at Wightwicks and at Dunks Green 2025** - Nothing to report.
 - 8.2. **Shipbourne Farmers Market** - Nothing to report.
 - 8.3. **Website Upgrade** -.Changes. Requirement to have Gov.UK domain, email addresses and fulfil accessibility requirements WCAG2.2AA for April 2026. Update- The Clerk has had an initial meeting to map out the new website and has been in touch with Saul Cullen about passing over the technical information. Cllr Davis suggested that we keep the existing domain for the church and strip out the Parish Council information once the Gov.UK website is up and running. The church can cover the cost of the hosting once the website is handed over.
 - 8.4. **Climate Change Group** –Update on project – Grant Funding Agreement – we are still awaiting the final signed contract but the work on the retrofit project to assess 6 architype homes has started. Cllr Oram has attended the last 3 farmers markets to hand out Christmas cards with energy saving ideas, designed by CASP. The Chair of CASP has written to the Parish Council to request funding for CASP events in 2026. Plaxtol Parish Council has agreed to donate £1,000 and it was suggested that we contribute £500 as we are a smaller parish. Cllr Redman said that some members of

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the community has expressed concern about expenditure, however, on balance, Councillors thought that we should be setting aside some money to address climate change. Both Shipbourne and Plaxtol are off-grid and fossil fuels are likely to be phased out so we need to explore alternative means of heating homes in the village. Work done by CASP to raise awareness and share information will benefit all members of the community. The Clerk noted that all expenses to date have been covered by grant funding. Cllr Leach said that the £40K Grant from CEF which is being used for the Retrofit Project will have a substantial return to the village. An information database will be available after the retrofit project to advise on retrofitting for the different styles of homes in the village. There is also a possibility of a future community energy scheme which could lead to reduced energy costs. It was agreed that we have a responsibility to help parishioners and should allow £500 in the budget to support ongoing work of CASP (which is now independent from Shipbourne Parish). We have also been asked to cover a hosting subscription of £5.60 per month for a separate CASP email address. We have a small amount remaining from the TMBC grant and the Clerk suggested that we use the remainder of this and top up a contribution to cover the first year's subscription. This was agreed. The next CASP event is planned for April 2026.

- 8.5. **Little Mead** – Update – The tree work has now been completed. A request from Little Mead to purchase a strip of land incorporating the driveway to the house and woodland adjoining their boundary is currently in the hands of a land agent.
- 8.6. **Damaged bench at Dunks Green** - Bollards at Dunks Green - Cllr Davis thought that the bollards had been repaired, Cllr Oram to report back. Cllr Davis has spoken to Will about designing a new bench as the old one has decayed, and is awaiting a cost. It was suggested that we could approach the Rifleman to ask for a contribution once we have an idea about cost. We should also make an allowance in the budget for a new bench.
- 8.7. **Bus Stop** - Repairs to timber – we are waiting for a date for the repairs. KCC Bus Stop Shelter Grant application – we are awaiting a response.
- 8.8. **Shipbourne Sign** – update – sandblasting/repainting quotes – the company that Cllr Leach approached cannot remove the existing post and Cllr Leach will approach a different contractor.
- 8.9. **Local Government Reorganisation** – Update – TMBC have sent in their submission, reported above by Cllr Lark. Within the 3 unitary suggestion, Tonbridge and Malling, Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks and Maidstone would form one Unitary.
- 8.10. **PPP Meeting** – Update from Cllr Oram – the main topic was Local Government Reform. Marius Carboni from Plaxtol PC has drafted a letter on behalf of local Parishes raising concerns about the effect of re-organisation on local Parishes.

9. Shipbourne Village Hall

- 9.1 **Trust Deed** – Approval-The Clerk circulated a revised Trust Deed that has been approved by the village Hall committee. This was agreed and the Clerk will send it to the Charity Commission.
- 9.2 **Quiz** – Update – Cllr Leach circulated an overview of finances for the last 12 months. The quiz was well attended and raised over £1000. £2,840 has been raised in total for events in 2025 compared to £600 in 2024. More events are planned for 2026 and Cllr Leach ran through some much-needed repairs and expenditure such as heating, decoration and a new dishwasher. Cllr Leach reported that marquee hires had generated an income and that we are considering buying a set of covers for an additional frame.

10. Communications –*Circulated in advance of the meeting.

KALC Training Bulletin
 Unity Bank monthly fee increase to £7 per month in 2026
 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Local Development Scheme Update November 2025
 News updates from Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council
 Local Government Reorganisation submission
 The Kent Classic 2026 Event Plan 24.10.26
 Update regarding IDOX return for Planning and Building Control
 New Updated Guide to Developing Affordable Homes in Rural Communities

11. Chairs Action and Correspondence - None

12. Finance & Policy

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- 12.1 Payment of Accounts** – Accounts were presented for agreement to pay:
Invoices were initialled by Cllrs Oram and Hollobon and Cllr Redman initialled the bank reconciliation. Cllrs Leach and Redman to authorise the Unity payments which will also include a payment to CASP to cover email hosting.

Parish Clerk Salary & Expenses November 2025	£710.28
HMRC – Clerks Tax & NI Contribution	£129.20
SCRIBE – Monthly subscription DD [paid]	£24.00
DAVVS – Donation	£50.00
Treeability – Work at Dunks Green	£3,116.40
Bank Charges 30.11.25	£6.00
Balance at 30.11.25: Unity Bank	£19,093.21

SVH Accounts – HSBC balances at 5.11.25 £2,152.11 & £14,625.85

Payments

EJP – Fire Alarm Service	£156.00
All Home Maintenance - Installation of windows	£3,580.00
All Home Maintenance - Painting & Internal and external decoration	£1,800.00

Timesheet Report October (Circulated)

- 12.2 Agree Budget items for 2026** – The Clerk circulated a draft budget, and additional items were suggested such as an allowance for LGR. It was agreed that we should make a significant allowance for the village hall maintenance. It was agreed that we should keep our precept to approx. £18,500. The Clerk will adjust figures accordingly to achieve a balanced budget. This will be presented for agreement at the January meeting.

- 12.3 Policy Documents** – The Clerk has amended the policy documents and will circulate for approval.

13. Planning Matters

- 13.1 Planning Applications** - None

- 13.2 Planning Decisions - APPROVED**

25/01800/PA ST GILES CHURCH, STUMBLE HILL, SHIPBOURNE, , TN11 9PE. 1 x Large mature Yew (T1 applicant reference) - Remove split branches back to source, thin large scaffold by approx 40% to alleviate weight on potential weak point. Tree standing on East boundary of churchyard, overhanging Farmers market sheds and neighbouring properties. 2 x large mature Yew (T2 T3 applicant reference) Remove major dead branches throughout crown (5cm or larger) Inspect remaining crown for defects Trees standing adjacent to T1,
25/01443/PA COBTREE COTTAGE, CLAYGATE LANE, SHIPBOURNE, TONBRIDGE, TN11 9RN. Proposed demolition of existing detached garages and replace with a new double garage and store area with associated driveway works.

- 13.3 Planning Decisions – WITHDRAWN**

25/01233/PA HOME FARM FAIRLAWNE, SCHOOL LANE, SHIPBOURNE, TONBRIDGE, TN11 9RT. Change of Use of Three Agricultural Buildings To Class B2 Business Use with Associated Parking And Landscaping Works.

- 13.4 Update on Local Plan** – www.tmhc.gov.uk/local-plan - Out for consultation. Cllr Leach said that we need to comment on every site put forward in case Borough Green Gardens doesn't go ahead. It is important that we use planning terminology. Cllr Leach will ask Jenny Bate if she can help us with our response.

- 14. To review submission to Parish Newsletter** – Draft agreed.

- 15. Urgent Business that occurs and requires attention before the next meeting** - None

- 16. Date of next meeting** - Monday 12 January 2026 at 7pm

Part 2 Matters to be discussed in private (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)

The meeting closed at 20.40pm

Signed.....Dated.....