



WESTWELL PARISH COUNCIL

In the Beautiful Garden of Kent

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1352

Westwell Parish Council

Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council

Held on Wednesday 4 March 2026 at 7pm, Westwell Village Hall, Westwell

1. Open Forum

No members of the public were present.

2. Present and apologies

Present: Cllrs Bainbridge (chair) Drury (vice-chair), Ward, Richards, Hutchinson, Bartlett, Farrington and Lister. Clerk – Sonia Young.

Apologies: Cllr Wyatt.

3. Declarations of Interest

None

4 4.1 Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2026 and matters arising.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of Westwell Parish Council held on 4 February 2026 be approved and confirmed as a true record.

Proposed: Cllr Drury. **Seconded:** Cllr Bartlett. **All in agreement.** Cllr Richards abstained as not present at the February meeting.

Resolved:

It was resolved to approve the minutes as a true record of the meeting.

4.2 Matters Arising

4.2.1 Westwell broadband provision

Cllr Bainbridge said he had spoken to a BT Outreach engineer who was installing fibre optic cabling in the parish and who confirmed that his job was expected to complete by April but he could not confirm when fibre to the home might be available to residents.

4.2.2 Salt bin to Tutt Hill

The Clerk will order a bin in due course.

4.2.3 Debris in St Mary's Churchyard

The building debris remains in the churchyard.

Action: Clerk to find out when the debris will be removed.

4.2.4 Meeting area PC - PC Aaron Hopkins

Meeting confirmed with PC Aaron Hopkins for Thursday 26 March for all councillors who are available.

Cllr Bainbridge wrote to the Chief Superintendent to see if all PC's shift patterns might, from time to time, be more flexible to better accommodate parish council meeting dates and improve community relations.

4.2.5 Application for a KCC Members' grant

Cllr Bainbridge has written the application – submission is pending.

4.2.6 Cemetery Memorial Safety

The clerk confirmed that the War Graves Commission has righted the memorial stone for Josef Dgryn. The clerk has been in touch with the family members re the two other memorials highlighted as at risk, to ask them to check their family memorial and advise WPC on any remedial actions taken.

4.2.7 Highways flooding

The Clerk confirmed that a letter has been sent to a resident about their report of highways flooding and the follow-up visit made to the reported site by two WPC Cllrs. The letter

summarised the Cllrs' conclusions from the visit and chats to nearby residents, plus the actions taken by WPC.

Decision Items

5 5.1 Planning applications received for comment

5.1.1 PA/2026/0167 Greenlands, Watery Lane TN25 4JJ - Double bay garage with office space to first floor, removal of front hedge and erection of wall to boundary line following demolition of existing single garage.

The standalone annexe will replace the existing outbuildings which are in a very poor state of repair and would certainly be an improvement in principle. The details would need to comply with Policy HOU9, and although the proposed annexe is large at approximately 2/3 of the footprint of the existing dwelling, with dormer windows at 1st floor level and ridge height of six metres it would achieve clear dependency as the dwelling has a ridge height of eight metres; the building line would be maintained, and the annexe would be well sited immediately adjacent to the dwelling with a gap between them. This siting would also achieve no intrusion on the neighbour occupying the other half of this semi-detached pair of rural cottages. The rural location is in the setting of the National Landscape. Removing the front hedge and replacing it with a wall would totally change the street view appearance of this pair of rural cottages which are united by being semi-detached, and by having a continuous hedge as their front boundary. The application states that the hedge needs to be removed, "because it is overgrown". In reality the hedge is both an important aspect of the rural character of the area and a unifying characteristic of this pair of rural cottages. The correct solution to an overgrown hedge is to manage and maintain it by cutting so that it regrows as a compact and effective visual screen and a habitat for wildlife. Removing it and replacing it with a wall, would be an alien urbanising action in a rural area and destruction of habitat in the setting of the national landscape. Westwell Parish Council supported the previous application at this site for modifications to the location and size of the porch (PA/ 2023/0142) and hopes this application can be managed so that the annexe is approved and the proposal for the boundary wall, in place of the current unifying hedge, is removed from the application.

Westwell Parish Council raises no objection to the proposed standalone annexe but does have strong concerns about the proposed removal of the front boundary hedge in this rural landscape and its replacement with a brick wall as it is out of keeping with the rural panorama of the lane. Hedges need to be maintained on both sides of the road. As such, WPC has no alternative but to propose to object to the application as it currently stands.

Resolved

It was proposed to object.

Proposed: Cllr Drury. **Seconded:** Cllr Hutchinson. **All in agreement.**

Resolved.

It was resolved to object to the application.

5.2 Update on Planning Matters in progress

5.2.1 PA/2025/2128 Elvey Cottage.

While the planning application to reduce the building has been approved by ABC, WPC will write to ABC to confirm its understanding that the Enforcement Notice will continue to run in the background and that unless the application to modify the existing built structure happens within the next three years, then the legal Enforcement Notice will apply as originally outlined and the current building, demolished.

5.2.2 ENF 2024/0048 Heath Cottage

The case officer has advised that the front wall and extension at the property require planning permission, and a response is awaited from the property owner.

5.2.3 ENF 2026/0064 Mercury Windows site – former Fairways Service Station

The owner has been advised that the advertising sign that has been erected should have had advertising consent from ABC Planning before being erected: they are being urged to regularise the situation by submitting a planning application in the normal way.

5.2.4 Sandbar Business site

Construction finishing continues and the site is beginning to operate. Some issues remain (colour of the yellow panels) and the reality of the lighting at night outside working hours is

evident and visible to some Tutt Hill residents. WPC will comment in April on the just received application for a gate house at the site.

5.3 ABC Local Plan 2042

No update available.

6. 6.1 Financial Report

6.1.1 Approval of payments for March in accordance with the budget WPC main account

Expenditure to approve for March 2026		Method	£
Salary payment March	Clerk	BACS	946.40
Tax and NI	HMRC	BACS	368.75
Mowing inv 5511	All Seasons Gardening Services	BACS	678.60
Kids clamber stack	Action Play and Leisure	BACS	9793.20
Clerk expenses	Reimburse Clerk	BACS	32.80
Post installation inspection Clamber stack	TMPI	BACs	330.00
Total			£12,149.75

Income			
Westwell Parish Hall	Donation to clamber stack	BACS	3382.85
Total			£3382.85

Bank Reconciliation Balance at 28 February 2026: £14, 701.51 less unrepresented cheques as follows:

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Actual balance = £14, 701.51 as at 28 February 2026

WPC deposit account

Expenditure			£
Total			£00.00

Income			
9 Feb	Interest	BACS	21.08
Total			£21.08

Bank Reconciliation Balance £46, 658.41 as at 28 February 2026 less un-presented cheques as follows:

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Actual balance: £46, 658.41 as at 28 February 2026

General reserve	20,132.22
Grant	2, 279
HiP	7,859.42
Deposit	15,937.77
Special reserves: £450 tidy undergrowth Gold Hill	450.00

*Interest added to the General Reserve

WPC No 2 Account

Expenditure		Cheque No	£
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Total			£00.00
Income			
Total			£00.00

Bank Reconciliation Balance £3.44 at 28 February 2026. Actual balance = £3.44 at 28 February 2026.

Resolved

6.1.1 WPC resolved to approve the accounts as noted and payments in accordance with the budget.

Proposed: Cllr Farrington. **Seconded:** Cllr Bainbridge. **All in agreement.**

Resolved. WPC approved the accounts as noted and payments to be made in accordance with the budget.

6.1.2 Annual mowing and landscape works

Prior to the meeting, Cllr Farrington circulated to all Cllrs, two separate company estimates for the contract 2026-2027. There was wide disparity in the two estimates and, after discussion, it was agreed to continue with the current contractor R P Wood and then undertake a full round of tenders for the 2027-2028 year.

Resolved

To award the annual parish mowing contract to RP Wood at a cost of £8,500 per annum (inclusive of VAT) representing a year-on-year increase of 5% against expected year end costs 2025-2026.

Proposed: Cllr Richards. **Seconded:** Cllr Lister. **All in agreement.**

Resolved. WPC will award the annual parish mowing contract to R P Wood.

6.2 Approval of the 2025-2026 WPC Asset Register

The Clerk circulated the updated Asset Register 2025-2026 to all Cllrs in advance of the meeting.

Resolved.

To approve the WPC Asset Register 2025-2026 as circulated.

Proposed: Cllr Bartlett. **Seconded:** Cllr Ward. **All in agreement.**

Resolved. The WPC 2025-2026 Asset Register was adopted.

Information items

7. 7.1 Correspondence

Cllr Bartlett will attend the East Kent Highways Road Safety and Active Travel Seminar on 21 April.

8. 8.1 KALC Report

KALC is encouraging parishes to submit their concerns re local crime.

Action: Cllrs to submit their concerns to Cllr Bainbridge. Cllr Bainbridge will collate responses and submit the resultant list to the Kent Neighbourhood Policing website.

9. 9.1 Highways

East Kent Highways have written to WPC re the proposed 20 mph speed limit for the centre of the village, advising that, for technical reasons, such a limit cannot be considered for Westwell. Cllr Bainbridge has written back for additional clarification as Cllrs are disappointed with the response.

East Kent Highways is proposing that the first step will be to implement 30mph signage. As the Kent Highways manager has been redeployed and the replacement – Fiona Wiles – will not start until late March – Cllr Bainbridge said an immediate response to his letter was not expected.

Action: Cllr Bainbridge to request a Teams meeting with Fiona Wiles in due course.

Separately, Cllr Drury has also written to East Kent Highways to confirm that as the Hare and Hounds pub on Sandyhurst Lane has re-opened, the proposed solutions to improve safety at the Potters Corner junction should remain a priority and require a fully rounded solution.

However, if investment is not forthcoming, then a left-only system on exit from Sandyhurst Lane onto the A20 is critical.

10. 10.1 Village Hall Management Committee

A deep clean – by volunteers – has been organised. Cllr Farrington – chair of the Village Hall Management Committee - will continue to carry out the weekly clean.

The ongoing need to increase storage at the hall was discussed in some detail.

Action: Cllr Farrington will re-circulate proposals for a new external storage cabinet to be sited adjacent to the new French doors for ease of access, and Cllr Hutchinson will advise how much space the Village Fete Committee require.

11. 11.1 Parish Priority Projects

The Clerk circulated the existing list for all Cllrs to review ahead of the meeting.

Cllrs agreed that future projects will depend on the site selections for the Local Plan 2042 and the proposed highways improvement plans for safety at Potters Corner but were pleased to confirm that the refurbishment of the children’s play area had completed one of the immediate projects.

12. 12.1 Westwell Eye

A very positive catch-up meeting with Westwell Eye editor Carolyn Thorneloe, Cllr Bainbridge, and The Clerk has taken place. Priorities were identified and included the purchase of Adobe In-Design to allow the Editor to layout the pages when her current software licence expires later this year.

Action: Clerk to investigate the costs of a business vs individual package to allow for wider access to the Eye layout templates. Clerk to talk to advertisers to assess interest in upgrading to a permanent colour position on one of the back two pages.

Action: The Clerk.

13. 13.1 Community Resilience Plan

The Clerk has created a confidential spreadsheet with details of all residents who responded to a call out via Facebook and the Westwell Eye to volunteer their time, equipment and skillsets in any crisis facing parts – or all - of the parish.

Action: Cllr Bainbridge to organise a repeat of the call out message to try and engage more volunteers.

14. Additional Items

Cllr Hutchinson gave his apologies for the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 20.54 hrs. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 1 April 2026.

Chairman’s Signature.....