



Coxheath Parish Council

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Coxheath Parish Council held on
Tuesday 28 July 2026 at 7.15pm in the Small Hall, Coxheath Village Hall**

Present: Cllr. N. Gardner (Chairman), Cllrs: G. Batty, D. Carpenter, K. Laponder, I. Laponder, J. Sheppard, H. Weaver and R. Webb.

In attendance: Louise Goldsmith (Parish Clerk)

Ward Member Claire Kehily and 3 members of the public.

MINUTES

57/26 ADMINISTRATION

Fire Exits, Fire Meeting Point, Mobile Phones. It was noted that Cllr. Gardner is recording the meeting.

58/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, DECLARATIONS AND DISPENSATIONS

- a) Apologies for absence:
An apology for absence was received from Cllr. Parker and the reason for absence was accepted.
- b) To receive Declarations of Interest in respect of matters contained in the agenda.
Disclosable Interests: Under the Localism Act 2011:
Cllr. Carpenter declared an interest as a Trustee of Coxheath village hall.
Other Significant Interests: **None received.**
- c) Requests for Dispensations: **None received.**
- d) Declarations of Lobbying: **None received.**

59/26 CO-OPTION: Nothing to report

60/26 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Resolved: That the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 30 June 2026 be approved and confirmed as a true and accurate record.

61/26 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Cllr. Gardner reported on a meeting held on the 3 July 2026 with the Highways Steward, her line Manager and an engineer which the Clerk and Cllr. Weaver also attended. The meeting was very productive and a clearer understanding of the responsibilities of the KCC fault repair team, the works of the Highways Improvement team and the responsibilities of MBC with respect to roads and yellow lines was gleaned. At the Community Group meeting held on the 7 July 2026 it was agreed that the Parish Council should take over the running of the group. It was agreed that resilience planning should also be included in the terms of reference for the group and that the aim is to work closely with the Staplehurst Resilience Team. Cllr. Gardner reported that the new website is up and running and that the Clerk is currently making some amendments. Cllr. Gardner mentioned that some of the posts about the Parish Council on social media have recently been a little disappointing and highlighted the fact that Councillors are volunteers. Cllr. Gardner reminded everyone that the hosepipe ban remains in place. Cllr. Gardner recently visited and spoke to representatives at Clockhouse Farm who seem keen to engage with the Parish Council.

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62/26 CLERKS REPORT/PAST MATTERS

Disclosable Pecuniary Interest Forms (DPIs): The Clerk reported that the new guidance for the Localism Act 2011 Section 32A states that the home addresses of Councillors on DPIs no longer need to be made publicly available. The Clerk advised Members that MBC will redact addresses on the online Disclosable Pecuniary Interest forms unless advised otherwise.

Fly-tipping: The Clerk reported that a member of the public has suggested that the Parish Council investigates installing remote cameras in flytipping hotspots. The Clerk will place this suggestion on the agenda for the next Traffic and Community Safety Working Group meeting.

Litter Picking: The Clerk reported that a member of the public has suggested that the Parish Council considers employing a Litter Picker. The Clerk will place this request on the list of projects to be considered when setting the next budget.

63/26 COUNTY COUNCILLOR/WARD MEMBER REPORT

County Councillor Report: There was no report.

Ward Member Report:

Ward Member Claire Kehily advised Members that Kent will be carved up into four new Unitary Authorities. Fourteen leaders put forward five options for the government to choose from, based on geography and population size and growth and the Government has chosen an option known as option 4b. Option 4b will be made up of: Dartford, Gravesham and Medway in the north; Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells in the west; Swale, Ashford and Folkestone and Hythe in the middle of Kent and Canterbury, Thanet and Dover in the east. In the short-term key services such as bin collections, tips, libraries, Highways and social care will stay the same for residents but work will now start on finding the most effective way to run them under the new system. Ward Member Claire Kehily advised Members that the ward which Coxheath and West Farleigh will be part of will have three elected Members but that Teston, Loose and East Farleigh will now be part of this ward. Elections for the new Unitary Authorities will take place in May 2027. Ward Member Claire Kehily advised Members that MBC has suggested it will be cost effective to align Parish Council elections with the Unitary Authority elections and that a decision from the Secretary of State on this is expected imminently. The new Unitary Authorities will shadow the existing structure for a year until May 2028. Ward Member Claire Kehily suggested that KCC may appeal the Government's decision as they wanted just one Unitary Authority for the whole of Kent.

Ward Member Claire Kehily discussed the numerous roadworks and road closures in the area which are causing chaos at peak times. Ward Member Claire Kehily has requested that the settings for the temporary traffic lights on Burial Ground Road are altered to improve the flow of traffic.

Kent Police is holding a free community event at Mote Park on Friday 31 July 2026 from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm which will be instead of their usual traditional Open Day at headquarters.

MBC's Policy & Advisory Committee recommended that the Borough should follow the example of TMBC and introduce a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) to crack down on the use of catapults. However, Cabinet at MBC voted not to proceed with a PSPO after Kent Police advised them it would not be effective. Kent Police suggested that a PSPO is just a tool to dissuade people from having possession of catapults but could seriously reduce the opportunity for local Beat Officers, who know the culprits, to deal with them effectively. Ward Member Claire Kehily advised Members that all incidents involving catapults should be reported to Kent Police.

Ward Member Claire Kehily reported that the Maidstone Town Council is going ahead for all the unparished areas in Maidstone and that elections will take place in May 2027.

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64/26 OPEN SESSION:

A member of the public mentioned that the NHS/Greensands have withdrawn the funding for the Beginners to Runners club in Coxheath. The club which offers its members a friendly and safe place to run and medical advice has had to move to Boughton Monchelsea Village Hall and members have been invited to voluntarily pay for sessions which is not affordable for all. The member of the public was hoping that the Parish Council could consider funding the group

A member of the public reminded Members that other similar community groups have also had their funding reduced.

A member of the public asked whether Greensands will be employing a replacement Social Prescriber as the service is sorely missed.

A member of the public praised the new website.

The Chairman of East Farleigh Parish Council advised Members that the Parish Council has been proactive in promoting traffic calming on Workhouse Lane and was pleased to advise that KCC has agreed to a reduce the speed limit to 30mph which will include the northern section of the lane that comes into Coxheath.

65/26 COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS

a) Planning Committee

i. Minutes of the meeting held on the 30 June 2026

The minutes of the meeting held on the 30 June 2026 were noted.

ii. To receive a report from the meeting held this evening

Cllr. Webb reported on the Planning Committee Meeting held before the Full Council Meeting.

b) Staffing Committee

i. To receive the minutes of the meeting held on the 15 July 2026

The minutes of the meeting held on the 15 July 2026 were received. It was noted that Cllr. K. Laponder and the Clerk will be meeting with the MUGA Steward next week. Cllr. K. Laponder has contacted the Village Hall Committee to find out if the Clerk and anyone that attends a meeting at the Parish Office when the Pre-School are in the building can have access to the toilets. Cllr. Carpenter suggested that access could be given to the new disabled toilet and that the Secretary to the Village Hall Committee will respond to the request with further information.

ii. Proposal to increase the Clerk's working hours

Cllr. K. Laponder discussed the fact that the role of the Clerk has substantially changed recently with the creation of new committees/working groups and a long action list of projects and initiatives.

Resolved: To approve a recommendation from the Staffing Committee to increase the Clerk's working hours by 5 hours a week from the 1 August 2026.

iii. Equality & Diversity Policy

Resolved: To adopt the Equality and Diversity Policy.

c) Finance Committee

i. To consider a proposal from MBC to lease the car park adjacent to the Scout Hut

It was noted that MBC wish to retain ownership of the car park adjacent to the Scout Hut but that MBC would be prepared to consider granting a lease for the car park on similar terms as the existing Scout lease to either the Parish Council or the Scouts meaning that

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repairs and maintenance could be carried out without needing approval from MBC. The Clerk has contacted Geoff Cooke at the Scouts who has advised that Trustees of the Scout Hut would prefer the Parish Council to take out any lease. Members discussed the fact the car park is in a poor state of repair and that the cost of the repairs and the liability would fall to the Parish Council. Cllr. I. Laponder suggested that if the Trustees of the Scout Hut took on the lease that the Parish Council could assist with the cost of the repairs. The Clerk asked Members to decide whether they wanted to proceed with a proposal to lease the car park.

Standing Orders were lowered to allow a member of the public to speak.

Ward Member Claire Kehily offered to speak to MBC about whether they would reconsider letting the Parish Council adopt the car park.

Resolved: At this stage the Parish Council do not want to lease the car park. The Clerk to find out if the Trustees of the Scout Hut would be willing to take on the lease.

ii. **Disposal of Whitebeam and Fairhurst Drive Play Areas: Confirming instructions and request for undertaking**

The Clerk reminded Members that in principle Full Council have stated they want to proceed with the adoption of both these areas. Kayleigh Ireland, Senior Associate at Whitehead Monckton, acting on behalf of the Parish Council has advised the Clerk that Capsticks, the solicitor acting for MBC, has requested an undertaking of the payment of £4,490,00 (including VAT) in legal fees. The Clerk reminded Members that Parish councils have the legal power to acquire land and manage open spaces or recreation grounds under sections 127 and 164 of the Local Government Act 1972. It was noted that the legal fees will be met from reserves.

Resolved: To agree the undertaking and to pay MBC £4490.00 (including VAT) for legal fees associated with the adoption of Whitebeam and Fairhurst play areas.

iii. **To receive the accounts as at the 30 June 2026**

The accounts as at the 30 June 2026 were received.

iv. **To receive a bank reconciliation as at the 30 June 2026**

A bank reconciliation as the 30 June 2026 was received and checked and signed by Cllr. I. Laponder in line with the adopted Financial Regulations.

viii. **To receive a payments list for approval**

The payment schedule appended to the minutes and a copy of the invoices had been circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr. I. Laponder checked the invoices on the payment schedule. Cllr. Carpenter raised a query on the purchase price of the gazebos which was answered to his satisfaction.

Resolved: Cllrs. Gardner and I. Laponder to authorise the payments online. Cllr. Gardner, as the Chair, initialled the payments list in accordance with the adopted Financial Regulations.

d) Recreation and Open Spaces Working Group

i. **To receive the minutes of the meeting held on the 9 July 2026**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 9 July 2026 were received. Cllr. Weaver advised Members that the Working Group discussed the specification for the grounds maintenance contract for a three year contract and revisited the football pitch hire regulations and fee. The recommendations from the working group will be considered by the Finance Committee when it meets on the 20 August 2026.

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ii. **To receive the monthly inspection reports and discuss the next steps**

The monthly inspections continue to take place. Cllr. Weaver advised Members that the RoSPA inspection also took place last week. Cllr. Weaver met the inspector on site and was pleased to report that the monthly inspections and ongoing maintenance seem to be having a positive effect and that very little was picked up by the RoSPA inspector. The inspector was also pleased to see that urgent remedial works highlighted on the report for the previous inspection have been carried out. Cllr. Weaver advised Members that the RoSPA inspector suggested that the Combi equipment in the outdoor gym area which was found lying on the ground last week must have been forced over. The Clerk has contacted Fresh Air Fitness who provided the equipment to see if it is covered by the warranty. The equipment was removed by Capel Groundcare on the day it was found on the ground and they made the area safe. Cllr. Weaver reported that the mesh fencing at both goal ends of the MUGA has been recently damaged and that the Clerk has requested a quote for boarding. This damage was noted by Cllr. K. Laponder who will bring up the reporting of damage to the MUGA with the MUGA Steward at the meeting which is due to take place next week.

iii. **Huntington Village Green: Proposal to request formal approval from Golding Homes to purchase the village green.**

The Clerk reminded Members that the Executive Team at Golding Homes had requested an independent valuation of Huntington Village Green. They had advised that the valuation will then be used to inform a formal decision on whether Golding Homes wish to proceed with a disposal. The valuation report has now been received and circulated. It was noted that the valuer has assessed the current status of the village green and is recommending that the value of a freehold or long leasehold (125 year) disposal of the land is of the order of £25,000 and should be subject to an appropriate legally enforceable restrictive covenant and development uplift clause in favour of Golding Homes. Cllr. I. Laponder suggested and it was agreed by some Members that the valuation and the recommendation of a restrictive covenant seems excessive given that the area is a village green and is protected by ancient statutes.

Resolved: The Clerk to advise Golding Homes that the Parish Council is interested in principle in purchasing Huntington Village Green but would like to carry out its own independent valuation. The Clerk was requested to instruct an independent valuation.

iv. **Proposal to adopt the recreation ground**

Cllr. Weaver advised Members that MBC would be willing to transfer the ownership of both Middle Field and Beacon Field on the recreation ground to the Parish Council. The Parish Council would need to pay for any legal costs. This information was reported at the Recreation Ground and Open Spaces Working Group meeting held on the 9 July 2026 and the Clerk was asked to find out who will be responsible for maintaining the recreation ground if the Parish Council do not adopt the areas. Mark Green, Director of Finances & Resources at MBC, has advised that the Parish Services Scheme, (PSS), will not be stopping next year as thought and that MBC has a responsibility for the maintenance of its own open space and that the grounds maintenance budget exists to ensure that residents have access to good quality open space, and ownership is a secondary issue. Mark Green had advised that there is no reason why MBC would reduce the PSS allocation just because ownership of the recreation ground transfers to the Parish Council.

Resolved: To proceed with a proposal to adopt Middle Field and Beacon Field on the recreation ground and pay the associated legal fees.

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8.53pm Ward Member Claire Kehily left the meeting

e) Traffic & Community Safety Working Group

i. Highways Improvement Plan (HIP)

Cllr. Gardner advised Members that the invoice for the installation of wig wags outside the school on Stockett Lane has been received and paid and that the Parish Council is waiting to hear when the works will take place. A date is also awaited for the various approved yellow lines to be installed.

ii. Proposal to resurface the service road in the village centre

Cllr. Gardner reported that a discussion was held at the meeting on the 3 July 2026 with the Highways Steward about the possibility of the Parish Council funding much needed improvements to the surface of roads around the parish. KCC advised that the Parish Council could fund road surface improvements through the Highways Improvement Plan process. This led to a discussion about the condition of the service road in the centre of the village which is used by many residents. The engineer present agreed to send a quote to repair and resurface the service road which has since been received and circulated to all Members. It was noted that these works are estimated to cost £35,575.00.

Resolved: To add a proposal to resurface the service road in the village centre to the Highways Improvement Plan and investigate the costs further. (A vote was taken 4 in favour, 4 against equating to an equal vote which triggered the Chairman's casting vote. The Chairman used their casting vote in favour of the motion. The motion was carried).

iii. To receive feedback from a meeting with the Highway Steward: See item 61/26

iv. Highway Faults

Cllr. Gardner advised Members that he will continue to press for refreshing various white lines and the repairing of potholes and that the meeting with the Highway Steward had been helpful in gaining an understanding of works that can be requested and the best time of year to report them. Members discussed a recent car crash in the village centre which resulted in two bollards being damaged and subsequently removed by the Highways Steward. It is unclear whether Kent Police attended the scene but unfortunately KCC Highways had not been made aware of the need to remove the debris and glass from the area until it was reported by the Parish Council.

Standing Orders were lowered to allow a member of the public to speak.

The meeting resumed.

Cllr. Gardner reported that KCC has advised that the bollards belong to the Parish Council and that the Parish Council will need to pay for them to be replaced. It was suggested that the Clerk should contact the Beat Officers to find out if they have any information on the vehicles involved which could mean that the Parish Council can make a claim for cost of the replacement bollards.

f) Events and Communication Committee

i. To receive the minutes of the meeting held on the 15 July 2026

Cllr. Gardner gave a brief update on the arrangements in place for the Remembrance Service due to take place on Sunday 8 November 2026 and the Christmas Lights Switch-On due to take place on Sunday 29 December 2026.

ii. To receive an update on the event due to be held on the 5 September 2026

Cllr. Gardner reported that at a meeting held on the 22 July 2026 with the local organisations the arrangements for a late summer family event to be held on the recreation ground on Saturday 5 September 2026 was progressed. Two singers have

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been booked and catering arrangements are in place. The Committee has now placed orders for gazebos and have arranged to hire a stage and generator. The Clerk has prepared a risk assessment for the event. The Clerk has been asked to purchase some merchandise for the Parish Council stall.

iii. **To receive an update on the arrangements for the Christmas Lights**

The Clerk reported that the Rochester Diocese have advised the PCC that a temporary light on the Church building would in fact require a faculty. As this is a lengthy application process which does not guarantee an approval the PCC do not think it would be sensible to pursue hanging the Cynthia Star on the Church this year. The Clerk advised Members that Gala Lights have now agreed to install it on a lamppost in the village centre and that as the Star is heavier than the normal decorative lights the Clerk has contacted KCC to find out if further load testing is required. The Clerk will order the Christmas Tree from local supplier Kingswood and has asked the scout leader, Geoff Cosgrove, if he is willing to attend the carol event and be Father Christmas again.

iv. **New website update and to agree a retention agreement**

Cllr. Gardner reported that the new website is now up and running and it was noted that the Clerk will spend some time making some amendments. The Clerk suggested that the Parish Council takes out a website retainer contract with Heliocentrix. Heliocentrix can offer 9 hours of support over a 12 month period for a fee of £972.00 (excluding VAT) and any unused time would be carried over. The Clerk advised that the agreement offers a 10% discount on standard rates.

Resolved: To not take out a retention agreement with Heliocentrix and for the Clerk to request support as and when required.

A member of the public left the meeting

66/26 PARISH MATTERS

a) **Local Government Reorganisation:** See agenda item 63/26.

b) **Maidstone Local Plan**

The Call for Sites will run from the 15 June 2026 until midnight on 23 August 2026.

c) **Kent Police:** There was no report.

d) **Litter Picking:**

Cllr. Weaver reported that the voluntary litter pickers will be meeting at Millbrook Garden Centre on Friday 31 July 2026 for a coffee and a cake.

A member of the public left the meeting

67/26 ADMINISTRATION

a) **To consider interim recommendations from the DPO and discuss the next steps**

Members noted a copy of a report with some interim recommendations from the recently appointed DPO. The Clerk advised Members that the Parish Council historically has not had a number of policies/forms in place which are a requirement of GDPR. It was noted that the Clerk is meeting virtually with the DPO this week to discuss the recommendations and to start formulating the required policies. The Clerk will share the documents with Members either through the Staffing Committee or will bring them to Full Council for adoption.

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68/26 REPRESENTATION AT MEETINGS

a) **Village Hall Committee**

It was noted that AGM was held on Tuesday 14 July 2026 and that Darren Carpenter was re-elected as the Chairman of the Village Hall Committee.

b) **KALC Area Committee**

There has been no meeting.

c) **Coxheath Community Group**

See agenda item 61/26.

d) **Other meetings**

Cllr. Weaver reported that at the request of some of the pupils on the Eco-Council for the school some of the litter picking team and pupils had collected litter in the vicinity of the school last week.

69/26 CORRESPONDENCE/CONSULTATIONS: None to consider.

70/26 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS: None to consider.

71/26 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING:

Parish Council Meeting: Tuesday 29 September 2026

Planning Committee Meeting: Tuesday 25 August 2026

Finance Committee Meeting: Thursday 20 August 2026

With no further business to transact the meeting closed at 9.33pm

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Date:

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Payment List - July 2026

Ref:	Payee	Description	Gross	VAT	Net
BACs Payments for ratification on the 28 July 2026					
BACS 07-01	Bouncyful Castles	Inflatable hire	663.00	-	663.00
BACS 07-02	BCH Builders Ltd	Tommy sihouette installations	102.00	17.00	85.00
BACS 07-03	Event Branding Ltd	Parish Council Gazebo (1)	1,413.60	235.60	1,178.00
BACS 07-04	KCC	Installation of school wig-wags	8,453.70	-	8,453.70
BACS 07-05	Capel Groundcare	Replacement of swing hangers	1,113.60	185.60	928.00
BACS 07-06	West Farleigh Church	Stage Hire	250.00	-	250.00
BACS 07-07	Event Branding Ltd	Parish Council Gazebo (2)	1,383.60	230.60	1,153.00
TOTAL			12,716.50	668.80	12,047.70

Date	Payee	Description	Gross	VAT	Net
Direct Debits					
13/07/2026	EE	Mobile Phone	17.40	-	17.40
16/07/2026	Lloyds Bank	Credit Card Payment	162.76	-	162.76
29/07/2026	Peoples Pension	Clerks Pension	271.51	-	271.51
30/06/2026	Unity Bank	Service Charge	9.40	-	9.40
27/07/2026	ICO	Annual Subscription	47.00	-	47.00
09/07/2026	BT Group	Broadband/Phone Parish Office	44.34	-	44.34
TOTAL			552.41	-	552.41

Date	Payee	Description	Gross	VAT	Net
Credit Card					
12/06/2026	Amazon	Remembrance Service materials	159.76	-	159.76
02/07/2026	Monthly fee		3.00	-	3.00

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Ref:	Payee	Description	Gross	VAT	Net
BACs Payments for payment on 28 July 2026					
BACS 07-08	Louise Goldsmith	Clerks Expenses	132.58	-	132.58
BACS 07-09	Heliocentrix	Set up of new website	3,132.00	522.00	2,610.00
BACS 07-10	Paul Waring	Grounds Maintenance	1,261.89	210.31	1,051.58
BACS 07-11	Coxheath Village Hall	Hall & Parish Office Hire and Cleaning	289.00	-	289.00
BACS 07-12	DM Payroll Services	Payroll April - Sept 2026	79.20	13.20	66.00
BACS 07-13	Down to Earth	Woodland Management Plan	864.00	144.00	720.00
BACS 07-14	Capel Groundcare	Playground inspections and emergency works	522.00	87.00	435.00
BACS 07-15	Heliocentrix	Microsoft 365 agreement and support services	172.60	28.77	143.83
BACS 07-16	Heliocentrix	Support Service	28.06	4.68	23.38
BACS 07-17	GDPR-info	Annual DPO Services	500.00	-	500.00
BACS 07-18	Down to Earth	Tree Works	7,728.00	1,288.00	6,440.00
BACS 07-19	SLCC	Annual Membership	180.80	-	180.80
BACS 07-20	Four Jays Ltd	Deposit Generator Hire	250.50	41.75	208.75
BACS 07-21	Louise Goldsmith	Clerks Salary July	1,851.07	-	1,851.07
BACS 07-22	HMRC	Clerks Tax & NI	929.66	-	929.66
TOTAL			17,921.36	2,339.71	15,581.65

RECEIPTS

Date	Payer	Amount
17/07/2026	MBC - S106 monies Container	8550.00
17/07/2026	50% PSS Grant	4694.60
		£13,244.60

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