



Coxheath Parish Council

Recreation and Open Spaces Working Group

Minutes from the meeting held on Thursday 9 July 2026 at 7pm
in the Parish Office, Coxheath Village Hall, Stockett Lane.

Present: Cllrs: H. Weaver (Chairman), D. Carpenter and I. Laponder

In attendance: Louise Goldsmith (Clerk)

MINUTES

31/26 Administration

Fire Exits, Fire Meeting Point, Mobile Phones. There were no intentions to record the meeting.

32/26 Apologies for Absence, Declarations and Dispensations

- a) Apologies for absence: **An apology for absence was received from Cllrs. Batty, Parker and Sheppard and the reason for absence were 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 the Village Hall
Other Significant Interests: **None received.**
Other Interests: **None received.**
- c) Requests for Dispensations: **None received.**
- d) Declarations of Lobbying: **None received.**

33/26 Minutes of the last meeting

Resolved to sign the minutes of the meeting held on the 2 June 2026 as a true and accurate record.

34/26 Open Session

No members of the public present.

35/26 Grounds Maintenance Contract 2027-2030

Members reviewed and made some amendments to the existing specification for the grounds maintenance. It was agreed that the preference would be to appoint a contractor for 3 years. It was noted that the 3 year contract would be excess of the £30,000.00 threshold.

Recommendation to Finance Committee: To invite specific firms and therefore not open up to wider competition nor advertise the opportunity on Contracts Finder (Public Contracts Regulations 2015, Reg. 110(5)(b)) but to comply with Regulation 112 which requires a Council to publish the award of a contract over £30,000 on Contracts Finder within a reasonable timescale.

36/26 Proposal to replace the containers on the recreation ground

The Clerk advised that the Planning Officer at MBC has apologised for the fact that he failed to submit a Committee report for planning application 26/501034/FULL in time to be considered at the July planning committee. The Officer has advised that the report is now completed and recommended for approval but can only be determined at the August committee. The Officer has requested a further extension of time to the 25 August 2026 to allow the decision to be issued following the August committee on the 20 August 2026. Members expressed their disappointment with this situation and reluctantly agreed to the proposed extension of time on the basis that the Officer advises the Clerk of the Committee's decision informally the day after the meeting. It was noted that the grounds contractor has trimmed the area behind the container on the Middle Field in preparation for the new container and has tidied up the

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whole area. The Clerk will advise Lawrence Containers that a decision on the planning permission has been delayed again.

37/26 Recreation Ground: To receive any update

It was noted that the Clerk and Cllrs. Weaver and Gardner attended a virtual meeting with Deborah Turner, Corporate Property MBC, and Andrew Jesson the Open Spaces and Parks Manager MBC on Friday 3 July 2026. Deborah Turner advised 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. The Clerk explained that the grant available from MBC under the Parish Services Scheme of approximately £9000.00 per annum is likely to stop next year. Cllr. I. Laponder questioned why the Parish Council needs to pay the legal fees given that this grant is likely to stop. Cllr. I. Laponder requested that the Clerk finds out what will happen if the Parish Council do not adopt the areas and whether MBC will take over the grounds maintenance. The Clerk suggested that the Parish Council should adopt these areas and maintain them to secure the future of the recreation ground for the benefit of all residents. The Clerk will place this proposal on the next Full Council meeting agenda for discussion.

Action: The Clerk to find out who will be responsible for maintaining the recreation ground if the Parish Council do not adopt the areas.

38/26 Playground/MUGA

a) To receive and discuss the monthly inspection report

It was noted that the next monthly inspection report for the play park, gym equipment, kick wall and MUGA is due at the end of the month. It was noted that Capel Groundcare attended today to reweld some of the mesh fencing in the MUGA. The Clerk advised Members that Capel Groundcare has suggested installed some boarding around the bottom of the fencing at the goal ends as these are regularly getting damaged by balls.

Agreed: The Clerk to ask Capel Groundcare for a quote for the suggested boarding.

b) To review the signage/noticeboard on the MUGA

Cllr. Weaver reported that the noticeboard on the MUGA is cracked and needs replacing. It was noted that the additional CCTV cameras have been installed and that further signage would be beneficial.

Agreed: The Clerk to obtain quotes to replace the noticeboard on the MUGA and for some additional CCTV signs.

c) To receive an update on a proposal to refurbish the Stockett Lane playground

The Clerk reminded Members that S106 funding of £101,789.63 needs to be spent by the 27 June 2027. MBC has agreed to release just under £10,000.00 of this funding to pay for the replacement container leaving over £90,000.00 of funds. The Clerk had contacted the S106 team again who have advised that a proposal to refurbish the Stockett Lane playground could be covered under the agreed use of the funding 'towards the cost of improvements refurbishment and replacement of facilities (including pavilions play equipment and play areas ground works and facilities) at Stockett Lane Recreation Ground'. The S106 team have suggested that the Parish Council obtains quotes and submits a proforma requesting that the remaining monies are used for this purpose.

Recommendation to Finance Committee: To invite specific firms and therefore not open up to wider competition nor advertise the opportunity on Contracts Finder (Public Contracts Regulations 2015, Reg. 110(5)(b)) but comply with Regulation 112 which requires a Council to publish the award of a contract over £30,000 on Contracts Finder within a reasonable timescale.

39/26 Football Pitches

a) To review the regulations and agreement for the hire of the football pitches

Members reviewed and made some amendments to the existing regulations and hire agreement for the football pitches. The Clerk reported that the football club seem to use the pitches on days not specified on the current application form. Cllr. Weaver suggested and it was agreed that a meeting is held with

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the football club to discuss the use of the pitches and reinforce that the football club must notify the Clerk of the itinerary each month.

b) To review the annual fee for hiring the football pitches

Members reviewed a table prepared by the Clerk outlining the current charges for football pitch hire in neighbouring parishes. It was concluded that there is no consistent rate of hire. Members discussed increasing the current hire fee of £100.00 per annum. Cllr. Weaver suggested increasing the fee slightly to £150.00 per annum stating that the pitch is currently used by Juniors and that families will need to fund any increase. Cllr. I. Laponder discussed increasing the fee to £300.00 per annum given the number of sessions held. As a decision could not be reached it was agreed that the Finance Committee should discuss and set the annual fee.

40/26 Huntingdon Road Village Green

a) To receive an update on a proposal to adopt the village green

The Clerk reported that Golding Homes has advised that the valuation was carried out last week but they not yet received a report. The valuation will be shared with the Parish Council to consider and then be used to inform a formal decision on whether Golding Homes wishes to proceed with a disposal.

b) To receive an update on proposal to improve the village green

It was noted that the Clerk and Cllr. Weaver met with two contractors on the 18 June 2026 to discuss improving the facilities on the village green. The Clerk advised that both contractors have apologised for not having submitted a quote yet but hope to send them very soon.

41/26 Tree Surveys/Woodland Management Plan

a) To receive an update on the tree works

It was noted Down to Earth completed the urgent remedial works to the trees on both the recreation ground and Huntingdon Village Green in the w/c 29 June 2026. It was noted that a local resident had queried why the stumps have been left so high and it was agreed that this was acceptable and was probably to allow for the retention of natural habitat and to prevent the stumps being a tripping hazard.

b) To discuss further works outlined in the tree report

It was agreed that the Clerk should obtain a quote from Down to Earth for the works required to trees identified as a moderate risk.

Action: The Clerk to obtain a quote for works required to trees identified as a moderate risk.

c) To receive an update on the Woodland Management Plan

Members discussed the Woodland Management Plan prepared by Down to Earth. Members were in agreement that the report is very comprehensive. A preliminary quote for the first stage of proposed works was also noted. Cllr. Weaver suggested and it was agreed that the Clerk should find out if a representative from Down to Earth could attend a site meeting to discuss the report in detail and the proposed cycle of works and to also discuss whether the proposed coppicing works could be combined with other works.

Action: The Clerk to request a site meeting with Down to Earth.

42/26 Other Open Spaces

a) Bench repairs: To consider quotes

Members considered two quotes to refurbish four of the benches owned by the Parish Council, namely two in the village centre, one outside the Church and one at The Beacons. It was agreed to accept the quote from BCH Builders Ltd who had quoted to refurbish two of the benches. The Clerk will request a further quote for the other two benches and under delegated powers will instruct them to proceed.

b) Brick Built Bus Shelter: To discuss a way forward

Members considered two quotes to repair the brick built bus shelter. Both contractors had quoted to repair the roof, a brick pillar and some repointing. Members were in agreement that the shelter should

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be retained and agreed to accept a quote of £880.00 (excluding VAT) from BCH Builders Ltd for the works.

c) **Noticeboards: To review**

Members discussed the condition of the village centre noticeboard and agreed that it needs to be replaced. The Clerk was asked to obtain some quotes for different styles of noticeboards given this is such an iconic noticeboard. Cllr. Weaver expressed her dissatisfaction with the style of all the other noticeboards. The Clerk was asked to obtain quotes for alternative styles for the working group to consider. It was agreed that the noticeboards could then be replaced on a cyclical basis. It was agreed that the Clerk should investigate the possibility of a new noticeboard being placed in the vicinity of Murdoch Close.

Action: The Clerk to obtain some quotes and investigate the location of a new noticeboard.

d) **Scout Hut Car Park: To receive an update and make a recommendation to Finance**

The Clerk advised Members that Deborah Turner, Corporate Property MBC, reported at the meeting held on Friday 3 July 2026 that the car park could only be made available on a lease on similar terms as the existing Scout lease i.e to 2050. The car park can be either leased to the Parish Council or the Scouts Trustees. Members discussed the current condition of the car park. Cllr. I. Laponder expressed his disappointment that MBC would expect the Parish Council to repair and maintain the car park but not own it. Concern was also expressed about the fact that the Parish Council would be liable for injuries. The Clerk advised that if the car park is not leased or adopted that MBC are responsible for the maintenance but that it had been explained that any repairs would not take place in the short term. The Clerk was asked to find out what effect leasing the car park would have on the cost of the insurance for the Parish Council. It was noted that the Scout Trustees preference would be for the Parish Council to lease the car park. The Clerk was asked to find out if the Scout Trustees would lease the car park if the Parish Council decided against leasing.

Action: The Clerk to contact the insurance company and the Scout Trustees.

43/26 Whitebeam and Fairhurst Play Areas

a) **Proposal to adopt the play areas from MBC – to receive an update**

It was noted that Kayleigh Ireland at Whitehead Monckton has now received from Capsticks acting on behalf of MBC a draft 'Heads of Terms' for the transfer of both Fairhurst and Whitebeam play Areas. The Clerk reminded Members that the Parish Council has agreed to pay the legal costs for the transfer. Kayleigh Ireland has reported that Capsticks have quoted the sum of £3,650 plus VAT and disbursements, whether or not the matter proceeds to completion. Cllr. I. Laponder suggested that as the Parish Council could be faced with a number of legal bills for the various transfer/adoption of land whether a fixed fee could be agreed. The Clerk was asked to investigate.

Action: The Clerk to discuss a fixed fee with Whitehead Monckton for all the proposed legal work.

b) **To receive and discuss the inspection reports for both play areas**

Members consider the most recent RoSPA inspection report for both areas which was carried out for MBC in January 2026 and the inspections carried out by Capel Groundcare. It was noted that some of the equipment will need to be replaced and it was agreed that it might be possible to transfer some of the existing equipment from the Stockett Lane playground to these areas if this playground is refurbished. The Clerk reminded Members that S106 funding could possibly be available to improve the surfacing and access to the Whitebeam Play area but that there is no S106 funding allocated to the Fairhurst play area. Despite the required works Members were in agreement that the Parish Council should adopt these areas to ensure that they remain as playgrounds for residents.

44/26 Confidential Items

There were none.

45/26 Date of the next meeting

Thursday 10 September 2026 at 7pm in the Parish Office.

With no further business to transact the meeting closed at 8.54pm

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Date:

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