

PLUCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 4th March 2025 at 7.30 pm in Pluckley Village Hall

Present : Cllrs Washer (in the Chair), Dilley, Robinson, Pearson, Buchanan & Malpeli

In attendance : Mr. G Eaton, Clerk to the Council, ABC Cllr Bell and Peter New,
Neighbourhood Watch

Action by:

1 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence

2 Declarations of Cllrs interests in items on the Agenda

Cllrs Dilley & Pearson declared an interest in the planned discussion about the proposed lease of the pavilion and the football pitches

There were no other declarations of Cllrs interests in items on the Agenda

3 Minutes of the last Meeting & Matters arising

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 4th February 2025 were approved and signed

The Clerk confirmed that the new noticeboard had been ordered

4 Public discussion and Parishioners questions

There were no members of the public present

5 ABC Cllr Bell's report & Neighbourhood Watch report

Cllr. Bell expressed her condolences on the passing of Kent County Councillor Charlie Simkins, extending thoughts to his family and friends at this sad time.

Although Kent was not selected for the government's Devolution Priority Programme, the government has requested that Kent County Council (KCC) and district councils in Kent and Medway submit initial proposals for Local Government Reorganisation by 21st March. Public consultations should take place over the summer, with final proposals to be submitted in the autumn.

Most local authorities in Kent favour replacing the current two-tier system with either three or four unitary councils. However, concerns remain over who would assume strategic responsibility for the county if no elected mayor is in place.

As part of her cabinet role at KCC, Cllr. Bell oversees the Kent Archives service. She highlighted an upcoming talk on Sir Edward Dering, organised by the Archives team. The event will be led by Pluckley-based historian Kate Sowden on Monday, 10th March at the Kent History and Library Centre in Maidstone. Cllr. Bell looks forward to attending and encouraged Pluckley residents and local history enthusiasts to join, as the event is open to all.

Peter New spoke to his latest Neighbourhood Watch report, previously circulated by email, and spoke about his productive recent meeting with Matthew Scott, Kent's Police and Crime Commissioner

6 Planning & Enforcement

2025/0214 - Erection of 12no. free-standing timber lighting poles in the garden area and rear car parking area and installation of associated festoon lighting. (retrospective)

Black Horse Inn, The Street, TN27 0QS

Pluckley Parish Council objects to this planning application for the following reasons :

The application does not conform to any of the relevant policies relating to external lighting in the adopted plans, including policy ENV 4 of the adopted Local Plan 2030, ABC's Dark Skies SPD and Pluckley Neighbourhood Plan Review 2023 policy H4.

All of these policies outline requirements that any lighting proposed should be the minimum appropriate for its purpose and that planning applications must demonstrate clear regard to the guidance and requirements set out in the Council's Dark Skies SPD. Applications must show consideration of where any external light shines, when it shines, how much it shines, lighting types and any possible ecological impact. This application does not address any of these issues in the small amount of technical information provided.

Importantly, the applicant has not demonstrated that the lighting proposed is: the minimum appropriate for its purpose; is designed such that lighting is directed downwards, with a beam angle below 70 degrees and; that no significant adverse effects individually or cumulatively will result to the character of the area, the residential amenity of local residents, the safety of vehicle users and pedestrians or the diurnal/seasonal rhythms of the Borough's biodiversity assets.

Pluckley Parish Council does not agree with the statements made within the Planning and Access Statement of the planning application, which seek to justify the installation of this lighting. The Statement claims that the primary goals are to enhance usability and increase safety . As the garden is generally only used either in the daytime or on summer evenings when it is light much later, this type of lighting is unnecessary. The tall timber poles at 3.6 metres high, are intrusive in both the pub garden and the parking area and the very large number of festoon lights which have been strung between the poles create an extremely bright white light which is inappropriate to both the setting of the listed building and the village conservation area and more widely causes considerable light pollution.

The Parish Council believes that there are other more appropriate and attractive ways of lighting these areas using low level lights which could enhance the building, the car park and garden, and be unobtrusive in the village centre and Conservation Area generally. Alternative low-level lighting could meet the policy requirements set out in the approved Development Plans and guidance documents and overcome local objections.

Pluckley village centre has no street lighting and residents generally ensure that external lighting relating to properties is kept to a minimum and so conforms to and maintains dark skies. As a result of the support locally for dark skies there have been several objections to this planning application citing the intrusive design of the lights and the Parish Council supports these objections .

7 Dark Skies Policy

There was a discussion about the Dark Skies Policy and the recent article published in the Pluckley Post. It was noted that any parishioners who wished to complain about possible breaches of the Policy should contact ABC Planning

8 Finance Matters

The following accounts were approved for payment:

	£
J Johns, recreation ground tidying	54.00
D Heasman, street cleaning	108.00
Whitstable Designs, website hosting	180.00
ABC, grounds maintenance 2024	3205.30

The Clerk's salary/expenses of £565.80, paid by monthly Standing Order, was noted and approved

9 Communications and correspondence

There was no correspondence of note

10 Traffic & Highways

Cllr Washer reported that he and Cllr Robinson recently had a very productive meeting with the Managing Director of Southeastern railways regarding the Station and parking issues in particular

Cllr Washer also updated on the Highways Improvement Plan – a further reply from Highways was awaited and the survey of sites for the Speed Indication devices was in hand

11 Recreation Sport & Leisure

There was a general discussion about granting the Football Club a lease on the pavilion and pitches so that they could better access funding to improve the pitches and drainage, fencing etc., which would benefit all users of the Recreation Ground. Several factors were considered including the length of the lease and guaranteeing the access rights for all users. It was unanimously agreed to progress this and to draft a lease agreement **Cllr Dilley/Clerk**

The Clerk was asked to contact Land Registry and confirm ownership of the pavilion and Recreation Ground **Clerk**

It was noted that the community consultation on the new playpark equipment would take place on 22nd march between 9am and 3pm at the Recreation Ground

Cllr Dilley reported that funding for the new container had been approved and should be in place by July/August 2025

12 AOB and Diary items

It was noted that a new date for the Village Clean-up would need to be set. Cllrs Robinson & Pearson kindly offered to organise the event **Cllrs Robinson & Pearson**

It was agreed that the Parish Assembly would take place on 13th May 2025 and follow the same format as last year. Cllrs to contact local groups, School, Church, clubs etc. **All**

13 Date of next Meeting

It was agreed that the next Meeting would be held on Tuesday 1st April 2025 at 7.30 pm at Pluckley Village Hall

There being no other business the Meeting closed at 9.10 pm