

# **PLUCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

## **Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> July 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, Peter New Neighbourhood Watch, and ten members of the public

**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 proposed lease of the football pitches and pavilion

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 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025 were approved and signed

### **4 Public discussion and Parishioners questions**

The members of the public outlined their various objections to planning application 2025/1092, and these were discussed. The Parish Council also objects to the application and would be writing to ABC detailing these objections

### **5 ABC Cllr Bell's report & Neighbourhood Watch report**

Cllr. Bell updated on the position regarding Local Government Reorganisation. Kent County Council's request to the government for an extension had been declined, so the deadline for KCC and the 12 district and borough councils to submit their final joint proposal for LGR remains 28<sup>th</sup> November 2025. A public consultation has been promised. The Kent Association of District Councils (KALC) is distributing a questionnaire to parish councils to gather views. She expressed disappointment that the only options put forward in the questionnaire are reorganising Kent into 3 or 4 unitary councils, rather than 1 or 2. Although the prevailing view across the county appears to favour 3 or 4, the government has not entirely ruled out the option of fewer, larger authorities. A report by PWC on the benefits of LGR concluded that minimal savings would be made with 3 unitaries, while the creation of 4 would actually cost

more. The report suggests that meaningful savings can only be achieved through the creation of a single unitary council. If the outcome results in 3 unitaries, Pluckley will likely be part of an East Kent Unitary Authority. The new administration at KCC has expressed misgivings about splitting Kent up into multiple unitary councils.

Cllr. Bell spoke of how much she had enjoyed the Pluckley Fete and Music Festival, particularly praising the musical performances by local children at the start of the event. She congratulated the organisers on a successful festival and was pleased to have supported it with funds from her Member Grant.

She also reported on her recent visit to the Environment Agency's clean-up operation at Hoad's Wood, which has now commenced. She was saddened to witness the visible impact of contamination on the site, particularly the death of ancient trees caused by toxic waste illegally dumped there. She expressed hope that those responsible—who are believed to be involved in Serious Organised Crime—will be brought to justice, although she noted that the penalties available to the courts are unfortunately quite limited. She questioned how this situation was allowed to develop over such a long period, especially on privately owned land.

Peter New spoke to his latest Neighbourhood Watch report, previously circulated by email, and updated on his work with catapults, E-scooters, anti-social behaviour, rogue traders and violence against women and girls. Cllr Washer thanked Peter for his continuing hard work for the residents of Pluckley

## **6 Planning & Enforcement**

### **2025/1092 – residential development for up to six dwellings Gooseberry Field Campsite, Smarden Road, TN27 0RE**

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

1. The application site was put forward to ABC as part of the Call for Sites within the Local Plan Review. All sites submitted within this process – including the application site - are currently under consideration by ABC. The application is therefore premature as the site should be considered within this context to allow for proper analysis and consideration.
2. In the ABC Local Plan 2030, the site falls outside of Policies HOU3A and HOU5. The application site lies outside the Pluckley Thorne Defined Settlement Area as shown in the Pluckley Neighbourhood Plan Review 2023, Map 8. This document forms part of the adopted Local Plan 2030.
3. Within the Local Plan the site is considered under the paragraph 6.62 "Isolated residential development". There is a general presumption against this type of development.
4. Pluckley Neighbourhood Plan Review 2023  
Policy H1 of the PNP Review – Windfall Housing Development is relevant.  
The policy states that 'Proposals for new residential development on "windfall" sites .....within the built-up confines of Pluckley Thorne, ... as defined on Map 8, will be supported where the proposals satisfy following criteria...' This application lies clearly outside of the Pluckley Thorne confines map and cannot be supported.

5. The Planning Statement accompanying the application makes the points that the application is a brownfield site and that it is in a sustainable location. PPC do not agree with these assertions. The Government defines a brownfield site as developed land, that is, or was previously, occupied by a permanent structure. As far as we are aware the application site includes a temporary poly tunnel and a gravel track and gravel hard standing. We do not believe that this should result in the site being classed as brownfield.
6. Kent Highways have requested details of how a safe pedestrian route can be provided in order that pedestrians can access the existing footway network along Smarden Road. There is a significant distance between the entrance to the site and an existing pavement at the junction of Smarden Road /Lambden Road and to date no details have been provided. There is also no safe pedestrian access available to Pluckley Station.
7. The application Planning Statement states in para 2.1.5, that approval has been granted for a total of six houses to the north of the application site at Pinnock Yard and that this site is also outside of the Settlement boundary. PPC response to this is that the Pinnock Yard site was allocated for residential in the Pluckley Neighbourhood Plan 2016 and was truly a brownfield site.
8. The application site, if approved, will significantly extend the built area of Pluckley Thorne southwards into an area of open countryside. Development here will not follow the built form and cannot be described as windfall.
9. The application site is described in the application as a designated Wildlife Site. Kent Wildlife Trust have objected and PPC support this objection.
10. PPC are concerned that this application if approved will affect the setting of the adjacent listed building of Thorne House.
11. The Parish Council supports tourism and local employment uses in appropriate locations and objects to loss of this site to residential use.

**2025/1087 – cladding of an agricultural straw and hay storage building (retrospective)**  
**Frith Court Farm, The Pinnock, TN27 0SY**

Pluckley Parish Council objects to this application.

The reasons given for not having built the building as an open sided barn in accordance with the permission, but having clad the building, are the same reasons used to justify the need for the barn in original application - PA 2023/2223.

The original application stated:

“The core reasons for erecting the building are:

- 1.To provide dry storage for the straw and hay crops.
- 2.Reduce losses and improve farming efficiency by 25% to prevent weathered losses of bales.
- 3.Provide purpose built modern agricultural facilities to add value to the farm’s existing arable crops and improve profitability / feed quality for the livestock through adding value by baling and storing straw.

4.To provide safe and secure storage of hay crops.

It is intended that the building is constructed to provide the applicants with a dry, safe and secure straw storage building. “

The current application states

“The need for cladding is directly related to the core function of the building -the dry and secure storage of baled straw and hay produced on the holding”

The key reasons for cladding the building are:

- 1.Preserving the dry matter content of straw and hay bales
- 2.Preventing quality degradation due to mould, spoilage, or rot
- 3.Reducing the risk of arson by enclosing the building “

Therefore, there is no demonstrable reason why this cladding should not be removed.

The Parish Council has a general policy of objecting to retrospective applications. There is a considerable history of retrospective applications associated with this site and this application is a retrospective application relating to a previously submitted retrospective application.

## **7 Finance Matters**

Paid accounts were ratified and new accounts approved for payment:

|                                                        | <b>£</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| J Johns, recreation ground tidying (July & August)     | 108.00   |
| D Heasman, street cleaning (July & Aug)                | 216.00   |
| Playspaces, deposit for new play equipment             | 38753.40 |
| South-east rentals, sound equipment for music festival | 610.00   |
| Ashford Folk, music for festival                       | 100.00   |
| HMRC, Clerks tax (nine months)                         | 1170.00  |
| KALC, course fee                                       | 90.00    |
| Kent K9 Guarding, security guards for festival         | 324.00   |
| ABC, licence for pavilion / printing for festival      | 189.42   |
| Ashford Drum Bank, music for festival                  | 100.00   |
| A Dunn, reimbursement of sundry expenses               | 109.46   |

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

## **8 Communications and correspondence**

There was nil of note

## **9 Traffic & Highways**

There was a discussion about the possibility of creating a footpath behind the newly installed bollards on Station Road to allow pedestrian to walk safely along that stretch of road. Clerk to contact Highways  
**Clerk**

Cllr Washer reported on the recent meeting with Southeastern Railways and was awaiting written feedback

## **10 Recreation Sport & Leisure**

There was a general discussion about the Parish Council granting the Football Club a lease on the pavilion and pitches, which had been unanimously approved. Cllr Dilley to circulate sample leases (of at least 10 years) for consideration  
**Cllr Dilley**

Cllr Dilley reported that there had been an attempted burglary of the container at the Rec. - this had been reported to the Police

There was a discussion about the need to obtain electrical and fire safety certificates for the pavilion and it was agreed to ask P Mulligan to provide a quote for the required works

Cllr Washer offered to meet with FSG Agri regarding the path and laying the electrical cable  
**Cllr Washer**

Cllr Buchanan gave a report about the recent music festival, which had been very successful and enjoyed by many residents and visitors. It was agreed that the music festival should be an annual event  
**Cllr Buchanan**

Cllr Robinson proposed that a Memorial Bench be installed in the Rec. This was fully supported but it was agreed to revisit this after the new path and play equipment had been installed  
**Cllr Robinson**

## **11 AOB and Diary items**

There was no other business to discuss

## **12 Date of next Meeting**

It was agreed that the next Meeting would be held on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2025 at 7.30 pm at Pluckley Village Hall

There being no other business the Meeting closed at 9.30 pm