

PLUCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 2nd September 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, Beth Morris, and Anna Dunn Friends of the Rec. Group

Action by:

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from KCC Cllr Eustace

2 Declarations of Cllrs interests in items on the Agenda

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

3 Minutes of the last Meeting & Matters arising

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 1st July 2025 were approved and signed

4 Public discussion and Parishioners questions

Local resident Beth Morris spoke about the need for rural bus services for parishioners especially those who were disabled or had medical conditions which prevented them from driving. Beth outlined the support she had received from parishioners to petition ABC to discuss the issue. There was a full discussion with members of the Parish Council who had actively campaigned for rural bus services in the past and they outlined the difficulties they had encountered. Beth was fully supported by the Council and members offered to help her as required

Anna Dunn, Friends of the Rec. Group, updated on the new play equipment, which was nearing completion, although some minor works were outstanding. There was a discussion about issues with the new path which may need compacting again but a watching brief be kept for now. It was generally felt that a good job had been done

Cllr Dilley kindly offered to liaise with Aspire, the ground work contractors, to make them aware of the new equipment and to avoid damaging it when grass cutting and strimming

5 ABC Cllr Bell's report & Neighbourhood Watch report

Cllr. Bell reported that Ashford Borough Council has launched its Regulation 18 consultation on the Draft Local Plan 2042. The draft plan sets out the council's proposed direction on key planning matters, including housing, economic development and the environment.

Under Policy Intention 2, which covers the spatial distribution of new housing land allocations, the council aims to meet a residual housing requirement of 5,730 dwellings. The majority of new housing will be targeted at Ashford and its edges. This includes 900 to 1,100 new dwellings in Ashford Town Centre, 600 to 800 dwellings in the Ashford Urban Area, and 2,500 to 2,700 dwellings at the Edge of Ashford.

In Tenterden, up to 500 new dwellings are proposed to be accommodated through new land allocations, while a range of other villages have been identified to accommodate up to 1,000 new dwellings via new land allocations. The precise composition of these allocations will be determined through more detailed site assessment work in the next iteration of the Local Plan.

In addition, the plan identifies the need for 115 pitches for Gypsy and Traveller provision.

In terms of Rural Business Grants Ashford Borough Council has secured £122,000 from the UK Government's Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) to support rural businesses until March 2026. The funding will be used for two grant schemes:

Rural Green Business Grant – supports energy efficiency and transition projects in rural commercial premises, and the Rural Place and Provenance Grant – supports food and drink producers, hospitality, tourism venues, start-up spaces, and travel connections to boost rural productivity and sustainability.

Applications are open until 31st October 2025, with a possible extension if funds remain. More details and eligibility guidance are available on the Ashford Borough Council website.

Regarding Local Government Reorganisation Medway Council has formally backed a plan to create 4 unitary councils across Kent, whereas KCC has proposed a single unitary council across Kent and Medway to include 3 area assemblies.

In response to a Freedom of Information request submitted by the BBC, the government has confirmed that it undertook no departmental analysis into the costs association with LGR.

The County Council Network has reiterated its concerns over the potential costs of LGR, citing figures provided in an updated report by consultancy PWC, indicating that £2.9 bn of savings over 5 years could be achieved if all 21 2-tier county areas (like Kent) were replaced with single unitary in each area. The savings from a 3 unitary scenario would generate around £17m over that period. 4 Unitaries would likely result in additional costs of almost £92m.

Peter New, Neighbourhood Watch, spoke to this latest report which had been circulated by email. Peter updated on recent meetings with the local MPs and detailed his continuing work focusing on rural crime and catapults

6 Planning & Enforcement

2025/1277 – variation of condition 3 (materials) of planning permission 2023/0736 for proposed repair and conversion of existing outbuilding to create supplementary accommodation to allow changes to roof and keep 'like for like' rather than change material

Fairview, 1 Jennings Farm Cottage, Charing Road, TN27 0QL

There were no objections to this application

2025/1431 – erection of self-build dwelling and two bay car port with annexe above following demolition of existing dwelling, alongside associated landscaping works

Clover Farm (aka Daniel Farm), The Pinnock, TN27 0SY

The agricultural condition which was associated with the existing bungalow was removed in 2016. Residential development such as this would not normally be permitted in the open countryside and this is a very isolated dwelling located 300 metres from the nearest road down a track

Pluckley Parish Council objects to this application on the grounds that it does not meet the criteria set out in the Adopted Local Plan, Policy HOU7 Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside, specifically the following criteria :

The dwelling

- b) ...is designed to ensure it does not result in significant harm to the overall character and appearance of the area, and
- c) ... is suitable in terms of its scale, bulk, massing and the materials used

This proposal would almost double the gross internal area from 231m² to 444m² and increase the ridge height from 6.7m to 8.7m.

The Parish Council believes that this proposal is inappropriate and will be visually intrusive in the countryside for the above reasons

2025/1458 – conversion of triple garage to one unit for tourist accommodation

Autumn Barn, The Pinnock, TN27 0SY

The Planning and Design Statement attached to the application is very difficult to understand and appears to reference policies which are no longer in existence- possibly relating to the previous application dating back to 2013.

Pluckley Parish Council objects to this application because the location of the building is in an unsustainable location, is isolated from the main house and will extend residential development into the countryside.

The proposal does not comply with the Adopted Ashford Local Plan Policy EMP 11 - Tourism which states:

.." Proposals for new hotels and B+B development will be permitted in locations that are accessible by a choice of modes of transport and particularly encouraged in Ashford and Tenterden urban areas."

The application is essentially for residential development in the countryside. It is unlikely that it will be possible to successfully apply a condition which restricts use to "tourism."

7 Finance Matters

Paid accounts were ratified and new accounts approved for payment:

	£
J Johns, recreation ground tidying (September)	54.00
D Heasman, street cleaning (September)	108.00
Playsafety, playpark inspection	120.00
Napier Technical Services, electrical works for CCTV at the pavilion	1746.56

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

8 Communications and correspondence

Cllr Buchanen summarised the feedback from the five Parish Council questionnaires received which focused on speeding, parking, pot holes, train frequency, footpaths and village events & activities. There was a general discussion and it was agreed to publish a summary of the responses in the next edition of 'The Pluckley Post'

9 Traffic & Highways

There was nil of note

10 Recreation Sport & Leisure

This item was covered in Public discussion, item 4 above

11 AOB and Diary items

It was agreed that David Heasman would be the 'Villager of the Year' for his long service to the Village, including running the shop for many years and currently keeping the streets clean

Carols around the Tree to be discussed at the October 2025 Meeting

12 Date of next Meeting

It was agreed that the next Meeting would be held on Tuesday 7th October 2025 at 7.30 pm at Pluckley Village Hall

There being no other business the Meeting closed at 9.20 pm