

KENARDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting
Held on Wednesday 9th April 2025 at 6.30pm****Present:****Parish Cllrs:** Cllrs S McIntyre, B Hedley, J Whittington**Borough Cllrs:** 0**KCC Councillor:** Cllr M Hill**Members of Public: 8****PCSO:** 1**Clerk:** A Beach

Minute No		ACTION
1166	Introduction by Chairman Cllr McIntyre welcomed everyone and gave apologies for: Cllr J Shilton	
1167	Approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 10th April 2024 The minutes were approved by Councillors' and signed by Cllr McIntyre	
1168	Chairman's Statement – Steve McIntyre Cllr McIntyre thanked the Parish, Borough and Kent Councillors for their help and assistance over the past year and very importantly the members of the community who helped with the events held in the Parish. He gave a brief report on the achievements of the Parish Council and the successful events held in the Village over the past year. The full report, including the RFO's financial report is attached. APPENDIX 1 Brenda Hedley presented Mike Hill with a small thank you present for his help and support he has given to the village during his time as KCC Councillor. Mike Hill presented Annette with a KALC Community Award on behalf of the three councils she is Parish Clerk to.	

1169	<p>Police Report</p> <p>PC Darren Laker gave a brief update for the area.</p> <p>There is nothing specifically happening in Kenardington and the area has very few incidents but it is important that all are reported to the Rural Police hotline. Some items reported are not police matters and if this is the case they will redirect you.</p> <p>We have a number of new recruits in the Ashford area who are currently training with experienced officers.</p>	
1170	<p>Borough Councillors Report – Johnny Shilton</p> <p>Cllr Shilton was unable to attend due to a train delay but forwarded his report to Neil Bell who kindly read on his behalf. A copy of his report is attached. APPENDIX 2</p>	
1171	<p>County Councillor Report – Mike Hill</p> <p>Cllr Hill gave his report and confirmed that he would not be re-standing in the upcoming elections and thanked everyone for their support over the years. A copy of his report is attached. APPENDIX 3</p>	
1172	<p>Village Hall & St Mary’s Church– Brenda Hedley</p> <p>Copy of the reports attached. APPENDIX 4 & 5</p>	
1173	<p>Village Caretaker Report – Yvonne Osbourne</p> <p>Yvonne and the Village Caretaker, Alf Mahler attended and explained the situation with the scheme.</p> <p>We have not received any increases from Ashford BC since the scheme commenced in 2013, this is now a problem and they have been in contact with Ashford BC.</p> <p>ABC refused and asked their landscaping department; Aspire; to quote for the work, they said they could do the work for £2k less. When investigated further it was not a direct comparison to the work currently provided and agreed to monitor the work carried out by Alf and re-estimate; we are waiting for details from ABC following this.</p> <p>If ABC still refuse to increase the donation currently paid the scheme will have to cease at the end of the 2025-26 financial year.</p> <p>Kenardington councillors and those attending from Warehorne were concerned as they expect the service currently given to significantly reduced.</p>	
1174	<p>Public Session</p> <p>Nothing to report</p>	

The Chairman thanked everyone for joining the meeting and hoped they would stay and enjoy refreshments and thanked Cllr Hedley for kindly preparing these and closed the meeting at 7.25pm

APPENDIX 1

Steve McIntyre – Chairman’s Annual Report Kenardington PC

Welcome / Introductions – this is an opportunity for members of the public to find out what local organisations are doing in a more informal setting etc.

Priorities include:

Designated Green Space

Annette is working hard to achieve designation of the green space next to The Wish. This will secure the land as an area for future events, and serve as a children’s play area. The Parish council has received 5K funding from ABC for a new swing.

Supporting Village Hall Improvements

KPC are supporting the Village Hall trustees with Village Hall improvements, to include new disability parking and toilet facilities, plus a patio area. Brenda Hedley leads this project.

Supporting Village Events

The VE Day event on the 3rd May 2025 will be held at the Village Hall and adjacent Green Space. Brenda and trusted helpers are working hard to make this a great day for the community.

Highways

(a) Highways Improvement Plan: The Kent County Council Highways Engagement Manager has worked with Councillors to assess the safety of the sections of Warehorne Rd and Appledore Rd within Kenardington Village.

The conclusion: data from Speed Watch deployments, Highways automated electronic speed capture and historic crash information do not justify lowering the current 40mph speed limits.

Highways have acknowledged areas for road safety improvements, replacing new gateways, bend warning signs and repaint of road markings within the village. Cllr John Whittington leads on this work.

(b) Increase parking availability at The Wish

Initial enquires being made with ABC to establish ownership of the current parking areas and to establish any scope for expansion.

Keeping the Village Tidy and Clean

Our Village Caretaker, Alf Mather continues to provide a superb gardening service for Kenardington. Also, a big thank you to Yvonne Osborne (Clerk of Wittersham) for organising the allocation of gardening services across Parishes. KPC will continue to provide a yearly harsher cut for The Wish hedge to improve the safety of pedestrians using the adjacent pavement.

Litter picking – if anyone would like to help with litter picking then Brenda has all the equipment

required.

6) Finances

At the end of the financial year, we had £11,298 in reserve and £5,833 Ringfenced for Swing. Our Precept for 2025-26 is £7100.

7) Devolution

Kent not chosen for the Government Devolution project.

8) Challenges

Difficulty getting councillors / less funding available. If you want to make a difference for the local community then please come and join us.

9) Thank you to everyone in the community who has helped with events over during year, and to the Borough and County Councillor for their continued support.

Mike Hill (OBE) has decided to retire after 25 years of service to communities. Having spent 35 years in the Army and a spell in the Civil Service, in 2001 Mike was elected as a Kent County Councillor. He has since served with Community Services and for the most part was a cabinet member in the Community and Regulatory Services. Amongst other things, Mike was responsible for the build of the Turner Contemporary in Margate.

Brenda presented Mike with a thank you gift.

Annette

Annette plays a pivotal role as a clerk and financial officer for 3 parish councils – Kenardington, Stone and Warehorne.

Annette continues to ensure the Councils operate legally and within Policy. She handles the numerous reports from members of the public e.g. flooding, pot holes, overgrown hedges etc. Identifies grant opportunities and applies for project funding.

Annette basically keeps us all in order and for this was nominated for KALC Community Award

On behalf of the Parishes, you serve we are grateful for the work you do for the communities and would ask you to accept this KALC award, presented by Cllr Hill.

APPENDIX 2

Johnny Shilton – Borough Councillor Annual Report Kenardington PC

It has been a pleasure serving alongside Mike Hill who has served our local area for the last 24 years. He's given so much of his time and energy to the local community and I want to wish him well in his well-deserved retirement.

Here in Kenardington we have a fantastic community and I'm so grateful to the Parish Council for everything they do - I know it is appreciated.

My job day to day is to support residents in the Isle of Oxney so if you need help don't hesitate to get in touch, and ask for my details if you don't have them. Much to my partner's irritation I will answer the phone any time of the day... or night!

It's been a busy year for ABC and I continue to worry about the state of the council's finances although they are not as bad as some other areas. I continue to believe that a large part of the job is fighting bureaucracy for local residents. Planning applications are taking far too long to get answers to simple questions that could be answered with common sense. The condition of ABC's

owned housing stock continues to dismay me and I continue to be contacted by residents living in what reasonably could be described as unacceptable conditions. I've been working closely with our local MP Katie on this issue to ensure that ABC gives rural areas as much attention as the town.

Unfortunately, I regret to inform residents their council tax will rise again by the maximum this year. I voted against this measure and suggested reasonable alternatives to increase efficiency without increasing the burden on residents in already difficult times, as did my colleague Neil who is with us this evening.

Finally, as some of you may be aware, my predecessor Mick Burgess, passed away recently.

Mick was an Ashford Borough Councillor from 1991 until 2023, when he stood down after 8 successive terms as a councillor. He was made an Honorary Alderman of the Borough in 2023. He was the longest serving councillor at the time.

He continued to support the communities of the Isle of Oxney even after he had stood down as a councillor.

Mick was a friend to many here in Kenardington and a great friend and guide for me personally. To many he exemplified what it was to be a councillor.

We lose in him a great friend and he will be sorely missed. I'm sure that you will join me in sending our very warmest wishes to his family at this difficult time.

Thank you.

Councillor Johnny Shilton

Ward Member for the Isle of Oxney

APPENDIX 3

Mike Hill – KCC Annual Report Kenardington

Good evening, and thank you for inviting me one again to your annual meeting.

When I spoke to you a year ago, I forecast a turbulent year ahead. Well that certainly proved true. The international scene has been particularly chaotic with escalating violence in Ukraine and the Middle East and a seismic shift in American politics following the Presidential election. At home we had a general election which saw the first change in the governing party for 14 years. Little progress has been made in stemming the flood of small boat crossings landing on the Kent coast and our economy seems to be stubbornly flatlining despite all the efforts to stimulate growth.

For the County Council our financial position continues to cause concern. We set our budget for the next financial year on 13 February, and it proved to be a challenging exercise. We have had great difficulty containing costs this year and will have an overspend at the end of the financial

year. Next year we will still be facing the ever-increasing demand pressures of Adult Social Care now exacerbated by the rises in minimum wage and Employers National Insurance contributions. In order to balance the books, we have had to make significant savings which will inevitably have an effect on service delivery and our discretionary activity. We have also had to raise Council Tax by the maximum allowed of 5%. It is a pretty bleak picture, and we are not alone. 7 Councils have effectively become bankrupt, and it has been reported that at least half of all Councils will be in financial difficulty in the next few years. We expect to see the issue of funding for local government rise up the political agenda as the effects of under investment in this sector become ever more apparent.

The other major issues which have come to the fore in the last few months are devolution and the reform of local government. These are closely linked topics which together represent the biggest change in local government for 50 years. For devolution, the government wishes to establish new strategic authorities in every area of England to be led by elected executive Mayors. These strategic authorities will be given additional funds to carry out a range of devolved powers and strategic responsibilities. A number of these Mayoral authorities are already in place.

Alongside devolution the government wishes to reform local government to end the two-tier system and replace it with unitary councils each with a population greater than 500k. These unitaries will deliver the full range of public services currently provided by County and District Councils. So, we will end up with an executive Mayor for the whole of Kent and Medway and the County Council would go, the District Councils would go and Medway Council would go – all replaced by a small number of Unitary Councils, perhaps 3 or possibly 4.

This is a flagship government policy, and they are determined to make it happen. The first tranche of Mayoral elections is scheduled for May next year. Kent is not in that first cohort though all our neighbours are. This is a big disappointment for all of us and we have yet to hear a rational explanation of why Kent has been excluded. The best guess on the Kent process is for elections in May 28. The hope is that new arrangements will be more efficient and will receive better support from Central government. In the short term it is going to be very disruptive and require a great deal of work.

Roads - Coming closer to home I am well aware of the poor condition of our road network; this is a result of years of underinvestment by successive governments in the road network. It is a national issue needing significant funding to get rid of the backlog. However, we will shortly be starting a pothole blitz to which we have committed £14m so I hope you will soon be seeing some significant improvement.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children - We have established 7 reception centres for UASC in order to meet our legal obligations. These are coping well with the current arrivals, but we await the summer weather with some trepidation. Alongside this work we continue to press government for an equitable dispersal scheme to reduce the burden on Kent.

Election – There will be KCC elections on 1st May. My position is that I will have completed 24 years on the Council including 18 years on the Cabinet. I think enough is enough and I am not standing again. I have found my time on the Council rewarding. I really enjoyed my portfolio responsibilities

for the Community Services which do so much to improve the quality of life of our residents but also the interaction with residents in my constituency helping them navigate the complexities of KCC bureaucracy.

And finally, it has been an enormous privilege to represent this beautiful part of the country on the County Council. Thank you for all your support and my very best wishes for the future.

Michael Hill

APPENDIX 4

Brenda Hedley – Kenardington Village Hall Annual Report 2025

Having had the interior of the hall refurbished with funds received from ABC after the pandemic, it has become a much more desirable and welcoming space. The addition of a kitchen and bar area has proven extremely useful.

In the year 2023–24, the hall cost £1,295 to run, with utility bill cost. Through events held at the hall, we were able to raise £743 towards this amount. These events included boot fairs, a murder mystery evening, a seventies night, and regular coffee mornings—all of which have been very successful.

Looking ahead, we are excited about the upcoming VE Day anniversary event planned for the Wish Green, and we very much hope it will attract a great turnout.

Currently, the hall has a bank balance of £4,500, which will naturally decrease over time as running costs continue to rise. I would like to express heartfelt thanks to the Parish Council for their ongoing support and contribution to the Hall Committee—it truly makes a difference and takes the pressure off those constantly trying to raise funds to pay the bills.

I thank all who have helped or supported fund raising events in the past year and especially Liz, Dawn and Colin for their continuing, dedicated help with fund raising.

It is a real shame that we don't always see more people from the village attending our events. Community has changed so much in recent years and seems to be so much more isolated. However, whenever we do come together, the atmosphere is great. I truly hope more of you will find the time to come along and support future events in the Village.

Though it may be a small building, this little hall is the heart of our village - and it is very much needed.

There are still some ongoing issues that need addressing, such as improvements to the toilet area and the patio outside. We are in the process of obtaining quotes for this work and will be applying for grants to help fund the project.

APPENDIX 5

Brenda Hedley – St Mary’s Church Kenardington Report 2025

St Mary’s Church in Kenardington, a remarkable 16th-century building, continues to stand as a quiet witness to centuries of local life. Originally damaged by a lightning strike in 1559, the ruins were patched up to provide a smaller church but one that was more suited to what was then, a small farming community. The bulk of the church was demolished, leaving the former south aisle and chapel to serve as the new church.

Today, St Mary’s still holds regular services, though our congregations are small. We are very grateful to our lay preacher Penny Lowe, who takes our monthly services. Coffee and chat time follows the services and is very much appreciated. We continue to meet our financial responsibilities to the diocese with the parish share, even though the building itself now urgently needs attention. The heating system is in need of costly repairs, and the tower roof has developed a hole, allowing water to leak into the bell tower. In all, an estimated total of £80,000 is required for essential repairs, treatments, and decorative work to St Mary’s.

Thanks to the Saxon Shore Early Music Kenardington events, which begin a new season this May, has seen welcome contributions to the income. You can find event details on their website of future concerts — these are not only a cultural highlight but a real lifeline for the church.

We were delighted to welcome so many to the candle-lit carol service last Christmas, and we hope to see many of you at our Maundy Thursday service at 7:30pm next Thursday.

Looking ahead, we have some exciting fundraising events planned, including an evening with Ian Hislop in 2026, and a flower and art festival — both of which we hope will bring in much-needed support and funds.

We have approached the Uren Foundation for financial assistance too, and are hopeful they’ll be able to contribute toward our restoration efforts. The Uren Foundation were the benefactors behind the huge improvements to St Marys which allowed for the building of the pentice and kitchen/toilet area plus much needed water and electricity supplies. These improvements are a huge asset to St Marys and are used regularly.

St Mary’s is a beautiful and historic part of Kenardington. Even if you don’t attend for religious reasons, we hope you will support us in preserving this treasured building — for the heritage it represents, and for future generations to enjoy.