



**Meeting of the Parish Council held on
Monday 12th January 2026
at Chilmington Cabin at 7.30pm
MINUTES**

Councillors Present:	Cllrs P Barker, Y Barker, McClintock, Mercer, Tate, Wiffen
Number of Seats	11 (1 vacancy)
Number of Cllrs Present	7
Number of Cllrs Absent	3
Also Present:	Aniko Szocs (Clerk), Paula Cowperthwaite (Deputy Clerk), Catherine Stevens (CEO), Cllr Blanford (ABC), Cllr Barrett (ABC), Cllr S Gathern (ABC), Cllr Hallett (ABC), Cllr Wibberley (KCC), Peter New (NHW) from Item public participation, and two members of public.

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllrs Gathern, Herring, Darvill.
Cllr Eustace (KCC).

2. Declarations of Interest

To hear declarations of interest on this agenda, relating to:

2.1. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None

2.2. Other Significant Interests

None

2.3. Other Interests

Cllr McClintock – Items 7.2, 7.5

Cllr Mercer – Items 7.1, 7.3

Cllr P Barker – Items 7.1, 7.3, 7.5, 7.6, 7.7

Cllr Wiffen – Items 7.2, 7.3, 7.5, 7.6, 7.7, 7.8

Cllr Sullivan – Items 7.1, 7.7

Cllr Tate – Items 7.1, 7.5

Cllr Y Barker – Items 7.1, 7.4, 7.6, 7.7

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The council resolved to approve the minutes of the 8th December 2025 as a true record.

Proposed:	Cllr P Barker	Seconded:	Cllr Mercer
Vote In Favour: 7	Vote Against: 0	Abstain: 0	MOTION CARRIED

4. Safeguarding

None

5. Reports from Borough Councillors and other organisations

5.1. Cllr Bill Barrett – Singleton East Ward

Cllr Barrett thanked the Parish Council for the Christmas lunch.

Cllr Barrett has been contacted by a resident in Old Orchard regarding potholes that are a trip hazard, he is following this up with KCC.

Cllr Barrett recently did a Singleton Lake walkabout and is following up on a few areas that need improvement. He has also identified some areas of hedging that need cutting back in the Millbrook Meadow area.

The battery storage system has been installed at SEC. Cllr Barrett is looking into the feasibility of a wind turbine to keep energy storage levels up.

Cllr S Gathern asked if the directional arrows can be reinstated at the Singleton Centre car park. Cllr Barrett will investigate this with the management company.

5.2. Cllrs Jessamy Blanford – Weald Central Ward

Cllr Blanford thanked the Parish Council for the Christmas lunch.

Cllr Blanford noted that the ABC element of the 2026/27 council tax will rise by £5.79 for a Band D house.

The next Eat Well Spend Less Roadshow will be on 21st January at the SWAN centre.

With regards to the wooden horse, as no one is taking responsibility for it, it should now be removed as it is quickly becoming a dangerous structure

5.3. Cllr Sally Gathern - Singleton West Ward

Cllr S Gathern thanked the Parish Council for the Christmas lunch.

Cllr S Gathern has seen a large increase in litter from the new McDonald's and Costa businesses that have recently opened in the area. She has reported this to ABC and the amount of litter picks in the area will be increased.

Cllr S Gathern recently met with a representative from Redrow regarding the land at Holt Close. They agreed that the fencing is dangerous in its current state, and that KCC are not strimming the grass appropriately. The missing fencing is being used as a rat run for misdemeanours and is very unsightly. Redrow will try to reinstate the fencing, even if it isn't their responsibility.

Cllr S Gathern noted that KCC signage being left after roadworks have completed is an increasing problem. She is reporting each issue, but it still doesn't always get moved and taxpayers' money is being used to fund replacements.

Cllr S Gathern is meeting with the Parish Council Community Engagement Officer this week to discuss way they can work together. She has also contributed some of her ward grant to the battery storage project at SEC, and some boot scrapers to use after muddy walks, when entering the main building.

5.4. Cllr Clive Hallett - Washford Ward

The ABC Oversight & Scrutiny committee meets tonight. Cllr Hallett has asked the committee to look at immoderate increases in small budget items – such as allotments charges. Cllr Hallett also thanked the Parish Council for the Christmas lunch.

6. Reports from County Councillors

6.1. Cllr Jeremy Eustace – Ashford Rural West

Not present. No report given.

6.2. Cllr Nick Wibberley – Ashford South

Cllr Wibberley has a £3100 Ward Member grant to use before April so please get in touch if something relevant needs funding.

A 3.99% increase in the KCC portion of the 2026/27 council tax bill will be voted for on 12th February.

7. Reports from Committees/Groups

To receive reports from committees

7.1. Planning Committee

The planning comments and decisions report was shown to the room and noted. Several different consultations are currently open, and councillors can comment as well.

It was noted in relation to several recent planning decisions, that there is a distinct lack of enforcement taking place within ABC.

7.2. Singleton Spaces

Singleton Environment Centre received a Sustainability award in the recent Hero Awards, the Repair Café was also Highly Commended.

There will be a quiz held this Saturday.

7.3. Environment Committee

No meeting held. Meeting is due on Wednesday.

7.4. Stronger Communities

No meeting held.

7.5. Finance Committee

No meeting held.

7.6. Devolution Working Group

No meeting held.

7.7. Parish Building

No meeting held.

7.8. Community Engagement Officer

The report was shown to the room and noted.

Public Participation: There will be 15 minutes of the meeting to hear public questions and comments.

Peter New (NHW) presented his personal action plan for 2026. He highlighted the usual crimes that will take place such as doorstep thefts and thefts from outbuildings. He has his eye on more serious crimes making their way out of London.

He noted that there is slow, but growing support for Violence Against Women and Girls.

He thanked the council for the grant funding towards his personal noticeboards to travel the area with.

A member of public noted that a potential hand over date for the Access C roundabout is August 2027.

Cllr Tate noted complaints from residents that The Street has not been gritted. It was suggested that if the road isn't gritted, a sign that there is ice present should be put out instead. The Clerk asked that residents report this information directly to KCC at the time as this will make the issue more timely.

Cllr Y Barker asked that resilience is put back on the Parish Council agenda, in light of the recent South East Water shortages.

8. Grant Applications

None

9. Review of Polices

To approve policies and procedures

9.1. IT Policy

The Parish Council resolved that under 6.1.2 the wording 'should not be used' will be changed to 'should be used with caution', and that once this change is made the Parish Council will adopt the IT policy.

Proposed:	Cllr Wiffen	Seconded:	Cllr P Barker.
Vote In Favour: 6	Vote Against: 1	Abstain: 0	MOTION CARRIED

9.2. Display Screen Equipment Policy

A policy has been put together to complement the DSE User Assessment form that staff are required to complete. A number of small administrative errors will be changed. Once these changes are completed, the Parish Council resolved to adopt the Display Screen Equipment Policy.

Proposed:	Cllr Wiffen	Seconded:	Cllr P Barker
Vote In Favour: 7	Vote Against: 0	Abstain: 0	MOTION CARRIED

10. Finance

10.1. Items for Payment

The Parish Council resolved to agree the items for payment in January once the following changes have been made:

A Hootsuite payment of £1,281.60 was paid on 09/01/2026

The HMRC contribution should be £4269.17

The total salaries figure should be £10,058.53

Proposed:	Cllr Wiffen	Seconded:	Cllr McClintock
Vote In Favour: 7	Vote Against: 0	Abstain: 0	MOTION CARRIED

The Parish Council resolved to acknowledge the bank reconciliation, earmarked reserves and credit card payments in December.

Proposed:	Cllr Wiffen	Seconded:	Cllr Tate
Vote In Favour: 7	Vote Against: 0	Abstain: 0	MOTION CARRIED

Method	Items for Approval for Payment	Description	VAT	Total payable
Bacs	Kent Pension	Pension Contribution		£3,257.28
Bacs	HMRC	Employer		£4,269.76
Bacs	Salaries	Jan Salaries		10,057.94
Bacs	ADM Computing	Windows 11 upgrade	£11.20	£67.20
Bacs	Tylers workwear	Work wear bundle - Parish Steward Assistant	£17.89	£107.34
Bacs	Footprint Café	Parish Council Christmas Lunch plus 1-2-1	£100.30	£701.85
Bacs	ADM Computing	Monthly support	£56.87	£341.23
Bacs	KCS Education	Stapler	£0.78	£4.68
Bacs	Lilys Singleton Café	Refreshments		£10.00
Bacs	Singleton Village Hall	Hall Hire - Living the Digital Age course		£108.00
Bacs	Singleton Village Hall	Office Rent		£1.00
Bacs	SWE Media Limited	Newsletter distribution	£117.00	£702.00
Bacs	Kallkwik	Newsletter printing		£935.00
Bacs	Singleton Spaces	Education team		£1,500.00

Bacs	Protyre Victoria Road	Van battery replacement	£21.67	£130.00
Bacs	The Clerk	Long service award		£100.00
Bacs	The Play Inspection Company	Annual Play Park Inspection	£56.97	£341.82
Bacs	Society of Local Councils Clerks	Training webinar	£7.70	£46.20
Bacs	Society of Local Councils Clerks	Training webinar	£11.55	£69.30
DD	RAC Business	Van Recovery insurance		£21.37
Comments:		SUBTOTAL		
			TOTAL	£22,771.97

Credit card payment items for Information	Description	VAT	Total Paid
Account Numbers: 19079376 & 55882568			
MaintainX	Subscription fee		£92.98
Morrisons	Refreshment		£3.05
Watling Tyres	Tube	£1.67	£10.00
Halfords	Battery AA	£0.83	£5.00
Lily's Singleton Café	Refreshment		£10.00
Sainsbury's	Diesel	£8.33	£50.00
Amazon	Bunting Flags	£4.16	£24.95
Amazon	USB adaptors for projector	£2.62	£15.69
Temu	Craft Items for Mother's Day	£4.58	£25.06
Virtual College	Level 2 Food Safety & Hygiene	£3.20	£19.20
HobbyCraft	Glue gun and glue sticks	£2.71	£16.25
Sainsbury's	Refreshment		£2.00
Waitrose	Refreshment	£0.34	£22.00
Vista Print	Business Cards for the CEO	£4.60	£27.58
Amazon	Naughty elf doll set	£2.46	£14.78
Amazon	Wireless keyboard	£2.59	£15.49
Amazon	Weed control membrane pegs	£4.00	£23.89
Amazon	Laptop case	£3.82	£22.88
Google App Play	Life360		£9.99
Google App Play	Life360		£9.99
Google App Play	What3Words		£3.49
Google App Play	What3Words		£3.49
Bank charge	International bank payment		£2.08
Total:		£45.91	£336.86

Great Chart with Singleton Parish NEW			
Bank - Cash and Investment Reconciliation as at 30 November 2025			
Confirmed Bank & Investment Balances			
<u>Bank Statement Balances</u>			
30/11/2025	Metro Bank Current Account	5,477.94	
30/11/2025	Metro Bank Instant Access	10,537.19	
30/11/2025	Metro Bank Credit Card 6934	-394.95	
30/11/2025	Metro Bank Credit Card 8589	-145.49	
30/11/2025	NatWest Current	100.00	
30/11/2025	NatWest Reserve Account	97,962.88	
30/11/2025	Nationwide Business 1 Yr Fixed	197,393.67	
30/11/2025	Dudley	117,252.33	
30/11/2025	Barclays	275.24	
30/11/2025		100,000.00	
30/11/2025		259,872.96	
			788,331.77
<u>Receipts not on Bank Statement</u>			
			0.00
<u>Closing Balance</u>			
<u>All Cash & Bank Accounts</u>			
1	Metro Bank Current Account	5,477.94	
2	Metro Bank Instant Access	10,537.19	
3	Metro Bank Credit Card	-540.44	
4	NatWest Current Account	100.00	
5	NatWest Reserve Account	97,962.88	
6	Nationwide Business 95 Day	197,393.67	
7	Dudley Building Society	117,252.33	
8	Barclays	275.24	
9	RedWood Bank	100,000.00	
10	Barclays Saver Account	259,872.96	
	Other Cash & Bank Balances	0.00	
	Total Cash & Bank Balances	788,331.77	

11. Clerk's Report and Update on Issues not Listed Elsewhere on the Agenda

The report was shown to the room and noted.

12. Correspondence

Three Christmas Cards were received from the SWAN Centre, MP Sojan Joseph, and MP Katie Lam.

13. Items for Information or Agenda for Next Meeting

- Parish Resilience Plan – discussed via Stronger Communities

14. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

The next scheduled Council Meeting will be held on Monday, **9th February 2026** at **Great Chart Village Hall** starting at **7.30 pm**.

The meeting ended at 21:30.

Signed as a true record by:

Cllr Wiffen _____

Date: _____

Appendix One

Planning Comments

December

OTH/2025/2143

Parcel P, The Hamlet, Land at Chilmington Green, Ashford

Non-material amendment to planning permission 18/00207/AS for "Reserved Matters approval for the development of Parcel P for 99 dwellings, together with associated access roads, footpaths, drainage, car/cycle parking, groundworks, landscaping, and infrastructure" to allow changes to the approved hard landscaping scheme, comprising of the removal of woodblock seats, low oak timber sleeper wall, timber stepping stones, play rocks and all finger sign boards, reduce the number of benches and changes to the footpath.

The committee resolved to object to this application for the following reasons:

- There is no evidence provided of the vast number of written complaints from residents.
- The amendment proposes the removal or reduction of most seating and informal play features, leaving only one bench and four timber seats for this development. This materially diminishes the amenity value of the public realm and undermines the inviting character of the estate.
- The proposal conflicts with Ashford Local Plan Policy SP6 (Promoting High Quality Design) and Policy IMP4 (Open Space Provision), which require developments to provide usable, welcoming, and inclusive open spaces. It also runs contrary to the principles of the National Design Guide (2021), which emphasises social spaces, play value, and inclusive design as integral to sustainable communities.

OTH/2025/2154

Land Between The Pig And Whistle Farmhouse And Minden Cottage, Ashford Road, Great Chart, TN23 3UW

Details submitted pursuant to Condition 30 (Disposal of sewage) of planning permission 21/01315/AS

There were no planning related concerns. The committee resolved to support the application.

OTH/2022/3169

Land Parcel I, Chilmington Green, Ashford Road, Ashford, Kent

Reserved Matters application, pursuant to planning permission 12/00400/AS, for appearance, landscaping, layout, scale and access for the construction of 145 dwellings on Land Parcel I – Main AAP Phase 1, together with associated roads, parking, landscaping public open space and infrastructure.

The committee resolved to object to the application for the following reasons:

- The previous Parish Council comment is still relevant - Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council object to this application due to the narrow roads for refuse and emergency vehicles, concerns over how waste and surface water will flow once off site, lack of suitable parking and lack of green energy initiatives.

- The work on Mock Lane outside of the parcel red line needs to be completed before development of the housing commences as the work within the red line cannot be completed without it.
- There will be 4 entry/exit roads and 4 private driveways directly on to Mock Lane which is a 60mph single track lane.
- Some of the road within the parcel do not have pavements which will be dangerous given the proximity to the two local schools and the number of vehicles and pedestrians using the roads at the same time.
- Construction traffic must be instructed to access the parcel from The Avenue, not Mock Lane.
- Vehicle tracking plan 1, inset A, shows that two refuse lorries cannot pass each other. Fortnightly there will be refuse and garden waste lorries servicing the same area.
- The design code states that tandem parking should be used as a minimum, but it is the majority. There are also some instances of triple parking.
- There is insufficient parking, specifically for the flats, of which there is a high number.
- Car barns need to be kept as car barns to avoid loss of future parking.
- There is no safe walking route or public bus route so people will need cars to travel outside of the development.

Planning Decisions

December

NOT/2025/1893

The Old Cart Shed, Worten Home Farm, Worten Road, Great Chart, Ashford, TN23 3BU – Prior Approval for the conversion & refurbishment of existing office unit to 1no. two bedroom dwelling.
<https://ashfordboroughcouncil.my.site.com/pr/a0hTw000003h1WzIAI>

PC: Support

ABC: Prior Approval Given

NOT/2025/1996

Court Lodge Farm, The Street, Great Chart, TN23 3AY – Prior notification for an agricultural storage building

<https://ashfordboroughcouncil.my.site.com/pr/a0hTw000003mzgzlAA>

PC: No comment

ABC: Prior Approval Refused

PA/2025/1605

2, Dragonfly Close, Singleton, TN23 5GH – Single-storey rear extension following the demolition of the existing conservatory.

<https://ashfordboroughcouncil.my.site.com/pr/a0hTw000003CKcLIAW>

PC: Support

ABC: Approve

PA/2025/1780

7 Sabre Crescent, Singleton, Ashford, TN23 5LD – Conversion of the garage into additional living space.

<https://ashfordboroughcouncil.my.site.com/pr/a0hTw000003TWxFIAW>

PC: Support

ABC: Approve

Appendix Two

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICER REPORT – JANUARY 2026

December Highlights and Community Initiatives

Kindness Tree Project

December 2025 proved to be a particularly busy and rewarding month for our community. The Kindness Tree initiative received an overwhelming response, with the generosity of residents shining through. Thanks to everyone's support, we were able to distribute 40 Christmas presents to individuals deserving a little extra festive cheer this year. The recipients expressed heartfelt gratitude and were genuinely delighted to know that their community was thinking of them. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all those who donated gifts, wrapping paper, and gift bags. The kindness shown by those who selected a tag from the tree, was truly touching. We hope to repeat this wonderful gesture again next year, so please keep an eye out for future announcements.

Festive Elf Visits

In addition to the Kindness Tree, our parish welcomed two visiting elves whose antics brought smiles throughout December. Each day leading up to Christmas Eve, their adventures were shared across our social media channels, culminating with their return to the North Pole on Christmas Eve. It was heartening to witness local businesses and community groups wholeheartedly embracing the festive spirit, joining in the fun with the elves. As one business owner aptly remarked, "it's all about being part of a community."

Exploring Affordable Food Solutions

As previously mentioned, we have been investigating ways to provide affordable food options for our residents. This month, Ani and I met with a representative from Mildred's Trust, a charity dedicated to tackling food insecurity and promoting sustainability. While the meeting did not result in an immediate solution, we remain committed to exploring further possibilities. This experience underscored the importance of understanding our residents' needs, prompting me to develop a questionnaire for those living in Great Chart with Singleton. The feedback gathered will guide us in focusing our efforts where they are most needed.

Youth Engagement and Creative Collaboration

Ani and I also held a productive meeting with Da Base, a music and education centre that supports local youth and the wider community. We are excited about the prospect of collaborating with Da Base and young people to create a track and video celebrating our area. We hope to encourage participation from parish councillors as well, potentially featuring cameo appearances....watch this space!

Engagement with Local Schools

I have also spoken with Wendy Pang, the head teacher at Great Chart Primary School, who is eager to work with us. She expressed great enthusiasm for the idea of establishing a student council, which would provide young people from Great Chart and Singleton with a platform to share their thoughts about the area and to voice what matters most to them. Looking ahead to the New Year, I'll be reaching out to other head teachers in the community to explore further collaboration and ensure that the views of young people are represented across our parish.

Upcoming Community Event for Mums and Nans

Together with Ani and Paula, preparations are underway for a special event in March celebrating the wonderful mums and nans of our community. The event will feature crafts, live music, cream teas, and, we

hope, plenty of cheerful bunting! It promises to be a delightful opportunity for families to come together, enjoy quality time, and celebrate the important women in their lives.

Invitation for Community Input

I am continuing to develop further initiatives and always welcome suggestions from members of the community. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if there is anything you would like to discuss or propose.

Appendix Three

Clerk's Report – January



Happy New Year

Happy New Year! Best wishes for 2026—I am looking forward to the year ahead and all that it may bring.

Events:

Kindness Tree: The project was a huge success, thanks to Catherine for organising it. Based on the feedback we plan to do it again this year.

Christmas Lunch: Thank you to the council for inviting the staff and councillors to the Christmas lunch and thank you to everyone who attended. We are also grateful to Singleton Environment Centre for hosting us. It was a lovely way to conclude the year.

Upcoming Events:

- The Living the Digital Age course began on January 8, 2026, and is fully booked with a waiting list.
- Mother's Day Celebration and Craft Event (March)
- Basketball training and end of tournament day (April)

The Street:

A consultation letter regarding the built-out scheme has been distributed to all households along The Street and the adjoining roads, with copies also left at the pub and hairdresser's to ensure broad participation. Thank you to Cllr Mercer for the help with distributing the letters. So far, 17 comments have been received from residents, with the deadline for submitting feedback being 10th January 2026. All comments will then be shared with the Highways Team for their consideration and to support the grant application to fund the scheme, should it receive approval.

Practitioner Conference: Thank you to the council for enabling us to attend this year's conference. These events are important learning opportunities for us, as well as helping us to build connections within the sector. This year, the CEO will also be joining and will hopefully pick up some useful tips on community engagement.

Training:

Please regularly check the Kent Association of Local Councils website for updates on training. If there is anything you feel would improve your role as a councillor, please book a place using their Eventbrite website. When booking a place at an event, please do not forget to select payment by invoice and the invoice to be sent to the clerk. If you have issues with accessing the website please email Laura Dyer at manager@kentalc.gov.uk and she will be able to assist you.

Tabling a motion for Parish council meetings: If you would like to request an agenda item, please send a motion at least seven clear days before the meeting via theclerk@greatchartsingleton-pc.gov.uk with the wording you would like to appear on the agenda. Please note, if the motion's wording is not clear, it could be rejected, or you could be requested to resubmit the motion with better wording.

Community Heroes:

As always, if you can, please promote the scheme with your friends and family. More information can be found on the parish council's [website](#).

National Association of Local Councils: If you haven't already please subscribe to [NALC's newsletter](#). It has up to date information relating to the sector as well as news about the latest events.

Reporting: It is very important that if you see a fault, it is reported to the relevant authority immediately so works can be arranged. It is often confusing to know who to report to so if in doubt you can check the Parish Council [website](#) where all the information you need to know is available. Did you know you can use What3Words to pinpoint the exact location of a fault? You can either access it via [the website](#) or download the app to your smartphone.

Social Media: Please like and share our posts on social media so it can reach a wider audience. If you are on Facebook or Instagram ensure you give us a like and follow us 😊