



Rolvenden Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting of Rolvenden Parish Council held in Rolvenden Village Hall on Wednesday 10 December 2025 at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllr. A. Hinge (Chairman), Cllrs. S. Bryant, M. Geerts, Cllr. M. Gilchrist, Cllr. G. Hodge.

In attendance: Louise Goldsmith, Parish Clerk
Ward Member Guy Pullen, 4 members of the public.

Louise Goldsmith Parish
Clerk
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Headcorn
Kent
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1381. Intention to record the Meeting:

There were no intentions to record the meeting.

1382. Apologies for Absence:

An apology for absence was received from County Councillor Wayne Chapman, Cllrs. Balch, Back and Walker and the reasons for absence were accepted.

1383. Declarations of interest:

Cllr Bryant noted an interest in the War Memorial Trust.
Cllr Hinge noted an interest in the War Memorial Trust.

1384. Minutes of the meeting of the 20 November 2025

Resolved: That the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 20 November 2025 be approved and confirmed as a true record.

1385. Ward Member/County Councillor Report:

Ward Member Guy Pullen advised Members that he has been getting to grips with his role as Portfolio Holder for Parks and Recreation at ABC and has met with the management team at Tenterden Leisure Centre to get up to speed with the redevelopment and financial arrangements. Tenterden Leisure Centre will be increasing their prices in the New Year by 3.8%. Ward Member Guy Pullen will be meeting with the Aspire team to discuss the maintenance of green spaces in Ashford. At a Cabinet meeting on the 27 November 2025 ABC agreed to put forward to the Government option 4d as their preferred option for the division of the County in the Local Government Reorganisation that will take place in 2027/28. The Government will ultimately decide how the County is divided. On the 1 December 2025 a presentation on the East Kent Design Code was given to all Ward Members. The aim of the project is to improve the design quality of new developments on Ashford. Residents will be consulted in due course. Ward Member Guy Pullen attended the Joint Advisory Committee meeting for the High Weald National Landscape (HWNL) on the 26 November 2025. A presentation was given about the invasive American Mink which are believed to be prevalent in the area. The HWNL are supporting farmers and landowners in trying to eradicate Mink from the area. Ward Member Guy Pullen is engaging with the 'Sprout Squad' project at Mildred Trust. The 'Sprout Squad' provide space and opportunities for children to engage with gardening and wildlife activities in Tenterden. Ward Member Guy Pullen is going to use some of his Member Grant to fund this project and to fund some of the work carried out by the Tenterden Wildlife Group. Ward Member Guy Pullen suggested that he should be able to award a grant to the Thoburn Trust in the next financial year.

1386. County Councillor Report:

A report from County Councillor Wayne Chapman was noted and will be placed on the website.

1387. Chairman's Report

Cllr. Hinge gave the following report. I have had a relatively quiet month with regards to the direct duties for the Parish Council. This follows the considerable efficiencies and organisation of the previous year and the assistance of our Clerk, ensuring the smooth running and organisation of the council. I represented the Council at the Remembrance service, which was well attended, and performed a reading. I would like to thank all those who assisted in the service and gave of their time, on particular to Edward Barham who organised the service with military precision. The Village Hall Committee continues to take some commitment to time, but with the banking

accounts now under our control, and the assistance of a professional bookkeeper, the day to day management is much improved. The cleaning is also now carried out by a member of the village, giving good standards at a more affordable rate.

The village preschool is a matter of some concern but the exact situation is unclear. We have made some attempts to discuss this with the preschool but they have been unable to attend any meetings to date. I must stress that the rent has not been increased for a number of years despite the considerable increases in utility costs to the hall, for which the school is the largest user. In fact, there has been a rent rebate as a goodwill gesture on occasion. The hall trustees are keen to assist the preschool in its affairs if possible.

The Clerk and I met with the current grazier on the Thoburn land to set out our plans and involve them in the proposals. This includes the proposed refencing, improved and new hedging, new gates and footpath gates and water supplies. This would enable better grazing strategies to improve sward and biodiversity. In turn this would assist with increasing insect, bird and mammal populations. The tenant was keen to be part of this. Whilst mixed sheep and cattle grazing was considered ideal, in practice this was not considered feasible given the proximity to the village and the level of walkers and dogs.

The Trust is now prepared to access any possible capital grants, but if this is not forthcoming then other grants, donations and available funding will be explored to enable plans to move forward next year.

Unfortunately, my involvement with the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee has been limited due to clashes with other commitments. I note with interest the potential development of Moneypenny and the vicarage, but the exact plans are still undergoing assessment by ABC.

Cllr. Bryant advised Members that his company has cleared the leaves on the footpath on Maytham Road free of charge. Cllr. Bryant has been advised that the skip on St. Marys Green is due to be removed tomorrow. Cllr. Bryant thanked everyone involved with the installation of the Christmas Tree.

1388. Clerk's report:

The Clerk advised that MP Katie Lam has arranged for every household in the Weald of Kent to receive a survey to give feedback on local crime.

1389. Open Session:

A member of the public spoke in support of planning proposal PA/2025/1758.

1390. Planning:

a) To consider any planning applications received prior to the meeting

PA/2025/1758: 48-50 High Street, Rolvenden

Proposed 1no. non-illuminated fascia sign board and associated vinyl graphics.

Resolved: Support

PA/2025/2137: Land rear of Redwood, Tenterden Road, Rolvenden

Variation of a 1979 Section 52 Legal Agreement to exclude part of the land from the agricultural -use restriction, relating to the site of approved application.

Resolved: No comment.

8pm 2 members of the public left the meeting.

b) To consider any approvals: (RPC recommendation in italics)

PA/2025/1632: The Bull Inn, 1 Regent Street, Rolvenden

Rebuild of fire damaged store and change of use to staff accommodation following demolition of existing building.

Resolved: Support subject to a condition that the accommodation remains for staff use only.

PA/2025/1672: The Bull Inn, 1 Regent Street, Rolvenden

Listed Building Consent to demolish and rebuild of fire damaged building.

Resolved: Refer to the Listed Building Officer.

NOT/2025/2050: 15 Hastings Road, Rolvenden

T1 - Conifer Golden Ornamental Lawson - Fell - an overgrown conifer which is approximately 10m in height. It is now breaking up the wall surrounding the base and does catch the wind and rocks at the base. This is a very windy site from which you can see Hastings which is about 15 miles away.

Resolved: Support.

c) **To consider any refusals:** None to consider.

d) **Withdrawn:** None to consider.

e) **Appeals**

PA/2025/0720: 60A High Street, Rovenden

Single-storey side extension, 1.9 metre high replacement garden wall, changes to fenestration, external alterations, including the creation of hardstanding and new vehicular access from the High Street. It was noted that the Planning Inspectorate has advised that the appeal will be determined on the basis of written representations.

1391. Parish Matters.

a) **Monypenny Proposals**

See item 1394 (b).

b) **Local Plan**

The Clerk reported that there was no update on any housing allocations for the parishes.

c) **KALC Community Awards 2025**

It was noted that the Clerk has posted a link to an online survey requesting nominations from parishioners on social media, the website and noticeboards. One nomination has been received so far and all nominations will be considered at the next meeting when a decision will be made.

d) **Pre-School**

Cllr. Hinge explained that the Village Hall Management Committee and the Parish Council would be willing to assist but have not been able to engage with the pre-school. It was agreed for Cllr. Hodge to arrange to meet with representatives from the pre-school and to find out what support they need such as assistance with bookkeeping, marketing.

e) **RoSPA Annual Inspection**

The Clerk advised that the grounds maintenance contractor hopes to carry out the remedial works this month.

f) **Neighbourhood Watch/Kent Police Update**

Sian Reeves, Rovenden Neighbourhood Watch, gave the following report.

Sian Reeves advised Members that she recently attended a VAWG (Violence against women and Girls) event. Sian Reeves reported some anti-social behaviour that took place on the 30 November 2025 in the churchyard. Two quad bikes have also been stolen from Halden Place Farm. The Rural South Policing Team has been doubled in terms of the number of Beat Officers. PC Darren Laker will continue to be the Beat Officer for Rovenden and is hoping to meet with Sian and the Chair and Clerk outside a Parish Council meeting. PC Darren Laker promoted Business Safe week in Tenterden. An individual has been served a criminal behaviour order which will mean he can no longer enter any shops in Tenterden.

Ongoing and new Fraud/Scams to be aware of:

Information in my monthly Rovenden Parish magazine article and sent to Rovenden Neighbourhood Watch members:

Lots of fake emails such as offering free awards for completing a survey; when updating your contact details be careful not to click on any fake links; fake currency scam; police impersonation scam; fake NHS calls; fake AI generated images scam; winter fuel payment scam; purchase scams and be careful how you pay, be wary of suspicious too good to be true adverts and free trials; fraudulent parking notices scam.

1392. HIGHWAYS/PROW

a) **Faults**

Maytham Road: large pothole between Potman's Heath Bridge and Maytham Wharf Farm has not been filled.

Broken streetlight (as a result of a catapult) on the footpath from Sparkeswood Avenue to the Corker Factory.

Large pothole on Benenden Road near Regent Street.

1393. Finances

a) **Draft Budget 2026-2027**

Members considered and commented on a draft budget prepared and circulated by the Clerk. The Clerk reported that general reserves have been depleted and that a deficit budget is now not advisable. Members agreed that reserves need to be replenished so that the Parish Council can undertake some projects in the future. It was agreed for the estimated expenditure for 2026-2027 to be £40,279.00 and the estimated income to be £46,350.00.

Resolved: That the Budget for 2026-2027 be accepted

b) **Precept Requirements 2026-2027**

Members discussed the level of reserves and budget requirements for 2026-2027 and agreed that as the general reserves are low that the precept needs to be raised despite a significant reduction in the Clerk's working hours. The Council Tax base calculation was discussed and noted.

Resolved: That the Precept for 2026-2027 be £43,00.00 representing a 6.32% increase equating to £3.58 for a Band D property

c) **To receive the bank reconciliation as at the 30 November 2025**

d) The bank reconciliation as at the 30 November 2025 was noted. In the absence of another signatory been present the bank reconciliation was checked and signed by Cllr. Hinge in accordance with the financial regulations.

e) **To receive a list of payments for approval**

Cllr. Hinge checked the invoices against the payment schedule, (appended to the minutes), and it was **resolved** for Cllrs. Balch and Hinge to authorise the payments online. The authorised schedule was initialled immediately below the last item by Cllr. Hinge in accordance with the financial regulations.

1394. External Meetings

a) **Thoburn Trust Meeting:**

Cllr. Hinge outlined the proposals in the management plan suggested by CLM. It was agreed that the next step is source some grant funding. Cllr. Hodge offered to contact Lund Trust as source of potential grant funding.

b) **Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group**

It was noted that the Steering Group will be holding a public consultation event on the 14 and 15 February 2026. It was agreed that the Parish Council should book and pay for the hall. The Parish Council has been advised that the Steering Group recently had a meeting with Mark Bawden, Housing Strategy Manager at ABC, to glean more information on the plans for the Vicarage site and to see if the Steering Group could perhaps include the site in the new NDP. The Steering Group has advised the Clerk that meeting proved mutually beneficial as ABC seem keen to work with them and have sites in the NDP. The Steering Group has advised that the plans for a "replacement Monypenny" and the Vicarage will help with housing numbers and could offer some protection from larger speculative development. ABC and the Steering Group have agreed to work together to carry out a very specific Call for Sites for the new independent living scheme. The Steering Group has advised that the work involved is minimal and that ABC is willing to fund the initiative. The Clerk has since contacted Mark Bawden at ABC to advise him that the Parish Council was not aware of this meeting and were disappointed to not have been invited. Mark Bawden was not aware of this situation and will continue to update the Clerk.

c) **Rolvenden Village Hall:**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 4 December 2025 were noted.

d) **KALC Ashford Area Committee:**

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 26 November 2025 was noted.

1395. Items for the next meeting

Assets of Community Value

1396. Correspondence/Consultations

MP Katie Lam Crime Survey.

Part 2 Exclusion of Public and Press – In accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960), the public and press be excluded from the meeting by the reason of its confidential nature.

The meeting closed to the public at 9.05pm

1397. Confidential Item

Cllr. Geerts reported on a Confidential Item regarding a letter sent to Lloyds Bank. As no response has been received it was agreed for Cllr. Geerts to contact MP Katie Lam for assistance.

1398. Date of the next Parish Council Meeting:

Thursday 15 January 2026 at 7.30pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.10pm

Signed: Date:

Chairmans signature.....

BACS Payments for Approval December 2025

Reference	Payee	Invoice	Description of Transaction	Gross
49/25	Louise Goldsmith		Expenses	65.60
50/25	M I Payroll		Payroll Services	25.00
DD	Unity Trust		Monthly Charge	6.00
DD	Hugo Fox		Website	11.99
DD	Hugo Fox		Email Accounts	20.99
DD	HMRC		Clerks Tax and NI (paid quarterly)	444.45
SO	Louise Goldsmith		Salary	1073.21
		Sub total		1647.24

Receipts: None

Bank Reconciliation as at 30 November 2025

Opening balance	£13,975.76
add receipts	£59,922.71
	<u>£73,898.47</u>
less payments	£39,865.29
Balance	<u>£34,033.08</u>