

**Newington and Peene Parish Council Meeting
Held at Georges Barn
8th September 2025**

Attended by: Councillor John Neale MBE (Chair)
Councillor Sarah Wright (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Jill Sage
Councillor David Gilbert
FHDC James Butcher

Clerk: Jean Gilham

ITEM		
	Welcome from the Chairman to all present	
1	Apologies – Cllr. David Godfrey, KCC. Chris Hespe, FHDC Stephen Scoffham	
2	Declaration of Interests – None noted	
3	Minutes of meeting held on 14th July 2025 – circulated previously signed by Cllr. Sarah Wright as a true record.	
4	<p>Matters arising from previous meeting –</p> <p>4.1 Road Closure – works have been completed, to date there is no information from residents regarding any major inconvenience.</p> <p>4.2 Notice Board – the new notice board for Newington has been delivered, following discussion it was agreed that Envisage would be asked to paint with wood preservative then remove the old notice board and install the new one.</p> <p>4.3 Community Warden – the clerk has sent emails to PC George Brace and requested a crime report for the villages. Currently the only data available is included within the Eurotunnel site. PC Brace was on leave and no information was received. Clerk will invite PC Brace to attend the next PC meeting on 10th November 2025.</p> <p>4.4 Broken Gates – walk no HE361 this matter was reported to KCC on June 23rd 2025, there has been no further details received. Clerk to check on progress and report at the next meeting.</p> <p>4.5 Goal Posts within the playing field – the new goal posts are now installed and being used by local residents. Cllr John Neale MBE was asked if the nets can be installed and this will be arranged with Envisage. The invoice for this purchase has also been paid.</p> <p>4.6 Local Government Reorganisation – FHDC James Butcher informed the PC of latest developments. Appendix A contains a report from Cllr. David Godfrey and the first para of appendix B report from KCC Chris Hespe.</p> <p>4.7 War Memorial Garden – payment to Mr Hill for the maintenance of the War Memorial Garden was agreed for years 2023-24 and 2025-26. Cllr. Sarah Wright will meet with Mr Hill and make a cheque payment personally.</p> <p>4.8 Bridal way/Walkway – the clerk contacted Mr J Keefe at Eurotunnel and he has agreed to look into the cutting of the</p>	<p>JG/Env</p> <p>JG</p> <p>JG</p> <p>JG</p> <p>SW</p>

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	walk way to allow easier access for residents between the villages. Awaiting update – clerk will email and report at next meeting. 4.9 Remembrance Sunday – the PC agreed to order a wreath which will be laid at the War Memorial.	JG JG
5	Public Participation/Open Session – No members of the public attended the meeting	
6	Reports received – Cllr. David Godfrey – 18 th July see appendix A KCC Christopher Hespe – 9 th September see appendix B KCC Christopher Hespe – 12 th August see appendix C FHDC James Butcher - 8 th September see appendix D	
7	Planning – No local planning applications have been received	
8	Finance – 8.1 July 2025 - finance documents were circulated prior to meeting. Bank reconciliation report was agreed and signed by Cllr. J Neale MBE and Clerk J Gilham 8.2 HMRC/VAT reclaim – the amount of £624.27 was received on 11 th July 2025. 8.3 August 2025 - finance documents were circulated prior to meeting. Bank reconciliation report was agreed and signed by Cllr. J Neale MBE and Clerk J Gilham 8.4 Bank Signatories – It was discussed and agreed that Cllr. David Godfrey and Cllr. David Gilbert would be added to the Bank Account as signatories. Proposed by Cllr. J Neale Seconded by Cllr. Jill Sage. Cllr. D Gilbert was able to sign all the documents on the night and Cllr. D Godfrey will be available at the November meeting to sign his paperwork. The clerk will forward all relevant paperwork to Unity Bank. 8.5 Ward Funding - from Cllr James Butcher – is available to help the PC to improve the telephone box which needs re-painting and to replace the bookcase. The PC will obtain quotes for the works	JG JN/SW
9	Policies and Procedures – Accessibility Statement – the document requires some additional information. Cllr S Wright will provide this information to the clerk who will amend. The document will then be re-presented at the November meeting. Risk Assessment – page numbers need to be included and dates need to be checked/amended. The clerk will amend and re-present at the November meeting. Financial Regulation – this is a standard document and is for information and reference to all members of the PC. Cllr. David Gilbert requested that all policies and procedures be made available to new members. The clerk to send via email	JG/SW JG JG

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10	ROSPA Report - a small number of items were noted within the report as being in need of repair or refurbishment. It was agreed that Envisage would be asked to assess the items and produce an itemised account for inclusion in next year's budget.	JG/Env
11	A.O.B – Highways Improvement Plan – Cllr. S Wright is in possession of the plan as well as the Guidance Document Councillors have been asked to identify any issues that may be relevant for inclusion within the document. To be discussed the next meeting.	SW/ALL

The meeting closed at 9.05pm

**Date of next meeting – Monday 10th November 2025
Time & venue of meeting – 7pm at Georges Barn**

Appendix A

Local Government Reorganisation - update from Cllr David Godfrey

KALC EGM 18th July

This meeting was well attended with representatives from most Paris and Town Councils plus Councillors and officers from the 14 District and borough Councils and KCC as well as Vince Cable Leader of Medway Unitary.

The Indicative timetable for Reform of District councils and KCC is currently as under but the whole process is a moving feast with new information coming from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on an almost daily basis which will affect the indicative program. E.g. in response to questions from Councils. The Minister has now said that the arbitrary figure of max 500,000 resident per unitary is now more flexible.

There is an enormous amount of Data for each Council to sift through in order to make a decision including but not limited to:

Assets, Contracts and contracting parties, Shared services, ICT architecture, Council Tax implications, Adult social Care, Children's services, housing supply, planning etc

Indicative Timetable

End November 2025: submission of LGR proposals

These are proposals by District Councils and KCC for the structure of the new Unitaries on their preferences for 3 or 4 Unitary Councils to be created and which Districts will be included in each Unitary. At this time FHDC preference is for us to join with Dover and Ashford given the common major transport issues associated with being the Gateway to/from Europe.

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The proposals from each District/Borough are to be collated by KCC however the Leader of the new Reform led KCC has written to the Minister asking for a delay. Indications are that the Minister will be unlikely to agree as it affects the entire Nation and not just Kent,

January 2026 to April 2026 – Government consultation on LGR

May 26-August 2026 – Ministerial decision making

May 2027 Elections to New Unitary council

May 2028 New Unitaries vesting Day

It is possible that FHDC election period will be extended from 4 to 5 years.

Town and Parish Council elections will go ahead in May 27.

At this time there is no change for Parish and town Councils however Devolution is still very much on the cards. There is talk of establishing Area Committees, but MHCLG are vague on this.

Appendix B

Report from Christopher Hesse

Local Government Reorganisation – KCC and Kent's districts have been meeting to attempt to find a structure that they believe will best suit the County. KCC has devised an option of one Unitary Council (Kent Council), that includes three Area Assemblies. In addition, there would be Parish, Town or Community Councils at local level. There would be no need for a Strategic Mayoral Authority. Hence this proposal would be less expensive, easier to establish and have a mix of local and strategic capability compared to other options being proposed. It would also have only two tiers, rather than the three tiers being put forward by districts. Submissions from Kent are due to be made to government by 28 November. In the meantime, KPMG consultants are doing detailed financial appraisal on the various options. KCC is keen to consult widely on the proposals once the number of options has been whittled down.

Road Repairs – KCC has earmarked £67 million for new road repairs, including carrying out a record number of pothole repairs.

KCC Budget Consultation – Please do take part in the consultation regarding the KCC budget for 2026/27. Currently, it looks as though KCC will have to find a further £50 million in savings and income in that year to balance the books. The public is being asked where savings should be made and which services should be protected. The consultation ends on 18 September 2025.

Home to School Transport for Special Educational Needs Children – New software is being implemented to simplify journey planning and make savings where possible.

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Women and Girls Safety Partnership – KCC is establishing a new working relationship with this organisation with a number of initiatives being planned to make our streets safer for women and girls in Kent.

Savings – KCC has announced more than £40 million of new savings from the future spend, in addition to the £100 million or so in savings and additional income generation that the new Reform administration were left to achieve by the outgoing administration.

Property and Land Disposals – KCC has a fiduciary duty to dispose of any land and property surplus to its needs. KCC is stepping up its disposals work in order to strengthen its reserves.

Small Member Grants – Small grants in the region of £250 to £500 are available for community events and activities. Voluntary sector and not-for-profit organisations who wish to explore whether they could receive a grant should contact Christopher Hespe on - Christopher.Hespe@kent.gov.uk

Appendix C

Kent County Councillor Report for Parishes – 12 August 2025

Reforming Kent's Roads

The new Administration at Kent County Council pledged to address the problem of potholes in Kent, which was raised constantly during the May 2025 elections. So, in response, KCC has agreed to invest £67 million to repair, renew and protect Kent's 5,400-mile road network. Some 12,000 potholes have been repaired between April and the end of July 2025, and additional crews are on the roads dealing with repairs and improvements. Please report road defects and potholes to KCC on-line if possible, or by telephone if it is easier.

Budget Consultation – Closing date 29 September 2025

Kent County Council has to set a balanced budget and therefore is consulting the public currently regarding the budget for 2026/27. Most of KCCs budget comes from Council Tax, business rates, government grants and income from service users. The cost of delivering services is expected to rise by £124 million and the funding is forecast to grow by only £74 million. So, the funding gap for the next financial year will be at least £50 million. KCC is keen to hear residents' views on which services they would be happy to see cut or protected, and suggestions on how to make savings and increase income.

Member Community Grants

Each elected Member of KCC has a small amount of funding to allocate in grants to voluntary and not-for-profit organisations, primarily for events and activities. The grants are usually in the region of £250 or £500 and aim to enhance the wider community. If your organisation would like to be considered for a small grant, please contact me with a broad outline of your project/scheme on

Christopher.Hespe@kent.gov.uk

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Christopher Hespe
Kent County Councillor for Elham Valley

Appendix D

District Council Report

Cllr James Butcher

james.butcher@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

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Rural England Prosperity Fund

Hot on the heels of the Green Grant scheme, we have funding available through the Rural England Prosperity Fund. This is designed to support local growth and productivity, improve rural services and enhance community well-being across eligible areas across rural England (see link below for more information on eligible areas).

If you are a rural business seeking to diversify your income, develop new products or upgrade your facilities, this fund may be able to help. Similarly, it could be the right fund for your community organisation if you want to improve local infrastructure or facilities that benefit local people and the local economy.

The fund has been designed to be very broad ranging with the expectation that applicants will come forward with pioneering and exciting projects. If your project aligns with these goals, this could be a fantastic opportunity to secure funding for your initiatives!

To find out more about the fund, eligibility criteria and how to apply, please visit the dedicated section on Folkestone Works: [Rural England Prosperity Fund 2025 - Folkestone Works](#)

As funding must be spent by early next year, we encourage interested applicants to submit an Expression of Interest as soon as possible, as these funds are limited.

North Downs Forum

For July's North Downs Forum we focused on identifying tourism opportunities in the local area. F&HDC has been producing pads of tear-off tourism maps for hotels and other outlets, and the map for North Downs will complete the series.

The next meeting will be on 2nd October at 19.00, venue TBC, and will focus on waste, recycling, and litter. Anyone is welcome to come along and join the discussion, and you can email me if you would like to be added to the mailing list.

EU Entry-Exit System

The EU's much delayed Entry-Exit System is set to be introduced from 12th October, with the risk of significant delays to journeys. F&HDC will run an awareness-raising comms campaign, and has a dedicated email address for local intelligence about

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traffic problems arising as the new system gets underway: ees@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

Design Code

The Design Code is a planning document setting out specific requirements for new development. The Council wants the code to reflect local knowledge and preferences e.g. building materials, energy efficiency and car parking. Parish Councils and community groups are invited to take part in a community panel by completing [a brief online application form](#) or by emailing planning.policy@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk for more information. In-person workshops will be held on Sunday 28 September (am) and Saturday 29 November (pm).

Princes Parade, Hythe

More than 50 people have attended two public consultation events at Hythe Town Hall this summer. The sessions were designed to give residents further opportunities to make suggestions for the future of the stretch of land on Hythe seafront.

Reflecting views shared in the online consultation, the majority of those attending the events wanted the site left as open space supporting biodiversity. Leisure facilities and the children's play area were discussed, and these will be addressed in the council's forthcoming leisure strategy.

Asian hornets

Residents have been encouraged to keep their eyes peeled for the invasive Asian Hornet. The council has joined the awareness campaign aimed at encouraging residents to report sightings of the insect which can cause significant losses to native bee colonies. Sightings can be reported via the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs free Asian Hornet Watch. The app can be downloaded via the [Apple](#) and [Android](#) app stores.

A260 Densole

We continue to campaign to reduce the speed limit from 40 to 30 mph on the A260 in Densole. This busy stretch of road carries around 90,000 vehicle movements a week and it passes through the heart of a built-up area where there are eight bus stops. Reducing the traffic speed would add just 20 seconds to a journey but has been fiercely resisted by the relevant authorities. With the recent changes in administration at KCC and the support of our new KCC councillor, we are hopeful that we may at last be able to make some progress.

Love Your Beach

As part of the special arrangements to keep the district's beaches as clean as possible this summer four new solar powered compactor bins have been installed at key locations. A further innovation is the use of electric bikes to collect waste. These can reach locations that are inaccessible to vehicles and run regular patrols throughout the

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day. Coping with the huge influx of visitors in recent weeks has been a major challenge and the refuse collection teams have done an excellent job.

Protecting the coast

The Council has recently heard that it has been successful in a £2.23 million bid to the Environment Agency for coastal protection measures. This will cover the costs of moving and regrading the shingle along 7km of coastline from Folkestone to Hythe for the next five years. The work is undertaken twice a year and is the most effective way of helping to protect 3,000 coastal homes from flooding.

Goldpark Caravan Park, North Wingmore

There have been a number of long-term planning issues regarding this site since it first started to be used for caravans some 20 years ago. The site is now in receivership, the licence has been revoked and the occupants have been told to leave. There were 22 people living at the caravan park in 18 dwellings, the caravans have not been moved for many years and the occupants do not have vehicles to tow them away. The Council is monitoring developments and offering what help it can with housing as the situation unfolds.

Meeting closed at 9.10pm

Date of next Parish Council Meeting 10th November 2025

Time and Venue of next meeting – 7pm at Georges Barn

Members of the public who may like to join the meeting should contact the clerk on:

clerk@newingtonandpeene-pc.gov.uk