



SANDGATE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on 27th April 2026 at 6.30pm
At Sandgate Parish Council/Library Offices
James Morris Court, Sandgate High Street, Sandgate

Present

Chair: Cllr Tim Prater

Councillors: Hazel Barret, Gary Fuller, Simon Horton, Rosa Morris

Clerk: Gaye Thomas

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Susan Claris, Michael Fitch, Peter Hickman, Kirsty Hogben, Nicola South, and Guy Valentine-Neale.

2. Declarations of Interest

Members were invited to declare disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests in items on the agenda as required by the Council's Code of Conduct and the Localism Act 2011. None were declared.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 30th March 2026 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to a minor amendment to a previously circulated version where a salary increase figure in item 13 had been incorrectly recorded.

Proposed by Tim Prater

Seconded by Simon Horton

Agreed by all

4. Chair's Opening Remarks & Correspondence

It was noted that Patrick Butler had been nominated for the KALC Community Award 2026 in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the village. The nomination highlighted that, for 18 years, he has built the Village Store as the heart of Sandgate, providing an exceptional range of services and consistently going the extra mile to strengthen community spirit.

It was further noted that Patrick received his award certificate last month from Jonathan Neame, Deputy Lord Lieutenant, at Shepherd Neame Brewery, and also undertook a tour of the brewery.

Patrick attended the meeting and outlined potential plans for his new lease of the former Christopher Buck premises, which he is leasing from the Masons. He advised that initial ideas could include hot desking facilities, together with a space for local artist Robbie Graham to work in view of the public.

In the longer term, Patrick indicated there was a possibility of reinstating the premises as three separate units, as historically, with potential uses including a pharmacy, launderette, and juice bar, with alternative seasonal uses also under consideration. He confirmed that the Masons had been very supportive.

The Parish Council congratulated Patrick on his award, and a photograph was taken with the Chair for inclusion on the Parish Council website.

It was also noted that a number of documents relating to Sandgate in the 1890s had been discovered in the basement of Folkestone Library and had been kindly donated to the Parish Council and library. These included “weekly lists” of the parish, featuring advertisements for local shops, as well as lists of visitors and residents and items of local news.

Members agreed this was a significant and exciting discovery, and discussions would be undertaken by the Library Committee regarding the most appropriate way to preserve and display these irreplaceable documents.

5. Planning Committee Report

It was noted that the Planning Committee had met on 20th April and that minutes had been circulated.

6. Environment Committee Report

It was noted that the next meeting of the Environment Committee would be held on 11th May, and it was hoped that by then positive news would have been received from DEFRA regarding the application to designate Granville Beach as a bathing beach.

7. Finance Committee Report

It was noted that the Finance Committee had met on 20th April and that minutes had been circulated. It was also noted that the Internal Auditor had visited the Parish and was satisfied with all financial matters relating to AGAR 2025/26.

8. External Auditor’s Report (2024/25)

Members considered the report of the external auditor in respect of the 2024/25 financial year, as required under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

The Finance Committee had previously considered the auditor’s comments in November and reviewed the points raised. Members noted the following:

- The 2023/24 reporting period had exceeded the 30 working day inspection period by one day, and future compliance would ensure strict adherence to the 30 working day requirement.
- All recommendations from the 2023/24 audit report had been implemented, as had those from the 2024/25 report, subject to the inspection period requirement being met.
- A bank reconciliation report should have been included with the 2024/25 AGAR submission. Members noted this omission and confirmed that bank reconciliation reports are regularly produced and reported to the Finance Committee. This would be included in future AGAR submissions.

Council noted and accepted the report and AGREED the recommendations and conclusions.

Proposed by Tim Prater
Seconded by Simon Horton
Agreed by all

9. Library Committee Report

It was noted that the library continues to purchase new books using Section 106 funding and as per agenda item 4 would convene to discuss the appropriate preservation and display of the recently acquired documents.

10. Sea Festival Report

It was noted that plans were progressing satisfactorily. Alex McNiece had prepared a programme for the stages. Fireworks and ambulances had been booked, and most stallholders had indicated their intention to return, with a list of potential new stallholders also in place.

There remained some concerns regarding volunteer recruitment; however, all other administrative preparations were reported to be on schedule.

11. Election Fund

Members considered proposals to transfer funds from the General Reserve to a designated Election Reserve as follows:

- £1,038.93 for 2025/26
- £1,000.00 for 2026/27

It was noted this would ensure sufficient funds were available in advance of the next election when costs would be incurred.

Proposed by Tim Prater
Seconded by Simon Horton
Agreed unanimously

12. Retrospective Approval – Business Rates Payment

Members approved retrospective payment of £5,968.25 for FHDC business rates relating to the library/parish office, noting that 50% would be met by KCC.

Proposed by Simon Horton
Seconded by Tim Prater
Agreed unanimously

13. KALC Subscription 2026/27

Members approved the KALC subscription for 2026/27 in the sum of £2,000.00 (ex VAT).

Proposed by Tim Prater
Seconded by Rosa Morris
Agreed unanimously

14. Information Items

It was noted that additional bulb planting had taken place at Wilberforce Green by Rosa Morris, who was thanked for her work. Battery Point planting was reported to be looking very good, and it was suggested that similar planting schemes be considered for the banks at Sandgate and Fremantle Park.

It was further noted that a table tennis table was to be purchased for Wilberforce Green using a Members' Grant from Gary Fuller.

15. Date of Next Meeting 18th May 2026 Annual Parish Meeting and Annual Parish Council Meeting.