SANDGATE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

Date: Monday 23rd November 2026
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Sandgate Parish Council and Library Offices,
James Morris Court, Sandgate High Street, Sandgate

Present

Chairman: Cllr Tim Prater

Councillors: Hazel Barrett, Susan Claris, Michael Fitch, Gary Fuller, Peter Hickman, Simon Horton, Rosa Morris, Nicola South and Guy Valentine-Neale.

Clerk: Gaye Thomas

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1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Kirsty Hogben.

2. Declarations of Interest

Members were invited to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests or other interests in items on the agenda, in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct and the Localism Act 2011.

No declarations were made.

3. Minutes of the Previous Parish Council Meeting

The minutes of the previous Parish Council meeting held on 26 October 2026 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Proposed: Simon Horton
Seconded: Susan Claris
Decision: Agreed unanimously.

4. Chairman's Opening Remarks and Correspondence

It was noted that the Parish Christmas event would take place on Friday 4 December 2026, with a programme of festive activities taking place throughout the village.

The celebrations would begin with Santa visiting Sandgate Library between 5.00pm and 6.00pm, accompanied by seasonal music, with a small gift for all children under the age of nine. At 6.00pm, the Sandgate Society

would lead the singing of Christmas carols around the Christmas tree, followed by a fireworks display on the beach at 6.30pm.

It was further noted that shops and businesses along Sandgate High Street would be participating in the celebrations, with a range of activities and entertainment taking place throughout the evening. Visitors would be able to enjoy carol singing, live bands, food and refreshments, with local businesses contributing to the festive atmosphere and community celebrations.

Members were informed that Christmas lights had now been installed on lampposts throughout the parish. It was further noted that District Councillor Tim Prater had given a contribution of £1,000 from the Combined Members Grant, to both Sandgate and Cheriton towards the cost of the Christmas lights.

Members were also advised that an email had been circulated concerning a matter to be considered later in the agenda, relating to a proposed amendment to the Council's Standing Orders. It was noted that legal advice was being sought from KALC and the Monitoring Officer to establish the legality, appropriateness and suitability of the proposed amendment.

The draft budget had also been circulated with the email. Members were advised that, although some amendments were likely to be required, the budget was expected to remain broadly in its current form. At this stage, the draft indicated a potential 3% increase in the precept. This would become clearer once the Proposed Council Tax Base and Precept Demand Form had been received.

Finally, information had been circulated regarding a proposal to engage an external HR consultant to review staff salaries. Members were advised that, should the incoming Council wish to undertake a formal staff review following the May 2027 elections, provision had been made within the budget for the associated consultancy costs.

5. Planning Committee

It was noted that the minutes of the previous Planning Committee meeting had been circulated.

The main implications of the National Scheme of Delegation for Planning Functions were discussed. Members noted that more applications would be determined by planning officers rather than planning committees and that representations would need to demonstrate significant local economic, social or environmental issues, or significant planning considerations assessed against the Local Plan and other material considerations.

6. Environment Committee

Members were updated on a number of positive developments within the parish.

It was noted that the new multicoloured benches had now been installed at the Solarium and were looking very attractive.

Following a meeting to discuss the HIP (Highway Improvement Plan), the proposed 20mph repeaters were discussed. It was agreed that, alongside this relatively modest proposal, additional 20mph entry signage would be provided at both ends of the High Street, approaching from the Folkestone and Hythe directions.

Members were also given an update on the Active Travel bid. The original bid, which had sought £14,000, had been successful and had secured £20,000 in funding. In addition to the three dropped kerbs originally requested, a further eleven had been included in the scheme. Furthermore, rather than installing a pedestrian refuge island on Military Road, it was now proposed that the entire junction would be redesigned, with the additional costs of this more substantial work being funded by Kent Highways.

Work on the dropped kerbs had commenced, with the locations marked out and implementation planned for January/February. The more substantial structural work associated with the crossing was scheduled for November. Members welcomed these developments as excellent news for the parish and a significant improvement on the original proposals.

On a further positive note, members were advised that the latest community Sprucing event had taken place the previous day, with volunteers undertaking a substantial clean-up of the Golden Valley area around the shops. The event had attracted a number of new volunteers following an appeal through social media, which was particularly encouraging and demonstrated the value of community engagement.

7. Finance Committee

It was noted that the previous meeting of the Finance Committee had not been quorate. Work was continuing on the preparation of the budget, as reported earlier in the meeting.

8. Library Committee

It was noted that the Library continued to be successful, with new books continuing to arrive. Requests for new book purchases should be directed to Gaye Thomas.

9. External Auditor's Report – Financial Year 2025/26

Members were asked to receive and consider the External Auditor's report for the 2025/26 financial year and determine any actions arising.

The External Auditor's Minor Scope for Improvement recommendations were noted, namely:

- That the Parish Council's name is clearly entered at the top of every AGAR form submitted.
- That the Asset Register is fully reconciled each year, with all variances, including nil or zero movements, clearly accounted for and explained in the appropriate supporting AGAR documentation, under Section 2 – Accounting Statements.

RESOLVED: To note the External Auditor's Minor Scope for Improvement recommendations and agree that these requirements will be incorporated into all future annual audit submissions.

Proposed: Cllr Tim Prater
Seconded: Cllr Guy Valentine-Neale
Decision: Agreed unanimously.

10. Christmas Lights and Fireworks Event

Further to the discussion under Agenda Item 4, members were provided with additional information regarding the arrangements for the event and the assistance received from external organisations.

It was noted that thanks should be extended to Folkestone & Hythe District Council (FHDC), who had been extremely helpful in securing approval for the event at very short notice, processing the application in approximately half the usual 12-week timeframe.

Appreciation was also expressed to Fred Miller, Transport Manager, for permitting access along Granville Parade and the Promenade for the fireworks contractor and ambulance vehicle during the event.

Thanks were also extended to Rebecca Austin and her colleagues at Saga for generously allowing the Parish Council free use of the Saga car park between 4.30pm and 7.30pm, which had been a considerable help in facilitating the event.

11. KALC Community Award – Nomination

It was noted that a nomination had been received for Vicky Feaver in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the Sandgate community.

Over the past two years, Vicky had transformed the Sandgate Society's event bookings, organised successful social events and significantly developed its social media presence. Her efforts had strengthened community engagement, raised the Society's profile and helped to build stronger connections and partnerships across the wider parish.

Members recognised Vicky as an enthusiastic, hardworking and inspirational individual whose commitment, energy and contribution had made a significant and positive difference to the community. It was agreed that she was a very worthy nominee for the KALC Community Award.

The award presentation would take place in May 2027.

12. Motion to Amend the Council's Standing Orders

Members considered a motion proposing amendments to the Council's Standing Orders.

It was proposed that the Clerk and Head of Personnel seek legal advice from KALC and the Monitoring Officer regarding the legality, appropriateness and suitability of the proposed amendments. The findings and advice received would then be brought back to Full Council for further consideration.

Proposed: Tim Prater
Seconded: Susan Claris

RESOLVED: That legal advice be sought from KALC and the Monitoring Officer, with the findings to be reported back to Full Council.

Voting: 9 in favour, 1 abstention.

13. Information

A member asked whether the finalised budget and expenditure figures for the 2026 Sea Festival had been completed. It was noted that the finalised figures for the 2026 event would be circulated to members shortly and would have been used to inform and prepare the forecast for the 2027/28 Sea Festival budget.

A member also advised that the Rowing Club was proposing to install planters incorporating bicycle stands on Granville Parade, opposite the Rowing Club. It was noted that permission would be required from the landowner, Folkestone & Hythe District Council, before any installation could proceed.

14. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of Sandgate Parish Council was scheduled for Monday 14 December 2026.

Signed by the Chairman: _____

Date: _____