

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF RIVER PARISH COUNCIL

Held at 7pm on Tuesday 8th April 2025 at River Methodist Church

PRESENT: Cllr. Dixon (in the Chair), Cllr. Beresford, Cllr. Atkins, Cllr. Innes, Cllr. Jones, Cllr. Styles-Martin and Cllr. Taylor

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr. A. Denyer (Parish Clerk), County Cllr. Collor, County Cllr. Richardson and two members of the public

38. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr. Shariff

39. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none

40. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 11th March 2025 had previously been circulated. Cllr. Beresford proposed that they represented a true record of the meeting. This was seconded by Cllr. Jones and all agreed.

41. UPDATES FROM THE MINUTES (NOT OTHERWISE LISTED ON THE AGENDA)

Item 35a(i): DOV/25/00114 | Conversion of existing care home to 9 residential flats | Meadow Dean Residential Home, 35 Lower Road, River, CT17 0QT - Cllr. Taylor asked if there had been any reaction to Clerk's letter regarding the planning application. No response received.

42. REPORTS

a) Policing

No report received.

b) District and County Councillors

No report due to forthcoming County Council elections.

c) Parish Councillors

i) Cllr. Innes reported on the extensive advisory visit to the River Dour by the Wild Trout Trust. Their report is expected by 4th May. Martha Noakes from White Cliffs Countryside Partnership also attended. Their funding application to the Environment Agency looks very positive and they hope to be able to make a small contribution towards any works recommended in River by the Wild Trout Trust. Cllr. Innes and Martha Noakes will make a joint presentation on the Dour at the Temple Ewell Parish Council AGM. Cllr. Innes will be attending a meeting of the East Kent Improvement Partnership which will give the opportunity for a meeting with the local Environment Agency Catchment Officer. Snap Fitness have agreed to be lead sponsor for the Summer Fete again this year. If we wish to have an entry or insert in the next edition of Rivall then the copy date is 1st May.

ii) Cllr. Beresford reported on attendance of the Parking Strategy Engagement Meeting at Dover District Council. According to a survey carried out between 20th December 2024 and 19th January 2025, Dover car parks are on average 50% full. Cambridge Terrace and Albany Place car parks are already earmarked for closure and development. The cost of parking permits is going to increase. Responses to the presentation included: a suggestion that if people are being asked to move away from car travel to public transport then adequate bus services will be needed; also requests that cash payment remains an option at car parks. Future devolution may lead to some car parks being offered to Parish Councils. The car park at the Recreation Ground was not part of the survey.

iii) Cllr. Styles-Martin is now in direct contact with relevant persons at Stagecoach who have accepted that the missing 'flag' on The Ridgeway bus stop should have been replaced by now. He is also looking into The Ridgeway returning in both directions. Two potential funding streams may be available, if needed, to pay for a replacement bus shelter in Lewisham Road.

iv) Chairman reported that a recent 'Speedwatch' session conducted on Lewisham Road by Mrs. Eyre-Jackson recorded 21 vehicles exceeding the speed limit with the highest speed recorded at 46mph. She appealed for more volunteers from the community to take part and allow extra sessions.

43. ANY QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

- a) The owner of the Premier Store in Chilton Way has contacted the Post Office asking that to open a branch in the store. He has setup an online petition at change.org. It was agreed that the Parish Council supports this effort and Clerk will publicise the link to the petition.
- b) Query about a date for the arrival of the new planters. Clerk reported a holdup due to a delay with the granting of permissions by Kent Highways. Also it has been necessary to wait for receipt of the KCC Members Grant from Cllr. Beaney. The planters are now on order.

44. PLANNING MATTERS

a) Any Planning Applications with expiry dates before the next meeting

i) DOV/25/00208 | Erection of two storey side and single storey side extensions, outbuilding, two bay carport, wall/gate, widening of driveway and alterations to door/window (outbuilding, garage, and single storey side extension to be demolished) | St.Radigund's Abbey Farm, Abbey Road, Dover, CT15 7DL - No comments.

ii) DOV/25/00209 | Erection of 2 storey extension with attached garden wall & single storey building to west elevation. Erection of single storey extension to east elevation. Internal works to include: demolition of existing & erection of new partition walls to all floors; introduction of sun tunnels to roof; installation of staircase from ground to 1st floor; installation of staircase from ground to basement; insulated lining of external walls; introduction of glazed doors to porch & replacement door & window to south elevation. | St.Radigund's Abbey Farm, Abbey Road, Dover, CT15 7DL - No comments.

iii) DOV/25/00330 | Erection of single storey rear extension. Erection of garden office/annexe | 63 Minnis Lane, River, CT17 0PR - No comments.

iv) DOV/25/00336 | Erection of 2 dwellings with associated parking and EV charging points (existing garages to be demolished) | River Garage, River Street, River, CT17 0RB - No comments.

v) DOV/25/00355 | Erection of a single storey rear extension, first floor side extension with front balcony, pitched roof over porch area and garage conversion | 100 Lower Road, River, Dover, Kent - No objection in principle but the single storey rear extension far exceeds the 45 degree line code with regard to the neighbouring property, if that is still a consideration.

b) Decisions by Dover District Council

i) DOV/25/00153 | Erection of a rear extension, which would extend beyond the rear wall of the original house by 5.20m, for which the maximum height would be 3.50m, and for which the height of the eaves would be 2.58m | 109 Lewisham Road, River, Dover, CT17 0PA - Conditional Extension General Permitted Development

ii) DOV/25/00090 | External cladding to care home | 105B - 107 Lower Road, River, Dover, CT17 0QY - permission granted

iii) DOV/25/00137 | Erection of a rear extension (Existing conservatory to be demolished) | 1 Hazeldown Close, River, CT17 0NJ - permission granted

45. RECREATION GROUND MATTERS

a) To discuss maintenance to the tennis enclosure

The fencing around the tennis courts is now in very poor condition. Neither the Parish Council or the tennis club has been able to find a contractor dealing with this type of fencing. John Hill will be asked to do a temporary repair to fill the gap. Any replacement fence would be extremely expensive. In view of this, after discussion it was agreed that a letter be sent to the Chairman of River Originals Tennis Club asking the club to approach outside organisations, such as the Lawn Tennis Association and Sport England, for funding. This would be similar to the way that River Bowling Club and Dover Rangers F.C. have been successful in bids for facility improvement. It was noted that the tennis club have a rolling one year agreement for free use of the tennis courts which they maintain.

b) A significant area of the 'wet pour' in the Crabble Lane Play Area has had to be repaired due to vandalism.

46. FINANCIAL MATTERS

a) To receive the March 2025 Financial Report

A full digital report including bank statements had previously been circulated. Income and expenditure details were circulated at the meeting along with an updated interim end of year report. Both were reported on by the Clerk who will be drafting the annual return over the next month.

b) To receive a proposal to open a second deposit account

It was agreed to open a second higher rate fixed term deposit account with Unity Trust Bank to hold additional funds reserved for the works related to conversion of the Ground Floor of Flint House into a Community Meeting space.

c) To discuss support for the Dover District Council Kearsney Abbey Play Area Refurbishment

Clerk has met with Grace Dennis of DDC at the Recreation Ground to explain the issues with the planning application for change of use for the Ground Floor of Flint House. She has agreed to approach the Planning Officer on our behalf. DDC have also agreed to approach other local parish councils, as requested, for potential contributions to the Kearsney Abbey Project.

d) To confirm renewal of the Recreation Ground Groundwork Contract

The maintenance contract for the Recreation Ground has been renewed for a further year at the same price as the previous year.

e) To receive Insurance Renewal quotation

The quotation for insurance is £6,486. The Parish Council is in the second year of a three year Long Term Agreement. This limits any rise in annual costs during the agreement period.

47. THE HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Clerk has had an online meeting with Kent Highway regarding updating the Highway Improvement Plan. reported The traffic survey requested for London Road will take place in the week commencing 13th May. With regard to the poor condition of the road surface of London Road, Kent Highways asked for this to be reported via the usual reporting method. With regard to potential better pedestrian access to the Dover bound bus stop at the Crabble Hill junction, both conversion of one set of traffic lights to a 'puffin' crossing and the possible installation of a refuge island were considered but found to be not possible. Clerk is still to discuss a request for broken yellow lines opposite a parishioners house on Lower Road. Normally the Highway Improvement Plan is reviewed annually but as we have no outstanding projects, Kent Highways are happy to review potential projects during the coming year or via a 6 month review.

48. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE 2025 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

After discussion, it was agreed that there will be a presentation at the Annual Parish Meeting of the report from the Wild Trout Trust and also the audio visual presentation provided for the Temple Ewell meeting. Cllr. Styles-Martin will speak to the Chitchat Cafe about providing coffee and cake for the meeting.

49. GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED BY THE DATE OF THE MEETING

a) KALC Community Award Scheme Event

An invitation has been received from KALC for the Parish Council's nominee to attend a special evening of celebration and recognition of people making a contribution within their local communities. This will be held at Sessions House in Maidstone.

b) Neighbourhood Watch Trusteeship

An opportunity to become a trustee of the Neighbourhood Watch charity has been received for anyone feeling they have relevant interest and experiences for the role.

c) River Dour Advisory visit complaint

An email has been received from a resident regarding the recent River Dour advisory visit. She did not know of the visit and had been worried by the sudden appearance of men walking along the river channel. She asked if any future visits could be publicised via a note through residents' doors and not just on websites and social media. She also asked whether this type of visit was allowed under riparian rights. Cllr. Innes recommended that the resident check her deeds for further information and that the river channel itself is not generally included within riparian rights.

50. MOTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC FROM ITEM 51 AS IT RELATES TO STAFF EMPLOYMENT MATTERS

Chairman proposed a motion to exclude the public from the following item as the pay and performance of the Clerk is to be discussed. This was agreed.

Members of the public, County Councillors and the Parish Clerk left the meeting at this point.

51. TO REVIEW THE PAY AND PERFORMANCE OF THE PARISH CLERK

The Councillors discussed the pay and performance of the Parish Clerk. It was decided that the Parish Clerk's hours increase from 18 to 20 per week. Also that he move to Band 20 (Spinal Column Point) of the Local Government National Agreement on pay scales.

52. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- a) Cllr. Jones said that one of the super yachts taking part in the clipper races was visiting Dover Harbour on Tuesday 23rd April and would be open to visits from the general public.
- b) The next Events Committee meeting will be at 5.15pm on 25th April at River Methodist Church

Meeting closed at 8.40pm