

Minutes of the Barham Annual Parish Meeting held on 22nd May 2025, in Barham Village Hall at 7.00pm.

Present: Parish Councillors: Carolyn Hunt (Chair), Diane Tatt, Andreas Tatt, Sean Latus and Nuala McGill. Also present: Caroline Read, Clerk & RFO to Barham Parish Council, KCC/CCC Cllr Mike Sole and 8 members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence. Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Manning, Cllr Smith and Cllr Hart.

2. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 25th April 2025, were signed and accepted as a true record of the meeting.

3. Matters arising from the previous Minutes. Previous concerns over the material state of the Methodist Chapel had been addressed, with the property likely to be marketed for sale in the Autumn of 2025.

The Parish Council engaged directly with the School, who have invested heavily in communicating with parents on suitable places to park in the village, no further complaints about parents parking have been received.

Low cost housing is not a matter the Parish Council can directly deliver, however, the Chair highlighted that the planning permission had now been granted at Barham Court Farm, with five units being secured as affordable housing.

4. Presentation by KCC and CCC Cllr Mike Sole: The Parish received an excellent presentation detailing the works that he undertakes in his role as County and City Councillor. He serves Canterbury South on Kent County Council (KCC) and for Nailbourne Ward on Canterbury City Council (CCC), he also holds the position of Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat group on CCC.

He spoke about his commitment to public service which is evident in his long-standing involvement in local governance. First elected as a Councillor for Nailbourne Ward in 2019, he has previously represented Barham Downs and Wincheap, demonstrating his deep-rooted connection to the community. His professional background as an accountant complements his roles, providing a pragmatic approach to fiscal matters within the Councils.

He highlighted the May 2025 local elections, which marked a significant change in Kent's political landscape, with Reform UK gaining control of KCC, securing 57 out of 81 seats. Despite this shift, the Liberal Democrats increased their representation to 12 seats, with Mike Sole being re-elected, underscoring his constituents' trust in his leadership.

He emphasized that Kent is on the cusp of a major local government reorganisation, aiming to transition from the current two-tier system to larger unitary authorities. This restructuring seeks to streamline services and improve efficiency across the county. He spoke about his extensive experience and leadership roles position him as a key figure in guiding his constituents through these forthcoming changes.

Throughout all these developments, Cllr Sole reassured residents that he remains a constant and approachable presence and will continue to make himself available to residents and parish

councils, assisting with questions and concerns ranging from highways and flood risk to planning and council services. He also assured residents that his open and responsive approach will ensure that local voices continue to be heard at both City and County levels.

5. To receive the Annual Report from the Chair of Barham Parish Council.

2024/5 has been another busy year with different challenges and opportunities presented. I was elected by Council as Chair for a second year in May 2024 and recently re-elected for a third year. I'd like to begin by thanking all my colleagues on the Parish Council who volunteer their time and give full attention to the issues of the day supported by our outstanding Parish Clerk, Caroline. Together we have done our best to ensure the effective running of the parish in our allocated responsibilities, engaging in healthy debate to reach decisions and focusing on what will achieve best value services and solutions for the monies set out in our annual budget funded by the precept, which is collected through parishioners Council Tax. I'm delighted to report that at the End of Financial Year 24/25 the Parish remains in good financial health.

One of the greatest areas of focus in the last year and continuing into this is the management and maintenance of our **streetlights**, or rather, the lack of it by our service contractors! The streetlights are completely within the Parish Council responsibility, one of only two parishes in Canterbury District to be in that position. There have been too many occasions that some or all lights have stopped working, sometimes for more than two consecutive weeks, but the response from our current contractor has been well below par. In addition, the six yearly structural inspection is also due. Our endeavors to rectify this directly with our current contractor have proven fruitless. We have explored multiple other options to address this unsatisfactory situation including transfer of street lighting to the district or county councils or alternative supply of services. This has taken a great deal of effort and hours of work especially by the Clerk, but we have started to make some headway and expect to provide better news in the coming months.

Highways is another topic on our regular agenda requiring time and attention. Working together with KCC on our parish Highways Improvement Plan (HIP), we have delivered the 20mph advisory speed limit with working wig-wag lights outside the school and consultation on the permanent 20mph speed in The Street has successfully completed. We now await implementation of the latter which will also include clearer road signage at each end of The Street in an endeavour to stop HGV's attempting to use it. On a connected topic we have engaged with National Highways who will now ensure we are informed when the A2 in our vicinity closes and they will ensure appropriate road signage is in place for diversions to discourage HGVs from using our narrow lanes. Although two volunteers had come forward to support Lorry Watch, the KCC guidance states more were needed before a Lorry Watch program could be established. We continue to engage with KCC with the support of Cllr Mike Sole as necessary on other matters such as the safety of the Out Elmstead Lane junction with the A2 and safety of lanes regularly used by walkers. It's good to see that at least some of parish roads have been resurfaced and some potholes more permanently fixed but the broken state of Brickfield Road as a major thoroughfare in the village continues to give cause for concern.

We had our first significant incidence of graffiti throughout the village appearing over a single night. Having reported each location to Canterbury City Council, the graffiti was all removed within 48 hours and thankfully no further reoccurrence to date. The council worker met with us and reassured that he would do further checks in the days afterward for any reoccurrence advising the sooner it's removed, the less likely it is to reappear. A great job by CCC! Also, a note of thanks to

the couple who reported graffiti in the little play area in Valley Road and removed the graffiti themselves, great community spirit.

We are blessed to live in a village with so many beautiful **trees** but of course they all need looking after to ensure they stay healthy and safe. Regrettably we had to fell the six sorbus trees on Derrystone Green due to fungal infestation which did cause concern to some villagers. We don't take these decisions lightly and ensure that any decision is taken with qualified professional advice. We have recently completed a survey of all the trees on parish grounds by a registered arborist and work is underway to rectify the high priority findings on trees bordering the Village Green, Derrystone Green and the Bear Trap. This included some self-help by a group of willing volunteers to stake, prune and mulch smaller trees on the Village Green and the Bear Trap. My thanks to those volunteers and their enthusiastic 2 hours of work to get the job done!

Our **green open spaces** such as the Village Green and Brickfield Recreation Ground are significant assets in our parish that we have full responsibility for. There have been some notable changes in these areas including taking over responsibility for grass cutting on the village green from the school, replacing the goal posts on the village green, removal of damaged benches, installation of concrete plinths in the Brickfield Picnic area with all benches secured following the theft of two picnic benches, purchase of a Litter Bin for the Bear Trap with collections by Canterbury City Council and appropriate clearance of moles in play areas. Congratulations to Barham Football Club who have installed new football pitches at Brickfield Recreation area, further enhancing this community space. We have also replaced the steps to the South Barham Road footpath for use when the Nailbourne runs and secured funding from a local business to purchase 5 benches to replace those that are at end of life. Hopefully with KCC permission to install a new bench along Fox Way.

Play Equipment requires continuous regular assessment to check for and address faults. We have an annual inspection by a qualified professional and then regular checks by members of the Parish Council. We have recently increased our inspections to quarterly. Necessary repairs have been made. Some of our play equipment is reaching end of life and elements have been disabled, for example the bucket swing in Brickfield Recreation ground. We are currently preparing to consult with parishioners on future plans for our play areas including where the equipment should be hosted and what type of equipment parishioners would like. Any replacement equipment will need to be planned carefully potentially phased over several years. It will be a significant financial investment alongside other priorities.

There have been a number of other projects and activities driven by the Parish Council over the last year which have all contributed to improving our parish. Examples include; -

- Two Litter Picks in Spring and Autumn, with much litter collected
- Introduction of local policing through 'Coffee with a Cop' event
- Contribution of 50% of the cost of erecting higher fencing at the allotments following thefts.
- Recruitment of village flood wardens
- Defibrillator and CPR training; Community Lifesavers from Thanet conducted free training for residents in return for a donation from the Parish Council, to cover their travel expenses; we donated £150.
- The expired defibrillator at the Village Hall replaced with new

- Air fryer training event using a grant of £1000 from the KCC Winter Support Scheme Grant. The event was a food-based activity session and included donation of 15 air fryers and cookbooks to Barham residents.
- Monthly review of planning applications
- Speed watch continues to be successful in identifying speeding vehicles, details of which are forwarded to Kent Police.
- Restoration of the old Village Sign which is now located in the Grabham Room at the Village Hall
- Replacement of Parish Notice Boards
- An update of existing and introduction of additional Parish Council Policies
- Electronic capture of all our assets; we now have a comprehensive detailed list of all assets including their location, current state of repair and their value to assist in their on-going management.

You may recall at the last Annual Parish meeting the significant concern raised about the poor state of repair of the Methodist Chapel on Derringstone Hill. Following that meeting there were various representations made to the owners directly and via social media whereby it was indicated that some repairs would be made and the chapel put up for sale this year. I have received an update in the last few days directly from the owners. They have confirmed that the building is completely sound and dry inside with no signs of damp or mould. Replacement of broken window panes has been arranged. Another garden tidy up is imminent including the removal of a branch from a neighbouring cherry tree which is rubbing on the chapel wall. Quotes to repair the damaged fencing are being requested. The aim is to have the building ready to market in September after the summer school holidays.

I had also reported last year that we had resolved to revisit and refresh the village plan which was created initially in 2016 via a survey to residents with the last revision conducted in 2020. This has been put on hold with other significant items on our agenda taking priority such as the provision of robust streetlighting, parish play area strategy and highways improvement plan. In addition, we will be engaged in the impending local government reorganization and devolution program for Kent and Medway. In March, councils across Kent and Medway, including Canterbury City Council, submitted an interim proposal for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) to Government. A more detailed proposal will be submitted by the end of November 2025. Canterbury City Council will continue to gather feedback from local councils to feed into this proposal. It is likely that reorganisation will bring changes to parish boundaries, with some areas having to merge to create more substantial Parish Councils. There is also a high risk of losing the Concurrent Function Funding currently received from Canterbury. It's important that our Parish Council fully engage in these developments. I'm sure Mike as our local district and county councillor will keep us informed so that we can be as prepared as best we can.

So, another busy year in prospect but regrettably without Councillor John Brooks. After 10 years of dedicated service, John has decided to hang up his Parish Council boots. I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank John for all he has done over those years for the good of our community. It has been more than a pleasure to work alongside him. As a result of John's resignation, we have a vacancy which has been posted and available to any resident to apply.

I would also like to pay tribute to our Clerk, Caroline, who works tirelessly and effectively to keep our administrative and financial house in very good order. There have been many quality improvements and interventions driven by Caroline. It is evident over the last year that the Parish

needs more of her time and so from the beginning of the year, we increased her hours from 15 to 17 hours per week.

Finally, a big thank you to all who volunteer in whatever capacity to support the various groups and activities in our Parish to make Barham the village we all enjoy living in. You make a significant difference, the village wouldn't be the same without you, keep up the great work!

6. To receive Annual reports from Representatives within Barham Parish.

Barham Village Hall Charitable Incorporated Organisation - Trustees' Report for the Parish Council May 2025:

I am pleased to report that the hall is popular with hirers and is in a good financial position. In March 2024, noise absorption panels were installed in the main hall to reduce the reverberation and echoing. They have successfully improved the sound quality in the room. The panels were partly funded by a very welcome grant from the Atherton Grassroots Trust.

In April 2024 the land previously licensed to a Heathfield resident reverted to the hall and an initial clearance of the site took place. Since the 1st March 2025, a new license agreement has been signed with another resident who will be using the space to create a wildflower garden. The village hall was converted to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) on the 19th November 2021. Following this the assets of the old unincorporated charity were transferred to the new CIO on 21st March 2022. The shop and bowls club leases have been amended to reflect this transfer. The formal notification of the land transfer to the CIO was finally confirmed by the Land Registry on 24th April 2024.

The hall car park's white lines have been refreshed. A new bookcase for children's and adult books has been added to the Grabham Room for use by the community.

The shop has installed a new array of solar energy panels which are helping to reduce their electricity bills.

Following reports of uneven paving slabs around the bowls club, the trustees instructed a contractor to re-lay the slabs in March this year to ensure a safe environment for all users. In July 2025 the shop and the lottery funded hall refurbishment will reach their ten-year anniversary. The hall trustees are planning a celebratory event on the 19th July which will include tea & cake, the National Crust pizza van, local village shop suppliers, craft stalls, and performances from our regular hirers – we are looking forward to seeing you all there.

The trustees have also agreed to replace the flooring in the Main Hall and the Grabham Room due to splintering and the regular maintenance required for the current flooring. The work is planned to take place during the August closure period this year to minimise the impact on our regular hirers.

As well as this, the Barham Village Hall website is currently undergoing a re-vamp. The current website is still live until the new website has been built. We are hoping this will make the offering of the hall clearer to potential hirers, as well as creating a website to keep our local community informed of what is taking place. We are working towards a completion date of the end of May.

The Barham Wives Club Annual Report:

The Barham wives club have had another successful year. We have been very pleased to welcome members of the Kingston wives club. Our membership now stands at 41. We have had various speakers which have kept us entertained. Our outing to Mount Ephram in May, and our annual meal in July at the Black Robin will see us to the end of the programme year. Any ladies would be most welcome to join us. We meet the first Thursday in the month at 2.00 pm at the Barham Village Hall. Our yearly membership subscription is £15.00

Anyone wishing to join should call: Rosemary on 01227 830872

Coffee Stop Report For Barham Parish Council May 2025:

You will find Coffee Stop every Tuesday morning throughout the year in the Grabham Room of the Barham Village, open for two hours from 10a.m. to 12noon. Only severe weather will stop us opening Coffee Stop! We are not a club... it is a meeting place for our community, where you can come and go as you wish, we welcome all of whatever age to come along and meet up with friends or make new ones.

Coffee and tea we offer as refreshment, we serve a variety of biscuits often supplemented by kind donations of home-made cakes, sweets and other goodies. Proving popular in the Winter weeks is toast with Marmite or marmalade. All of this for a small donation. After expenses we pay the balance to the Village Hall Fund, it being a vital community centre.

The Village Hall 100's Club draw for three lucky numbers is held monthly and application forms are available for completion.

On a quarterly basis the Hi Kent organisation run a clinic for re-tubing NHS hearing aids and supplying batteries on production of a NHS Card. Monthly we welcome the Parish Clerk, Caroline Read, giving parishioners the opportunity to confidentially ask questions or comment on parish matters.

We would like others to come and join the team to help, on a rota basis, to set up tables and chairs, make and serve refreshments and there's always the easy washing-up!

We, the members of the team, look forward to Tuesdays when we know that the morning will be filled with laughter, caring and a sense of community.

Barham Tennis Club April 2025 Report:

The Club sets out to provide quality tennis courts for the enjoyment of Barham residents and for the surrounding villages, in a non-intimidating, rural environment and at the lowest membership subscription level, sufficient to be able to maintain this high standard facility into the future.

The Club enjoyed a good year in 2024 with Membership levels being maintained at a satisfactory level, despite the windy and wet Summer. At the beginning of the year, at the AGM, the subject of introducing the playing of Pickleball was raised and the committee has spent the year investigating the possibility of introducing it, subject to there being sufficient demand.

Pickleball is a game that is rapidly growing in the UK. It is a sport that contains characteristics of badminton, tennis and ping-pong on a court similar in size to a badminton court and is played with a solid bat or paddle and with a ball that is larger than a tennis ball and which is hollow and full of holes. The rules are relatively simple and the game requires less skill, making this an excellent match for players of all ages and skill sets which will attract a wider range of participants.

As a result of the committee's investigation, it is planned to have the two new Pickleball courts ready, together with a refurbished Practice Wall, by the end of May 2025 and then to hold an Open Day to introduce the game to new players and for existing players to try out the new courts. This would be followed by a 4-week course for beginners, run by Gwen Christie, who has recently moved in to the village and who is an accredited LTA level 1 tennis coach. It is then planned for the club to establish a Pickleball 'WhatsApp' group so that members can organise playing times. If you are interested in participating, please contact Gwen on 07827 229898

The Club is also delighted to have received an offer of tennis coaching from Tony Marshall, who has also recently moved in to the village and who is a player with 30 years' experience of coaching all ages and levels. Tony is a county-level player, winning 12 singles titles at various clubs, an ACA and LTA level 4 accredited Coach. For anyone interested in improving their game, please get in touch with Tony, who can be contacted on 07773 290916

This year the club celebrates its 60th anniversary. Although it was initially formed in 1965, it took the club two more years to raise the funds to build the courts and a further three more before the practice wall was erected. So, the addition of Pickleball will be a celebratory addition to the activities of the club.

Anyone interested in joining the Club and playing either Tennis or Pickleball, please contact Simon Cavalier on 01227 831367.

Barham Football Club 2024/25 Season Highlights

Barham FC is proud to celebrate another fantastic grassroots season. It's been a year filled with growth, achievement and community spirit. From our youngest minis in training, to our impressive U11s, it's been an action-packed year across the board and we could not be prouder of our club.

We are incredibly grateful for the hard work and dedication of our fantastic coaching team; you are the heartbeat of the club. We must also shout out to our loyal sponsors for all your support. Behind the scenes, the committee has worked hard to secure funding and oversees the rebuild of the fantastic new Brickfield pitch, including the installation of brand-new goals. We have some exciting plans to improve the some of our facilities next season and fund a more permanent parking solution for wetter months.

Beyond the league matches, teams have participated in friendly fixtures and tournaments and our Christmas party brought the whole club together to celebrate and raise funds.

Thank you for an awesome season, everyone. Upcoming events: 8th June 2025 Club Presentations, picnic and activities. 16th June 2025, The Black robin Kingston – Club AGM. Dates for next season: 10th August to 17th May 2026.

7. Residents' Participation and Questions.

A resident raised concerns about inconsiderate parking on Valley Road and in other areas of the parish. The Chair acknowledged the resident's frustration, but explained that if vehicles are parked legally and are taxed and insured, there is little the Parish Council can do directly. However, if any parking is causing a road safety issue or obstruction, residents are encouraged to report it to the police via the appropriate non-emergency channels.

8. Chair of Barham Parish Council to close the meeting. The Chair of the Parish Council thanked everyone for attending, and closed the meeting at 8.02pm

Caroline Read
Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
Barham Parish Council
Clerk@barhamparishcouncil.gov.uk

Signed as a true record:
Chair, Cllr Carolyn Hunt

Date: