RUCKINGE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council
Held at Ruckinge Village Hall
19th February 2026 at 7.30pm

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks, Apologies, and Approval of Absences

The Chair, Cllr Hewison, opened the meeting at 7.30pm and welcomed those present.

Present:
Cllr Hewison (Chair)
Cllr Cliffe-Harrison (Vice Chair)
Cllr Sharpe
Cllr Sillibourne
Cllr Archer

Apologies:
Borough Councillor Linda Harman sent her apologies as she was attending the Bromley Green Residents' Meeting regarding drainage matters. It was noted that the meetings had clashed and Cllr Harman would report back to the Parish Council.

Members of the Public: 3

2. Declarations of Interest

Members were invited to declare Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI), Other Significant Interests (OSI) or voluntary interests in relation to items on the agenda.

No declarations were made.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 11th December 2025 were considered.

Members noted that clarification was required in relation to the playground removal costs. Since that meeting, the remaining items in the play park have been removed and the Council has only been invoiced once for both jobs.

Resolved: The minutes were approved subject to the above clarification being added.

4. Public Forum

a) Willow Tree Create & Craft Studio (Retrospective Planning Application)

The applicant addressed the Council outlining the background to the retrospective application. It was explained that advice had been sought prior to commencement and it had been understood that no change of use was required. The business operates strictly by appointment only, with visitor numbers controlled through a booking system requiring advance declaration of vehicle numbers. Parking is restricted to designated spaces and maximum table size is six persons.

Evening opening is limited to Friday only, finishing at 9.00pm. Alcohol sales are ancillary to

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the primary activity and a premises licence is in place. Immediate neighbours had been consulted and had raised no concerns. The applicant confirmed willingness to accept a planning condition restricting evening operation to Friday only.

Members asked questions regarding parking management, operating hours, and licensing arrangements.

b) Canal Farm (Hamstreet Road) – Proposed Flexible Commercial Use (Class B8)

A resident addressed the Council raising concerns regarding potential 44-tonne lorry movements, the suitability of rural road infrastructure, drainage and flooding issues, and the existing deterioration of local highways.

5. Reports from the Kent County Councillor, Ashford Borough Councillor, and Neighbourhood Watch

Apologies were received from Peter New (Neighbourhood Watch), who was unable to attend as he had undergone an operation on the previous Monday.

Neighbourhood Watch updates were noted as available online.

Kent County Councillor Bill Barrett provided an update on highways maintenance funding, budget pressures, contractor arrangements and the current reactive pothole repair process. Discussion included liability considerations, reporting procedures and funding constraints.

Specific concerns were raised regarding Tar Pot Lane and Hamstreet Road, including repeat pothole failures, delays in repair following white lining, and ongoing highway deterioration.

The County Councillor undertook to follow up reported defects with the highway's depot manager.

6. Chairman's Report

The Chairman delivered a verbal report covering ongoing parish matters and issues relating to the Village Hall. Members requested clarification on elements of the report.

The report was noted.

7. Finance

Bank Balances:
31st December 2025: £22,181.18
31st January 2026: £20,761.71

Members reviewed the schedule of payments for December and January as previously circulated.

Resolved: The bank balances were noted and payments approved.

8. Planning

PA/2026/0208 – Oakdene, Bromley Green Road – Resolved: Support (No objection).

PA/2026/0064 – Mulberry House, Brisley Lane – Detached Triple Garage with Loft Room –

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Members expressed concerns regarding the scale of the proposal and the potential for future residential use of the loft space, particularly due to the number of windows proposed within the roof - Resolved: Object.

PA/2026/0050 – Wey Street Farm – Listed Building Consent – Resolved: Support.

NOT/2026/0042 – Canal Farm, Hamstreet Road – Flexible Commercial Use (Class B8) – Resolved: Object on grounds of unsuitable access, highway safety concerns and impact of heavy goods vehicles.

PA/2026/0022 – Fairfield, Bromley Green Road – Resolved: Support subject to condition that the garage shall not be used as separate residential accommodation.

PA/2025/2225 – Willow Tree Hair & Beauty – Change of Use to Create & Craft Studio (Retrospective) – Resolved: Support with condition restricting evening operation to Friday only.

9. Village Hall

Members considered the proposal for use of the Village Hall as a pre-school and associated financial and operational implications.

It was agreed that the Council would purchase a 52-inch smart television and a digital key safe for the Village Hall.

Resolved: Support in principle, subject to planning clarification and financial viability.

10. Bromley Green

Updates were received regarding the car park, Carters Field and trees.

RESOLVED:

- That the Clerk obtain quotations for an annual top-up of the car park surface (Type 1 or Type 2 aggregate) and for regular inspections.
- That maintenance at Carters Field be undertaken on an ad hoc basis, as and when required.
- That the Clerk investigate whether the S106 allotment funding may be utilised for improvements to the old playground area.

11. Meeting Dates

It was agreed that the Annual Parish Meeting (Village Meeting) will be held prior to the Parish Council meeting on 9th April 2026.

It was further agreed that all future Parish Council meetings will be held at Ruckinge Village Hall.

The Clerk was asked to confirm the statutory requirements and legal timeframe for holding the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

Resolved:

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- The Annual Parish Meeting to be held prior to the Parish Council meeting on 9th April 2026.
- All future Parish Council meetings to be held at Ruckinge Village Hall.
- The Clerk to confirm the legal requirements relating to the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

12. Ongoing Action Plan and Matters for Future Discussion

Noted.

13. Correspondence

Highways Improvement Plan (HIP),

Parking Issues on Hamstreet

Meeting closed at 10.23pm.

Signed: _____
Cllr Hewison, Chair

Date: _____

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