

Linton Parish Council  
The Minutes of the Meeting of Linton Parish Council  
held in Linton Village Hall on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at 7:30PM.

*Councillors present: Bernard Cresswell  
Caroline Richer  
Patrick Gerrish  
Peter Paterson*

*Also: Sherrie Babington, Parish Clerk, MBC Cllr Clarke, KCC Cllr Simon Webb and members of the public.*

*The meeting was chaired by Cllr Cresswell.*

**1. Apologies.**

Members who cannot attend a meeting shall tender their apologies to the Parish Clerk prior to the meetings, under Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, the members present must decide whether the reason(s) for a member's absence shall be accepted.

Apologies were received and accepted from Parish Councillors DiMarco and Burden.

Apologies were also received from MBC Cllr Wales.

**2. Parish Councillor Vacancy.**

To consider any applications for the Parish Councillor vacancy.

No applications to consider.

**3. Declaration of Interests.**

To receive Declarations of Interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda, in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 in respect of members and in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect of officers.

No interests were declared.

To consider any Dispensation requests received by the Parish Clerk and not previously considered.

No Dispensations were considered.

**4. Minutes of the previous Meeting.**

The Minutes of the previous meeting were circulated to all Members.

These were proposed by Cllr Richer as a true record, seconded by Cllr Gerrish and agreed to by all present.

The minutes were then signed and dated by the Chairman of the meeting.

**5. Matters arising from the minutes.**

To consider any matters arising, not included on the agenda.

Cllr Gerrish reported that following his comments at the previous meeting regarding missed bin collections, the issue was promptly addressed. The bins were collected the following day, and collections have since resumed on a regular basis.

**6. Public Participation.**

A resident attended the meeting to speak regarding allotment matters.

Residents attended the meeting to speak on a planning matter and other matters affecting the parish. Councillors noted the matters raised.

**7. Clerks Report & Correspondence.**

The Clerks Report was noted and accepted.

**8. Devolution/Community Governance Review.**

**To receive any updates on Devolution and the Community Governance Review.**

The Chairman referred to the previous PC meeting and reported on a question he raised at the Maidstone Borough Council Democracy and Overview Planning Meeting, where MBC Councillor Clive English had stated he would address the planned Community Governance Review and confirm the Borough Council's position. He noted that, contrary to what Cllr English had stated at the previous Parish Council meeting, the MBC position had not been clarified, and none of the relevant discussions had been included in the Borough Council's formal minutes, only reference to the Podcast.

He stated that the only positive development was the agreement that a representative from KALC would be invited to attend any future meetings concerning the Community Governance Review.

Cllr Clarke advised that, due to the upcoming elections and Purdah, no further information or decisions are expected until after the elections.

**9. KCC & MBC Ward Councillor Reports.**

**To received reports from the KCC and Borough Councillors.**

KCC Cllr Simon Webb attended the meeting and presented a written report to members. He provided an update on recent budget cuts affecting adult social care and outlined some of the savings that have been achieved by KCC.

Cllr Cresswell raised concerns about local infrastructure, particularly the need for additional school provision. He noted that the catchment area for Coxheath Primary School was now only 300 metres. A general discussion followed regarding school placements and the impact of intake rates on local families.

MBC Cllr Brian Clarke provided an update on Borough Council matters.

He raised the concerns of the Joint Transportation Board regarding the Maidstone Integrated Transport Plan, and the lack of transparency around how the allocated £14.8 had been spent, with £13.443 million reportedly already used. He confirmed that a detailed financial breakdown had been requested from Kent County Council officers, who have yet to provide full disclosure.

Cllr Clarke stated this remained a significant concern as the Linton Crossroads was a high priority project.

Cllr Clarke reported on current consultations including Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs).

He informed the PC that he was actively working towards securing National Landscape status for the Greensand Ridge. If successful, this designation would offer greater protection to valued landscapes and could influence planning decisions by helping prevent developments that would cause significant harm to the area.

**10. Financial Matters:**

a. Financial Statement.

Financial Statement will be circulated in paperwork at PC meeting.

The financial statement was circulated and approved by members. Proposed by Cllr Cresswell, seconded by Cllr Richer and agreed by all present.

**11. Highways Matters and PROW.**

To discuss highway related matters.

Cllr Patterson reported that the blocked footpath he had raised at a previous meeting has now been cleared.

The Chairman referred to a letter sent to local businesses regarding the issue of HGVs on Redwall Lane and thanked ISS for their prompt and effective response.

This was discussed by all present.

**12. Planning Matters.**

**a. Planning Applications.**

25/500836/LDCEX - Wares Laceys Lane Linton Kent ME17 4BE

Lawful Development Certificate (Existing) for use of the land as residential curtilage.

25/501045/FULL - Cuckoo Field House Linton Park Linton Kent ME17 4AN

Section 73 - Application for Removal of Condition 4 (Agricultural Occupancy) pursuant to application MA/74/884W for Demolition of existing garden house and erection of dwelling house. Condition Number(s): 4 - The occupation of the dwelling shall be limited to a person solely or mainly employed, or last employed, locally in agriculture as defined in Section 290(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971, or in forestry, or a dependent of such a person residing within him (but including a widow or widower of such a person).

25/501132/FULL - Cold Stores Building Wares Farm Redwall Lane Linton

Change of use of an agricultural cold store building to B8 use.

**b. Planning Decisions.**

25/500524/FULL

Ranters Linton Hill Linton Kent ME17 4AU

Conversion of existing garage roof space to a gym/office with rear dormer and 2no. roof lights to the front, raised sun deck, balustrade and external stairs. (Retrospective)

Application Permitted

25/500219/FULL

Iris House 4 Firmin Close Linton Kent ME17 4XR

Creation of a first floor to existing garage together with insertion of a first-floor rear window and 3 roof lights. Erection of an attached single storey rear extension to existing garage.

Application Permitted

25/500133/SUB

Burford Farm Redwall Lane Linton Kent ME17 4BD

Submission of details pursuant to conditions 4 - Disposal of Sewage and Surface Water and 9 - Landscaping Scheme, Subject to 22/504667/FULL

Application Permitted

24/505023/FULL

G And S Smallholdings Wheelers Lane Linton Kent ME17 4BN

Section 73 application for removal of condition vi (occupancy of dwelling being limited to persons employed or last employed in agriculture) pursuant to application MA/90/0631 (erection of 2 storey house and garage), as amended by 24/504663/NMAMD.

Application Permitted

23/505091/HYBRID

Land Adjacent to Greensand Health Centre Heath Road Linton Kent ME17 4NU

Hybrid Planning Application: (i) Full Planning Application for the erection of a 73-unit Extra Care Home (Class C2), erection of a 14-unit block for Autistic Adults, extensive tree planting and landscaping, access, drainage infrastructure and all other associated and ancillary works; and (ii) Outline Planning Application for erection of a new Hospice building with In-Patient and Out-Patient facilities and provision of up to 52 no. 100% affordable retirement bungalows (all matters, except for access, to be reserved for future determination) with related off-site S278 highway works to Heath Road.

Application Permitted

20/505751/EIFUL

Reed Court Farm Hunton Road Marden Tonbridge Kent TN12 9SX

Erection of a new free range egg farm consisting of 2 no. hen houses with extensive outdoor ranges and fencing, formal vehicle access from Hunton Road and associated parking, landscaping, woodland and tree planting, drainage and other associated works.

Application Refused

The Council hereby REFUSES Planning Permission for the above for the following Reason(s):

(1) The proposal does not comply with the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2017. The environmental information is unsatisfactory and does not ensure the protection of the River Beult SSSI from the adverse effects of pollution from manure waste (which potentially worsens the River Beult's water quality targets) and the conservation of biodiversity. There is lack of certainty that harmful effects can be effectively and fully mitigated and thus that the borough's biodiversity and wildlife habitats will be suitably protected and enhanced. The proposal is thereby contrary to Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review's Spatial Objective 5, policies LPRSP14(A), LPRSP15; Marden Neighbourhood Plan policies NE2, NE4; and paragraphs 187 and 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 which places a duty to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

(2) The proposal does not comply with the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2017. The environmental information is unsatisfactory and does not ensure the protection of the River Beult SSSI, local Ancient Woodland, habitats and the conservation of biodiversity from the impact of ammonia emissions. There is lack of certainty that harmful effects can be effectively and fully mitigated and thus that the borough's biodiversity and wildlife habitats will be suitably protected and enhanced. The proposal is thereby contrary to Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review's Spatial Objective 5, policies LPRSP14(A), LPRSP15; Marden Neighbourhood Plan policies NE2, NE4; and paragraphs 187 and 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 which places a duty to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

(3) The proposal does not comply with the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2017. The environmental information is unsatisfactory in that the landscape and visual impact of the revised siting of Hen House 2 has not been assessed and no updated Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) nor updated landscape masterplan has been submitted. Furthermore, no assessment of the visual impact of the engineering needed for land level changes necessary to site Hen House 2 and its associated ranging areas has been carried out. The proposed siting of Hen House 2 results in the loss of small field pattern and a direct loss/impact on hedgerow/trees contrary to Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment 2012 (Updated 2013). It has not been demonstrated that there will not be significant harm to the rural character and

appearance of the area. The development is therefore contrary to Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review 2024 policies LPRSP9, LPRSP15 and LPRQD4; Marden Neighbourhood Plan policies NE3, BE5; and paragraphs 135 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

(4) The proposal does not comply with the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2017. The environmental information is unsatisfactory in regard of flood risk. The proposal includes engineering operations in the functional flood plain, being an improved access junction and road and amended field drains. The impact of the revised siting of Hen House 2 and its associated ranging area has not been assessed in terms of the flood risk impact from engineering land level changes close to or within Flood Zones 2 and 3. This is contrary to the broad aim of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review 2024 to ensure that new development is located outside areas liable to flooding and also contrary to its Spatial Objective 4. The proposal is contrary to paragraph 170 of the National Planning Policy Framework which sets out that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided and is contrary to the national planning policy guidance (PPG) which defines land and buildings used for agriculture as a "less vulnerable land use" that should not be permitted in Flood Zone 3b (the functional flood plain). It is also contrary to paragraph 181 of the National Planning Policy Framework in terms of the safe management of risk and incorporation of safe access and escape routes as part of an agreed emergency plan.

(5) The proposal does not comply with the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2017. The environmental information is unsatisfactory in that it does not include a sufficient assessment of the "indirect", "secondary" or "cumulative" effects of the proposed development such as the disposal of manure via an off-site anaerobic digester and the cumulative impact with other livestock farms in terms of risk of pollution to the River Beult SSSI. There is lack of certainty that "indirect", "secondary" or "cumulative" harmful effects can be effectively and fully mitigated and thus that the borough's biodiversity and wildlife habitats will be suitably protected and enhanced. The proposal is thereby contrary to Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review 2024 Spatial Objective 5, policies LPRSP14(A), LPRSP15; Marden Neighbourhood Plan policies NE2, NE4; and paragraphs 187 and 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 which places a duty to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

(6)(i) The application does not include a s106 legal agreement to secure: a management scheme to protect the watercourses on site which would be necessary in regard of the River Beult's water quality targets and the conservation of biodiversity and to contribute to that the borough's biodiversity and wildlife habitats being suitably protected and enhanced.

(ii) highway condition surveys for highway access routes and a commitment provided to fund the repair of any damage caused by vehicles related to the development, details of routing of construction and delivery vehicles to / from site.

In the absence of these obligations, the application is contrary to Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review 2024 Spatial Objective 5, policies LPRSP14(A), LPRSP15; Marden Neighbourhood Plan policies NE2, NE4 and paragraphs 187 and 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 which places a duty to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity and is also contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 116 and Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review 2024 policies LPRTRA2 and LPRSP15 and Marden Neighbourhood Plan policies In1 in regard of highway safety.

c. Other Planning Matters.

To consider other planning matters.

13. Other Reports.

To received reports for the following:

a. Allotments.

Cllr Gerrish gave an update on the allotments and a recent issue concerning a new allotment tenant who had planted several fruit trees approximately eight feet tall. He stated this action was in breach of the tenancy agreement, which clearly states that permission must be sought from the Parish Council before any trees are planted. In addition to the fruit trees, the tenant had expressed a desire to establish a wildflower garden on the plot. This raised concerns among other allotment holders, who were worried about the potential spread of wildflower seeds to neighbouring plots.

The Parish Council discussed the matter and agreed that eight-foot fruit trees would not be permitted, as they could cause long-term issues for future tenants. It was also agreed that wildflower planting would not be appropriate, as the allotments are designated specifically for the cultivation of fruit and vegetables. The spread of wildflower seeds could lead to complications for other tenants and disrupt the purpose of the site.

**Action: Clerk to formally write to allotment holder.**

Cllr Gerrish also reported on a recent allotment inspection and asked the Clerk to send reminder letters to tenants whose plots are currently not being maintained.

**Action: Clerk to progress.**

An allotment holder attended the meeting to ask whether the Parish Council would consider providing toilet facilities at the site.

After discussion, it was agreed that such facilities were not necessary.

Cllr Gerrish informed members that he is continuing to investigate suitable styles of noticeboards for the site and will report back at a future meeting.

He also confirmed that the installation of a new wooden stakes for the allotments was currently in progress.

b. KALC.

No matters were reported.

c. Playground.

No matters were raised.

d. Website.

To consider any matters relating to the Linton Website.

No matters were reported.

e. Speed Watch.

To receive an update regarding Speed Watch.

No matters were raised.

f. Neighbourhood Watch Report.

To receive a report on NHW.

A progress report was given by Cllr Paterson.

g. Linton Village Hall.

To receive a report regarding the Village Hall.

The Chair of the Village Hall Committee attended the meeting and gave a report on behalf of the Hall's Management Committee.

h. Parish Newsletter.

Cllr Gerrish reported that the latest edition of the newsletter had been published and circulated as agreed.

i. Parish Litter pick.

To receive an update on the Litter Pick.

Cllr Richer reported that the next Litter Pick was scheduled for early June, and ISS had kindly offered their support with this.

**14. Annual Meeting of the Parish.**

Annual Meeting of the Parish - Wednesday, 14th May 2025 at 7:30pm.

It was agreed that refreshments would be provided. Cllr Richer to liaise with Cllr Burden to arrange drinks and all to consider who would attend as a guest speaker.

*Action: Clerk to send invitations to village contacts.*

**15. Other Matters and Items for the next Agenda.**

- Policy Review.

**16. Date of next Meeting – Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025.**

The Chairman thanked all members for attending the meeting.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was closed to the press and public at 9.10pm.

Signed\_\_\_\_\_

(Chairman)

Date\_\_\_\_\_