

**The Minutes of the Meeting of Thurnham Parish Council
held on 16th March 2026 at the Tudor Park Hotel, at 7:30pm.**

Councillors present: *Duncan
Dunlop
Shelley
Skinner
Wise*

Also: *Sherrie Babington (Parish Clerk), and members of the public.*

The meeting was Chaired by Cllr Skinner.

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:

- Cllr Smith – Holiday
- Cllr Waters - Work

Apologies were also received from Ward Councillor Stephen Thompson.

2. Parish Councillor Vacancies

Members noted that there remains one vacancy on the Parish Council which has not yet been filled by co-option.

Members further noted the resignation of Cllr Stark, and the Parish Council formally recorded its thanks for his service to the Council and the community.

The Clerk advised that the additional vacancy would now be advertised in accordance with statutory requirements. Should no request for a by-election be received within the prescribed period, the Council would be permitted to fill the vacancy by co-option.

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 declarations of interest were made.

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

No dispensation requests were considered.

4. Minutes from last Parish Council Meeting.

To consider the minutes of the previous meeting and if in order sign as a true record.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9th February 2026 were circulated to all members.

Proposed: Cllr Wise

Seconded: Cllr Shelley

RESOLVED: Minutes approved.

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

5. Matters arising from the Minutes.

There were no matters arising.

6. Public Participation.

A resident attended the meeting to raise concerns regarding highway safety on Weaving Street, particularly at the blocked/dead-end section of the road.

The resident reported that, although the road is intended to be a dead end, it is increasingly being used as a cut-through by unauthorised vehicles. These include motorbikes, off-road bikes and scooters, as well as some smaller vehicles attempting to pass through the restricted section. It was noted that the current restriction consists of a single bollard, which is insufficient to prevent access and leaves a gap that is being used.

Concerns were also raised regarding vehicle speeds along the lane. The resident advised that Weaving Street is narrow, has limited passing points, is unlit in places and does not benefit from a continuous footway. It is regularly used by pedestrians, including children, cyclists and residents with pushchairs, and this combination of factors presents a significant safety risk.

The resident further advised that the issue appears to have worsened during nearby roadworks and diversions, with an increase in traffic attempting to use the route.

Members discussed the concerns raised and acknowledged the seriousness of the issues. It was noted that there are effectively two elements to the problem: firstly, the need to prevent unauthorised access through the blocked section, and secondly, the need to address vehicle speed along the road.

Following discussion, Members agreed that the matter should be included within the Parish Council's Highways Improvement Plan for submission to Kent County Council, in order that appropriate solutions can be explored with Highways Officers.

Action: Clerk to update HIP for submission to KCC.

7. Clerk's Report.

The Clerk's report was received and noted.

Road Safety & Active Travel Group (RSATG) Seminar

The Clerk referred members to the invitation received from Kent County Council's Road Safety & Active Travel Group in respect of its dedicated seminar for Parish and Town Councils.

Members noted that the seminar is intended to provide broader information regarding the Highways Improvement Plan process and the wider work undertaken by Kent County Council, Kent Police and related highways teams in identifying long-term solutions to road safety and active travel concerns.

The details of the seminar dates and venues were noted.

8. Local Government and Community Governance Review.

To receive a report on Local Government Review and the Community Governance Review.

Members considered the statutory consultation seeking views on proposals for local government reorganisation in Kent and Medway.

A discussion took place regarding the implications of the various options proposed. Members expressed strong concern regarding the potential loss of local representation and the risk that local communities such as Thurnham could become increasingly remote from decision-making structures under a large unitary model.

It was felt that parish councils play a vital role in local representation and community voice, and that any restructuring should not undermine local accountability.

Members agreed that the Parish Council should submit a formal response to the consultation objecting to the proposals insofar as they would weaken local representation and democratic accountability.

RESOLVED:

That the Parish Council submit a response to the Local Government Review and Community Governance Review consultation setting out its objection to proposals which would reduce local representation.

Action: Clerk to action.

9. External Reports.

a. To receive the MBC Ward Councillor's Report.

Apologies and a written report were received and noted from Cllr Thompson.

b. To receive the KCC Councillor's Report.

No apologies or reports were received.

c. To receive the Police Report.

No report submitted.

d. To receive Parish Councillors Reports.

No matters were reported.

10. St Mary's Church.

To receive a report on St Marys Church.

No matters were reported.

11. Financial Matters.

a. Financial Statement.

To receive and approve the financial statement and payments.

The financial statement was circulated.

Members raised no queries and approved the Financial Statement.

Proposed: Cllr Shelley

Seconded: Cllr Wise

RESOLVED: Approved.

b. Internal Auditor.

To approve the appointment of the Internal Auditor for the audit of the 2025/2026 Accounts.

Members considered the appointment of Martin Thomas & Co as Internal Auditor for the 2025/2026 accounts.

Proposed: Cllr Wise

Seconded: Cllr Duncan

RESOLVED: That Martin Thomas & Co be appointed as Internal Auditor for the 2025/2026 accounts.

12. Planning Matters.

a. Planning Applications Received

26/500519/FULL - 1 Baron Close Bearsted Kent ME14 4PZ

Conversion of existing garage with first floor side extension. Erection of a single storey side and rear extension including 2no. rooflights and changes to fenestration.

PC Comment: No Objections

26/500529/FULL - Cobham Manor Riding Centre Water Lane Thurnham

Demolition of existing livery yard and construction of 7(no) dwellings with associated car barns/garages, car barn for Cobham Manor Hall and conversion of building for ancillary residential use, including landscaping, access and associated works.

Members considered the revised application for the demolition of the existing livery yard and the construction of 7 dwellings with associated works.

It was noted that the application had been resubmitted with amendments, including the removal of equestrian use and changes to the layout and supporting information. Members acknowledged that the revised scheme represented some improvements compared to the previous application.

Members discussed the application in detail, including the potential impact on Water Lane, which is narrow and rural in nature, together with concerns relating to surface water drainage and the impact on neighbouring properties.

It was further noted that, unlike the previous application, there had been no members of the public in attendance to comment on the proposal at this meeting, although a number of objections had been submitted on the planning portal.

Following discussion, Members agreed that it would be beneficial to seek the views of the Ward Councillor, Cllr Val Springett, particularly in relation to any concerns raised by residents and her assessment of the revised proposal.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk contact Cllr Val Springett to ascertain her views on the application, and that the Parish Council's formal response be finalised following receipt of her comments.

Action: Clerk to progress.

26/500485/FULL - Land at Hockers Farm Orchard View Detling Kent

Demolition of existing structures and erection of 25(no) dwellings and associated car ports and parking (with 40% affordable housing onsite), erection of 2-storey building to be used as a children's nursery and associated parking, provision of open space, biodiversity net gain area and landscape buffering, and associated earthworks, with access from Orchard View.

Members discussed the application and raised concerns regarding the proposed access via Orchard View, noting that it is a narrow cul-de-sac and may not be suitable to accommodate the level of additional traffic generated by 25 dwellings and a nursery.

Members also queried the impact on existing residents and the cumulative effect of development in the area. It was noted that the site had previously been anticipated as a second phase of development; however, concerns remain regarding access arrangements and overall suitability.

RESOLVED: That the Parish Council objects to the application on the grounds of highway access and the impact on the local road network.

Action: *Clerk to progress.*

26/500704/FULL - Griffins Weaving Street Weaving Kent ME14 5JS

Erection of a first-floor extension following part demolition of existing bungalow to create a two-storey dwelling. Proposal includes a two-storey front extension, two storey rear extension, single storey rear extension with glass roof and a single storey side porch. Works to include a rear paved terrace and the creation of a front driveway providing three parking spaces with a sliding metal gate access.

PC Comment: *No Objections*

b. MBC Planning Decisions.

25/505052/FULL

1 Barty Way Thurnham Kent ME14 4GB

Conversion of existing loft into habitable space including 5no. rooflights.

Application Permitted

25/504717/FULL

The Cottage Little Dane Thurnham Lane Thurnham Kent ME14 3LG

Erection of a single storey extension and raising the height of the existing flat roof.

Application Permitted

c. Other Planning Matters.

No matters were raised.

13. Highway & PROW Matters.

a. To consider general highway and PROW matters.

Members discussed the issue raised by residents under public comments regarding Weaving Street.

Members agreed that these concerns were valid and should be included in future highways submissions and discussions with Kent County Council.

The Clerk also updated members regarding the recently made traffic order relating to double yellow lines at Hockers Lane and Ware Street. The order and implementation date were noted.

b. HIP (Highways Improvement Plan).

To receive an update on the Highways Improvement Plan.

The Clerk reported on this item.

14. Heritage Award.

Members considered the refurbishment of the Thurnham Heritage Award.

The Clerk advised that refurbishment of the Heritage Award remained in progress and that the brass plaque proof was awaited. Once received, this would be circulated to members.

15. Future Agenda Items.

There were no future items.

16. Date of next Meeting.

Monday 20th April 2026.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed to the press and public at 8.30pm.

Signed:

Date: