



LYMPNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Lympe Parish Council

held on Wednesday 8th July 2026 at 7pm
at The Committee Room, Lympe Village Hall

Present:

Cllr M. Boor (Chair)

Cllr. P. Murphy (Vice Chair)

Cllr. M. Potter

Cllr. C. Yates

Cllr. M. McAuley

Cllr. J. East

Cllr. J. Sinclair

In attendance: Mr J. Lawrence (Parish Clerk) and District Cllr. John Wing

1. APOLOGIES

All Present

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr McAuley declared a personal interest in the planning application relating to car parking at Lympe Castle (Minute 13a below) and did not take part in the discussion or vote on that item.

3. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 10th JUNE 2026

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th June 2026 were proposed and accepted as a true and accurate record.

4. PUBLIC SESSION

No members of the public were in attendance.

5. CHAIR'S REPORT/UPDATES

- Insurance: the current policy is under review; Members agreed to check whether the new pond to be created as part of the Wellbeing Garden (see below) needs to be added to the policy.
- Roadworks: Members noted planned works in the area of Aldington Road at Court-At Street running from 13th July to 25th September 2026.
- Operation Brock: Members noted that the M20 contraflow (Operation Brock) is due to commence on 13th July 2026 for approximately six weeks. A Member raised concern that the concrete barriers on either side of the contraflow leave no refuge for vehicles that break down within it, and questioned why the full stretch had to be closed rather than a shorter, more localised section nearer Dover.
- Damaged signage: road signs at the corner of Aldington Road and Harringe Lane, previously reported as leaning, remain in poor condition; this will be reported again.

Barbara Johnson's 90th birthday: as an additional item raised because of the timing of the event, Members discussed marking Barbara Johnson's forthcoming 90th birthday and her long record of voluntary service to the village — including her involvement with the village's young mothers' group since 1964, her work with weddings and flowers at Lympe Castle, and her service on the Village Hall committee. It was proposed and RESOLVED (unanimous) that Barbara be recognised with an honorary title in the nature of "Freeman of the Parish", and that a scroll be prepared and presented to her at her birthday celebration at the Village Hall in August, ideally by a councillor known to her.

NB- Post meeting please note that although this matter was agreed unanimously, in order to comply with the Local Government Act 1972 under section 249 (Appointment of Freemen or Freewomen of a Parish) can only be agreed at a Specially Convened meeting. The Clerk will arrange this to comply with the law.

Otterpool Park development (300 homes to be built) : Members noted that the proposed housing development at Westenhanger falls within the parish of Saltwood rather than Lymgne, but that neighbouring parishes, including Lymgne, are likely to see increased demand on school and medical places as a result. It was agreed that early, informal discussions should be opened with the developer regarding potential support for the local school, given falling rolls; no financial contribution to the parish itself has so far been offered.

Green Grant application: an application was submitted (deadline 17th July) requesting approximately £1,000 towards:

- Millennium/Memorial Gardens — replacement of approximately 30 timber guide posts along the footpath (materials) and a contractor to clear overgrown bramble along the paths (estimated £400 for labour); and
- the new Wellbeing Garden being created on the site of the former playground — plants, trees and shrubs only, to include a community orchard, a flower meadow, two additional trees either side of the existing chestnut tree, raised planting beds for use by the youth club, scouts and school, a low-maintenance sensory garden (lavender and ornamental grasses), and a raised pond with a dropped-kerb access point for wheelchair access, reusing surplus materials from the trim trail project.

A possible future location for a "Men in Sheds" project was also identified near the entrance gate, where a rustic timber feature gate is planned. Costs already funded through other grants (the pond and the trim trail path) were deliberately excluded from this application to avoid duplicate funding claims.

Trim Trail: Members were updated that the contractor has been delayed by personal and business commitments, and that the remaining work will not now be completed until September. The youth shelter element is expected to be installed within the next few weeks. It was noted that the majority of the funded work (estimated at around 80%) has been completed and materials paid for, with a final balance of work and invoicing still outstanding.

Car park arrangements: an update was given on line-marking and layout changes to the car park, including a one-way system, relocated disabled bays (to be used as drop-off only) with additional disabled bays alongside, and confirmation that new white lines will be applied.

Summer Fair: it was proposed and RESOLVED that the Council make a donation of £200 towards this year's Summer Fair (a reduction on the amount donated in previous years, reflecting other recent expenditure).

The clerk was instructed to arrange payment

6. MEMBERS' REPORTS

Cllr. C Yates

Lymgne Youth Club: reported a very good turnout this term (around 25 children attending each week) but confirmed the club continues to face a serious shortage of volunteers, with the existing volunteer team experiencing burnout after several years of running the club and no confirmed successors from September. One parent has expressed interest in helping to run some sessions. Agreed actions: post again on Facebook to seek volunteers; make contact with a local individual who may be able to help identify volunteers among a local employer's workforce; write to the relevant KCC contact and to youth service providers to highlight the club's success and ask what support may be available; and consider, as a longer-term option, whether a small number of paid part-time hours could help sustain the club. A concern was also raised about the safe handling of paperwork containing personal data connected with the club, and it was agreed the record folder should not continue to be kept at a volunteer's private address.

It was agreed that the Clerk would arrange storage for the personal information.

Cllr. J. Sinclair

Digital Champions: the scheme continues, with mixed levels of engagement; one resident was assisted with a device issue in the past week. A further coordination meeting is planned.

Wellbeing/community activities: the craft group continues to run well and remains well attended. Cllr. Sinclair had not recently been in contact with the usual point of contact for wellbeing activities, and noted ongoing uncertainty about the future of county-funded wellbeing and youth services in rural areas following local government reorganisation.

7. CLERKS REPORT

Insurance renewal: received and will be reviewed over the coming weeks, including cover for play park equipment.

Asset register: the Clerk noted that the asset register (held at a nominal value of £1 for county recording purposes) differs from the insurance valuation of the same assets, which reflects full replacement value. The Clerk will review the asset register over the coming weeks and bring it to the Parish Walkabout Day (Minute 11) for review by Members.

Berwick Lane bench: a replacement bench for Berwick Lane, funded by a grant from KCC Cllr. Peter Osborne, is to be installed with a small plaque acknowledging KCC's contribution.

Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) forms: Members were reminded that residents/councillors can request that personal address details be removed from published DPI forms; the Clerk will circulate a link on how to do this.

Village Shop Trustees: an update was given on progress towards removing the requirement for two named trustees. The Clerk will continue to work with the current trustees to complete the necessary changes.

8. INVITED SPEAKERS

District Cllr John Wing-

Southern Water: Members noted correspondence regarding Southern Water's increased investment (from £11 million to £42 million) intended to increase pumping capacity, following a well-attended public meeting at which concerns were raised about water/wastewater capacity.

Joint operation to combat High Street criminality: Members noted an update on enforcement activity, with a particular focus this month on unlicensed vape retailers.

District improvement works: Members noted planned improvements to public areas across the district.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR): Members noted continuing uncertainty regarding proposed local government reorganisation, including concern that the proposals may reduce the level of democratic representation for local communities, and the suggestion that Town and Parish Councils should make clear the case for a role in any new area/neighbourhood committee arrangements. No further detail on the structure of area committees is yet available.

Local Plan: Members noted that the District is beginning work on a new five-year Local Plan, moving to a revised, staged "gateway" consultation process, with the first stage involving parish councils and schools rather than the wider public. It was noted that having an adopted Local Plan in place ahead of any future unitary authority taking over would help protect existing local allocations (including green space and recreational land, not only housing) for a period. A Member agreed to continue engaging with the consultation process on the Council's behalf.

9. CORRESPONDENCE AND COMMUNICATION, AND TO DEAL WITH ANY MATTERS ARISING

DPI forms: as noted at Minute 7 above.

10. STATEMENT FROM LYMPNE PARISH COUNCIL REGARDING PLANNING MATTERS WITHIN THE PARISH

General Planning Policy Statement: Members reviewed the draft general planning policy statement, the purpose of which is to reassure residents that the Council listens to, and acts in, the community's best interests within its limited statutory role, and to encourage residents to raise concerns directly with the Council rather than through informal channels. It was RESOLVED that the draft, subject to minor amendments to punctuation, be adopted as the Council's final Planning Policy Statement (general applications).

It was further agreed that a note be added to the village "Green Sheet" confirming that comments made by residents on social media (Facebook, Instagram and similar platforms) are treated as a legitimate form of feedback to the Council, in line with the Council's approach to public engagement.

Agreed Unanimously- Carried

Lympne Castle Planning-specific statement — car parking: Members reviewed the Castle-specific planning policy statement, noting the history of the Council's position on this matter (initially no objection; objection raised once car port roofs were introduced in a resubmitted application; and now no objection, following removal of the roofs from the current revised scheme). It was RESOLVED that the Council raise no objection to either the Event car park or the second (overflow) car park application, on the basis that the revised scheme includes a continuous hedge along the boundary (to act as a wildlife corridor and screen for neighbouring gardens, in place of trees, at residents' request), additional frontage planting, and timed lighting to deter after-hours use of the gravelled area.

Cllr Michael declared an interest (Minute 2) and did not vote. A minor drafting point was noted regarding the site plan, where the boundary shown did not correctly reflect the red-line site boundary; this is to be raised with the applicant/agent as a point of correction rather than an objection. The Clerk agreed to check the application (HORSE FIELD CARPARK) once published online to confirm it accurately reflects the basis of the Council's earlier objections, and to correspond further if needed.

VOTE HELD-

FOR- 5

AGAINST- 0

ABSTAIN- 1

Unable to vote due to interest – 1

CARRIED

11. PARISH WALKABOUT DAY

Members agreed to hold an informal Parish Walkabout on Wednesday 5th August 2026 at 6pm, in place of a formal meeting in August, to review parish signage, assets and other matters of note together. The Clerk will bring the asset register.

12. MILLENIUM WOOD REVIEW

Cllr. J East- updated the meeting

Members reviewed progress on the reinstatement of paths, signage and fencing at Millennium Wood, established in partnership with Port Lympne in 1999. It was noted that the terms of the original agreement require the Council not to damage trees or attach fixings (including nails or pins) to them, to notify Port Lympne before erecting any structures, and to provide Port Lympne with an annual copy of the Council's public liability insurance certificate; the latter appears to have lapsed in recent years and will be reinstated.

Members agreed that a separate, informally-used path leading off the site into adjoining woodland, unconnected with the Council's original circular route, should be left as is, with the Council's maintenance continuing to focus on the originally agreed circular walkway.

It was agreed that approximately 30 replacement timber guide posts are needed along the path to replace damaged and missing waymarkers (cost included within the Green Grant application, Minute 5), and that clearance of overgrown bramble along the path, particularly to the rear of the wood, will also be carried out (funded as above).

Members noted ongoing litter and evidence of antisocial behaviour in part of the wood. A dangerous section of barbed-wire fencing along the ridge line, close to a public path, was also raised; the Clerk has written to the Castle estate, which responded promptly and has agreed to carry out repairs.

It was confirmed that a previous informal proposal to divert part of the public footpath in this area (raised in connection with a nearby planning matter) has not progressed, and the footpath remains on its established, registered route.

13. PLANNING

a) 26/0640/FH — Lympne Castle, The Street, Lympne, Hythe, CT21 4LQ — Change of use of land as event and staff car parking: see Minute 10 above. RESOLVED: no objection , for the reasons set out at Minute 10. Cllr Michael declared an interest and did not vote.

b) 26/0956/FH/CON — Upper Otterpool, Ashford Road, Sellindge, Ashford, TN25 6DD — Approval of details pursuant to condition 3 (treatment plant) of planning permission 25/2211/FH — noted for information only; no comment required.

14. FINANCE

a) Bank reconciliation: reviewed by the Clerk and a Member.

b) Review of transactions and budget: noted, including that the annual grounds/bin clearance contract has now concluded for the season and will resume in September, and that a repayment to the Public Works Loan Board falls due on 20th July.

c) Payments for authorisation: Members reviewed and approved invoices for payment, including: office stationery and postage; replacement printer cartridges; newsletter printing (higher than usual this month owing to an additional print run of 50 copies required after a printing error); grounds/bin clearance (final instalment for the season); and the Clerk's wages, inclusive of tax. Payments were authorised by two Members.

Cllrs. East and Boor agreed to complete the online authorisations.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next formal meeting of the Council will be held on Wednesday 9th September 2026 at 7pm in the Committee Room, Village Hall, Lympne. (The Parish Walkabout on 5th August, Minute 11, is an informal gathering and not a formal Council meeting.)

Meeting closed.