

ST JAMES, ISLE OF GRAIN, PARISH COUNCIL

M I N U T E S

27th MAY 2025

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD
IN THE VILLAGE HALL AT 19:25

Present:

Councillor P Blakeley (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs C Hardingham
Councillor A G Jones
Councillor Mrs G Sands
Councillor T Sands (Vice Chairman)
Councillor Ms J Sharp
Councillor Ms H von der Holle

In Attendance:

Mrs Christine Gurr – Parish Clerk

Recording, filming and broadcasting of the meeting:

- There were no members of the press and public present.

Apologies for absence (received and accepted):

Councillor H Ogunfemi - Work commitment
Councillor D Warrington - On holiday

(To avoid possible disqualification under the 6-month rule, Councillors must provide a reason for non-attendance)

Declarations of disclosable pecuniary Interests (DPIs):

- A member need only disclose at any meeting the existence of a disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI) in a matter to be considered at that meeting **if** that DPI has not been entered on the disclosable pecuniary interests register maintained by the Monitoring Officer.
- A member disclosing a DPI at a meeting must thereafter notify the Monitoring Officer in writing of that interest within 28 days from the date of disclosure at the meeting.
- A member **may not participate** in a discussion of or vote on any matter in which he or she has a DPI (both those already registered and those disclosed at the meeting) and **must withdraw** from the room during such discussion/vote.
- Members may choose to voluntarily disclose a DPI at a meeting even if it is registered on the council's register of disclosable pecuniary interests but there is no legal requirement to do so.
- Members should also ensure they disclose any other interests which may give rise to a conflict under the council's code of conduct.
- In line with the training provided to members by the Monitoring Officer members with also need to consider bias and pre-determination in certain circumstances and whether they have a conflict of interest or should otherwise leave the room for Code reasons.

DB

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The following DPIs were received:

Agenda Item	Name of Member	Reason
10	Councillor Mrs Hardingham	Planning application MC/25/1034 relates to land adjacent to her private dwelling.

(A Councillor who declares a DPI must withdraw from the room unless a dispensation has been obtained from Medway Council's Monitoring Officer)

Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

- The following two items were discussed as a matter of urgency and a third item will be discussed during the private and confidential session:

25.58 Village Hall High Level Lighting

On Monday, 26th May 2025, the Caretaker reported that one of the high-level light fittings had become dislodged and smashed onto the main hall floor. The Clerk immediately:

- Closed the hall;
- Notified all the regular users that their bookings were cancelled until further notice;
- Contacted Boyds Electrical Ltd for a quotation for urgent repairs.

Action/Comments Agreed:

The following was agreed on proposition by Councillor Ms von der Holle and seconded by Councillor Mrs G Sands:

- Owing to the urgent nature of the repairs, financial regulations relating to obtaining alternative quotations was suspended;
- The approved contractor for the Village Hall is Boyds Electrical Ltd owing to their familiarity with the electrical system;
- Accept the estimate from Boyds Electrical Ltd dated 27th May 2025:
 - Provide scissor lift to access electrical work - £375 + VAT
 - Provide 6 x 6ft LED twin batten lights (including removal of mirror ball) - £1,200 + VAT
 - Labour to fit - £700 + VAT
- Once the repairs are completed, the Caretaker will carry out the floor refurbishment (postponed from January) so the hall will remain closed for an additional 7-10 days.

25.59 Request to Access Pavilion Car Park – Term 6

Members discussed at length the letter dated 19th May 2025 from Miss Fay Cordingley, Headteacher of St James' Church of England Primary Academy requesting the unlocking of the Pavilion Car Park during the morning school drop-off period from 08:20 to 09:00 throughout term 6.

Action/Comments Agreed:

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Hardingham, seconded by Councillor T Sands, and agreed to reply that members were sympathetic to the problems of parking during school drop-off and

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pick-up times but were very concerned about using the Pavilion Car Park as a method of alleviating those problems for the following reasons:

- The access to the Pavilion Car Park is via an unadopted road (not public highway);
- The Parish Council only has a right of access across that unadopted road to its adjacent land holdings;
- Additional traffic would impact on the three properties that also have a right of access across this unadopted road;
- The road is narrow with soft verges and is not suitable for two-way traffic;
- The junction with Green Lane is narrow with poor visibility because of vegetation growth;
- The Parish Council does not have the human or financial resources to open/close the car park daily.
- The Parish Council would be willing to provide a key for a responsible person on the assurance that the opening/closing times would be observed strictly to avoid unauthorized parking outside of those hours;
- Suggest to Miss Cordingley that she consult the three householders directly affected to gauge their opinion of the proposal.

25.60 Minutes

The minutes of the following meetings were accepted as an accurate record of the proceedings:

- Parish Council – 1st April 2025 - Confidential Notes only
 - Proposer: Councillor T Sands
 - Second: Councillor Blakeley
- Parish Council – 6th May 2025 (including Confidential Notes)
 - Proposer: Councillor Ms Sharp
 - Second: Councillor Ms von der Holle

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION, RESOLUTION, OR REPRESENTATIONS

25.61 Grain Post Office Closure

Members discussed the email dated 9th May 2025 from Post Office National Consultation Manager with a link to:

- Information letter from Damien Haydock, Post Office Partner Account Manager regarding branch unplanned close of Isle of Grain Post Office;
- Frequently asked questions – updated October 2024

Action/Comments Agreed:

It was proposed by Councillor Blakeley, seconded by Councillor T Sands, and agreed, to:

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- To enquire whether the UJ Chapel could be used as a space for a Post Office Service in some form;
- Agenda for the Parish Council Meeting scheduled for 24th June 2025

25.62 Quotations for Legionella Risk Assessments

Members reviewed the following document:

- Quotation QTE-4919 dated 23rd May 2025 from Musketeer Services Ltd (previously Guardian Water Treatment Ltd) for carrying out Legionella risk assessments for the Village Hall & Pavilion at a cost of £950 plus VAT.

Action/Comments Agreed:

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Hardingham, seconded by Councillor Mrs G Sand, and agreed, to accept the above quotation.

25.63 Update on Highway Issues

Members reviewed the following documents:

- Email from Karen Tamsett, Head of Highways for Medway Council dated 12th May 2025 stating that the GPC email dated 1st May had been passed to Michael Edwards, Head of Transport for Medway Council for his reply;
- Email from GPC to Councillor Chris Spalding dated 24th May 2025, as he requested at the Annual Parish Meeting on 13th May 2025.

Action/Comments Agreed:

Agenda for the Parish Council Meeting scheduled for 24th June 2025.

25.64 Report on Annual Parish Meeting – 13th May 2025

Members reviewed the report compiled on 16th May 2025, following the Annual Parish Meeting on 13th May 2025.

Action/Comments Agreed:

The following was agreed on proposition by Councillor Mrs Hardingham, seconded by Councillor T Sands:

- Accept the report as per Appendix 1;
- Agenda review of hiring agreements for the General Purposes meeting scheduled for 15th July 2025

20:25 Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Parish Council resolved that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

25.65 Update on Shared Access Upgrade Works – Pavilion Car Park

There was a confidential discussion of a potential contract.

Action/Comments Agreed:

Agenda for the Parish Council Meeting scheduled for 24th June 2025.

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25.66 National Grid Tilbury to Grain – Easement Proposal

There was a confidential discussion of a potential contract.

Action/Comments Agreed:

Agenda for the Parish Council Meeting scheduled for 24th June 2025.

25.67 Update on Nautilus Interconnector Project

There was a confidential discussion of a potential contract.

Action/Comments Agreed:

It was proposed by Councillor Blakeley, seconded by Councillor Ms Sharp, and agreed, to renew the Dalcourt Maclaren Site Investigation Licence for 1 year for payment of £500.

25.68 Request for a joint meeting of All Saints Ward Parish Councils

There was a confidential discussion of a request for a joint meeting

Action/Comments Agreed:

It was proposed by Councillor Jones, seconded by Councillor T Sands, and agreed, to attend the proposed meeting.

20:51 The Meeting was re-opened to the press and public

25.69 Authorisation of Payments of Accounts

Schedule of cheques, BACS and Direct Debit payments for May 2025 for approval:

- Revenue Account: £5,126.42
- Capital Account: Nil
- **TOTAL PAYMENTS: £5,126.42 (inclusive of VAT)**

Action/Comments Agreed:

It was proposed by Councillor Blakeley, seconded by Councillor Mrs Hardingham, and agreed, that the schedule of payments, as *per* Appendix 2, was approved.

25.70 Revenue and Capital Receipts Report

Schedule of receipts during April 2025 for information:

- Revenue Account
 - Cash/cheques: £345.32
 - BACS deposits: £71,473.67
- Capital Account
 - Cash/cheques banked: Nil
 - BACS credits: Nil
- **TOTAL RECEIPTS: £71,818.99 (inclusive of VAT)**

Action/Comments Agreed:

It was proposed by Councillor T Sands, seconded by Councillor Blakeley, and agreed, that the schedule of receipts, as *per* Appendix 3, was approved.

21:03 Councillors Mrs Hardingham and Jones left the meeting.

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25.71 Consideration of Planning Applications

The following applications were examined, discussed, and comments thereupon agreed upon proposition by Councillor T Sands, and seconded by Councillor Ms Sharp:

MC/25/2609

Land Adjacent to Westbere, Grain Road

- Construction of 3 detached chalet bungalows with associated off-road parking and vehicular crossovers – demolition of existing buildings.

Comment/s agreed:

Members were unable to view the online documents.

MC/25/0971

Co-Op Store, 27-29 High Street

- Construction of rear extension and remove conservatory, new mechanical plant area at the rear with timber hit and miss fencing around and new in-post lockers with bollards to the front elevation.

Comment/s agreed:

Members had no comments.

MC/25/1034

Land to Rear of the Old Vicarage, High Street

- Hybrid planning application seeking outline permission for construction of two self-build dwellings and full permission for construction of a single self-building dwelling with associated access

Comment/s agreed:

Members wish to reiterate their objections to the previous applications for this site and greater emphasis of the acute problems with access and parking for the nearby Primary school.

21:06 Councillor Mrs Hardingham returned to the meeting.

25.72 Reports from meetings/events hosted by outside organisations
Councillor Mrs G Sands attended the KALC Nuts & Bolts of Parish Councils online training on 28th April 2025.

Councillor T Sands reported that there will be an Open Meeting of the Rural Liaison Board on Wednesday 25th June 2025 at 18:30 held at the St George's Centre, Chatham Maritime to which all councillors and Clerks are invited.

Action/Comments Agreed:

The minutes of the meeting/s (if applicable) will be copied/forwarded to all members when they become available.

25.73 General Correspondence

The following correspondence was received:

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27/05/25

Email dated 27th May 2025 from Kent Film Office giving notice of a small film crew on the foreshore near the end of Smithfield Road for a fee of £300.

Actions/Comments Agreed:

- Consider creation of a scale of fees for future events.

13/05/25

Letter from Showin' Grain thanking the PC for the £50 donation.

Actions/Comments Agreed:

- Noted.

14/05/25

Email from the Fete Committee thanking the PC for the £50 donation and stating that they will attend the meeting on 24th June to update the PC on the arrangements for Fete Day on 19th July 2025.

Actions/Comments Agreed:

- Noted.

12/05/25

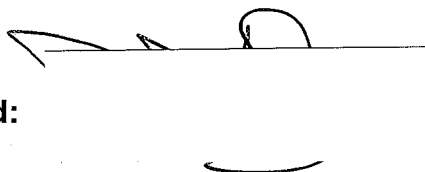
DEFRA Notice under Regulation 5(3)(b) of the Nitrate Pollution Prevention Regulations 2015 in respect of a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) for 2025-28.

Actions/Comments Agreed:

- See advice from George Webb Finn on what action is needed, if any.

21:17 *There being no further business, the meeting was closed.*

Signed:



Date:

24/6/2025.

APPENDIX 1

ST JAMES, ISLE OF GRAIN, PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 13th MAY 2025

REPORT ON QUESTIONS RAISED

At the above meeting, the following questions were raised by members of the public:

Q.1	On 26 th November 2024, three items on the agenda were discussed under Private & Confidential – are you sure of your reasons for this?
Q.2	Why are questions raised by the public not included in the minutes even if actions are agreed?
Q.3	Are you going to remove the skate park which is still in use and leave the children with nothing?
Q.4	What is the justification for using 1 st class post costing £1.80 when the recipient lived only three doors away from the post box?
Q.5	What about the damage to the playing field after Fete Day – what action are you taking to prevent this or remedy it?
Q.6	Quote for £3,500 for Alan Jones – why were 3 quotes not obtained? Why did Councillor Jones not declare a Pecuniary Interest.
Q.7	Have you sent photographs of HGV parking within the village to Councillor Spalding for his attention?

Although a brief response was given to each question at the meeting, the full replies are as follows:

Q.1	The KALC/NALC legal guidance is that: <i>“The meetings of the council (and its committees) must be open to the public (which includes the press) under s.1 (1) of the 1960 Act. However, the public may, under s.1(2) of the 1960 Act, be excluded for the whole or part of a meeting if it resolves that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons stated in the resolution.....”</i> NB <i>This refers to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 but is also included in the Local Government Act 1972 which is referenced on the agenda.</i>
Q.2	Members of the public who attend Parish Council meetings are asked if they wish to ask questions before the start of the meeting. Those questions are not included in the minutes unless: - They relate to an item in the agenda - Are brought forward for discussion as an urgent item (at the discretion of the Chairman) To qualify as an ‘urgent item’ they must meet one of the following conditions: - A policy decision is required; - Financial approval is required; - A deadline for action/comment is required; - A Health & Safety issue is identified. Items not meeting these criteria are dealt with as routine administration matters or, if required, put on the agenda of a future meeting.

APPENDIX 1
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REPORT ON QUESTIONS RAISED

	It is important that the 'Urgent Business' conditions are followed strictly to avoid the creation of an 'Any Other Business' platform which would be unlawful.
Q.3	Are you going to remove the skate park which is still in use and leave the children with nothing? • The skate park was installed in 2006 at a cost of £23,000 (WREN grant of £14,000 was secured plus a donation of £1,000 from Thamesport); • The company that installed the skateboard park is no longer trading; • In November 2023, a local playground services company stated that it would be more economic to replace the skateboard park rather than repair it and quoted £2,400 plus VAT to remove it; • No other repairer has been found; • A decision on the future of the skatepark is in abeyance.
Q.4	The Parish Council's policy is to use second-class post but circumstances may require the use of first-class post. Meeting papers are hand-delivered to members to ensure prompt and secure delivery but the postal service is used for all other mail.
Q.5	The Parish Council will liaise with the Fete Committee, to minimise damage to the football pitch during Fete Day. This should be followed by a prompt inspection of the field after Fete Day to identify any issues which can then be dealt with before the start of the 2025/26 season. The Chairman emphasised that, nevertheless, the field remains a public open space maintained for the benefit of all residents.
Q.6	At the Parish Council meeting on 25th February 2025 (item 25.24) a quotation in the sum of £3,543.34 from Mr Alan Jones was discussed. This was an updated quotation which was originally submitted to, and accepted by, NeuConnect in April 2023 as part of the Parish Council's application for funding for repairs to the Village Hall Roof and replacement of soffits, fascias and guttering. An updated quotation was required owing to the time lag between the grant application in April 2023 and the grant payment in September 2024. Thus, although the funding for these projects is not directly gathered from taxpayers, the PC is required to record how the money is being spent to comply with the formal agreement with NeuConnect. Guidance is being sought on the need for a Declaration of Pecuniary Interest in this instance.
Q.7	The photographs of HGV parking have been sent to Medway Council Highways Department and the local police officers. A copy has now been forwarded to Councillor Spalding, at his request.

APPENDIX 2

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LIST OF PAYMENTS AGREED/APPROVED - MAY 2025

Cheque Number	Supplier/Payee	Amount £	VAT £	Total £	Expenditure Category
Revenue Account					
123221	Mrs M Pearn	24.42	0.00	24.42	Administration
123222	Cancelled				
123223	Mrs S Langdridge	24.42	0.00	24.42	Administration
S/Orders	Salaries & Expenses - see below			0.00	Salaries
123224	Salaries & Expenses - see below			0.00	Salaries
123225	Salaries & Expenses - see below			0.00	Salaries
123226	Salaries & Expenses - see below			0.00	Salaries
123227	Ms Anita Burke	300.00	0.00	300.00	Refunds & PRS
123228	Kent Fire Extinguisher Ser. Ltd	133.89	26.78	160.67	V/H M&R
123229	LMIDB	68.76	0.00	68.76	Water
123230	Managed Technology Corp Ltd	63.70	12.74	76.44	Stationery/Equip
123231	Royal British Legion	17.00	0.00	17.00	Administration
123232	Royal Mail Group Ltd	371.50	74.30	445.80	Administration
123233	UJ Community Partnership	20.00	0.00	20.00	Administration
123234	Vision ICT Ltd	160.00	32.00	192.00	Administration
	Salaries & Expenses	2,407.45	2.56	2,410.01	Salaries
	Total - Cheques/BACS	3,591.14	148.38	3,739.52	
Revenue Account - Direct Debits					
30/04/2025	Veolia ES (UK) Ltd	392.38	78.48	470.86	V/Hall M&R
01/05/2025	Bluerag Networks Ltd	20.00	4.00	24.00	Administration
16/04/2025	Business Stream	43.68	0.00	43.68	V/H Water
6/04/2025	Business Stream	20.90	0.00	20.90	Water
23/05/2025	EE Broadband	54.32	0.00	54.32	Telephone
07/05/2025	Crown Gas & Power Ltd	367.91	73.58	441.49	Gas
09/05/2025	Crown Gas & Power Ltd	183.44	9.17	192.61	V/H Electricity
08/05/2025	Crown Gas & Power Ltd (Pavilion)	67.15	3.36	70.51	Electricity
09/05/2025	Crown Gas & Power Ltd (MUGA)	35.54	1.78	37.32	Electricity
09/05/2025	Crown Gas & Power Ltd (W/Shop)	29.72	1.49	31.21	Electricity
	Total - Direct Debits	1,215.04	171.86	1,386.90	
	TOTAL REVENUE PAYMENTS	4,806.18	320.24	5,126.42	
Capital Account					
				0.00	Capital
	TOTAL CAPITAL PAYMENTS	0.00	0.00	0.00	
	TOTAL PAYMENTS FOR MAY 2025	4,806.18	320.24	5,126.42	

RB

APPENDIX 3

ST JAMES, ISLE OF GRAIN, PARISH COUNCIL

REVENUE & CAPITAL RECEIPTS REPORT

REVENUE ACCOUNT

Cash/Cheques	Receipt No 6770 to 6776
~ Garages	£120.92
~ Village Hall Lettings	£224.40
~ Wayleaves	£0.00
~ Other	£0.00
TOTAL: £345.32	

BACS Deposits	Bank Statement 005/2025
~ Garages	£537.96
~ Village Hall Lettings	£708.71
~ Playing Field Rent	£0.00
~ Precept	£70,227.00
TOTAL: £71,473.67	

CAPITAL ACCOUNT

Cash/cheques	Receipt No 6770 to 6776
~ Other	£0.00
TOTAL: £0.00	

BACS deposits	Bank Statement 005/2025
~ Other	£0.00
TOTAL: £0.00	

TOTAL RECEIPTS FOR APRIL 2025: £71,818.99