

ST JAMES, ISLE OF GRAIN, PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

28th JANUARY 2025

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD
IN THE VILLAGE HALL AT 19:55

Present:

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

In Attendance:

Mrs Christine Gurr – Parish Clerk
One member of the public

Recording, filming and broadcasting of the meeting:

- No requests received.

Apologies for absence (received and accepted):

Councillor Mrs C Hardingham - Family commitment

(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.

The following DPIs were received:

- None



ST JAMES, ISLE OF GRAIN, PARISH COUNCIL

(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

- None

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION, RESOLUTION, OR REPRESENTATIONS

25.01 New Road Name Consultation – Land West of Edinburgh Road

There was a lengthy discussion of the following documents:

- Email exchange between Angela Searle, Street Naming & Numbering and GIS Officer for Medway Council and Councillor Chris Spalding dated 18th December 2024 to 6th January 2025;
- Email exchange between Angela Searle, Street Naming & Numbering and GIS Officer for Medway Council and GPC dated 18th December 2024 to 8th January 2025;

Action/Comments Agreed:

It was proposed by Councillor Ms Sharp, seconded by Councillor Mrs G Sands, and agreed unanimously to comment as follows:

- Members feel strongly that as vehicle access to those properties can only be made via Edinburgh Road, then they should be numbered as an extension of Edinburgh Road;
- One of our members is a serving fire officer and raised concerns that the use of a separate road name for those properties would cause confusion for the emergency services when vehicle access is only possible via Edinburgh Road;
- The use of Yenlade Walk (or any other name) would encourage vehicles to stop on Grain Road to deliver to those properties – thus causing a potentially dangerous visual obstruction for drivers leaving the village;
- If Grain Road were to be considered as an alternative postal address for those properties, then that would further exacerbate the danger from vehicles stopping and/or parking on the blind bend as stated previously;
- To avoid the potential risk from parked vehicles on Grain Road, members request the installation of double yellow lines on the highway to prevent vehicles stopping and/or parking there irrespective of the road name which is finally adopted.

25.02 Approval of Hire Charges for 2025/26

Members reviewed the following documents which had been discussed at length by the Finance Committee at a meeting earlier in the evening:

- Draft Schedules from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026 showing an increase of 2% (rounded up/down as appropriate):
 - Hire Charges for Parish Council Properties;

PB

ST JAMES, ISLE OF GRAIN, PARISH COUNCIL

- Supplementary Charges/Conditions for Hire of Parish Council Properties

Action/Comments Agreed:

It was proposed by Councillor Ms Sharp, seconded by Councillor Warrington, and agreed the following changes (as per Appendix 1):

- Hire Charges for the Village Hall remain the same as 2024/25;
- Hire Charges for Playing Field & Pavilion remain the same as 2024/25;
- Hire charges for Garages be increased by approximately 3% (rounded up or down as appropriate) to take account of the increased costs of maintaining the garages.

20:12 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.

25.03 Approval of Salaries for 2025/26

Members discussed the schedule of Salary Rates for 2025/26

Action/Comments Agreed:

The Salary Rates for 2025/26 were discussed and agreed on proposition by Councillor Blakeley and seconded by Councillor T Sands

20.05 The Meeting was re-opened to the press and public

25.04 Consideration of Budget for 2024/25

Members reviewed the following documents which had been discussed at length by the Finance Committee at a meeting earlier in the evening:

- Report to Finance Committee dated 24th January 2025 compiled by RFO (Responsible Financial Officer – Christine Gurr) which highlighted the following points for consideration;
 - Following Medway Council's decision in 2022/23 to withdraw funding of £7,500 from this parish, a potential substantial rise in Precept for 2022/23 was avoided by using £5,000 from a carry-forward balance of £13,527;
 - Medway Council reinstated the Formula Grant (Rural Liaison Grant) of £3,600 in 2023/24 but there is no indication that this will be available in 2024/25 or beyond.
 - The predicted carry-forward balance at 31/03/25 is £10,424 which is comparable with the figure for 2023/24;

DB

ST JAMES, ISLE OF GRAIN, PARISH COUNCIL

- Utility costs continue to rise and an energy broker (Utility Aid) is seeking quotes from alternative suppliers on our behalf;
 - It is important to maintain a buffer in the budget to reduce the full effect of the loss of £7,500 in 2022/23, the effects of which are ongoing. That buffer will reduce each year until the full impact of the loss of income cannot be avoided and a substantial increase in precept (tax) demands will then take effect;
 - It would be prudent to introduce increases gradually each year rather than impose a substantial increase when the buffer has been exhausted;
 - The Tax Base for 2026/27 is likely to increase with additional properties within the parish that will attract Council Tax;
 - Consider that, although the Government has so far not capped Parish Council Tax demands, such capping can be introduced at any time.
- Draft Budget giving 4 Options for setting the Precept for 2025/26.

Action/Comments Agreed:

It was proposed by Councillor Warrington, seconded by Councillor Sands, and agreed, to accept the recommendation of the Finance Committee that:

- Option 1 of the draft budget proposing that the Precept be set at £70,229 be accepted as *per* Appendix 2;
- Option 1 sets a Precept per Band D Dwelling of £157.75 (an increase of £11.49 over 2024/25) and a percentage increase of 7.9% (a reduction of 7.88% over 2024/25).

20:20 *There being no further business, the meeting was closed.*

Signed:



Date:

25/2/2025

APPENDIX 1
ST JAMES, ISLE OF GRAIN, PARISH COUNCIL
HIRE CHARGES FOR PARISH COUNCIL PROPERTIES
1st APRIL 2025 TO 31st MARCH 2026

VILLAGE HALL

Annual Lettings: Monday to Friday		
- Grain Organisations	- £10.20 per session	See Notes 2, 3, 9 & 10 below
- Outside Organisations	- £19.50 per session	See Notes 2, 3 & 10 below
Casual Lettings: Sunday to Friday		
- Residents	- £10.20 per hour	See Notes 4, 5 & 10 below
- Non-residents	- £19.50 per hour	See Notes 4, 5 & 10 below
- Charitable/Non-profit Organisations	- Special rates and conditions are available, on application	
Day Rate: Monday to Sunday		
- Private Parties (Residents)	- £300 per day	See Notes 1 & 5 below
- Public Events (Residents)	- £335 per day	See Note 1 & 10 below
- Non-residents	- £500 per day	See Note 5 & 10 below
- Charitable/Non-profit Organisations	- Special rates and conditions are available, on application	

PLAYING FIELDS & PAVILION

St James' Playing Field & Pavilion		
- Youth Club	- As per agreement with Medway Council Youth Service	
- Adult Football Club	- £400 per season	See Notes 6, 7 & 8 below
- Day rate	- £75 per day + VAT	See Note 8 below
- Commercial	- £450 per day + VAT	See Note 8 below
Seaview Meadow		
- Grain Junior Football Club	- Free	See Note 7 below
- Day rate	- £40 per day + VAT	
- Commercial	- £275 per day + VAT	

GARAGES

Garages – St James' Close and St James' Road	- £37.00 per month + VAT
Garages – Pintail Close*	- £30.50 per month + VAT

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Note 1:	A refund of £150 can be claimed if the Hall is left clean, tidy and undamaged (as per conditions stated on Refund Claim Form)
Note 2:	Bookings accepted at a concessionary rate may be liable to cancellation if in conflict with a full-rate booking
Note 3:	A session is a maximum of 3 hours (or part thereof)
Note 4:	A maximum of 5 hours (or part thereof)
Note 5:	Bookings will not be accepted for birthday or other parties for 15 to 18-year olds
Note 6:	An additional deposit of £250 is payable on 1 st September, together with 50% of the hire charge for the season (the remaining 50% will be payable on 1 st January)
Note 7:	A charge will be made if line marking is required
Note 8:	The Pavilion is only available for hire in conjunction with the adjacent playing field
Note 9:	Two free sessions per year, subject to conditions
Note 10:	PPL/PRS royalties will be payable for the public performance of music

APPENDIX 2

ST JAMES, ISLE OF GRAIN, PARISH COUNCIL FINAL BUDGET FOR 2025/26 PRECEPT CALCULATION

Year End Balance	2024/25
2023/24 Balance brought forward	34,888
Less: Unapplied Capital Account @ 31/12/24	-24,929
<i>Revenue Balance</i>	£9,959
Add: Receipts @ 31/12/24	£108,080
Less: Payments @ 31/12/24	-£91,015
<i>Revenue Balance</i>	£27,024
Add: Estimated 3 months receipts	£12,794
Less: Estimated 3 month payments	-£41,656
<i>Revenue Balance</i>	-£1,838
Add: VAT Repayments due to 31/12/24	£12,262
Add: Cash in hand	£0
<i>Revenue Balance</i>	£10,424
Year-end revenue balance to carry forward	£10,424

2024/25	<u>Precept Calculation</u>	2025/26
£86,971	Estimated Payments to 31st March 2026	£94,860
£23,380	Less: Estimated Receipts to 31st March 2026	£24,631
£63,591		£70,229
£0	Less: Rural Liaison Grant	£0
£0	Less: Proportion of year-end revenue carry forward balance	£0
£63,591	PRECEPT	£70,229
£8,863	Increase/Decrease	£6,638
434.74	Tax Base	445.15
£146.27	Precept per Band D Dwelling	£157.76
£20.99	<i>Increase over previous year</i>	£11.49
16.8%	<i>Percentage Increase</i>	7.9%

APPENDIX 2

ST. JAMES, ISLE OF GRAIN, PARISH COUNCIL FINAL BUDGET FOR 2025/2026 - PAYMENTS

2022/23 Actual £		2024/25 Budget £	2024/25 9 Month Actual £	2024/25 3 Month Estimate £	2024/25 Estimated Outcome £	%	2025/26 Budget Estimate £
Administration & General							
42,662	Salaries	43,946	35,611	11,721	47,332	108%	47,435 <i>Note 9</i>
5,571	Insurance	5,600	5,875	0	5,875	105%	6,000
3,265	Administration	3,000	2,598	402	3,000	100%	3,000
1,722	Stationery & Equipment	2,100	1,149	951	2,100	100%	2,100
782	Telephone & Postage	800	573	227	800	100%	800
796	KAPC & Subscriptions	800	729	71	800	100%	800
409	Audit	1,000	94	315	409	41%	1,000
700	Section 137 Expenditure	700	204	496	700	100%	700
189	Chairman's Allowance	170	40	130	170	100%	170
569	Miscellaneous	650	1,100	21,050	22,150	3408%	650
56,664		58,766	47,973	35,363	83,336	142%	62,655
Village Hall							
0	Business Rates	0	0	0	0	0%	0
6,919	Gas	6,000	5,173	1,000	6,173	103%	6,500 <i>Note 10</i>
7,279	Maintenance & Repairs	5,500	5,589	1,600	7,189	131%	6,500
3,045	Electricity	3,000	2,747	1,200	3,947	132%	4,000 <i>Note 10</i>
611	Water	500	81	200	281	56%	500
1,358	Refunds & Performing Rights	800	967	150	1,117	140%	800 <i>Note 5</i>
19,212		15,800	14,557	4,150	18,707	118%	18,300
Pavilion & Open Spaces							
7,468	General Main't & Repairs	6,000	4,811	1,000	5,811	97%	6,000
578	Pavilion Main't & Repairs	500	1,949	0	1,949	390%	500
745	Garages Main't & Repairs	700	325	350	675	96%	700
499	Water	300	281	20	301	100%	300
919	Electricity	1,000	2,448	773	3,221	322%	2,500 <i>Note 10</i>
10,208		8,500	9,814	2,143	11,957	141%	10,000
0	Election Costs Reserve	2,605	0	0	0	0%	2,605 <i>Note 3</i>
0	Equipment Replacement	1,300	1,163	0	1,163	89%	1,300
5,020	Capital Account	0	10,930	0	10,930	0%	0
0	Rural Liaison Projects	0	0	0	0	0%	0
91,105	TOTALS	86,971	84,436	41,656	126,092	145%	94,860

APPENDIX 2

ST. JAMES, ISLE OF GRAIN, PARISH COUNCIL FINAL BUDGET FOR 2025/2026 RECEIPTS (EXCLUDING PRECEPT)

2023/24 Actual £		2024/25 Budget £	2024/25 9 Month Actual £	2024/25 3 Month Estimate £	2024/25 Estimated Outcome £	% %	2024/25 Budget Estimate £
Administration & General							
146	Capital Account Interest	160	407	0	407	254%	160 <i>Note 6</i>
256	Wayleaves	260	256	0	256	98%	260
2,500	Miscellaneous	400	29,519	0	29,519	7380%	400
2,902		820	30,182	0	30,182	3681%	820
Village Hall							
16,160	Lettings & PRS	15,750	7,834	9,961	17,795	113%	16,037 <i>Notes 4 & 5</i>
16,160		15,750	7,834	9,961	17,795	113%	16,037
Pavilion & Open Spaces							
6,353	Garages Rent	6,810	4,881	2,633	7,514	110%	7,124 <i>Note 7</i>
0	Playing Field Rent	0	450	200	650	0%	650 <i>Note 5</i>
0	W/House Agricultural Rent	0	0	0	0	0%	0 <i>Note 8</i>
6,353		6,810	5,331	2,833	8,164	120%	7,774
25,415	TOTALS	23,380	43,347	12,794	56,141	240%	24,631

APPENDIX 2
ST. JAMES, ISLE OF GRAIN, PARISH COUNCIL
FINAL BUDGET FOR 2025/2026
NOTES

- 1 Figures in **bold** indicate an increase in budget.
- 2 **Shaded figures indicate a decrease in budget.**
- 3 An election cost reserve of £2,605 has been included as per email from Jane Ringham dated 22/06/22 estimating the cost of a contested election.
- 4 Rent for GP Surgery remains the same as for 2024/54 plus £1,800 for reimbursement of utility costs.
- 5 Letting fees for the Village Hall, Pavilion and playing fields have been increased by approximately 2% (rounded up or down as appropriate). The PPL PRS royalties will be added to all Village Hall lettings where music is played although this has been capped at £30 per event for Village Organisations.
- 6 A nominal sum for capital account interest has been included as no investments are held at present.
- 7 The rent for 17 garages has not been increased (increased by approximately 7% in 2024/25). The additional three garages in Pintail Close are used for storage of PC equipment.
- 8 A rent for Whitehouse Farm agricultural rent has not included as no new agreement is in place at this time.
- 9 The Clerk's salary is aligned to SCP22 (previously SCP28) as per 2019-20 National Salary Award (NALC Employment Briefing E02-18 dated December 2018). However when the 2025/26 Salary Award is announced any increase will be back-dated to 1st April 2025.

Caretaker's and Relief Caretaker's salaries have been aligned to National Living Wage which will be increased on 1st April 2025.

An additional allowance of 200 hours for Relief Caretaker has been added to cover minor maintenance work as and when required.
- 10 Utilities budgets have been increased whilst a new fixed-term agreement is being sought.
- 11 The Tax Base figure for 2025/26 is 445.15 as notified by Medway Council on 22nd January 2025.
- 12 The Band D figure is calculated by dividing the precept by the tax base for the year ($£70,229 \div 445.15 = £157.76$). Option 1 figures have been used for this example.
- 13 The percentage increase is calculated by dividing the increase by the previous year's Band D figure ($£11.49 \div £146.27 = 7.9\%$) - Option 1 figures have been used for this example.