

**Minutes of a meeting of Halstead Parish Council held at The Pavilion, Station Road,
Halstead TN14 7DH commencing at 7.30pm on Monday, 12th January 2026**

Present: Cllr Jean Peel (Chair), Cllr Sue Gardner, Cllr Tony Marshall (Vice Chair), Cllr Liz Meaton, Cllr Roger Sales, Mrs H Pack (Locum Clerk)

In attendance: 11 residents, District Cllr John Grint and County Cllr Nigel Williams

Minute number: 260112:

- 1. Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Linda Wilkinson
- 2.** There were no **declarations of interest**
- 3. Chair's remarks**
The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were given. A one-minute silence was observed in memory of County Councillor Gary Williamson, and of Mr John Escott. The Chair paid tribute to both.
- 4.** The **minutes of the meeting held on Monday 8th December 2025** were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
- 5. Clerks Report / Action List**
The Clerks report (appendix a) had been circulated to councillors and the Chair read out the headlines of this report.
- 6. Public participation forum**

It was asked whether the Parish Council could consider measures to prevent illegal access and fly-tipping at the bottom of Wheatsheaf Hill. Residents were advised that the difficulty is that the land falls within the London Borough of Bromley (LBB). Cllr John Grint confirmed that LBB is aware of the issue.

Photographs were submitted showing significant fly-tipping at the bottom of Watercroft Road. The Parish Council agreed to contact Badgers Mount Parish Council and to write to the London Borough of Bromley Planning Enforcement Team.

It was asked when Kent County Council would be resurfacing Knockholt Road. The Parish Council agreed to make enquiries.

Concerns were raised again about parking outside Brownings and along Church Road on the bend. This is a blind bend and presents a safety risk. Videos have been sent to the Clerk. The Parish Council would report this.

A planning application at Deerleap Bank was raised, as the site is not within Halstead parish. The Parish Council confirmed that it would consider submitting comments.

It was also asked why the roads had not been gritted. County Councillor Nigel Williams agreed to make enquiries.

- 7. District and County Councillor updates**

Nigel Williams, Kent County Councillor, offered his condolences on the loss of Gary Williamson, noting his many years of service and that he will be sadly missed.

He advised that Council Tax would be increasing by 4%, with many factors to consider when setting the budget. He also confirmed that he has a meeting scheduled for the 19th with KCC Highways, at which he will raise a list of outstanding issues.

Cllr John Grint also spoke in tribute to Gary, highlighting his affection for the people of Knockholt and Badgers Mount, which was fully reciprocated. He served the community for over 25 years.

Cllr Grint reported on a meeting with Richard Morris, Head of Planning, to discuss a range of issues and specific planning applications. The volume of applications was described as alarming, with an increasing amount of local land being put forward for development, posing an existential threat to local villages.

Regulation 19 was discussed, with the acknowledgement that some sites may fall out of the plan. The Local Plan to 2042 must progress, but without causing harm to villages. It was emphasised that it is vital for the plan to be adopted, as failure to do so would result in a loss of local control.

8. Finance and Governance

- a) The Chair of Finance and Governance had nothing to report that was not on the agenda.
- b) The schedule of payments had been circulated with invoices and was approved
- c) Payments and receipts against budget to 30th November 2025 were noted and Cllr Sales advised that he has been reviewing additional expenditure for 2025/26.
- d) A recommendation from the H&A committee to increase hall hire fees from 1st April 2026 to £10 per hour for the Parish Room and £12 per hour for the Pavilion was approved.
- e) The 2026/27 budget was approved (appendix c) and it was unanimously agreed to request a 2026/27 precept of £88,712.
- f) The following policies were reviewed:
 - i. IT policy – this required some amendments and simplification. It would be revised and considered at a future meeting.
 - ii. Health and Safety policy was approved.

9. Highways & Amenities update

- a) The Chair of Highways and Amenities reported on the following:
 - Tree works at the allotments had been completed.
 - He had met with two contractors to discuss work needed to the trees near the Parish Room and the gutters.
 - Grass cuttings on the football field needed to be removed.
- b) Warm Space café. It was agreed to promote the Warm Space Café to a wider audience.

10. Communication & Events update

The Chair of Communications and Events had given her apologies. 50 to 60 people had attended the Christmas event, despite the weather. Additional lights were suggested for next year and this would be considered at the next C&E meeting.

11. Planning

The Chair of Planning ran through recent planning applications.

The next meeting is the Parish Council Meeting on Monday 9th February 2026 at 7:30pm in the Pavilion.

