

CHART SUTTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held at Chart Sutton Village Hall Monday 9th March 2026 at 7.45pm

Present: Cllr Steven Waring (Chair) Cllr Robert Sagrott Cllr Valerie Underdown
Cllr John Killick Cllr Mike Brown Cllr Wendy Gatward

Steve Hill – Parish Clerk
MBC – Cllr Anne Dawes
Public – 2

25/85 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Kerry Dreger - Accepted

25/86 Recording of Meeting

The Clerk made an audio recording solely to support the accurate preparation of the minutes. The recording will be deleted once the minutes have been approved.

25/87 Councillors Declaration of Interest

Cllr Waring, Cllr Sagrott and Cllr Killick are all due to receive payments for goods, training or services.

25/88 Minutes of 26th January 2026 Council Meeting.

The minutes were proposed and resolved that the Chairman signs the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

25/89 Open Public Session

No comments from the public.

25/90 Report from Borough Councillors & County Councillors

KCC – None received.

Cllr Anne Dawes: It was explained that MBC intends to use funds accumulated through careful budgeting for the benefit of Maidstone residents before these resources are transferred to the new Unity authority. Details of the specific expenditure will be provided once allocations have been confirmed.

Police have seized 189 e-scooters and 30 e-bikes across the borough over the past two years. The majority of these seizures have taken place in the Maidstone High Street area due to the high concentration of devices and the pedestrianised nature of the location. Most of the e-scooters seized were being used by adults rather than young people, as many appear to have been mis-sold e-scooters and e-bikes as environmentally friendly alternatives without being given clear information about the legal guidelines governing their use.

25/91 Crime Report:

None to report January - February.

25/92 Climate Change & Biodiversity / Clean and Green Group

Update from Cllr Sagrott – The attendees received an update on recent community repair and recycling initiatives. Members noted the two Repair Cafés currently operating: the established facility at Lockmeadow and the newly opened venue at the YMCA building in Tovil. It was also reported that representatives had visited an electrical recycling plant in Sittingbourne, a new initiative aimed at improving local reuse and recycling opportunities.

Initials

A new charter for the Protection, Monitoring, and Improvement of Local Waterways - This charter establishes a community-driven framework for regular, transparent, and scientifically credible monitoring of river water quality. Where enforceable government standards are lacking, this charter empowers residents, volunteers, and partner organisations to gather reliable data, raise awareness, and advocate for improved environmental stewardship.

The **Scenic Green Trail Walker's Guide** is now available. This guide highlights some of the most attractive walking routes around Maidstone, offering residents and visitors an opportunity to explore our local countryside and enjoy its natural beauty. A copy of the guide will be added to the Parish Council website under the Local Walks section, where it can be viewed or downloaded at any time.

Update from Cllr Killick – Clean and Green Volunteer Group - It was agreed that an advert will be placed in the April edition of the Village News to encourage interest in forming a refreshed Clean and Green volunteer workgroup. The group will meet on Sundays from 10:00 to 12:00, three times between April and September, to carry out light community maintenance such as cleaning road signs, tidying roadside banks, and improving the areas around the Village Hall and car park. A poster will be prepared for inclusion in the Village News and on the Parish Website to invite residents to take part.

25/93 **Update Policy documents:**

Resolution: Document Retention Policy required.

Resolved: Councillors agreed to adopt the new Document Retention Policy.

Resolution: Public Participation Policy update required.

Resolved: Councillors agreed to adopt the revised Public Participation Policy.

25/94 **Parish Matters**

a. **Highways and other matters:**

- It has been agreed by KCC that an extra limb can be added to finger post showing the direction to the Village Hall. They have also stated that Chart Sutton may provide the sign and it must only say Village Hall.
- The "Shop on the Green" sign will be installed once an application to KCC has been accepted and the appropriate permission has been granted, ensuring any new signs meet current safety requirements.
- A letter has been sent to Andrew Loosemore, KCC District Highways Manager, requesting a review of the condition and safety of roads within the parish. The damage has been caused due to the prolonged diversion routes, which have resulted in significantly increased traffic passing through Chart Sutton.
- One recurring cause of increased traffic in the village occurs when the Hawkenbury bridge is closed following an accident. When this happens, vehicles travelling between Headcorn, Sutton Valence and Staplehurst divert using Chart Hill Road, resulting in a significant rise in through-traffic. Headcorn and Staplehurst Parish Councils have been complaining for many years, and we are supporting their efforts to persuade KCC that a long-term solution is needed. There is broad support for action from residents, local businesses, borough councillors and the Mayor of Maidstone. However, KCC maintains that the cost of installing traffic lights is too high and that ongoing repairs are sufficient, as the accidents are considered minor. A campaign is now underway urging KCC to identify and implement a suitable and lasting remedy.

- b. **Salt Bin Amber Lane/Back Lane: Resolution:** It was identified that a salt bin is required at this junction due to the significant standing water present during the winter months, which frequently freezes and creates a high risk of accidents.

Resolved: All Councillors agreed that Cllr Steven Waring will source and purchase a new yellow salt bin, along with an initial supply of salt, to be installed at this location.

Initials

- c. **Local Neighbourhood Plan:**
Update from Cllr Robert Sagrott: The Local Neighbourhood Plan (LNP) is now nearing completion and will be finalised at least two weeks before the next Parish Council meeting to allow sufficient time for councillors to evaluate. Once endorsed, it will be published on the Parish Council website for residents to review, with an opportunity for comments to be submitted.
A public meeting was held on 22 February to allow residents to openly discuss their views on the three potential development sites within Chart Sutton. Of the three locations, two sites emerged as clear favourites, each receiving approximately equal levels of support in a non-binding show of hands. The third site received no support from attendees. The site decision date has been moved to the 13 April meeting.
- d. **Bus stop Bin removed:** Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) confirmed that, shortly before Christmas, Kent County Council (KCC) advised that post-mounted litter bins can no longer be installed on lighting columns, telegraph poles, or any street furniture not owned by MBC. As a result, MBC has removed the remaining post-mounted bins across the borough, including the one at the bus stop.

MBC has agreed to install a floor-mounted replacement bin at this location. However, they have advised that no budget is available until the new financial year, so installation will not take place before 1 April.
- e. **Outreach Post Office Service in Chart Sutton:** The PO Wednesday session has been cancelled. The new mobile van Post Office service is expected to begin mid-April and is planned to visit the village every Tuesday from 9.30am to 11.00am, to be confirmed.
- f. **KCC Grant:** The Council noted that its grant request to Kent County Council for a replacement defibrillator cabinet has been received.
- g. **Pavilion volunteer required:** The current volunteer is stepping down, so a new person is needed to take on the cleaning and basic maintenance duties at the Pavilion. An advert will be prepared inviting any residents who may be willing to volunteer for this role.
- h. **Renewal of VH Broadband Contract – Resolution:** To ratify the decision made outside the meeting to remain on the existing broadband service, Standard Fibre Essential, under the new two-year contract offered by BT.
Resolved: Cllrs considered and agreed to accept the revised terms of the agreement and proceed to the new contract, noting that this represents a lower cost than allowing the current contract to lapse, which would trigger an automatic increase to a higher monthly charge.
- i. **Defibrillator –** The new cabinet has now been fitted to the Shop on the Green, complete with an electrical connection. This powers the internal heater, ensuring the defibrillator remains fully operational throughout the winter months.
Training: The company that recently inspected the defibrillator has offered to provide free training for up to 12 councillors and residents. Several councillors will take up the offer, along with selected shop volunteers who are likely to be closest to the device during opening hours.

Initials

- j. **Parish Resilience Cluster Group meeting:** Cllr Steven Waring attended the recent Parish Resilience Cluster Group meeting and provided a summary of its purpose and key points. He confirmed that Chart Sutton Parish Council already has an established and active Resilience Plan in place.

25/95 Reports from Committees and Representatives on other bodies:

Chairman’s Report – Attended the Staplehurst Parish Resilience Cluster Group meeting for the local area. It was explained that, as Chart Sutton is a relatively small parish, it has its own resilience plan registered with MBC. Details of the meeting will be made available to Councillors.

Bearsted Boys FC requested sole use of the Football Field on Sundays. It was agreed to decline this request due to an existing regular Sunday booking. Boughton Ladies Football Team have requested use of the football pitch. There were no objections, as their fixtures will dovetail with existing users.

The Parish Council continues to incur ongoing costs for the EV chargers, including monthly operational charges and the annual security fee. To help increase usage and move the chargers toward becoming cost-neutral, a new sign has been installed at the entrance to the Village Hall. This should encourage more drivers to make use of the facility, helping to offset the running costs over time, which will be reviewed in three months.

We have recently received feedback that the Parish Council website and the Village Hall website look quite similar, which has occasionally caused confusion for visitors. To help make things clearer, the Parish Council website has now been updated to display “Chart Sutton Parish Council” prominently at the top left of the home page. This small change should make it easier for residents to identify which site they are viewing. We appreciate the comments from those who raised this and will continue to make improvements that support clarity and accessibility for everyone.

Parish Council Web Page: <https://www.chartsutton-pc.gov.uk/>
Village Hall Web Page: <https://www.chartsuttonvillagehall.co.uk/>

Councillors Report

- Parked car in Marsham Crescent causing an obstruction – a letter will be sent to the owner.
- Three ladies have been litter-picking in the Chart Hill area, which is appreciated by the Parish Council.

KALC – Maidstone branch had a meeting on 26th January, and minutes have been shared with councillors. A main KALC Conference on local Government Reform (LGR) on 26th February was also attended.

Clerk Report – Provided a separate document to Cllrs and provided an update on previous actions.

25/96 Correspondence/Consultations

Communications received by the Clerk since last meeting.

- Two emails received by the Clerk regarding residents’ personal preference regarding LNP choices, both communications were forwarded to the Chairman and the Chair of LNP steering Group.

25/97 Financial Resolutions

- a. *Financial statement and bank reconciliation was received and approved by councillors. Bank reconciliation statement signed by Cllr Steven Waring and Cllr Robert Sagrott.*

Balances as of 28 February 2026:

Unity Trust Current Account:	£ 1,616.37
Unity Trust Savings Account:	£ 58,500.00
UTB Total Balance:	£ 60,116.37

- b. *To authorise payments made out of meeting and at meeting.*

Payments made out of meeting:

UTB Ref:	Details	Amount	VAT*	Total	Auth
151	S Hill - Clerks salary January 2026	982.74		982.74	SO
152	Unity Trust Bank Charges	6.00		6.00	DD
153	Hugo Fox – monthly website fee	19.99	4.00	23.99	DD
154	Mike FitzGerald – Village News Feb 2026	530.00		530.00	MB & RS
155	BT Monthly Broadband	30.18	6.04	36.22	DD
156	EDF – Pavilion electric supply	18.48		18.48	DD
157	Castle Water - pavilion water supply	6.58	1.32	7.90	DD
158	Campbell Laser - Village Hall Sign	115.00	23.00	138.00	MB & SW
159	Unity Trust Bank Charges	6.00		6.00	DD
160	S Hill - Clerks salary February 2026	982.74		982.74	SO
161	Hugo Fox – monthly website fee	19.99	4.00	23.99	DD
162	BT Monthly Broadband VH	30.47	6.09	36.56	DD
TOTAL		2748.17	44.45	2792.62	

* VAT to be reclaimed.

Payments for authorising at meeting:

UTB Ref:	Details	Amount	VAT*	Total	Auth
163	Cartridge save – HP1 High Cap Black Toner	176.61	35.32	211.93	MB & SW
164	JGF Electrical Services – VH Final Claim	1000.00	200.01	1200.01	MB & SW
165	R Sagrott – KALC Chairman Conference	70.00	14.00	84.00	MB & SW
166	MBC Cleaning IN 2703349 Feb	70.02	14.00	84.02	MB & SW
167	MBC Cleaning IN 2703283 Jan	70.02	14.00	84.02	MB & SW
168	Clerks Expenses Feb/March 2026	39.93	6.00	45.93	MB & SW
169	Village Hall Hire Oct-Nov-Dec	45.00		45.00	MB & SW
170	J.Killick – DA Edwards – Wood for Signpost	40.00		40.00	MB & SW
171	Commercial Services LS215083 Q3	1335.79	267.16	1602.95	MB & SW
172	Google Play Extra Memory– Pay L Windless	13.33	2.66	15.99	MB & SW
173	Parish Online – 29UH009-0005	63.00	12.60	75.60	MB & JK
174	P Waring – Various itemised invoices	544.70	108.94	653.64	MB & JK
TOTAL		3468.40	674.69	4143.09	

* VAT to be reclaimed

c. **To note income received since last meeting on 26th January 2026**

- *Katie Lam – Village News Advert* £ 210.00
- *KCC Grant for Defibrillator Cabinet* £ 584.00
- *Coxheath FC second payment* £ 350.00

d. **To consider other financial considerations and purchases:**

- It was suggested that the new annual Football fee will increase to £800.00 PA
- Clerk will need to adjust Standing Order to accommodate HMRC changes
- Employer NIC has not been collected so will come out of next year's budget

25/98 Closed Session – No closed session took place.

25/99 Items for the Next Meeting

- Review the condition and age of Defibrillator
- Invite assigned area Police Constables
- Decision of chosen site LNP

25/100 Date of Next Meeting – Monday 13 April 2026 (date of Annual Parish meeting 20 April)

With no further business the meeting was closed at 10.40pm

S Waring

13 April 2026

Signed..... Chairman

Date.....