

CHART SUTTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held at Chart Sutton Village Hall Monday 13 April 2026 at 7.45pm

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

Steve Hill – Parish Clerk
MBC – Cllr Anne Dawes
KCC – Cllr Brian Black
Public – 45 plus reducing to 6

26/1 Apologies for Absence

None received.

26/2 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.

26/3 Councillors Declaration of Interest

Cllr Valerie Underwood, Cllr Mike Brown and Cllr Wendy Gatward all declare an interest in item 26/8 and 26/9 on the agenda due to the proximity of their home addresses.

26/4 Minutes of 9 March 2026 Council Meeting.

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

26/5 Open Public Session

There was also a request for the Parish to investigate a possible change of use at a property in Lested Lane, where it appears that a private school may be operating as a business. It was explained that the Parish has no involvement in such matters, and that residents and the business tenant should contact Maidstone Borough Council for confirmation of the regulations required to run such a business, especially as the use seems to have increased traffic to the area.

Chart Sutton also asked the tenants of Lested Hall to provide the owner's contact details, so that the Clerk can make enquiries regarding the trimming of the boundary hedges to improve visibility at the junction.

26/6 Report from Borough Councillors & County Councillors

Cllr Brian Black KCC - He explained that he had submitted an objection to MBC regarding the proposed development of 35 houses, on the grounds that the additional housing is not required, the existing infrastructure cannot support it, and local public services such as schools and doctors' surgeries are already under pressure.

He also expressed his concerns regarding the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) being pursued by central government, noting that it is expected to cost taxpayers in the region of £100–£150 million. He felt that such expenditure is unnecessary and that many of the issues cited could be addressed

Initials

through improved collaboration and stronger working relationships between existing authorities, rather than through structural reform.

He also supported the view that the property in Lested Lane should contact MBC, as the matter constitutes a *change of use* that may affect neighbouring residents.

A discussion took place regarding the general condition of the roads in Chart Sutton, particularly the impact of road closures that result in traffic diverting through minor roads rather than following the recommended major diversion routes. When Hawkenbury Bridge is closed, often due to the high number of accidents at that location, traffic uses Chart Hill Road as an east to west route, creating further congestion. Cllr Black reported that he is in discussions with KCC Highways, with support from adjacent parishes Staplehurst and Headcorn, to identify a workable solution. One option under consideration is the installation of traffic lights; however, KCC remains adamantly opposed to this due to cost.

Cllr Anne Dawes MBC: No report available.

26/7 Crime Report:

Between 19:30 on Wednesday 25th of March and 04:45 on Thursday 26th of March in Chart Hill Road. Somebody stole a black Toyota Hilux, RK23***, from outside a residential property.

Crime Report No. 46/48229/26 - Posted 29/03/2026

26/8 Selection of proposed site for inclusion to Local Neighbourhood Plan (LNP)

Chart Sutton was advised by Maidstone Borough Council to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan because it would enable the Parish to negotiate from a position of strength with developers. An adopted Plan carries statutory weight, reducing the likelihood of speculative applications and helping to secure higher-quality proposals that reflect local priorities. The Chart Sutton Neighbourhood Plan is now progressing well and is expected to be completed within the next few weeks. Once finalised, it will be published on the Parish Council website for residents to view.

The highlights of each of the three development options were outlined, based on the proposed solutions put forward by the respective developers. A number of factors are common to all sites:

- Maidstone Borough Council has allocated 35 homes to Chart Sutton, and this requirement applies regardless of which site is selected.
- No central facilities, such as a hospital, GP surgery, or school, will be provided as part of any of the proposals.
- KCC Highways has confirmed that the additional traffic generated by 35 homes is acceptable, and this assessment cannot be challenged by the Parish Council.
- Residents have expressed a strong desire for new facilities that would enhance the quality of village life.
- Green spaces within each development would be maintained by a management company, rather than by the Parish Council.

It was recommended by the Steering Group that the site to be taken forward in the Neighbourhood Plan should be Land south of Amber Lane, based on Concept 3. This option was considered to provide the most balanced and deliverable solution when assessed against the agreed criteria of the residents and the requirements set by Maidstone Borough Council.

26/9 Endorsement of LNP

Based on the information provided and the material presented in the Neighbourhood Plan, four members of the Parish Council agreed to endorse the recommendation to select Land south of Amber Lane (west of the Village Hall) as the preferred site.

It was considered appropriate that any councillor living in close proximity to one of the potential development sites should abstain from expressing a preference. As a result, two members abstained. However, one member who lived near the recommended site chose to vote against the proposal, as she felt she should not be excluded from the opportunity to vote.

Please Note: At this point in the meeting most of the audience left the meeting.

26/10 Climate Change & Biodiversity

- There was nothing further to report regarding Climate Change, as no meetings have taken place.
- The recent “Clean and Green” meeting was not well supported, with only a small number of residents in attendance.

26/11 Update Parish Insurance

Resolution: The Chart Sutton insurance is currently held with Zurich under a three-year fixed long-term agreement, which has now come to an end. As a result, the renewal premium has increased significantly. An alternative provider specialising in Parish Council insurance was contacted for a comparison quotation; however, their price was close to Zurich’s renewal figure, and Zurich also offered a new three-year LTA.

Resolved: Councillors considered the options and agreed unanimously to proceed with the Zurich three-year LTA.

26/12 Parish Matters

a. Highways and other matters:

- Several letters have been received regarding Chart Sutton’s request to KCC Highways for an investigation into the damage caused to local roads as a result of various diversions and road closures. Numerous repairs have since been carried out by KCC in the area, including on Warmlake Road, Chart Hill Road, Plough Wents Road, and several minor roads, and this work is still ongoing. A letter of thanks has been sent to Mr Andrew Loosemore KCC District Highways Manager.
- Cllr Brown and Cllr Killick will be attending the Road Safety & Active Travel Group (RSATG) Seminar on 21 April.
- The request for signage at the junction of Plough Wents Road and Lested Lane has been approved and passed to the KCC design team.
- A new request will be made for the bus stop layby to be resurfaced/repaired.

b. **Bus stop Bin removed** – still not replaced - no update.

c. **Outreach Post Office Service in Chart Sutton:** The Post Office confirmed that no further information is currently available regarding the start date or any other operational details.

d. **Pavilion volunteer required:** Advertised on website and in the Village News, no response.

e. **Possible Defibrillator replacement** – The existing defibrillator has been checked, and it was noted that it is approaching the end of its expected service life. Although it remains fully operational at present, a replacement will need to be considered. Councillors agreed to investigate the expected lifespan of the device and to make a decision once this information is confirmed.

- f. **Golding Homes** – The bi-annual meeting will be arranged in May or June, once all parties have confirmed their availability. Subjects for discussion will include recommendations regarding the groundwork’s maintenance.

26/13 Reports from Committees and Representatives on other bodies:

Chairman’s Report – Another football team has requested use of the playing field, but they will be informed that all available slots are currently allocated to existing users. New signs have been installed at the recreational field gate, and existing signs have also been refixed.

Councillors Report

- Attended the Police Cluster Meeting, where the main topic of discussion was Speed watch
- It was noted that the village shop is struggling to remain viable, but it continues to be regarded as an important village asset.
- It is becoming increasingly difficult to predict which products will sell, and on some occasions unsold food has to be thrown away.
- The village finger post has had an additional limb attached pointing to the Village Hall.

KALC – No meeting attended.

Clerk Report – A separate document has been sent to Councillors providing updates on previous actions and any additional actions.

26/14 Correspondence/Consultations

Communications received by the Clerk since last meeting.

- One email received by the Clerk regarding residents’ personal preference regarding LNP choices which was forwarded to the Chairman and the Chair of LNP steering Group.

26/15 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 31 March 2026:

Unity Trust Current Account:	£	421.57
Unity Trust Savings Account:	£	53,799.93
UTB Total Balance:	£	54,221.50

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

Payments made out of meeting:

CB Ref:	Details	Amount	VAT*	Total	Auth
175	EDF – Pavilion electric supply	18.48		18.48	DD
176	Castle Water - pavilion water supply	0.17	0.03	0.20	DD
177	S Hill - Clerks salary March 2026	982.74		982.74	SO
178	Unity Trust Bank Charges	7.00		7.00	DD
01	Hugo Fox – monthly website fee	19.99	4.00	23.99	DD
02	BT Monthly Broadband VH	30.94	6.19	37.13	DD
TOTAL		1059.32	10.22	1069.54	

* VAT to be reclaimed.

Payments for authorising at meeting:

CB Ref:	Details	Amount	VAT*	Total	Auth
4	MBC Cleaning IN 2703521 March	70.02	14.00	84.02	MB & RS
5	Clerks Expenses March 2026	9.95		9.95	MB & RS
6	Mike FitzGerald – Village News April 2026	390.00		390.00	MB & RS
7	KALC – Annual Subscription	444.53	88.91	533.44	MB & RS
TOTAL		914.50	102.91	1017.41	

* VAT to be reclaimed

c. To note income received since last meeting on 9 March 2026

- *Unity Trust Bank Q4 Interest* £ 299.93
- *Maidstone BC – 2026 Precept* £29,097.00

d. To consider and accept FYE balances:

Resolution: Separate financial documents were circulated to councillors showing the year-end balances, which were verified against the Unity Trust Bank statement.

Resolved: Councillors confirmed that all financial information presented was accurate.

26/16 Closed Session

Resolution: The Clerk’s contract states that he is entitled to a pay increment subject to satisfactory performance. He will progress automatically through the range on salary scale LC2 by annual increments until the maximum point of the scale is reached.

Resolved: It was unanimously agreed to award the pay increment.

To Note: The first increment is due on 1 April 2026, with subsequent increments payable on 1 April each year thereafter until the top of the scale is reached.

26/17 Items for the Next Meeting – Next meeting will follow standard Annual Meeting agenda.

26/18 Close of meeting at 10.10pm. Date of Next Annual Meeting – 20 April 2026

S Waring

11 May 2026

Signed..... Chairman

Date.....