



MANSTON PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Cllr Paul Bell

Clerk: Mrs Elizabeth Carr

Email: clerk@manstonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Minutes of the Meeting of the Full Council held. on 9th March 2026 at 7.15pm, Manston Village Hall, Manston.

Present: Parish Councillors: Paul Bell (Chairman), Ian Amato, Roy Matthews, Stuart McRae, Henry Robinson, Graham Elliott & Guy Wilson.

In Attendance: Gary Groombridge (Community Warden) and Cllr Abi Smith, Cllr Luke Evans, Cllr Peter Evans, 2 members of the Westgate Action Group and 10 members of public.

121/25-26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

122/25-26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The declaration form was circulated to those present. There were no declarations of interest.

123/25-26. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 9th February had been circulated.

RESOLVED: The minutes were proposed by Cllr Robertson and seconded Cllr Amato as a true record of the meeting.

1124/25-26 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

RiverOak Strategic Partners (RSP) is progressing plans to reopen Manston Airport as an air freight hub and will run its Stage 3 airspace change consultation from 16 March to 22 June 2026. The consultation will outline proposed changes to flight paths and airspace design, with information available through an online portal, alongside a programme of in-person and virtual engagement events. Stakeholders will be able to submit feedback online, at events, or via Freepost (FREEPOST 1616).

RSP will promote the consultation through local media, social channels, and physical posters, and can provide printed or smaller-format materials for wider distribution. The process will follow Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) airspace change standards, with all updates available on the CAA's portal at <https://airspacechange.caa.co.uk/>. Full details of the proposals will be shared with stakeholders at the start of the consultation period.

Details of upcoming events at that RAF Manston History Museum were provided. Date available via the Chairs report on the Manston Parish Council website.

125/25-26 CLERK'S REPORT

- Cllrs were advised that meeting paperwork would be circulated via a link to the Agendas and Minutes page of the Manston Parish Council website.

- A spring clean litter picking activity had been planned for Sunday 15th March at 11am starting at Manston Village Hall.
- An expression of interest has been submitted for funding through Thanet District Council's Pride in Place Impact Fund. TDC has received £1.5 million from central government for this initiative, with £100,000 specifically allocated to Thanet's rural villages. A copy of the expression of interest is included in the meeting papers.
- Councillors and members of the public can comment on the Pride in Place Impact Fund by visiting: <https://yourvoice.thanet.gov.uk/en-GB/projects/pride-in-place-impact-fund>

126/25-26. FINANCE MATTERS AND AUTHORISATION OF PAYMENTS

- Authorisation of Payments:** To approve the monthly payments list, 2 Cllrs to sign the to confirm bank transfers online with Unity Bank. **RESOLVED: All unanimously agreed the payments.**
- Bank Reconciliation:** Bank reconciliations were confirmed by all.

127/25-26 PLANNING.

PN12/TH/25/1382 - Birchington Vale Caravan Park, Shottendane Road, Birchington, Kent

PROPOSAL: Application to apply for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the local planning authority is required in respect of the installation of solar panels to roof of 2no buildings.

There were no objections.

RiverOak Strategic Partnerships: Cllrs discussed a copy of the letter of complaint that was sent to RiverOak Strategic Partnership on 26th February 2026. Cllr Abi Smith, TDC, reported that the Environmental Officer had been advised. The guidance was for residents to report any disturbance via the online reporting tool <https://www.thanet.gov.uk/info-pages/noise-nuisance/> This information had been posted to the MPC website & Facebook page and Manston Matters. Cllrs felt it was appropriate to allow RSP time to respond to the letter.

Hydrogen Transition Energy: There was a detailed discussion regarding the proposed HTE plant, with residents expressing significant concern about the facility being located close to residential properties. The primary issues raised related to safety at the site. Councillors noted that no planning application has yet been submitted and that, due to the scale of the development, Kent County Council—not Thanet District Council—would be the determining authority.

Cllr Luke Evans advised that a planning application is expected to be submitted this week and confirmed he will keep the parish council updated. He also reported that the Head of Planning at KCC has already met with HTE and that the authority is approaching the project with considerable caution.

Sealink National Grid Hearings March 2026: To highlight hearings on 24th, 25th and 27th March 2026. The hearings are scheduled for 10am on the dates above, all are blended hearing, in person at The Discovery Park, Sandwich or online. Full details have been published on the Manston Parish Council website. If you wish to register as an interested party the deadline is tomorrow.

Manston Processing Centre. To receive letter from the Home Office, 26th February 2026. In summary a new processing centre will not be built due to financial constraints, but the available funds will be used to improve the site.

128/25-26. HIGHWAYS

- Damaged bollards at the chicane as you enter the village from the Haine Road end. Date reported: 17th December, Ref: 917902, and reported again on 2nd February, Ref: 934561. KCC Highways had been in touch, and they are looking for a better solution as we fear replacing the bollards will only result in them being damaged again.
- Damaged crossroads warning sign on B2050. Date Reported 2nd February, Ref: 934571 – works completed.
- Damaged pedestrian warning sign on B2050. Date Reported 2nd February, Ref: 934574 – works completed.
- Damaged blue cycle way sign at memorial junction. Date Reported 2nd February, Ref: 934581. The clerk invited the Chairman to a HIP Preview on 20th February. KCC Highway will not remove the sign, and neither should the parish council. Works not required.

HIP Update

Councillors received a copy of the draft Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) for 2026/27. Proposed improvements include gateway treatments at both entrances to the village and speed-restriction roundels on the carriageway. KCC will also revisit the possibility of a pedestrian crossing, which may require the acquisition of additional land. Councillors were asked to approve the proposed plan.

Cllr Amato reported that speeding is particularly problematic along Spratling Street, noting that contractor vehicles appear to be the main issue. The situation appears to be worse now the 20mph restriction is in place. It was suggested that this be raised with PC Owen Crush to support driver education, and that KCC be contacted regarding their vehicles. Cllr Bell advised that KCC is unlikely to support the installation of speed humps or street lighting. It was agreed that the draft HIP would be amended to include measures to strengthen enforcement of the 20mph limit in Spratling Street. In the meantime, Cllr Bell will contact KCC to explore what can be done to encourage compliance. Members of the public were asked to record registration numbers or company names of speeding vehicles, as much of the issue appears to involve construction traffic.

Speedwatch

Village Speedwatch activities will resume, as Cllr Amato and Cllr McRae have confirmed their intention to sign up to the scheme.

129/25-26. MANSTON PARK

a) Park checks.

The council received the park check and noted the following Cllr Matthews cleaned the car park and clean the climbing equipment. Cllr Matthews will send an expense claim.

b) Park Barrier

The barrier has now been reset and is fully operational, and antisocial behaviour in the area will continue to be monitored. As there had been ongoing issues with park users being locked in, it was agreed that the barrier should operate to fixed opening and closing times rather than relying on dawn and dusk. The following times were agreed:

- **Winter:** 7am–6pm
- **Summer:** 7am–9pm

It was also agreed that additional signage should be installed, and Cllr Bell will arrange for this to be sourced.

a) Repairs to football pitch and new goal posts

Councillors received a detailed options paper outlining proposed repairs to the football pitch, including three quotations for replacement goalposts and nets.

Option 1 – to repair grass and replace football goals and net: £3,066.

Option 2 – to repair grass and remove goals and nets: £1,420.

Cllrs were asked to confirm whether to replace goal posts and nets or repair grass and remove goals. Cllr Luke can put £1,000 of community grant towards the goals.

RESOLVED: To repair the grass and to replace football goals and nets, proposed by Cllr Bell and seconded Cllr Amato

- b) **Dog park** – Cllrs agreed that the opening times for the dog park should be made clear. It was confirmed that the dog park would be open from April to October – subject to weather conditions. Cllr Bell will source signage, and the Clerk would advertise via social media.

c) **Trees at The Leys**

Cllr Bell and the Clerk visited The Leys site with the groundsman, Paul Hughes, on Wednesday 4 March. The area in question is currently overgrown with ground elder and contains a quantity of tree cuttings. Mr Hughes confirmed that these cuttings were not left by him during previous works, as he had cleared the site at that time.

The tree under discussion sits directly on the boundary line, and ownership remains unclear. It was therefore proposed that any necessary tree works be funded on a 50/50 basis between the Parish Council and The Leys. Two options for the work were identified, and quotations have been obtained:

- **Option A:** Removal of the tree down to the stub, including removal of all debris (stub to remain) – £2,500–£3,000.
- **Option B:** Reduction of the tree by one-third, including removal of all debris – £1,850–£2,250.

The Council agreed in principle to contributing 50% of the cost and noted that full removal of the tree is likely to be the most appropriate option. It was also noted that any ground conditions or further requirements will become clearer once the tree and debris have been removed.

The Council will write again to The Leys Management Company and await their response.

Review at the next meeting.

d) **Manston Park Boundary**

As part of the covenant attached to the purchase of Manston Park, the Parish Council is required to maintain a fence around the park. At present, the site is enclosed by a combination of fencing and natural barriers, including established trees and hedging. The Council agreed that the covenant requirement should be added to the Risk Register to ensure ongoing monitoring and compliance.

130 / 25-26 PUBLICATIONS SCHEME

Councillors were asked to approve the Publication Scheme. This is a statutory requirement under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and sets out the information the Council routinely makes available to the public. Adoption of the scheme supports transparency, accountability, and clarity regarding the information the Council holds. Councillors approved the Publication Scheme.

RESOLVED: To approve the Publication Scheme, proposed by Cllr Bell and seconded Cllr Amato

131 / 25-26 LITTER PICKING

The Council has signed up to the Keep Britain Tidy *Great British Spring Clean* campaign, which runs from 13–29 March. Cllr McRae and the Clerk will lead a community litter pick on Sunday 15 March at 11am, meeting at the Village Hall (noting that this date falls on Mothering Sunday). The event has been publicised on the Council’s website, social media, village noticeboards, the church, and the Jolly Farmer. Litter pickers and bags have been supplied by TDC. Residents are welcome to litter pick at any time during the campaign. Please note that only TDC-issued bags should be left beside public bins for collection. It was also noted that there has been an increase in household rubbish (e.g., black bags) being placed next to Council bins. This constitutes fly-tipping and has been reported to the TDC Enforcement Office

132/25-26. INDIVIDUAL REPORTS TO NOTE

Cllr Luke Evans (KCC) - Cllr Evans outlined the budget reductions delivered by KCC. Adult Social Care contracts had previously been costed at significantly above neighbouring authorities, and a review has now brought these in line, generating substantial savings. A Contract Management Review Group has been established to ensure all contracts remain fit for purpose. A new commercial strategy has also opened contracts to a wider range of suppliers, with the expectation that this will help reduce costs further.

KCC has budgeted £30m in reserves for the coming year. Council tax will rise by 3.99%, rather than the previously anticipated 5%.

Cllr Evans also highlighted “Plan B,” an annual KCC initiative to increase habitats for pollinators. He encouraged community involvement and suggested planting wildflowers in suitable locations.

Cllr Bell thanked Cllr Evans for the update and noted the wider financial pressures currently affecting residents. He emphasised the importance of community resilience and supporting one another during this period.

Cllr Abi Smith (TDC) impact on the villages but may offer a future amenity.

TDC Budget 2026–27: TDC approved a balanced £30.357m budget with a council tax rise of just under 3%. KCC’s increase is 3.99%. Key spending includes temporary housing and public space improvements.

Dreamland Scenic Railway: TDC’s Director of Place Bob Porter sent the following email in response to the news that Dreamland intends to ‘retire’ the ride rather than maintain it as operational: The ride was closed at the time of an ‘incident’ last year and has not operated since. Following an investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the HSE has advised Dreamland that to operate the ride they would need to implement a daily inspection routine, which Dreamland says would take up to five hours each day, so that Dreamland believes they are no longer able to operate the ride.

TDC Leader Rick Everitt commented: “As the scenic railway is a listed structure, Dreamland is required to maintain the structure in good condition, but not necessarily to operate it as a ride... Any applications would need to clearly set out the detailed case for why it is not viable to operate the ride and set out the case for change.”

TDC has no direct planning enforcement role in the operation of the Scenic Railway, but arguably it has a clear responsibility under national planning policy.

Manston Airspace Change Consultation: RSP is carrying out its Stage 3 airspace change consultation from 16th March to 22nd June. The consultation will provide details of proposed changes to flight paths and airspace structure. Aspects of the consultation include an online portal to view consultation materials and proposals, and a series of in-person and online engagement events. You can give feedback via the online portal, at forthcoming consultation events or by writing to FREEPOST 1616. The website is <https://airspacechange.caa.co.uk/>.

Leafing Bin Scheme: The scheme has been shortlisted for the 2026 Awards for Excellence in Recycling & Waste Management.

Great British Spring Clean: A TDC beach clean for staff and councillors will take place on 26 March from Margate toward Westgate-on-Sea.

Westgate Action group against housing development - The Council received information from the Westgate Action Group regarding the national Community Planning Alliance Day of Action on 18 April. Westgate is planning a community event involving local campaign groups, scarecrows, placards, and a tractor rally, and they have invited Manston to offer support. They will send details to the Clerk for potential promotion, subject to confirmation from KALC. Cllr Elliott will attend the community event.

Community Warden, Gary Groombridge - The Community Warden, Gary Groombridge, reported ongoing challenges in encouraging engagement from Manston residents. He has introduced new Wednesday Drop-In sessions from 2–4pm and is working with Nadine from *Heart of the Community* to develop a wellbeing hub. A Trading Standards scam-awareness talk will take place on 27 May from 2–4pm, which will be strongly promoted to encourage community attendance.

Kent Police, Owen Crush - Kent Police provided an update on activity within the Thanet Villages. Manston recorded 36 calls, traffic-related matters, and business alarm activations, all attended promptly. Two reported crimes related to the same domestic incident. Police are investigating reports of youths causing damage with an air rifle in Manston, with CCTV currently being reviewed. Officers continue initiative-taking patrols in areas highlighted for nuisance vehicle use, with several vehicles stopped and one driver issued a s.59 warning. Residents were reminded to secure vehicles overnight following recent thefts across the ward. Residents were advised of upcoming police surgeries: 6 March outside Monkton Village Hall (9–10am) and 27 February in central Ramsgate (3–4pm). Residents may attend either session regardless of ward.

133/25-26. PUBLIC QUESTIONS/ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

The following items were put forward by members of the public:

The Chair of Manston Parish Council, Cllr Paul Bell, received a new Jewel of Office donated to the Parish Council by past Chairman Mr David Steed. The original Chairman's Jewel had been lost over the years. The Jewel is worn on special occasions when the Chairman represents the Parishioners and the Council at formal, ceremonial, and civic occasions such as the Annual Parish Council Meeting, the Annual Parish Meeting, formal openings, and occasions involving dignitaries.

134/25-26. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 13th April 2026, 7.15pm.
The meeting closed at 9.10pm