

WESTERHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held at Russell House on
Monday 16th March 2026 at 7 pm

Present: Councillors: Dr J Lord (JL) – Chair
Mrs L Bird (LB), Mr M Bortolozzo (MB),
Mr E Boyle (EB), Mr I Breminer (IB),
Mrs D Coen (DC), Mr N Proudfoot (NP),
Mrs S Sheen (SS), Mrs L Rodgers (LR),
and Mr K Thompson (KT)

In attendance: Town Clerk: Mrs A Howells (AH)
Finance Officer/Project Officer: Mrs D Marshall (DM)
SDC Cllr Diana Esler

Item		Action
1.	<u>Apologies for Absence</u> Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Dicker – business commitment and Hussain – personal commitment	
2.	<u>Declarations of Interest not previously declared</u> None.	
3.	<u>Minutes of the Council Meeting on 19th January 2026</u> It was resolved to approve and sign the minutes of the Council meeting held on 19 th January 2026.	
4.	<u>Information items arising from the minutes of the previous meeting not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda</u> 8.3 Grant to Holy Trinity Church, Crockham Hill – Cllr Lord confirmed that St Mary's Church and Holy Trinity Church were in a joint Benefice but had separate bank accounts so could apply for grants individually. 10. Crockham Hill War Memorial Playing Field Trust – Cllr Sheen asked whether the meeting had taken place on 4 th March but was informed that it had been cancelled due to lack of business. 17. Town of Culture – Cllr Coen asked why this item was not on the Agenda and was informed that the Town Partnership was leading this bid with support from WTC.	
5.	<u>To receive and consider the following Minutes of Committee</u> 5.1 <u>Highways and Lighting – 02.02.26</u> Cllr Bortolozzo presented the minutes. 5.1 Speedwatch – The frequency of Speedwatch had increased and Cllrs were now undertaking Speedwatch out of office hours. Recent Speedwatch had been undertaken at the junction of Croydon Road and The Paddock at 8.30am and another two were planned this month.	

	approximately 50 children/parents/carers in the Hall. The Committee was working in partnership with Westerham Library on Family events. Members of the Committee approved the Minutes. Resolved: that the minutes be adopted. 5.4 <u>Planning and Development – 19.02.26</u> Cllr Breminer presented the Minutes: Resolved: that the Minutes be adopted. 5.5 <u>Planning and Development – 05.03.26</u> Cllr Breminer presented the Minutes: Cllr Breminer had attended the CPRE meeting on 21st January and sent his apologies for the meeting on 18th March. Members of the Committee approved the Minutes. Resolved: that the minutes be adopted. 5.6 <u>Finance & General Purposes – 09.03.26</u> Cllr Sheen presented the Minutes. 5.1 CIL Funds – The funds would be placed in the KGF Re-development Project as previously agreed by Council. 5.8 Previously agreed Grant to Pootings RA - Council had previously agreed to award a grant of £750 to the PRA subject to confirmation that such an award was acceptable to WTC auditors. The Auditor and KALC did not have an issue with the grant from the perspective of the use of public funds. However, to complete due diligence Cllr Sheen also raised the issue of the PRA grant with Sevenoaks District Council (SDC). A response had been received stating that WTC should consider if payment of this grant would affect their potential to provide comments in any future planning application, that is, would WTC be able to show they had retained an open mind and did not have a conflict of interest. FG&GP had recommended to Council that the grant to the PRA should not be paid to obviate the risk. Following lengthy discussion, it was agreed (Vote 7 – 3) not to approve a grant of £750 to Pootings RA as this could compromise WTC comments on any future planning applications. Resolved: Not to approve the Grant to Pootings RA. 6.1 Gold Award – WTC was preparing to re-apply in 2027. To improve the transparency of papers at meetings FG&GP had discussed and agreed to upload papers to the website prior to meetings. Following discussion, it was agreed to trial this with all meetings. 7.2 Surgery lease – This was an ongoing lengthy process. Members of the Committee approved the Minutes. Resolved: that the minutes be adopted.	
6.	<u>Local Government Re-organisation</u> Cllr Lord had circulated details of the Government LGR consultation which will close on 26th March. SDC Cllr Esler reported on how SDC were currently working, all SDC Cllrs would stay on SDC until 2028 and elections for the new Unitary would take place in May 2027. Following discussion, it was agreed that WTC would submit a response in support of Option 2 also known as 3A. Cllr Lord to submit the response. Resolved: To support Option 2 (3A) in the LGR consultation.	JL

7.	<u>Finance</u> <u>7.1 Payment List to 28th February 2026</u> Cllr Sheen reported that F&GP had reviewed the payment lists and had nothing to bring to Council's attention. There were no queries and the payment lists were approved. <u>7.2 Committee Accounts to 28th February 2026</u> Cllr Sheen reported that the accounts were in line with expected expenditure. The in-budget concerns detailed in the F&GP minutes were highlighted. There were no further queries and the accounts were approved. <u>7.3 Audit Plan 2026/27</u> The Audit Plan for 2026/27 had been circulated, there were no queries and this was approved. Following discussion, it was agreed to appoint KCC as the Internal Auditor. Resolved: To approve the Audit Plan 2026/27 and appoint KCC as the WTC Internal Auditor. <u>7.4 Effectiveness of Internal Audit</u> Cllr Sheen reported that F&GP had reviewed the Effectiveness of Internal Audit and recommended approval. There were no queries and this was approved. Resolved: To approve the Effectiveness of Internal Audit. <u>7.5 Grant to Sevenoaks Volunteer Transport Group (SVTG)</u> Cllr Sheen presented a paper regarding the Grant Applications. Following discussion, it was agreed to award a grant of £125 to SVTG. Resolved: To award a grant of £125 to Sevenoaks Volunteer Transport Group. <u>7.6 Grant to Westerham Town Partnership</u> Following discussion, it was agreed to award a grant of £550 to Westerham Town Partnership. Resolved: To award a grant of £550 to Westerham Town Partnership to come out of next financial year - 2026/27. <u>7.7 Grant to Edenbridge First Responders</u> Following discussion, it was agreed to award a grant of £500 to Edenbridge First Responders. The Group covered Westerham and Crockham Hill. Resolved: To award a grant of £500 to Edenbridge First Responders.	
8.	<u>King George's Field Re-development Project</u> The Project Officer had circulated a paper following the previous agreement to consider partnership working on the KGF Project. Three organisations had expressed interest in working with WTC and the Project Officer had undertaken research on the three organisations. Each organisation had put together a short high-level proposal to introduce themselves, this information had been included in the report. The Project Officer recommended setting up a Working Group of Cllrs to meet with each of the three organisations to discuss their proposal in detail and assess their ability to deliver and work in partnership with WTC. When a clear 'preferred partner' unanimously agreed by the Group had been identified, the Project Officer would be granted delegated power to work with them to potentially bring a full proposal to Council on 18th	

	May for consideration. Following discussion, this was approved and the Working Group would be made up of Cllrs Bird, Breminer, Rodgers and Sheen. In addition, information had been provided regarding the condition of the Pavilion and the need to amend the plans. Following discussion, it was agreed: - • To approve the clearance of the contents inside the pavilion up to a value of £1,000. • To approve a budget of £10,000 to £15,000 for the quantity surveying/tender process for the pavilion refurbishments. • To approve the cost of up to £750 to amend the plans. The Project Officer also raised the issue of a pickleball court and following discussion; it was agreed to explore painting a pickleball court at the tennis courts at Crockham Hill. The Project Officer had confirmed with Wealden League that a pickleball court would not present any issues for matches played on the courts however the tennis club would be consulted before any changes were made.	DM DM DM DM/CDB
9.	<u>Land Adjacent to Churchill School lease proposal</u> Cllr Lord had circulated a paper regarding an update on the lease and background information. WTC's previous costs for the land had exceeded the rent and WTC had been trying to re-negotiate the lease with the Churchill School. The Aquinas CE Educations Trust had now acquired Churchill School and wished to secure a long-term lease on the playing field to match the one they had with KCC for the rest of the School. Following lengthy discussion, it was agreed to approve a 125-lease subject to the following: - • The responsibility of all maintenance such as tree management and maintenance of boundaries fencing etc would fall to the Trust • The land could only be used as a playing field and no development other than temporary structures would be allowed • Sub-letting would only be allowed for sporting/or school activities • The lease to be between WTC and Aquinas only and would terminate if the Trust ceased to run the School unless it was a multi academy trust • The Newtary would be the responsibility of Aquinas Trust • Rental was to be agreed but would not be less than current rental • WTC would retain 1.6 acres of the field with a separate 1 year rolling lease for this area • There would a rent review in 25 years and rent would increase by RPI every five years. Resolved: To enter a 125-year lease with Aquinas Trust for land adjacent to the School subject to the above conditions.	
10.	<u>Annual Town Meeting</u> The Clerk reminded Council that the date of the ATM was 13th May and would include the Community Awards presentation. The panel would be meeting shortly to decide the Awards; WTC had received numerous nominations from residents.	

11.	<u>Policies and Procedures</u> The following Policies had been circulated: - 11.1 Financial Risk Assessment The Financial Risk Assessment had been reviewed and recommended for approval by FG&GP, following discussion this was approved. Resolved: To approve the Financial Risk Assessment. 11.2 Asset Register The Asset Register Policy had been reviewed and was recommended for approval by FG&GP, following discussion this was approved. Resolved: To approve the Asset Register.	
12.	<u>Correspondence</u> 12.1 A letter of thanks had been received from Holy Trinity Church, Crockham Hill for the recently awarded Grant.	
13.	<u>Reports from Councillors</u> Cllr Lord reported WTC had won a Bronze Award in the Wilder Kent Awards, he thanked the Clerk for preparing the successful submission. Cllrs Rodgers and Bortolozzo had attended the WSA meeting. Cllr Boyle was attending the Town of Culture bid meetings. Cllr Proudfoot reported that Toad Patrol had commenced. Cllr Proudfoot had met a French travel writer who could not get to Chartwell by public transport. Cllrs Bortolozzo and Breminer had met with an Edenbridge Town Cllr. Cllr Breminer reported Icon Towers were waiting for a response from FIT. Cllr Breminer reported that small cells information was awaited. Cllrs Bortolozzo and Breminer had attended the Traders meeting. Cllrs Coen and Sheen had attended Speedwatch in CH on 12th March. Cllr Coen had attended the Crockham Hill February coffee morning. Cllr Sheen had attended the Citizens Advice meeting on 21st January. Cllrs Lord and Sheen had met with the Doctors Surgery on 20th January. Cllr Thompson had attended the weekly Warm Space and Memory Café. Cllr Lord had met with Henry Warde. Cllr Lord had attended the Wilder Kent Awards to pick up WTC Award.	
14.	<u>TN16, Crockham Hill Village Newsletter & website</u> None.	
15.	<u>Matters for District and County Councillors</u> None.	
16.	<u>Further matters for consideration at the next meeting</u> None.	
17.	<u>Date of next meeting</u> Monday 18th May 2026 – Annual council meeting Cllrs Bird and Breminer gave their apologies.	

The meeting was concluded at 9.58 pm.

Minutes confirmed as a correct record: **Chairman**