SHORNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Footpaths, Land & Properties Committee Meeting held on 9th October 2025 at Shorne Village Hall

PRESENT Ms P Clifton (Chairman)
Mr C Rea (Vice-Chairman)
Mr R Lane
Mr R Theobald
Mrs S Lindley
Mr J Bugg
Mr R Hardy
Mrs L Williams
Mrs D Salmon (Parish Clerk)

APOLOGIES Mr T Rochard-Pullen

In attendance: Mr A Watson – Parishioner

Not in attendance: None

35. To receive any declarations of interest for any items on the agenda:
None.

36. Minutes of previous meeting held on Thursday 24th July 2025:
The minutes were approved as a true record.

37. Any Matters Arising from Minutes not covered in the Agenda:
None.

38. Recreation Ground:

- The grass on the football pitch was cut by Gravesham Borough Council with the large tractor mower week commencing 6th October.

a) Recent Issues with Football Team:

- The Clerk contacted the football teams at the beginning of September to raise concerns regarding the rubbish being left after practice sessions and matches. Photographic evidence had been provided by parishioners. Ms Clifton was pleased to report that bins are now being used.
- A request was received from the football teams for branches of an Oak tree that overhangs the pitch to be cut back. The Clerk has asked the teams for photographs and more information regarding which trees are in question and await a response. No works can be undertaken without consent from GBC due to being a conservation area.

Action: Ms Clifton to refer to the Arboriculturist when he visits the Parish in November to check any dangerous trees.

b) Youth Team:
The Youth Team are no longer training at the Recreation Ground on a Saturday morning.

c) Business Rates:
The Parish Council has received an invoice for Business Rates relating to the Pavilion at the Recreation Ground. Business Rates have not been charged previously. The Clerk is in correspondence with Gravesham Borough Council. Currently, GBC are requesting a copy of the lease and contact details for the teams.

GBC state *'There is a data protection exemption for the collection of any tax. As business rates is a tax, you are able to give us the information we request without breaching data protection. We also have powers under section 16 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, requiring you to supply certain information concerning the above property and its occupation.'*

The Clerk is awaiting further clarification from GBC before sending the information they have requested. Before providing any contact information to GBC, the Clerk will notify the football teams.

39. Shorne Common:

a) Playground Graffiti:
Ms Clifton contacted the Small Works Contractor in June. He confirmed he can complete the works but is still to provide a date for completion.

Action: Ms Clifton to telephone the Small Works Contractor to discuss.

40. Shorne Common Rough:
A report has been received of motorised bikes and quad bikes causing damage to the grassed area at Shorne Common Rough on Saturday 4th October. Mr Lane has reviewed the CCTV footage at the Village Hall around the time of the report to check if they travelled through the village and if any further descriptions could be obtained. Unfortunately, they must have used a different route.

Members discussed the options for fencing or restricting access to such vehicles to Shorne Common Rough. It was decided the costs involved in fencing or restricting access must be considered and the situation will be kept under review.

This issue is a known issue in rural communities and is not unique to Shorne Common Rough.

41. Crabbles Bottom:

- Ms Clifton and the Clerk visited Crabbles Bottom last month and enjoyed cutting the shoots from the elder trees.
- In August, Gozzett Tree Surgery and Land Management Ltd completed cuts to the Orchard, footpath and bridleway. Ms Clifton reminded members there is a schedule of works contract in place between the Parish Council and the Contractor which may need to be reviewed when the new Management Plan is completed – item 41(e) below.

Action: Ms Clifton to circulate a copy of the schedule of works contract to members.

a) Update on Grazing:
At the end of September, The Shorne Young Farmers took 7 sheep to graze the Orchard. The Leader of the Young Farmers has temporarily covered the gap under the

old gate where it is believed the sheep previously escaped. There will need to be a permanent fix in the future.

The Leader of the Young Farmers has confirmed with the Contractor that the final cut of the season can be undertaken with the sheep on site.

Action: Mrs Williams to monitor the grass is suitable for feeding the sheep, and ensure a suitable rest period for the grass. Mrs Williams will notify Ms Clifton when the sheep are being removed.

b) Update on Apple Baking Competition:
Entries have been received by parishioners. Mr Rea and the Clerk have also participated in baking and circulating photographs, but they will NOT be entering the competition. Clerk to continue advertising the competition on Facebook before the closing date at the end of October.

c) Snapped branches:
Ms Clifton has contacted Jack Bath who completed the pruning during the Orchard Restoration project to ask for his advice and a quote for works required. A response is yet to be received.

d) Correspondence Re Mining Bees:
A parishioner contacted the Clerk to raise concerns about a swarm of bees in the wildflower meadow. Ms Clifton and the Clerk visited the meadow the next day and confirm that the swarm had moved on, but there is evidence of Ground/Mining bees nesting underground. These are not harmful and are excellent pollinators.

e) Update on new Management Plan:
Mr Rea confirmed that Mike Phillips has been appointed as the agent to produce the new Management Plan. Mr Rea has notified the Rural Payments Agent of the appointment. Mr Rea to update members when further information is available.

42. Footpaths and Non-Motorised Highways:

- A replacement for John Pelham, Public Rights of Way (PROW) Officer has been appointed and expected to commence employment at the end of October.

a) Crown Lane/Malthouse Lane:
Olly Cowburn (KCC) has apologised for the delay in getting the growth cut back. This has now been completed by the KCC Soft Landscapes Team. Ms Clifton notes to members that this has not been completed to the same standard as last year but is sufficient.

b) Reports to KCC PROW:

- NS160 running through Great Crabbles Wood to Pear Tree Lane – Works have been completed
- NS163/NS164 Near Muggins Lane – Previously reported – Fields ploughed and path not re-instated. Still reading 'Allocated – Awaiting Inspection' on KCC website.

Action: Ms Clifton to speak to new KCC PROW Officer when employment commences.

c) Shornemead Crossing:
No further update regarding when the crossing will officially open.

Action: Mr Theobald to contact Network Rail.

- Ms Clifton has identified a Finger Post is down on the Ridgeway at the end of the NS162.

Action: Ms Clifton to report online.

43. Verges and Greens

a) Village Hall Landscaped Area:

A local resident has kindly volunteered to undertake the maintenance of the shrubs fronting The Street. As a volunteer she will not be paid, but the Parish Council will re-imburse the cost of materials and consider making an annual donation to Shorne Wildlife Community Group, of which she is a member.

44. National Nature Reserve:

a) New Signs:

Ms Clifton has collected the new NNR signs, 2 of which are for Crabbles Bottom and 1 of which is for Shorne Common Rough. Ms Clifton has requested a quote from the Small Works Contractor for the installation of all 3 signs but no response received at this time.

Action: Ms Clifton to chase the Small Works Contractor.

b) Draft NNR Management Framework:

Ms Clifton circulated the document to all members on the 19th August. Ms Clifton considers the document to be interesting and encourages members to review it.

45. Michael Gardens Gym Equipment Update:

Mr Rea has received communication from James Young at Gravesham Borough Council who confirms the equipment is currently under refurbishment but works are running approximately 6 weeks behind schedule due to machine breakdowns. Installation is expected to be end of October/early November.

46. CCTV Maintenance:

Mr Lane met with a local CCTV Engineer at the Village Hall. The Engineer was able to make some minor adjustments to the system to ensure it is running smoothly. The Engineer confirms the system is still fit for purpose and is going to prepare a maintenance contract quote. Mr Lane has not yet received the quote. He will circulate to members once received.

47. Community Payback Scheme:

As previously agreed, Ms Clifton has approached the Shorne Village Hall Management Committee regarding the supervised use of the Hall's toilet facilities by members of the Community Payback Scheme. This was approved by Shorne Village Hall Management Committee at the meeting held on 2nd October 2025.

Members agreed to use the scheme on a trial basis. Members discussed options for initial projects. The following was agreed:

- Litter pick at Shorne Common Rough
- Weed removal on The Street

***Action*:** Ms Clifton to contact the scheme co-ordinators to arrange an initial project.

Any other business:

48. Matters raised by Members, including from other Committees being discussed for convenience:

- Mr Rea has been in discussions with Michelle Elliott from Gravesham Bee Keepers regarding the ongoing issue with Asian Hornets. Michelle is wanting to provide information to the residents of Shorne and local area and was hoping the Parish Council could help. The Clerk has suggested that Michelle is invited to be a guest speaker at the Parish Assembly in April 2026. Mr Rea to share the idea with Michelle.
- Mrs Williams reports an increase in National Highways vehicles traveling at speed, and causing damage to trees and fencing, in the Thong Lane area. This will need to be monitored as the Lower Thames Crossing works increase
- Mrs Lindley confirmed that from visible checks, and the presence of a drain gulper vehicle, the works being undertaken on Tanyard Hill are drain works.

49. Matters raised by attending Parishioners (at discretion of the Chairman):

Parishioner in attendance raised the following:

- The footpath between Thong Lane and Shorne Country Park is not being maintained by Highways England, with their vehicles driving over the footpath regularly causing extensive damage. This will become unusable to pedestrians as we approach the winter months

  Action: Mrs Lindley to report to the Parish Council's contact at the Lower Thames Crossing development.

- Have any updated plans been received for the Lower Thames Crossing?

  Mrs Lindley advised that all up-to-date plans should be showing on the Lower Thames Crossing development website.

Date of next meeting: The next meeting of the Footpaths, Land and Properties Committee will be held at 7.30pm on date TBC.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8:57pm.

Signed Ms Clifton :…….. Dated:……..