

KENT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Tonbridge and Malling Area Committee

MINUTES

on Thursday 9th October 2025 at 7.30pm at

POTTERS MEDE

Present: Sarah Barker, Chair - Kings Hill PC, Sarah Huseyin, Secretary - Ightham and Shipbourne PC's, Sue Butterfill, Vice Chair - Borough Green PC, Tom Shelly - Aylesford PC, Jackie Westwood - Birling PC, Tim Shaw - Borough Green & Mike Taylor - Borough Green and TMBC, David Thornewell - East Malling and Larkfield PC, Ed Bright - Hadlow PC, Cathy Wynne - Hildenborough PC, Rodney Willingham - Ightham PC, Wendy Palmer - Platt PC, Marius Carboni - Plaxtol PC Sandy Oram - Shipbourne PC, Daren Sefer - Stansted PC, Stuart Mathieson - Watlington PC, Keith Mann - West Malling PC, Caroline Collier-Ward - Wouldham PC, Harry Rayner - Wrotham PC and KCC,

Guest Speaker - DI Zara McAiney - CSU Inspector

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1. **Apologies for absence** - Patricia Garrett - Addington PC, Gwyneth Barkham - West Malling PC, Sue Bell - Snodland PC, Dan Benyon - Plaxtol PC, Nigel Newman - Ditton PC, Cllr Sangha - Burham PC
 2. **Introductions and Announcements** - Chair welcomed members and gave thanks to Mike Taylor for the use of Potters Mede and to Sue Butterfill for the refreshments. New members introduced themselves.
 3. **Update from T&M Community Safety Unit CSU - Inspector Zara McAiney**
 - 2 Beat Officers have left and been replaced with 3 new officers. Some changes will be made to Wards to even out the workload. Zara will circulate a current list of Beat Officers for each Ward. All Beat officers are full-time except Laura.
 - A question was raised in relation to Beat officers not attending Parish meetings and several Parishes said that their Beat Officers hadn't attended a meeting although some had contacted their Parishes. Mike Taylor commented that he would rather Beat Officers do police work than attend meetings and that written reports should be fine. Zara said it was sometimes difficult for Officers to attend meetings as emergencies take precedence and suggested physical attendance every 6 months or when there is something that needs dealing with. This was agreed and Zara will update the contract.
 - Highlights over the summer:
 - "Operations fanfare" attendance at high footfall locations.
 - Catapults – Officers have focussed time as catapults are increasingly becoming a nuisance. They aren't classified as

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offensive weapons so can only be dealt with where e.g. animal cruelty is involved.

- Closure orders – dealing with ASB and racism.
- “Operation Make Safe” – dealing with violence against women and girls. Involved a positive initiative checking whether hotels allow bookings.
- Operations to reduce Shop lifting.
- “Operation Sunbeam” investigating taxi’s refusing to take people short distances which adversely affects young females.
- “Operation pilot” - targeting drug use in pubs by drug swabbing.
- Various road traffic checks and speed checks resulting in notices issued, ticketing and cars being seized. Road Traffic Police are active on the bridge on A228 near West Malling Station.

Chair reported that TMBC proposed to include catapults in the Public Space Protection Order which will come into effect next April. There is currently a consultation and Chair urged Parishes to respond to Alison Finch. Mike Taylor said that this would enable catapults to be dealt with by civil enforcement, taking pressure off the police. It was noted that under 16’s cannot be fined.

Zara reported resources are in place for events including Halloween (especially around Kings Hill), Diwali (where there is a spike in Asian gold thefts), Christmas and New Year (drink drive campaigns).

Statistics - ASB rose from June to August 2025, mainly due to nuisance vehicles and catapults but numbers are back down. Serious violent crimes have decreased. Shop lifting numbers are the lowest in years, but Morrisons remains as a target. Officers have a good relationship with stores.

Questions: Keith reported catapults are being used in West Malling by teenagers who are targeting pigeons and asked whether they can be confiscated? They can if it's a wildlife offence.

Chair thanked Zara who said she would put a 6-month contract together and send a list of Beat Officers to the Secretary.

4. Elections for Year 2025 - 2026:

- a. Chairman - Sarah Barker - Proposed by Mike and seconded by Wendy *carried*
- b. Vice-Chairman Sue Butterfill – Proposed by Tim and seconded by Wendy *carried*
- c. Committee Secretary - Sarah Huseyin - *Agreed*
- d. Learning & Development Officer - Sarah Barker

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5. Nominations for Representatives on outside Bodies for Year 2025-26

- a. KALC Executive Committee 2 Members and a substitute - Sarah Barker, Tim Shaw and Sue Butterfill as substitute.
- b. T&M Joint Transportation Board - Up to 3 Members - Tim Shaw, Sue Butterfill and Sarah Barker. Chair reported that the September meeting was cancelled. Thanks to Harry, we've had a note from KCC to propose that Parish Councils have a vote. The next JTB is scheduled for 1st December 2025 and we should request Parish voting to be on the agenda.

6. Approval of Minutes from AGM held on 26th September 2024 - Approved

7. Matters Arising & Actions Arising from these minutes - None

8. Approval of the Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 17th July 2025 – Approved

9. Matters arising from the Minutes not otherwise on the agenda - None

10. LGR in Kent

a. Recent Updates (Harry Rayner)

Things are moving along at TMBC. 4 Boroughs of Tunbridge Wells, TMBC, Maidstone and Sevenoaks are aligned in their thinking, and we will know what's in the proposal on 28th November. The Minister will decide in early summer 2026. In Kent there are several issues, Reform has applied for a singular unitary and whilst The Government may not agree, it is the cheapest proposal. Most councils are in favour of 3-tier unitary. West Kent has the least amount of debt. There is £2.25 billion of debt in Kent. East Kent has the lowest council tax but highest adult services and SEND expenses. This area is concerning for the Treasury who would need to bail it out. The 4-unitary option is more expensive to disaggregate services. Some unitaries cost £100 million plus to disaggregate.

It is not too late for Parishes to make representations to TMBC.

A lot of debt is tied with assets, for example, Thanet Way. This cannot be transferred to West Kent. £10 million of this debt is service charges (10%).

There are indications that the government is running out of steam particularly with the resignation of Angela Rayner, so LGR may not happen. We have no idea how debt will be distributed but new unitaries will not want to take on more debt from other areas. Ministers will probably share the debt around. No costings have been done and LGR wasn't in Labour's manifesto so The Prime Minister may decide to not proceed so as not to lose more votes.

Chair said that the KALC website has a lot of information on LGR.

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Future of Area Committees: Chairs have already met and whilst there's not a lot to do now, they have started to look at collaborating and think about how the 4 authorities can work together. There will be Tonbridge Town Council elections in 2027, if this goes ahead, Parishes must consider Powers of Competency to give them more spending power. Chair will encourage KALC to advise on promoting parishes.

11. Climate Change in our Parishes

a. Updates from:

Climate Action Shipborne & Plaxtol - Secretary reported that CASP are still awaiting their £40k grant for their Warmer Homes Project, it is due any day now. A sample of "architype" homes in Shipbourne and Plaxtol will be assessed, and this will help us to put together information for the community on how to better insulate their homes.

West Malling PC Climate Change and Biodiversity Group - Keith reported their Climate Group meets monthly. The next meeting is on 23rd October 7pm at The Clout Institute. They have a variety of guest speakers including Simon Springate (KCC) who will be talking about Kent's Plan Bee. Most talks have 30-40 attendees. Chair asked whether West Malling Parish Council had bought a thermal image camera? They have and it is available for Parishioners to use. Last year they surveyed 12 houses and found a lot of issues are easy to fix, such as loft insulation.

Sandy reported that she was collecting the TMBC thermal camera next week. It was noted that it's not cold enough to use yet as you need a substantial difference between indoor and outdoor temperature to use. Mike was keen to use the camera at Potters Mede.

b. Reports from Parishes on their CC Action Plans & Carbon Footprint - Tom reported that he has got a smart meter in their village hall. He also gave a talk on microplastics which has been sent to the MP who responded to say it was an ecological catastrophe. Microplastics are already in the food chain, there are lots of ways to break them down, but they cannot be captured. Chair asked Tom to summarise his talk for KALC news and the climate forum at TMBC.

Mike said hard plastics are easy to recycle whereas soft plastics can only go via the supermarkets so we should encourage TMBC to incorporate soft plastics into their recycling program.

Chair will pick up the visit to the recycling facility to raise awareness.

It was reported that the Anaerobic Digester is closed but we shouldn't stop recycling food.

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Tim reported that contractors are now rejecting items that aren't correctly recycled.

Mike reported the amount of recycling has fallen because less needs to be recycled.

- c. Report from KALC CC Advisory Committee - Sarah Barker - No information, NALC Climate Change Emergency Network (CEN) - Meets quarterly. SLCC - No information.
- d. Information on Great Collaboration / Place Based Initiative (PBI) - Sarah Barker – Nothing to report

12. TMBC Climate Change Forum

- a. Verbal or written update will be provided at the meeting - No information from Chair or Tom. New CC officer at TMBC - no information.

13. Reports from Meetings

- a. KALC Executive Committee Meeting on 27th July 2025
Minutes were only received on Tuesday and should be on the website.
- b. KALC Executive Committee Agenda 11th October 2025 - Chair and Sue not attending, Tim to check availability. Subscriptions for 2026 will be discussed. The AGM won't contain LGR as submissions won't have gone in. There will a KALC LGR meeting in 2026.
- c. T & M PPP held on 28th August 2025 - Report from Cllr Mary MacKinlay - Not present. Chair recommended asking Mary if you want anything on the PPP agenda.
- d. T & M Joint Transportation Board on 8th September 2025 - Cancelled due to Insufficient Business.

14. Training & Development

An overview of Future Training available from KALC & NALC - All training is KALC News. Chair reported there is a possibility of discounts for smaller parishes. Contact KALC if you want to discuss training for your Councillors.

15. Updates from TMBC and KCC Councillors present at the meeting

David reported the next stage in the Local Plan will be discussed at the Housing and Planning Meeting on 21st October. The consultation will run from the 10th November to the 22nd December (and potentially over Christmas). Mike urged everyone to respond when the consultation starts. Last time 4,000 responses on greenbelt shifted the emphasis of the Plan. It will be well advertised and promoted and there will be as much engagement as people can manage. Sue suggested we ask for James Bailey to extend the deadline

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over Christmas via KALC. This was agreed and the Chair will send an email to Matt Boughton and Eleanor Hoyle.

The London Lionesses proposal for Cobdown is positive but the hockey and croquet clubs are unhappy.

Harry reported that Reform had reported savings yet has overspent £31 million in Adult Services. Reform is finding it difficult to make savings and there is an article in the FT to say that council tax would increase by 5%. There are issues in connection with Environment policies; electric vehicles have not been taken up, and some policies are being watered down. On Combined Members Grants, all members will have £2,500 to spend by March 2026 with application deadline February 2026. Parishes have been invited to put schemes forward and Harry will support the skate park in Wrotham.

16. Proposed Topics for PPP to be held on 20st November 2025

- a. Items to be discussed and agreed at the meeting
 - i. ASB project - Ask Des Keers to come along and explain whether it's been a success. Wendy said Kent Live reported TMBC is one of the only counties where ASB went down.
 - ii. Update on LGR submission
 - iii. Request information on climate change and introduction to the new officer
- b. Future dates for PPP - 5th February 2026

17. Future Meetings of T & M Area Committee

- a. 6th November 2025 at 19:30 Remote Meeting (Teams) - Cllr Matt Boughton and Damian Roberts to present the latest updates for TMBC's LGR submission to Government
- b. Thursday 15th January on Teams

18. Points for Information

- a. Chair to circulate a sheet to Clerks on Monday

18. AOB Chair highlighted the KCC Highways Seminars on the 2nd October (online) and 22nd October at Sessions House. There have been staff changes in public transport and Phillip Lightowler has now left KCC. There's an interim. TFSE - nothing to report.

Close at 21-12

Signed.....

Date.....