

Minutes of a meeting of Bilsington Parish Council held at Bilsington Village Hall on Thursday 4th September 2025 at 7:00pm.

Present: Councillors; L Lawson (Vice-Chair), M Bilham, A Evans and R Thompson.

In attendance: Peter Setterfield, Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer.

Also present: Cllr L Harman (KCC), P New (Neighbourhood Watch) and 2 residents.

1190. **Apologies for absence:**

Cllr S Hudson.

1191. **Declarations of interest:**

There were no declarations of interest.

1192. **Neighbourhood Watch:**

Report attached.

1193. **Kent County Councillor's Report:**

No report submitted.

1194. **Ashford Borough Councillor's Report:**

The Draft Ashford Local Plan is now out for consultation, there will be 6 in person and 1 online event the nearest to Bilsington will be at Mersham on 25th September from 3 pm to 7pm. The draft shows the direction of travel for the plan but there are no definitive allocations for building, the Borough is divided into 5 areas. It has been indicated that 1,000 new homes will be spread between all of the villages.

The other issue that has taken some time is the drainage, contact has been made with the County Councillor to ensure works are undertaken. The residents present advised that KCC's contractor had attended at midnight to clear the drains, it has been indicated by them that the drain had collapsed due to root ingress implying that the hedge needs to be removed (this is within the conservation area and would need planning permission) ideally a root barrier needs to be installed in the drain. The Parish Clerk to communicate with Kent Highways as some of the issue would appear to be the verges are impacting the edge of the road breaking it resulting in debris in the drain.

An update on the Stonestreet Green Solar proposals at Aldington, the Planning Inspector has written to the applicant requesting Statements of Mutual Understanding by 12th September to enable a decision to be made.

1195. **Public Participation:**

Covered within the Borough Council report.

1196. **Minutes:**

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 19th June 2025 were submitted, agreed as a true record and signed by the Vice-Chair.

1197. **Highways:**

In addition to the drains covered within the Borough Council Report, the invoice for the installation of Village entry gates on Ashford Road and Bonnington Road has been received which has been reduced by 50% as Kent Highways grant applied.

1198. **Shepway Energy Park:**

SSE renewables have contacted the Parish Council asking to attend a meeting to present their proposals to the Council, however they are only in the area between the 6th and 9th October.

It was agreed to hold an extra meeting to accommodate.

1199. **Draft Ashford Local Plan:**

Covered within the Borough Councillor's report.

1200. **Planning Matters:**

There were no applications for consideration.

1201. **Finance:**

Schedule of payments:

Staff costs June	£426.96
Staff costs July	£507.52
Staff costs August	£473.73
Clerk's expenses	£168.13
KCC	£2,654.07
Information Commissioner	£47.00
Society of Local Council Clerks	£165.00

Resolved:

- a. To authorise the payments within the schedule,
- b. To add Cllr Evans as an additional signatory to the Bank Accounts, current signing arrangements unaltered.

1202. **Village Hall:**

Nothing to report.

1203. **Other items for information:**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:05pm

REPORT TO BILSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL AUGUST 2025

I will update council on my Neighbourhood Watch work and the trends that we still remain vulnerable to.

CRIME TRENDS

Vehicle crime. cars and vans, nothing whatsoever to be left on show in a parked car anywhere! Vans with tools are a risk please try to park as safe and secure as possible.

Motorbikes and cycle thefts.

Sheds, garages, barns, stables, outbuildings and any form of external storage can be vulnerable.

Internet shopping parcels stolen from doorsteps especially as criminals now follow the vans.

Bogus Callers and Rogue Traders

You must never ever agree to unsolicited work in on your doorstep no matter how cheap and attractive the price.

Scams

There is a scam for everything and anything 365 days a year 24 hours a day. Please take your time and do nothing in a rush. If in doubt do nothing.

VAWAGs. I carry out considerable work on Violence Against Women and Girls.

Vulnerable persons. I carry out work to assist vulnerable persons with my Operation Guardian Angel. This group will be especially targeted by criminals.

Knife Crime and Drugs

These can be linked and never forget that many of the thefts carried out by 'chancer and opportunists' criminals that target the matters in the crime trends above are carried out to fund the purchase drugs

Rural Crime

I am now linking in with the Rural Police Task Force. I am running numerous rural crime themes like horse safety, sheep worrying and fly tipping. Plus working on trends like catapults.

REPORTING

It is essential that all crimes, attempted crimes and failed crimes are reported. So many crimes are not reported and writing on Facebook is not reporting. You must report and get a crime number, that way we can follow up police actions or perceived lack of police actions.

COMMUNICATIONS

I have done considerable work to strengthen my Neighbourhood Watch network.

1. I have met both MPs that cover the Ashford District
2. I have met and set up working relations with the new KCC councillors that cover the whole Ashford district. Some have been NHW members with me for 7 years others we are starting from scratch.
3. I continue to work close with Ashford Borough Councillors
4. I work with as many Parish/ Community Councils as I possibly can as many as 14 meetings a month
5. I write in numerous magazines, and I am always looking for space in parish/community magazines and newsletters
6. I continue to build a very strong NHW data base to communicate directly with residents.
7. I write on about 200 Facebook Groups across the whole of Kent
8. I have started to utilise other communications systems to assist residents for example local WhatsApp groups.

CURRENT CRIME TREND WORK. SPECIAL TARGET AREAS

At this time of year, I am dealing with the following issues that I believe cause concerns, worry, upset and distress in communities.

- 1. CATAPULTS**
- 2. E-SCOOTERS**
- 3. ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR.**
- 1. Catapults**

I have done considerable work on Catapults. Recent work included arranging to meet with the lead officer for Kent Police
Work with National BBC TV and Local BBC TV news. Live broadcast on Radio Kent and I hope to feature in a BBC documentary in September.

I helped to run a government petition to change the law on catapults I secured 25000 signatures. Although that was not enough to trigger a government debate. It did allow a government response to me after 10000 signatures and put me in a strong position to hold local police to account on the communities perceived lack of action. The Police announcing a crackdown last week was a major step forward.

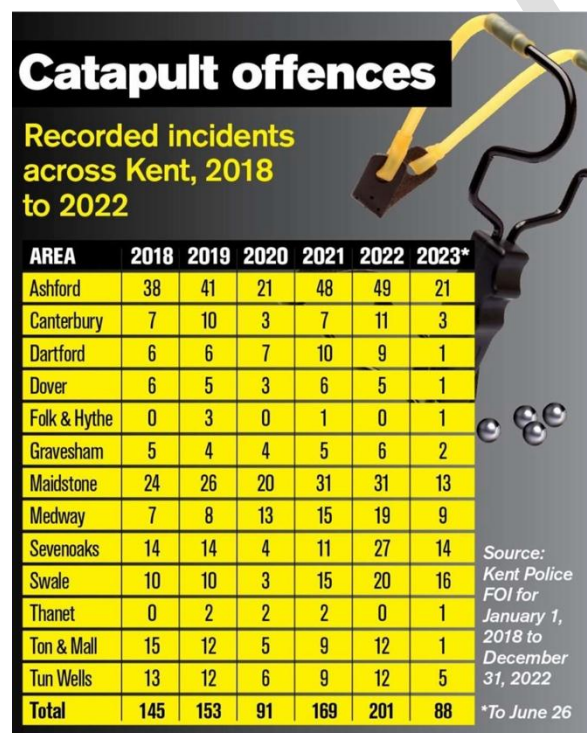
I hope residents have followed my work on this issue and this is now what I am needing from you. **REPORTING INCIDENTS ON 999**

You must report every incident at the time you see it. Turning a blind eye or being too busy does not help at all.

You must make a 999 call then and there when you see these incidents, it is a “999 call “crime in progress”

It is for Force control to manage responses. Do not make the decision the “police are too busy”, “the police won’t come”, “the police won’t do anything”

Make the call, get a crime number and we can follow up police actions.



6 years of data tells its own story, and I feel in recent years the problem has got worse.

2 E-scooters

Ashford police were very slow off the mark as against other districts. A Engage and educate policy saw Ashford District blighted by more and more e-scooters

The PCC position was crystal clear Seize and Crush them and at last now Ashford police are making interceptions and seizing the scooters.

I have also carried out extensive work on the fire safety issue of the e-scooters causing fires when they are being charged. The nearest fatal fire caused to this area was in Faversham.

Again please report when e-scooters are blatantly ridden in communities.

3 Anti Social Behaviour.

A subject that can cause criminal damage, upset, distress and in some cases fear. When a 30-year-old resident is a victim, it is vastly different to a 90 year old victim.

Although seen as a low-level crime it is clear one that causes much concern in communities.

Again, you must report please.

I have been hugely disappointed by Ashford Police attendance across the district to council meetings by police officers and I have raised this with the Crime Commissioner on several occasions.

We were assured when PCSOs were abolished as community officers and replaced by Beat officers PCs there would be no loss of service.

Dear Peter **RE: Beat Police Officers attending council meetings**
Thank you for your email.

Please be advised that the Commissioner met with KALC and the Assistant Chief Constable Nigel Brookes earlier last week and the principle of regular attendance was confirmed again.

He has raised concerns about attendance in Ashford District with the Commander for the area very recently too.

He is taking this matter seriously and hopes the situation improves.

Yours sincerely, Mrs Haleemah MuddasarCasework officer

Office of the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner,

Kent Police, Sutton Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 9BZ Office telephone: 01622 677055
Email: contactyourpcc@kent.police.uk

The agreed standard is for a police officer to attend once every 3 months.

Some areas however have not seen an officer since the new policing model was launched in June 2023, and I work with many councils who have not seen an officer in 4 years.

This is so fundamental to community policing and a subject I will continue to fight for. By attending meetings and linking in with you the council and individual councillors the police would pick up so much valuable and important intelligence and information.

There are two new police sergeants who have arrived in Ashford, and I meet with them regularly and I have found them a breath of fresh air. Sergeant Dan Edge heads up the Beat Officers for the district and Sergeant Jason Bushell heads up the Task force that can be brought to issues and can target specific crime trends.

I am committed to supporting them but will challenge them and hold them to account if policing does not focus on community concerns.

There is no doubt the huge areas covered by Beat Officers puts them under pressure.

It is important when I meet with the police, I pose these very simple questions

1. How can we help you?
2. What do you need from us
3. How can we work better together by getting intelligence and information in so a much more targeted approach to dealing with crime can be made and intelligence lead proactive campaigns are launched

“ Crime cannot prosper on communities that care and are alert and vigilant”.

Thank you, Peter

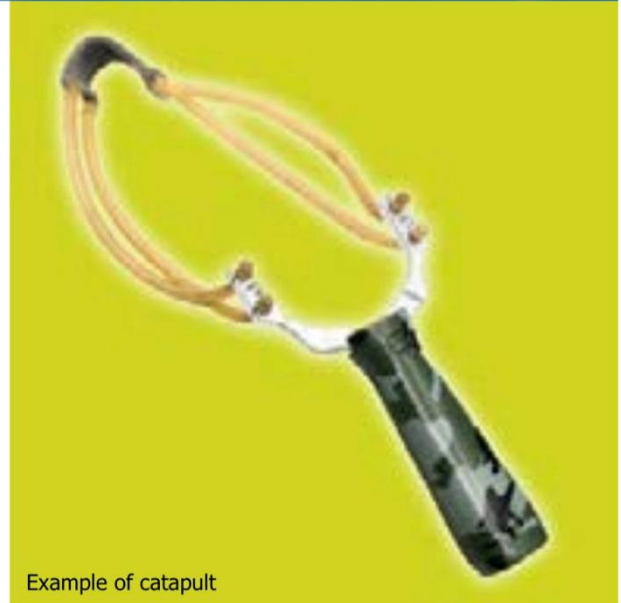
Peter New (peternew1@aol.com) **COMMUNITY NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH**



Catapults – Know the law

Catapults can be classed as offensive weapons.

If you **carry one in public** without a reasonable excuse, you could face up to **four years in prison**.



Example of catapult

If you use it to **threaten** or **injure someone**, or **damage property**, the penalties could be even higher.

Is it worth it?

Remember – A criminal record can change your life.

- You may not be offered a college or university place.
- Getting a job will be more difficult.
- It can even prevent you from travelling to some countries.



**Kent
Police**

Report a non-urgent crime online www.kent.police.uk/report

Talk to us on LiveChat – available 24/7 www.kent.police.uk/contact

In an emergency, if crime is in progress or life is in danger call **999**

If you have a hearing or speech impairment, use our textphone service **18000**.

Or text us on 999 if you've pre-registered with the emergency SMS service.

www.kent.police.uk   



Reporting catapults

Good afternoon,

There has been a very large spike of reports of catapult incidents in the last 6 months, particularly involving youths using them to cause criminal damage or target innocent wildlife. We take these incidents seriously and deal with offenders robustly!

If you see, or are a victim of someone using a catapult for anti-social reasons, whether they have fired it at property, at wildlife or at another person, please call 999 immediately to enable the fastest possible response from us. Reports made via 101 or online are processed too slowly for us to be made aware and then effectively respond, you will not be accused of abusing the 999 system where there is a threat of harm or threat to property.

We only have a small number of eyes and ears and we rely on our communities to expand this for us, together we can help tackle this behaviour. We do not encourage recording of offenders as it can impose a safety risk to yourselves, however if you wish to record or photograph offenders please ensure it is safe to do so. Evidence is vital in supporting prosecutions.

Kindest regards,

Canterbury Community Safety Unit

Kent Police



Protect yourself and others against rogue traders

Most people who call at your home are genuine. But sometimes people may turn up unannounced and try to sell you services or items you do not want or need or carry out unnecessary repairs to your home at inflated prices.

If you're concerned about someone calling at your home, **don't open your door.**

You can:

- Ask for identification and call their company yourself (not on a number they provide) to check they are genuine
- Ask the visitor to return another time when someone can be with you
- Get three written quotes
- Ask family and friends for recommendations
- Agree payment arrangements and start and finish dates in writing beforehand, and never pay in full until you're completely satisfied with the work.

Pressurised selling on your doorstep is a crime and you can report it:

- kent.gov.uk/tradingstandards or call 0808 223 1133
- For advice: citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer

For more information and advice visit kent.police.uk/fraud or email KFAS@ecis.police.uk

Preventing fraud

Together, let's stop scammers.



Remember, ABC:



never Assume



never Believe



always Confirm

Call 159



If you have paid money or shared bank details, contact your bank's fraud team straight away.

Call 159 for the bank hotline. This number connects you directly to your bank.



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Dealing with **rogue traders**

- 1** Research different companies and compare quotes so you know how much you would be expected to pay for a job. Rogue traders will often charge extortionate prices for simple jobs.
- 2** Be wary of leaflets that are posted through your door offering services. Rogue traders will often have incorrect business addresses, and be only contactable by mobile numbers. Ask for identification and take vehicle registrations down and do not be afraid to ask for references.
- 3** Make sure a quote is obtained in writing for the exact work to be completed. Do not give traders an opportunity to subtly damage your property to charge extra (take pictures before and after a quotation if physical inspection is required). Rogue traders like to bill you for items you have not requested.
- 4** Avoid paying money up front and insist in a bank transfer from your bank to theirs using a sort code and account number; do not give them your card details. Avoid paying in cash.
- 5** If you feel something is wrong, do not continue with the work. Trust your instincts. Ask a friend or relative for advice and take your time to make a decision. Rogue traders will try and pressure you into a sale.

Reporting to **Trading Standards**

If you think a business has broken the law or acted unfairly, you can report them to Trading Standards.

Trading Standards use the information you give them to investigate unfair trading and illegal business activity, like rogue traders and scams.

Trading Standards can take businesses to court or stop them operating, but they won't help you fix your problem – for example, they can't help you get a refund.

kent.gov.uk/business/trading-standards



Safe Local Traders

www.kent.gov.uk/tschecked

Trading Standards Checked is Kent County Council's (KCC) safe traders scheme for businesses in the home improvement sector. Together with Kent Police and our members, we aim to prevent financial abuse, stop doorstep criminals and protect residents, especially the vulnerable, from criminal and rogue traders.

Trading Standards Checked carries out thorough checks on traders and is the only scheme vetted by Kent Trading Standards – **tschecked.kent.gov.uk**



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