

MINUTES of the Badgers Mount Parish Council Meeting held on **Thursday 2nd October 2025** in Badgers Mount Memorial Hall at **7.00 pm**.

Meeting attended by: Cllr Plumb, Cllr Dunlop, Cllr Lake, Cllr Grint (late arrival), Cllr Peel (HPC), Cllr Robinson (HPC), Cllr Meaton (HPC), Cllr Clacton (DGPC), Clerk + 19 residents

Meeting commenced: 19:00 hours

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Apologies received from Cllr McCartney. Cllr Grint arrived late.
2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes of the of the Parish Council Meeting held on 4th Sept 2025 approved
3. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS: To receive any disclosure by members of personal interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interests, and whether the member regards the interest to be prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct - Cllr Dunlop declared a non-participation in discussions under item 10.4, as the application concerned his neighbour.
4. PUBLIC SESSION: The session was primarily focused on the Broke Hill Planning Application. Residents expressed strong concerns regarding the scale, environmental impact, and infrastructure strain posed by the proposed development. Several residents requested that the Council formally oppose the application and ensure their objections are represented to the planning authority. A summary of the public comments has been recorded under item 10.1.
5. DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT: The District Councillor reported that at Sevenoaks District Council, the Finance Committee Chair raised concerns over two major development projects—Bevan Place and White Oak Residential—valued between £18–20 million. These were approved by the Cabinet without prior consultation with the Finance Committee. The Council’s external auditors, Grant Thornton, have been notified of potential financial irregularities.
Earlier in the week, BMPC Councillors met with Kent County Councillor Nigel Williams to discuss ongoing issues in Badgers Mount, particularly those affecting the A224. Cllr Williams expressed his support and agreed to escalate the matter within Kent County Council.
6. FINANCE AND STAFFING
 - 6.1. Accounts for Payments approved
 - 6.2. Bank Reconciliation done
 - 6.3. Audited AGAR 2024-25 complete : The Clerk informed the Council that the external audit by Forvis Mazars was completed before 30 September 2025. Two minor issues were noted in the letter of completion: The first one was regarding the timing of the public inspection period. In 2025, the inspection period began on the same day the AGAR was published, rather than the following day as required. Secondly, the variance analysis submitted explain the changes in Box 9 (fixed assets), as this was less than the required 15% variance. The auditors acknowledged potential confusion in their template and requested full explanations for future submissions. The audited AGAR and the letter of completion were uploaded to the Council website prior to the 30 September deadline.
7. CHAIRMAN’S REPORT -
8. CLERKS REPORTS
 - 8.1. Changing BMPC domain & email to Gov.uk : The Clerk confirmed that the application for the official domain *badgermountparishcouncil.gov.uk* had been approved in accordance with government best practices. The Council agreed to transition all Councillor and Clerk email addresses to the new .gov.uk domain to enhance transparency and security.
 - 8.2. Saturday Freighter Service: Sevenoaks District Council has confirmed that the Saturday freighter service will operate as scheduled on 1 November 2025.
 - 8.3. LGR in Kent & Medway – feedback requested from SDC on delivering services differently: A draft response to the LGR consultation has been prepared and circulated by the Clerk. Councillors were invited to review and provide feedback ahead of submission.

- 8.4. Plan 2042 – locations of SDC’s call for land (DIAC): Strategic Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). The Council reviewed the latest call for land under SHELAA. One site within the parish has been listed by SDC, classified for employment use. The Parish Council will continue to monitor developments and assess any future implications.
- 8.5. Parking concerns in the village (various locations) – Response from Kent Highways : The Council discussed ongoing parking issues at various locations within the village specifically near the junction of Highland Road & the A224. A response from Kent Highways indicated that signage requests must be added to the Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) and reviewed through standard procedures. Currently, efforts are focused on reducing the speed limit on the By-Pass. Any signage installation would require approval from the Streetworks team, who may refer the matter back to Highways. Kent Highways suggested contacting telecom and parcel delivery companies directly if their vehicles are causing obstruction. In cases of dangerous parking, residents are advised to contact the police.
9. AMENITIES/PROJECTS/SAFETY
- 9.1. Maintenance of Bus Shelters and Millennium sign: Cllr Plumb raised concerns regarding the condition of two bus shelters on Old London Road, particularly those with rusting metal panels. He highlighted the cost implications of replacing wooden shelters and suggested exploring alternatives. The Millennium sign was also noted to require cleaning and repainting, with potential structural issues in the timber post. A proposal was made to turn the refurbishment into a community-led mosaic project. The Council welcomed the idea and requested a formal proposal be submitted for consideration at the next meeting.
- 9.2. Salt Bags from Kent Highways: Kent Highways issued a call for salt bag orders. Cllr Plumb confirmed that existing supplies are sufficient to fill the bins at present. With existing stocks it would seem that no new order is necessary(weather depending!).
- 9.3. Damaged streetlight near BM roundabout: The Clerk reported that a streetlight near the Badgers Mount roundabout was damaged in a recent accident. The unit has since been removed for safety reasons.
10. PLANNING:
- 10.1. 25/02129/OUT - Former Broke Hill Golf Club Sevenoaks Road. : Outline application (with all matters reserved except for access) for up to 660 dwellings (Use Class C3), a retirement village of up to 150 units (Use Class C2) and care home Class C2) together with a primary school, local centre, cafe and country park with associated car parking and landscaping. Deadline: 25/10/2025.
The Council and residents held an extended discussion regarding the proposed development. The following key concerns were raised:
- **Unsustainable Scale and Population Growth**
 - The proposal would nearly quadruple the current housing stock of approximately 750 homes, potentially increasing the population from 1,700 to over 6,000.
 - Residents expressed that such growth is disproportionate for a semi-rural area and would fundamentally alter the character of Badgers Mount.
 - **Infrastructure and Access Limitations**
 - Existing infrastructure is inadequate to support the proposed scale of development.
 - Concerns were raised about weight restrictions and the structural integrity of Victorian-era bridges in the area.
 - Road access is already strained, with residents reporting difficulty exiting driveways during peak hours.
 - The closure of the A21 has exacerbated traffic congestion, and the development would further increase vehicular pressure.
 - **Impact on Local Services**
 - The development includes a primary school and care facilities, but there is scepticism about the feasibility of staffing and operating these services.
 - GP surgeries and NHS services are already under strain, and no clear plan has been presented to address increased demand.
 - Water supply issues were highlighted, particularly referencing recent disruptions in Fort Halstead and recurring shortages in nearby areas.

- **Ecological and Environmental Concerns**
 - The developer's ecological survey was challenged, particularly the classification of the site as "modified grasslands," which residents believe misrepresents the true biodiversity of the area.
 - The potential loss of green belt land and natural habitats was a major concern, especially in light of recent government shifts in green belt policy.
 - **Developer Intentions and Transparency**
 - The application proposes 50% social housing, but attendees questioned the developer's commitment to delivering this proportion.
 - There was a general sentiment that the developer's motivations are profit-driven, with limited regard for local needs or long-term community benefit.
 - No detailed plans were provided for how social housing would be integrated or managed.
 - Suggestions for discounted housing for local families were discussed, but no guarantees or mechanisms were offered.
 - **Call to Action**
 - Residents were encouraged to submit formal objections to the planning authority, citing specific concerns around infrastructure, ecological impact, traffic, and service provision.
 - The Parish Council will explore potential legal avenues and regulatory measures to challenge the application.
 - Attendees were advised to raise objections individually and collectively, ensuring that all concerns are documented and considered during the planning review process.
- 10.2. 25/01285/REM - DSTL Fort Halstead Crow Drive Kent TN14 7BU. Reserved matters application Kent TN14 7HR (details relating to appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) pursuant to condition 5 of hybrid planning permission (in outline) 19/05000/HYB for Phase 1 (RM01) works comprising Polhill Roundabout and a section of Crow Drive, with associated infrastructure including landscaping, and to comply with conditions 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 15 and 55. Deadline 9/10/2025 – The Parish Council raised no objections to the soft landscaping proposals but requested clarification regarding the access approach to London Furniture Company, which was unclear in the submitted drawings.
- 10.3. 25/02540/FUL - Retreat House Polhill Kent TN14 7AA. Use of building as larger HMO for 8 persons. Deadline 7/10/2025 - Application for use of the building as a larger HMO for 8 persons. The Parish Council reaffirmed its previous objections, noting that the concerns remain valid despite the inclusion of three additional parking spaces.
- 10.4. 25/02562/MMA - Druids Oak Milton Avenue Badgers Mount Kent TN14: Amendment to 25/00318/HOUSE to raise the eaves to the northern elevation and alteration to fenestration. Deadline 8/10/2025 - Minor material amendment to raise the eaves and alter fenestration. The Council had no objections, as the changes do not impact neighbouring properties and will benefit the homeowner.
- 10.5. 25/02729/WTPO: Bowens Folly Badgers Road Badgers Mount Kent TN14 7AY. Twin-stemmed Oak tree; reduce height by 4m and width by up to 4m. For info only. Noted

Meeting closed: 21:45 hours