



BOBBING PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Wednesday 3rd December 2025

Present:

Cllr. G. Randall	Sarah Poole - Clerk
Cllr. R. Richardson	Cllr. M. Bencych
Cllr. S. Chapman	

2 Parishioners, PC Jacob and guest speakers Robin Johnson, Eva Rath and George Ilesfrom from RWE Renewables UK Solar and Storage Limited

BPCM25/26 – 131 **Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

Cllr. Randall welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending tonight. Apologies were received from Cllr. Baldock, Cllr. Twardochleb, Cllr. Watson, Borough Councillors Cllr. Cavanagh, due to Swale Borough Council meeting, County Councillor Cllr. Palmer, Cllr. Blake-Knowles, the Parish Council has resolved to waive Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 (Vacation of Office by Failure to Attend Meetings) for Cllr. Lewis Blake-Knowles due to family matters. Under Section 85(1) of the Act, a member of a local authority who fails to attend any meeting for a consecutive six-month period ceases to be a member unless their absence is approved by the authority before the expiry of that period. As this is a matter for the Parish Council and not Swale Borough Council or the Monitoring Officer, the Council has resolved to approve Cllr. Blake-Knowles absence on the grounds of emergency family matters, ensuring he retains his position while these family matters are present. This resolution **RESOLVED** accepted. All agreed.

BPCM25/26 – 132 **Public Session**

as per our Standing Orders 3 f, g & h and shall not exceed 30 minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting. An individual member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting. The chairman of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.

A parishioner raised ongoing concerns regarding road safety along Sheppey Way near Stickfast Lane. The parishioner reported that a boundary wall at the property had been struck by vehicles on more than fourteen occasions over the past ten years. The parishioner stated that the removal of the wall would likely result in vehicles colliding with parked cars or the property itself.

A detailed discussion took place, with councillors expressing significant concern that Sheppey Way is a recognised accident hot spot and that failure to implement safety measures could result in serious injury or loss of life. Cllr. Richardson confirmed that the matter had previously been raised with the local Member of Parliament.



The attending PC Jacob confirmed that the matter would be referred to the local beat officer for further action, including undertaking speed monitoring in the area and carrying out additional patrols and drive-through observations.

Cllr. Chapman reported that this issue would be taken forward at the forthcoming Joint Transportation Board (JTB) meeting on Monday.

BPCM25/26 – 133 **To receive any report from Borough Councillor**

Cllr. Mike Baldock, Cllr Ann. Cavanagh, Cllr. Lloyd Chapman, Cllr. Roger Clarke and Cllr. James Hunt.

A written report was received from Cllr. Ann Cavanagh. Cllr. Cavanagh reported regular attendance at Heather House’s Chatty Café and participation in a range of council briefings and meetings during November, including sessions on KCC Highways, Planning Committee, Full Council, Carbon Literacy training, and procedures for managing illegal encampments. Cllr. Cavanagh also attended a Sittingbourne Heritage Museum presentation supported by a Member’s Grant contribution, along with the Western Area Committee.

Cllr. Cavanagh confirmed planned attendance at Kite College on 3rd December 2025 and a meeting of the Community Governance Review Steering Group. Ongoing casework for residents continues. Cllr. Cavanagh reported that the Highsted Inquiry has concluded, with a final decision expected in 2026, and extended Christmas greetings to the Parish Council.

An apology for absence was received from Cllr. Mike Baldock, who was required to chair a Community Governance Review meeting at Swale House. No reports were received from Cllr. Lloyd Chapman, Cllr. Roger Clarke or Cllr. James Hunt.

BPCM25/26 – 134 **To receive any report from County Councillor**

A written report was received from Cllr. Palmer, Kent County Council Councillor, providing an end-of-year update. Cllr. Palmer offered apologies for absence due to commitments in the role of Chairman of Kent County Council and extended Christmas and New Year greetings to the Parish Council.

Cllr. Palmer reported that Kent County Council continues to face significant financial pressures, with work underway to reduce debt and achieve savings while maintaining services. Key achievements during 2025 included:

- A £67 million reduction in KCC debt and delivery of substantial savings and income targets.
- Commencement of a £67 million investment in road repairs, including one of the largest pothole repair programmes nationally.
- Development of the first KCC Commercial Strategy and reforms to Member allowances.
- Progress on Local Government Reorganisation proposals, placing Kent residents and taxpayers at the centre of planning.
- Delivery of major improvements across Adult Social Care, Children’s Services, SEND, Highways, Communities and Economic Development.



- Further highlights included the expansion of SEND school places, improvements to home-to-school transport planning, enhanced road maintenance, the launch of “My Kent Highways” reporting, community safety initiatives, investments in regeneration, support programmes for families, and the establishment of new early help and fostering initiatives.

Cllr. Palmer also outlined achievements in environmental services, including the introduction of re-use shops at Household Waste Recycling Centres, and confirmed that reforms to SEND processes are already improving communication and efficiency. Updates were provided on Adult Social Care partnership working with the NHS, including changes to aftercare funding arrangements.

BPCM25/26 – 135 **To receive any report from to receive any report from PC Skye Williams and PC Jacob Boosey - The Meads awaiting information on who is covering Archers Park and Grove Park**

PC Jacob Boosey attended the meeting and provided an update. Confirmation is still awaited regarding which officer will cover Archers Park and Grove Park.

Key points reported:

- **Upcoming engagement:** PC Boosey will be in the Jenny Wren and Quartz Way area on 19 December 2025 at 20:00 for festive-season engagement.
- **Crime overview:** No significant trends identified; most incidents this month were domestic-related.
- **Applegarth Road:** Ongoing drug-related issues. Recent enforcement action included a vehicle pursuit and seizure which has reduced activity, although some low-level NOS use continues.
- **Quartz Way:** A known dealing vehicle was stopped; the suspect received a conditional caution and drugs were seized.
- **Residential burglary:** A messy-search burglary was reported; residents are reminded to secure their homes over the festive period.
- **Youth safety:** Discussions with KCC are underway regarding improving lighting and safety under the Bristol Close railway tunnel.
- **Youth engagement:** A Tech Zone Gaming Bus visit is planned for **2 January 2026**.

Councillors noted the report and thanked PC Boosey for coming on his day off to give a report.

BPCM25/26 – 136 **For Members to make or receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Non-Pecuniary Interests in regard to any items on the agenda under the Council’s adopted Code of Conduct**

In accordance with the Parish Council’s adopted Code of Conduct, Cllr. Chapman declared an interest in the invoice relating to garden work carried out during the summer months and confirmed that Cllr. Chapman would abstain from the vote when the payment was considered.



BPCM25/26 – 137 Approval and Adoption of Minutes from the previous meetings Minutes of the Council Meeting on 5th November 2025.

These were all circulated before the meeting all agreed. Cllr. Bencych proposed, and Cllr. Richardson seconded all agreed. All agreed. **Resolved: Accepted.** The Chairman duly signed the Minutes.

BPCM25/26 – 138 Presentation by Robin Johnson, Development Project Manager at RWE Renewables UK Solar and Storage Limited

Cllr. Randall introduced Robin Johnson, Development Project Manager at RWE Renewables UK Solar and Storage Ltd, accompanied by colleagues George Iles and Eva Rath.

The presentation commenced at 19:33 and provided a detailed overview of the proposed Raspberry Solar Farm. The project team outlined:

- Site layout and design, including panel configuration, access arrangements, screening plans and substation location.
- Environmental enhancements, such as the creation of wildflower meadows, additional hedgerow planting, habitat corridors, and biodiversity net gain measures.
- Public Rights of Way (PROW) improvements, including proposed surfacing upgrades, visibility enhancements and opportunities for better connectivity.
- Construction timelines, covering the anticipated start date, phased works, traffic management plans and expected duration of the build.
- Community benefits, including potential funding opportunities, long-term landscape improvements and ongoing engagement with local stakeholders.

Councillors raised questions regarding traffic impact during construction, noise levels, long-term site management, visual impact, ecological monitoring and how RWE intends to maintain regular community communication. The project team responded to each query, providing clarification on mitigation measures, regulatory controls, environmental monitoring processes and opportunities for further discussion as the project advances.

The presentation concluded at 20:03, and Cllr. Randall thanked Robin, George and Eva for their comprehensive and informative briefing and for their continued engagement and support to Bobbing Parish Council as the project progresses.

BPCM25/26 – 139 Matters arising from the minutes not covered by other agenda items.

a) Update on Kitchen Quote for the Village Hall. Cllr. Richardson

This item was deferred to a future meeting as no further information is currently available. Cllr. Richardson continues to liaise with contractors and is expected to provide an update at the next meeting.



b) Defibrillator update Cllr. Chapman

The Clerk provided an update following discussions held at the recent Clerks' Meeting regarding new defibrillators, associated cabinets and aftercare provision. A detailed quotation was received from Hopkins, outlining three fully installed, turn-key package options:

- Option A: Fixed 200-joule output £2,042.10
- Option B: Variable 360-joule output £1,854.30
- Option C: Variable output up to 360 joules with CPR Insight £2,739.00

All options include full installation, a heated and lit external cabinet, consumables, warranties, training for up to 12 people, and the first year of AED governance aftercare.

Councillors considered the information provided. Option B was proposed by Cllr. Richardson, seconded by Cllr. Randall, all agreed. Accepted, **RESOLVED**.

BPCM25/26 – 140 Community Engagement

a. Report on Loneliness Project 29th November 10.30-12.30 then last Saturday of each month.

The Clerk reported that the Loneliness Project Café held on 29th November was attended by approximately 18 residents. The Mayor of Swale, Cllr. Watson, attended and parishioners expressed appreciation for the event. Borough Cllr. Lee-Ann Moore also attended and commented that this initiative could be replicated in other areas of the borough. The Café will continue to run on the last Saturday of each month.

b. Feedback on Repair Café 8th November which is the second Saturday of each month 10.00-14.00

Cllr. Richardson reported that the Repair Café was very well attended, with residents bringing a variety of items for repair, including a vacuum cleaner and an antique table. Thanks were recorded to Uwe and Graham for their support in completing the repairs. Cllr. Richardson encouraged additional volunteers with repair skills to join the team.

c. Christmas Dinner project.

The Clerk confirmed that approximately 50 application forms had been printed for Cllr. Chapman and suggested that they could be distributed via Swale CVS (<https://www.swalecvs.org.uk/>). Additional forms are included within the winter newsletter. Responses will be monitored to determine uptake. Cllr. Bencych will bring a smaller Gas bottle for the project.

d. Winter Newsletter distribution update.

Cllr. Richardson expressed concern that the same individuals were consistently undertaking newsletter deliveries, as well as the meetings and community events. Distribution areas were agreed as follows:

– Cllr. Richardson: The Meads



- Cllr. Bencych: Archers Park
- Cllr. Randall: Outlying areas
- The Clerk will enquire whether Cllr. Watson can deliver to Grove.

e. Digital Friends initiative

The Clerk reported on attendance at the Digital Friends training for Parish Councils, delivered by Kent County Council, which provides support for volunteers acting as Digital Champions and Energy Champions. The training introduces tools to tackle digital exclusion, support community resilience, and reduce loneliness

The Clerk has signed up to the Digital Champion Network and received onboarding communications from KCC officers Abigail Levitt and Archie Veasey. Once onboard steps are complete, the Parish Council will have access to training, resources, webinars, and ongoing support. The Energy Champion training package includes guidance on energy efficiency, grants, carbon monoxide awareness and the Priority Services Register

Archie Veasey confirmed he would be pleased to meet with the Parish Council in the New Year.

BPCM25/26 – 141

General matters raised by Parish Councillor's Reports for discussion.

Cllr. Chapman raised concerns regarding ongoing health and safety risks caused by pigeon fouling beneath the A249 bridge. Swale Borough Council confirmed that responsibility lies with Kent Highways/Kent County Council. Cllr. Chapman will formally raise this matter at the upcoming Joint Transportation Board (JTB) meeting.

Cllr. Chapman also reported continuing speeding issues on Sheppey Way, particularly involving HGV movements to and from local depots. Cllr. Chapman intends to present the following proposals to the JTB:

- Introduction of a solid white line to prevent parking opposite the school;
- Exploration of a designated parent parking area, potentially supported through Section 106 contributions;
- Installation of village gateway features, reduced speed limits, and other traffic-calming measures to reinforce Bobbing's village identity and improve child safety.

Cllr. Bencych reported assisting with the Christmas sleigh rounds while they were visiting Archers Park.

Cllr. Richardson reported that he attended the Remembrance Service, laying the wreath on behalf of the Parish Council, accompanied by the Clerk. Cllr. James Hunt laid the wreath on behalf of Swale Borough Council.

Cllr. Richardson also attended the Church Christmas Fair at Bobbing Village Hall and the Friendship Café.



Cllr. Randall reported that he has been supporting activities associated with the Sittingbourne Community Santa Sleigh Rounds, assisting with community engagement across the festive period.

BPCM25/26 – 142 Financial Statement and Authorisation of Payments

a. The Clerk will make payments under the delegated powers of the Clerk/RFO and to seek approval of any additional payments as necessary.

The Clerk outlined the financial transactions scheduled for processing following the meeting, all recorded on the Scribe accounting platform. It was confirmed that Cllr. Richardson has full access to reconciliations and payment records within the system.

Several payments made by Direct Debit or Standing Order had already been processed under the delegated authority of the Clerk/RFO. The Parish Council was asked to approve these payments alongside all remaining transactions requiring authorisation within the bank account.

It was proposed by Cllr. Richardson and seconded by Cllr. Bencych that all payments be authorised. Cllr. Chapman abstained. **RESOLVED:** Accepted.

The Clerk reported that the Unity Trust Bank balance prior to the processing of payments stood at £94,590.82. Payment instructions have been prepared online, and all Councillors with banking access were requested to log in and complete authorisations.

The Clerk confirmed that the Unity Trust Bank balance stood at £99,309.54 prior to the processing of the listed payments. Payment instructions had been prepared online, and all Councillors with banking access were requested to log in and complete the authorisations.

b. BT Contract due for renewal

The Clerk presented the renewal information received from BT for the Parish Council's broadband and digital phone line service. The minimum term ends on 15th December 2025, with the current monthly charge of £50.13 (ex VAT) rising to £71.13 (ex VAT) if no action is taken.

Two alternative BT packages were discussed in detail, alongside pricing and service features.

Cllr. Bencych proposed that the Council also review broadband options available through bOnline (<https://www.bonline.com/24mbps-unlimited-broadband/>) before making a final decision.

The item was deferred pending comparison of costs and service levels.



c. What the precept means to Parishioners

The Clerk provided full details to Councillors regarding the Parish precept funds agreed at the previous meeting, outlining the services delivered and the impact on individual households. Based on the proposed 2026/27 precept, a Band D property in Bobbing Parish would contribute £65.34 per year, representing an increase of £11.91. This equates to approximately £5.45 per month, £1.26 per week or £0.18 per day.

Councillors agreed that presenting the precept in this format would help residents better understand the value of Parish Council services and the minimal daily cost to households. The Clerk will prepare a public notice and display this information on the Parish noticeboards and other communication channels.

d. New laptop for the Clerk

Councillors discussed the need to replace the Clerk's existing laptop due to performance issues and the increasing demands of administrative and financial software.

Following consideration of suitable models, it was proposed by Cllr. Randall and seconded by Cllr. Bencych that the Parish Council buy a new laptop. All agreed **RESOLVED**: Accepted.

BPCM25/26 – 143

Planning Application – viewable on: Swale:

<http://pa.midkent.gov.uk/onlineapplications>;

- a. ***Just for note:*** Application No: 22/503654/EIOUT Location: Land To The West Of Bobbing Sittingbourne Kent ME9 8QL Proposal: Outline application (all matters reserved except for access) for a mixed used development comprising up to 2,500 dwellings, a 5.21 ha commercial employment zone including doctors' surgery, a 4.35 ha sports hub (and sports pitches), 3FE primary school, community facilities, local retail provision, public open space, children's play areas and associated parking, servicing, utilities, footpath and cycle links, drainage, ground and other infrastructure.

The application was noted by the Parish Council.

- b. Planning Application Ref. No: 25/504231/FULL **Refurbishment of the restaurant with the minor reconfiguration of the elevations, to include a small extension, new access door, updated drive thru booths, glazing and aluminium cladding with redecoration of column casings and frames in RAL 7022 and associated works to the site. Installation of replacement Height restrictor (finished black) and Replacement Container in the car park.** Mcdonalds Sheppey Way Bobbing Kent ME9 8RZ



The application was discussed in detail. Cllr. Randall proposed that Bobbing Parish Council raise no objection to the application, Cllr. Bencych seconded the proposal, all agreed **RESOLVED** accepted.

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Appeals:

No appeals were advised.

BPCM25/26 – 145

Consultations

The Clerk reminded Councillors that a consultation had been received from Swale Borough Council for awareness and consideration. Councillors were asked to review the consultation and respond individually.

The consultation relates to the Council's draft Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Lettings Policy, which proposes how discounts may be applied to charities and not-for-profit organisations seeking to rent Council-owned properties. The policy introduces a revised points-based system, with potential rent reductions of up to 90% for organisations demonstrating significant community benefit and alignment with Borough priorities.

Key proposed changes include:

- Introduction of an online application process for ease of use.
- A clearer and updated points-based assessment system.
- Alignment with recently updated Council policies.
- Strengthened requirements for evidence of safeguarding and Prevent strategies.

The policy does not apply to Swale House, leases exceeding 25 years, or community assets where an organisation exists solely to manage the asset.

Councillors were encouraged to review the consultation document and provide feedback via swale.gov.uk/vcs-policy-consultation before the closing date of Wednesday 17 December 2025

BPCM25/26 – 146

Correspondence

a) Swale Footpaths Group – ZR109 Inquiry

The Clerk reported correspondence from the Planning Inspectorate regarding the forthcoming Inquiry into Public Footpath ZR109. Further Statements of Case were received, including representations from Mr Alan Smith (raising safety concerns) and Mr Gareth Randall (supporting the proposed diversion), along with Network Rail's justification for closing Simpsons Level Crossing. Councillors noted the documents and the Inquiry date of 14 January 2026 at Bobbing Village Hall 09.00-17.00.

b) Kent Downs Management Plan Consultation

The Clerk confirmed receipt of correspondence promoting the Kent Downs Management Plan Review 2026–2031. Materials were provided to Cllr. Randall for noticeboards, and Councillors agreed to promote the survey through parish communication channels.



c) Highways & Transportation Seminar Q&A

KCC confirmed that two questions raised by the Clerk at the October seminar relating to Grovehurst/Jacksons' delays and Lower Road safety were omitted from the published Q&A. Responses are being prepared. Councillors noted the update.

d) Defibrillator Bleed Kits

Councillors approved the purchase of two Community Trauma Bleed Kits, one for the Co-op defibrillator and one for the new Village Hall unit. Proposed by Cllr. Randall, seconded by Cllr. Richardson. All agreed **RESOLVED**. Accepted

e) Website Forms Add-On

The Clerk reported that the optional website forms module costs £50 + VAT per year. Councillors noted the information for future consideration.

f) Community Resilience Plan

Councillors agreed to begin development of a parish-level Community Resilience Plan. A working group was formed: Cllr. Richardson, Cllr. Randall, Cllr. Chapman, Uwe and the Clerk.

g) Letter re Pigeon Farm

The Clerk reported receipt of an anonymous letter from a parishioner expressing concerns about conditions and activities at Pigeon Farm. As no contact details were provided, the Parish Council is unable to respond directly. Councillors noted that this matter remains part of an ongoing multi-agency investigation led by Swale Borough Council and Kent County Council, and that the Parish Council does not hold the enforcement powers required to intervene independently.

h) Website Update

The Clerk reported that the new parish website is progressing, with remaining content to be finalised by Cllr. Bencych and the Clerk for a January launch.

i) Community Governance Review (CGR)

Correspondence from Swale Borough Council confirmed that Bobbing Parish Council's proposed boundary adjustments have been included in submissions to the Councillors Steering Group. The Clerk clarified the boundary lines submitted.

j) Missed Bin Collections – Bristol Close

A parishioner reported ongoing missed collections due to parking obstruction associated with Aspire School, causing safety issues and access problems. The Clerk will raise the matter with Swale Borough Council and Cllr. James Hunt and request intervention.



k) Southeast SEND Guide

Councillors agreed to obtain printed copies of the Southeast SEND Guide 2025/26 for the noticeboards and Bobbing Village Hall. The Clerk will arrange this.

l) Loneliness in Swale Survey 2025

SCVS shared the borough-wide Loneliness Survey reporting significant levels of loneliness and identifying barriers such as rural isolation and digital exclusion. Councillors noted the findings and agreed they support ongoing loneliness initiatives within the parish.

m) CPRE Kent – Membership

Councillors approved joining CPRE Kent to support planning-related representation, particularly in relation to the Bobbing Garden City proposal. Proposed by Cllr. Richardson, seconded by Cllr. Randall. All agreed **RESOLVED**. Accepted.

n) Kent Archives – Dr Barrie Cook Lecture

Correspondence was received regarding a lecture titled “The Coin Hoards of Medieval Kent, 1180–1560” on 24 February 2026 at Westgate Hall, Canterbury. Councillors agreed to promote the event via parish noticeboards and online channels.

BPCM25/26 – 147 Training Reports

a) Forecasting, Budgeting & Setting the Precept – 3rd December 2025

The Clerk reported attendance at the Scribe training session *Forecasting, Budgeting & Setting the Precept for Local Councils*, held on 3rd December 2025. The session covered statutory budgeting requirements, forecasting methods, reserves management and calculation of the precept. Supporting materials have been circulated for use by the Finance Working Group.

b) KALC Clerks Conference – 13th November 2025

The Clerk attended the KALC Clerks Conference at Lenham Community Centre. The event focused on resilience in clerking, including accessibility, Local Government Reorganisation, digital tools, funding and wellbeing. Presentations included sessions on website compliance, clerk wellbeing, funding options and the future role of digital technology in local councils.

c) Digital Champion Network

The Clerk reported participation in the Digital Friends / Digital Champion Network session delivered by Kent County Council. The initiative provides training and resources to help Parish Councils address digital exclusion. The Clerk is now registered with the programme and will receive onboarding and access to Digital Champion resources.



d) Website Accessibility Training – 28th October 2025

The Clerk reported attendance at Aubergine’s Website Accessibility training. The session covered techniques for identifying and correcting accessibility issues in Parish Council website content, ensuring compliance with statutory accessibility requirements.

BPCM25/26 – 148 Reports from representatives

a) Village Hall Committee

No update was received.

b) Local KALC – Rural Parishes

Cllr. Twardochleb and the Clerk reported that the next meeting is scheduled for February 2026.

c) Friends of Rose Hill

Cllr. Baldock reported that no update was available.

d) The Meads Community Woodland

No report was received.

e) Joint Transportation Board (JTB)

Cllr. Chapman will attend the meeting scheduled for 8th December 2025 at 17:30. The Clerk noted that the published agenda pack includes items such as Traffic Regulation Order objections, the Highways Work Programme, and active travel updates.

f) Western Area Committee – 27th November 2025

Cllr. Richardson and Cllr. Bencych was scheduled to attend; however, no representative from Bobbing Parish Council was present. The Clerk confirmed that the Public Document Pack was available, containing reports on the 2026/27 Budget, Local Government Reorganisation, the Community Governance Review, bus partnership updates, and the public toilet consultation outcomes.



g) Swale Liaison Forum – 2nd December 2025

The Clerk attended the online meeting and reported on the main items discussed, including:

- A parish council briefing on the Tax Base
- An update on Local Government Reform
- An update on the Community Governance Review

The meeting was held via Microsoft Teams, and parish councils were reminded of the confidential nature of the supporting documentation.

BPCM25/26 – 149 Recommendations to next Full Council

Cllr. Richardson proposed that the Parish Council consider entering into a Resolution Contract for gardening and maintenance services at Bobbing Village Hall. It was agreed that this recommendation would be brought forward to the next Full Council meeting for decision.

An update on the Parish Council website project will also be presented to the next Full Council meeting, including progress to date and the remaining actions required ahead of the planned January launch.

CLOSED SESSION – No Public allowed during this session.

BPCM25/26 – 150 Discussion from last meeting re Clerk hours worked.

BPCM25/26 – 151 Dates of Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 7th January 2026 at 19:00.

BPCM25/26 – 152 Closure of Meeting

The meeting closed at 21.17

These minutes are certified to be a true and just record.

Signed: _____

Date: _____