REPORT TO WOULDHAM PARISH COUNCIL 3rd November 2026

By the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Councillors for

Aylesford North and North Downs Ward
Councillors Dave Davis, Alex McDermott and Roger Dalton

LOCAL GOVERNEMENT REORGANISATION

LOCAL PLAN

1. Many thanks for all your help in Wouldham and Peters Village to publicise the Regulation 19 Consultation across the two villages.

2. The Consultation finished at 23:59hrs on Monday 26th October and we must wait and see what the Planning Inspectors come up with for the final plan.

PETERS VILLAGE SURGERY

3. It is good to see, at long last, that there seems to be progress being made on the Peters Village Surgery. It is early days and we must see how this progresses.

WOULDHAM RIVER WALL.

4. Thank you for raising the Wouldham River Wall by Trafalgar Close at your last meeting. You probable know that Cllr Dave Davis is a Chartered Civil Engineer and well able to discuss this issue and has done in the last month with the engineers at TMBC.

5. The river wall is a highly significant engineering structure that was probably put in between the two World Wars. For the past 30 years or so it has shown signs of minor superficial wear and tear to be expected in any structure like this. Failure would be a serious event and so the system requires effective management and that process is in place and has been for many years. TMBC employs a firm of consulting engineers to monitor this structure . The programme at present is to visually inspect the wall and its surroundings every 3 months and to survey it with instruments to see what movement is in the wall.

6. Movement of the wall is absolutely normal in a cycle of the tide from high tide to low tide back to high tide. Taking measurements at low tide year on year indicates long term movements that are so small that they are insignificant in engineering terms. The wall movement over the past year for example is 3mm vertically and 6 mm horizontally. That is so small that it could well be the errors expected in the instruments and the readings. The basic finding is that this wall is sound now and should be for many years to come.

7. The wall is not total impervious and as such there will be water movement through gaps and from below and above and round the sides of the wall. This will cause a different type of failure, the slow erosion of the soil from behind the wall as happened a few years ago. This is not the wall failing but normal soil movement requiring minor remedial work every few years as happen recently

8. For the foreseeable future, the 3 monthly visual inspection and the yearly survey of actual movement is the necessary and sound management plan for what is a very stable structure.

WOULDHAM SPECIAL EXPENSES

9. At your last meeting you raised the Wouldham special expenses charge on Wouldham Council Taxpayers.

10. We asked the following questions:

a. What are they spent on in Wouldham?

b. How are they accounted for in terms of matching the work done for the costs ie do TMBC make a surplus and where does that go?

c. Is it possible for Wouldham to take on the work and do it themselves?

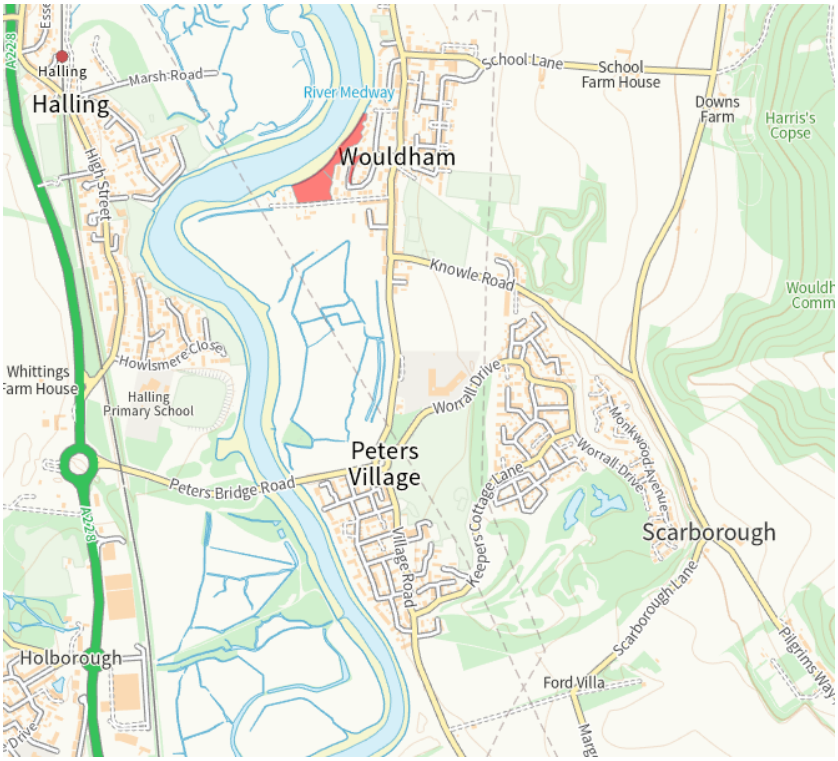
11. We got the following answers:

a. For the 2026/27 budget Wouldham parish residents were charged £8,922 or £6.58 per band D property for Special Expenses.

b. The charge is in respect of open space owned by the TMBC Council in Wouldham, shown in pink on the map below, primarily along the river wall. The charge is based upon the proportion charged for the Grounds Maintenance Contract which commenced in 2025, including the officer time and the capital costs associated with the footpath along the river walk.

c. The charges are based upon the original estimate for public open spaces. TMBC Council bears the risk of variance on cost but does not make a surplus on the expenses charged.

d. For the Parish Council to undertake the work themselves, the Parish Council would need to make a request the transfer the parcel of land from the TMBC Borough Council. To ensure that public safety is maintained the Parish Council would also need to demonstrate that they have the resources and relevant knowledge in maintaining the areas prior to the transfer being made.



ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

12. **Downs Farm.** The Enforcement Officer could find no work that did not have planning permission.

13. **Tramway Quarry.** The Enforcement Officer again found nothing that required planning permission. We are waiting for further information on containers before this case can be closed.

14. **Southern Extension to Peters Village 21/01939/OAEA.** We are still waiting for a more detailed review by officers on what can be done about the Southern Extension Enforcement Officers are looking into this and we will update you when they have completed their investigations.