

Cinque Port Town of New Romney



Mrs C. Newcombe
Town Clerk

Town Clerk's Office
Town Hall
New Romney
Kent TN28 8BT

Tel: New Romney 01797 362348

Ref: CN/3005

3rd February 2026

Dear Councillor / Committee Member,

Meeting of the Health & Wellbeing Committee

A Meeting of the Health & Wellbeing Committee will be held in the **Assembly Rooms, Church Approach, New Romney** on **Tuesday 3rd February 2026** commencing at **10.00am**. The favour of your attendance is requested.

Yours sincerely,

C. Newcombe

Mrs. C Newcombe – Town Clerk
Email: town.clerk@newromney-tc.gov.uk

The afore-mentioned meeting will commence at 10.00am.

Members of Public are welcome to join this meeting. However, a number of matters discussed by the Health & Wellbeing Committee are likely to be discussed in private and confidential session due to their sensitive, legal or contractual nature. Members of Public and Press and Council Members who are not Members of the Health & Wellbeing Committee will be required to leave the meeting at that time.

PLEASE NOTE: New Romney Town Hall and New Romney Assembly Rooms all have restricted access for people with limited mobility; please enquire for details.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS

1. Who can participate in this New Romney Town Council meeting?

All Members of the Public may attend this meeting, except at such times as certain sensitive, legal or contractual matters may be considered in private and confidential session, when Members of the Public will be required to leave the meeting.

Agendas and reports for meetings will be available at least 3 working days and usually 7 weekdays before the date of the meeting on the Town Council website. Any supplementary sheets will be available the day before the meeting and can be viewed at www.newromney-tc.gov.uk

THE LAWS OF LIBEL AND SLANDER

- These laws are very strict.
- If, in public, you say something about a person that is not true, even if you believe it to be true, you may be sued and have to pay compensation. Therefore, you need to be very careful about any criticism you wish to make of people in any written submission to the Council.
- Councillors are able to speak more freely and bluntly while in Council or Committee meetings than members of the public.
- You, as a member of the public, do not have the same protection.

**NEW ROMNEY TOWN COUNCIL
HEALTH & WELLBEING COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY 10TH FEBRUARY 2026 AT 10.00AM**

AGENDA

Welcome and Introductions.

1. APOLOGIES:

To receive and note the apologies of councillors / committee members unable to attend.

2. DISPENSATION TO PARTICIPATE:

To receive and note any applications granted by the Town Clerk, on behalf of the Town Council, for dispensation to participate in Meetings of New Romney Town Council.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Councillors to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Significant or Personal Interests they may have in items on the agenda for this meeting.

4. MINUTES (Encs*):

To approve the minutes of the **Health & Wellbeing Committee Meeting** held on **25th November 2025**.

5. HEALTH CENTRE FOR ROMNEY MARSH:

To receive and note Chairman's report and take any such action thereon as deemed appropriate. (Report to follow*)

6. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS:

To consider exclusion of public and press in accordance with Standing Order No.34 (a), which states that '*in view of the special and confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded [from the meeting] and they are instructed to withdraw*' due to the fact that elements of the agenda items as listed above may relate to matters of a sensitive, legal or contractual nature.

7. CONCLUSION OF PRIVATE SESSION:

To consider concluding private session, if applicable.

Mrs. C Newcombe - Town Clerk

Copied to Health & Wellbeing Committee Members and to all other Councillors for information only.

AGENDA ITEM 4

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**MINUTES
Of
A Meeting of New Romney Town Council's
Health & Wellbeing Committee
Held in the Assembly Rooms, New Romney
on Tuesday 25th November 2025
Commencing at 10.00am**

PRESENT: Councillors J Rivers, J Hiscock, J Davies, P Coe, P Thomas
P Carey and S McLachlan
NHS Representatives: 5
MP's Senior Caseworker: 1

In the Chair: Councillor J Rivers

In Attendance: Town Clerk – Mrs C Newcombe

363/2025-26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and noted, as follows:

2x NHS Representatives - For personal reasons

364/2025-26 DISPENSATION TO PARTICIPATE

No new requests for Dispensation to Participate had been processed by the Town Clerk.

365/2025-26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

366/2025-26 MINUTES

The Chairman presented the minutes of the Health & Wellbeing Committee meeting held on 2nd September 2025, which were duly received and noted and it was:

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Carey
SECONDED BY: Councillor Coe

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Health & Wellbeing Committee meeting held on 2nd September 2025 be hereby approved as a true and correct record.

Councillor Rev Cn McLachlan, 2x NHS representatives and the MP's Senior Caseworker abstained from voting as they had not been present at the afore-mentioned meeting.

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367/2025-26 **HEALTH CENTRE FOR ROMNEY MARSH:**

Having duly considered the Chairman's report and having re-affirmed the clear consensus that there was a clear need for a purpose built Health Centre, including CDC (Clinical Diagnostic Centre) for Romney Marsh, it was:

(i)

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Coe

SECONDED BY: Councillor McLachlan

RESOLVED – that the Health and Wellbeing Committee:

1. Notes the opportunity presented by the Government's Neighbourhood Health Service pilot and the £10 million funding allocated to East Kent as one of the first pilot areas.
2. Recognises the clear case for locating a Community Diagnostic Centre (CDC) in New Romney, in response to local health needs, transport challenges, and health inequalities across Romney Marsh.
3. Agrees that the establishment of a CDC in New Romney would strengthen the delivery of the Neighbourhood Health Service and provide measurable benefits to local residents, across the Marsh, through improved access to diagnostic services closer to home.

The MP's Senior Caseworker abstained from voting as she could not speak for the MP.

(ii)

It was then:

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Rivers

SECONDED BY: Councillor Hiscock

RECOMMENDED – that New Romney Town Council:

1. Formally confirms its support for the proposal for a Community Diagnostic Centre in New Romney as part of the East Kent pilot, and

2. Authorises the Chairman of the Health & Wellbeing Committee, with the Town Clerk, to request that the East Kent Integrated Care Board (ICB), with Government support, develop and bring forward a detailed implementation plan, including site options, service scope, and timeline for delivery. Relevant communications to be copied to the Minister of State for Health.

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3. Authorises the Health & Wellbeing Committee, under the leadership of its Committee Chairman, to engage with local stakeholders, clinicians, and community representatives to ensure the centre meets the needs of the wider Romney Marsh population.

The MP's Senior Caseworker abstained from voting as she could not speak for the MP.

368/2025-26 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS:**

Not applicable

369/2025-26 **CONCLUSION OF PRIVATE SESSION:**

Not applicable

The Chairman thanked those present for their attendance and the meeting concluded **@10.51AM**

NB: All documents referred to herein are available for perusal on request, except for those documents of a sensitive / legal nature discussed in private session, including documents relating to staff matters which remain Private and Confidential in accordance with Data Protection legislation.

Minutes prepared by the Town Clerk

HEALTH CENTRE FOR ROMNEY MARSH

Summary of the FOLCA paper:

Colleagues,

This summary is about **fairness and access**, not opposition.

We welcome the progress being made on the new medical centre at the FOLCA building in Folkestone. It shows what can be achieved when the NHS, local partners and Government align behind a clear need.

But the purpose of this paper is to say, clearly and constructively, that **Romney Marsh faces healthcare challenges that are at least as great, and in many respects greater, and they now need the same level of strategic attention.**

Romney Marsh serves **25 to 28 thousand residents**, comparable to the population proposed for FOLCA. However, our population is **older**, has **higher levels of long-term conditions**, and lives across a **large rural and coastal area** with limited transport options.

The reality for many residents is stark:

- Journey times of **40 to 75 minutes** to acute hospitals,
- Over **70% of residents living outside the NHS 30-minute access benchmark**,
- Infrequent public transport, particularly evenings and weekends.

Unlike Folkestone, we have **no integrated healthcare hub**. Care is fragmented. Residents often attend a GP locally, diagnostics elsewhere, urgent care somewhere else again: multiple journeys for a single episode of care. This leads to delayed treatment, avoidable ambulance use, and pressure on A&E.

It's important to say this clearly:

FOLCA modernises existing urban provision. Romney Marsh requires additional provision.

What we are proposing is a **Marsh-based Neighbourhood Health or Integrated Community Health Facility**: bringing GPs, diagnostics, same-day urgent care and community services together under one roof. This would **complement**, not compete with, the Folkestone scheme.

Our ask is straightforward:

- That the ICB formally recognises Romney Marsh as an **area of priority need**,
- That officers work with local councils on a **Strategic Outline Case**,

- And that urban and rural schemes are progressed **in parallel**, ensuring balanced investment.

The evidence shows Romney Marsh is a **healthcare access cold-spot**, driven by geography, distance and demographics.

We are ready to work collaboratively to turn this from aspiration into delivery.

Cllr John Rivers

Chairman: New Romney Town Council

Chairman: Health and Wellbeing Committee

January 2026

Briefing Note for Councillors:

Romney Marsh Neighbourhood Health Centre / Community Diagnostic Centre (CDC)

- **Purpose:**

To summarise the case for locating a new Neighbourhood Health Centre, including a Community Diagnostic Centre (CDC), in **New Romney** to serve the whole Romney Marsh.

- **Context:**

The Government's 10-Year Health Plan commits to moving care out of hospitals and into communities through Neighbourhood Health Centres offering diagnostics, urgent care, mental health and community services under one roof. East Kent is identified as a pilot area for this approach.

- **Why Romney Marsh?**

- Romney Marsh is one of the most **isolated and underserved areas in East Kent**, with long travel times to hospitals and limited public transport.
- The area has an **older-than-average population** and a higher prevalence of long-term conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, COPD and frailty.
- These factors contribute to **missed appointments, delayed diagnosis and avoidable hospital admissions**, increasing pressure on acute services.

- **What is being proposed?**

A modern, integrated Neighbourhood Health Centre on the Romney Marsh, providing:

- Modern GP facilities with same-day and digital access
- Urgent primary care, including evenings and weekends
- A local CDC "spoke" offering tests and scans (e.g. bloods, X-ray, ultrasound, ECG)
- Community mental health, rehabilitation, pharmacy and nursing services
- Space for voluntary and community wellbeing support
- Potential future development of a Minor Injuries Unit

- **Why New Romney?**

- New Romney is the **natural civic and population hub** of the Marsh and the most accessible location for surrounding villages.
- It can serve a catchment of **25,000+ residents**, as well as seasonal visitors and the local workforce.
- Land has already been identified, and there is strong local leadership and cross-community support, reducing delivery risk.

- **Benefits for the wider system**

- Faster diagnosis and treatment closer to home
- Reduced travel and fewer DNAs (Did Not Attends)
- Improved management of long-term conditions
- Reduced pressure on William Harvey Hospital and Folkestone Urgent Treatment Centre
- Direct contribution to tackling rural and coastal health inequalities

- **Key Ask**

That Kent & Medway ICB places a **Romney Marsh Neighbourhood Health Centre** on its capital pipeline and recognises New Romney as a priority site for delivering the Government's neighbourhood health model in East Kent.

What Councillors Are Being Asked to Support

- **In-principle support** for the development of a Neighbourhood Health Centre, including a Community Diagnostic Centre (CDC), to serve the Romney Marsh.
- **Recognition of New Romney** as the most appropriate and accessible location for this facility, serving the widest Marsh catchment.
- **Advocacy to Kent & Medway ICB and local MPs** to place the Romney Marsh scheme on the NHS capital pipeline as a priority project.
- **Cross-council collaboration** (town and parish) to demonstrate unified local leadership and readiness to support delivery.
- **Engagement with residents and partners** to strengthen the case and ensure the centre reflects local health and wellbeing needs

Cllr John Rivers

Chairman: New Romney Town Council

Chairman: Health and Wellbeing Committee

Integrated Care Board Summary Overview

“Colleagues, I want to be clear about where NHS power now sits, because this matters for our communities.

The Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board, the ICB, is now the body that decides what NHS services are provided, where they are located, and how funding is allocated across our area. Those decisions are no longer made by NHS England.

That includes GP services, community hospitals, urgent care, and diagnostic centres. In other words, if a service is missing locally, or being centralised elsewhere, the ICB is where that decision is happening.

The challenge for rural and coastal areas like ours is that ICB decisions are often justified on so-called ‘system efficiency’. Without strong evidence, communities with longer travel times, older populations, and poorer transport links can be overshadowed by urban demand.

Importantly, the ICB has a **legal duty** to reduce health inequalities. That includes tackling rural isolation, coastal deprivation, and the needs of ageing populations. Areas like Romney Marsh are not on the very edge of what is expected, they are exactly what this duty was designed to address.

The NHS now works on a place and neighbourhood basis. While town and parish councils sit outside formal NHS governance, this is where local influence is strongest, if we act early, speak with one voice, and present hard data.

Workforce shortages are often cited as a reason not to expand local services. If we want change, we must be ready with practical solutions: hub-and-spoke models; shared facilities; and system-wide benefits.

Finally, NHS England no longer decides where community services are built. It sets national rules and holds ICBs to account, but local decisions must go through the ICB first. Direct lobbying of NHS England rarely works unless that route has been fully exhausted.

The key message is simple: unified councils, strong evidence, and early engagement are what shift outcomes.”

*Cllr John Rivers
Chairman: New Romney Town Council
Chairman: Health and Wellbeing Committee*

January 2026

END