

**BIRDBROOK PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**  
**HELD ON TUESDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2025 at 7pm**  
**AT THE COMMUNITY HOUSE, BIRDBROOK**

**PRESENT:** Mr Steve Rhenius (Chair)  
Mr Alan Cook  
Mr Tim Chadney  
Mrs Anita Chadney

**ALSO PRESENT:** Cllr Diana Garrod (BDC)  
Mrs Debbie Hilliard (Clerk)  
5 members of the public

Mr Rhenius welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

**QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

Has there been any movement re trees to the rear of the pond? The online form has been submitted to Braintree District Council under reference 970286 with the pictures but nothing else has been heard.

Re Baythorne End bridge - signage – we have all concluded that getting the speed limit through Baythorne End reduced to 30mph is not going to happen. However, as you drive into Baythorne End from Haverhill there is no sign to say that it is Baythorne End and the 40mph sign has been knocked sideways and there are no repeaters. We are waiting for an update from Cllr Schwier of ECC regarding progress on the VAS signs. If the Parish Council and residents continue to be concerned re speed of traffic, there are things that could be done to make the speed limit more prominent and make improvements to the look of the village as you enter by making signs more prominent and signs saying it is Baythorne End and gates.

**25/75 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Peter Schwier.

**25/76 OTHER ABSENCES**

None

*It was agreed to invite Cllr Garrod to submit her report.*

It was confirmed that Cllr Garrod's report had been received and circulated prior to the meeting. Points noted were:-

- Closure of Four Ash Hill on 24 November 2025 for 3 days with diversion via Station Road.
- Local plan review – BDC were updating the local plan and whilst Birdbrook sites were dismissed it was important to note that BDC had not reached the required target number of houses and were reconsidering some of the sites previously dismissed, particularly in the north of the district. There will be another consultation in February 2026, and all residents were urged to take part in the consultation. It was noted that there could be an impact on a potential green buffer between Helions Bumpstead and Steeple Bumpstead and Sturmer. It was proposed and agreed to agenda the consultation for the January meeting. **Action.**

Will they be looking at sites in Birdbrook? I don't know at this stage. Start time for meetings will be 6.30pm and I suggest you look at the agendas when published. I also had questions from

other Parish Councils about the A1307. They are looking at this part of the district because of its proximity to Cambridge and the Silicon Valley.

It was noted that a rail link or guided bus route would relieve traffic impact and there was a lack of consideration or long-term thinking regarding infrastructure.

- Potential funding – Funding opportunities were considered and noted.
- Pond – There was a discussion regarding the pond and its ownership status. It was noted that the Parish Council could approach NALC or the EALC for legal advice and establish whether the land was registered with the Land Registry. It was noted that the Parish Council would need to consider next steps very carefully.
- Essex Highways Survey – Cllr Garrod recommended that residents complete the survey, using the comments box at the end.

Cllr Garrod invited questions.

Roly Hill, Sturmer – land clearance – it was noted that this area had been cleared illegally and it had been deemed an environmental crime with a crime number. The landowner cleared the area during bird nesting season and the impact on wildlife was immense – What can be done? The developer put it in during the Call for Sites and it may go forward for planning again. Use the February consultation to make any comments.

There were no further questions, and Cllr Garrod was thanked for her report and left the meeting.

Parish Council Vacancies – Mr Cook advised that having been approached by Michelle Harrington, Helen Castle and Shirley Turner and having met and spoken with them he proposed that they be co-opted to the Parish Council subject to completion of the necessary documentation. This was seconded by Tim Chadney with all in favour. It was noted that Shirley Turner had been unable to attend this meeting.

Debbie will notify BDC and issue the co-opted members with the necessary information.**Action.**

## 25/77 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

(a) The minutes of the meeting held on 8 July, and 16 September 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed.

(b) Matters arising, including Action List (below):-

### Action List

Minute	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
Questions	Contact BDC to report trees behind pond potentially at risk of causing damage to properties nearby.	Clerk	Clerk has found online reporting tool on BDC website and awaiting photos of the trees before completing form. 18 Sept. Completed BDC tree form reference 970286
25/70	Play Equipment inspection report. Defer to next meeting	Agenda next meeting	Agenda item 6
	Hedge trimming and thank you for play equipment cleaning.	Clerk to contact DA and thank him	Emailed 19/9

		for cleaning the play equipment and ask him to trim the hedge.	
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**25/78 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**25/79 REPORT OF DISTRICT COUNCILLOR/COUNTY COUNCILLOR**

Completed above.

**25/80 MEMBERS' REPORTS:-**

- a) Pond – It was noted from the discussion above that the Parish Council would need to consider in great detail whether to proceed regarding the pond and all the implications of that. It was noted that legal advice would be needed. It was proposed and agreed that Debbie would contact the land registry to see if the land was registered. **Action.**
- b) Parks
- Inspection reports (previously circulated) – Anita Chadney reported and confirmed she had reviewed the reports. It was noted that there were no major issues recorded, and all recommendations were designated low risk. Anita proposed that the groundswoker be asked to clean the play equipment twice a year in spring and autumn including sealing any wooden areas. It was agreed that Debbie would contact Mr Allen for a quote. **Action.**
  - Hedge Trimming – It was confirmed that work on the play area side had been completed including cutting back and reducing the height. Mr Cook confirmed that work on the bowls green side would take place in the spring.
- c) Chair's Report – Steve Rhenius followed on from the District Councillors comments regarding increased traffic on the A1037. Steve referred to the Index of Multiple Deprivation advising that car ownership in rural areas was now deemed as an indication of affluence in a rural area, a substantial change from previous.

Steve also commented on the increased use of AI for minuting meetings.

- d) Highways Report
- Bus shelter – Baythorne End – retrospective licence (previously circulated) – defer to next meeting.
  - Baythorne End Bridge signage – Alan Cook reported and congratulated Mr McIver for his tenacity and hard work. It was confirmed that three new improved road signs with yellow backing had been installed. Resurfacing has been completed. It was noted that the proposal to colour the pedestrian walkway had been refused. However, it had been agreed to paint a pedestrian symbol on the walkway at each end of the bridge and an additional "slow" sign on the carriageway.

*Michelle Harrington left the meeting.*

- Pothole – Finkle Green on north edge of road – Alan will provide photos and Debbie will report in. **Action.**
- e) Media  
Nothing to report.

**25/81 PLANNING**

Nothing to report.

**25/82 FINANCE**

- Budget 2026/27 (previously circulated) – The budget form was considered and completed. It was agreed that it would be reviewed and formally adopted at the January meeting. There was a discussion regarding continuation of the pest control contract, the view being that it was the responsibility of the Community House Trustees. Steve will speak the Community House representative. **Action.**
- Finance Report – The Finance Report was considered and agreed.

**25/83 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

None.

**25/84 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

None.

**25/85 TIME, DAY AND DATE OF MEETINGS 2026**

6 January

10 March

12 May (APA and AGM)

7 July

15 September

10 November

All are Tuesdays at 7pm in the Community House

There being no further business to discuss the meeting closed at approximately 9pm.

Signed:  .....

Date: 6/1/26 .....

**Action List**

Minute	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
Questions	Agenda Local Plan Review for January meeting particularly for potential green buffer. Impact from proposals at Sturmer/Steeple/Helions and consultation	Clerk to agenda	Completed.
25/80	Pond – Contact Land Registry and see if land registered.	Clerk	Completed – now on January's agenda
	Parks – Contact DA for quote to clean play equipment twice a year.	Clerk	
	Highways – Retrospective bus shelter licence. Defer to next meeting.	Clerk	

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	Pothole – Finkle Green – Report in	Debbie/Alan	
New Members	Debbie will send them the Code of Conduct and Declaration of Interests form and notify BDC	Clerk	

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