



FOXEARTH & LISTON PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Annual Electors Meeting held on Monday 19th. May 2025 at 7.30pm in Foxearth Village Hall.

Present: Cllrs K. Holmes (Chair), K. Robson (Vice-Chair), M. Posen, ECC Cllr P. Schwier, BDC Cllr I. Parker and Kevin B. Money (Parish Clerk). There were also 7 members of the public present

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr S. Ham

2. **To approve the minutes of the last Annual Electors meeting** held on 20th. May 2024.
 These minutes were signed at the 22nd. July 2024 meeting

3. **Report from ECC Councillor** – Cllr Peter Schwier

- Sent updates to all his Parish and town Councils
- Essex Forestry initiative. 500,000 trees have been planted over just a 1-year term. Many volunteers have taken up the initiative to plant a further 500,000 trees. These trees have been planted across the whole of Essex.
- Children outcomes being looked at for future children and adult social care. 23 actions are coming out of the commissioned report.
- Money from Essex Highways has been made available to make the road white lines clearer.
- Vegetation landowners to clear signage by their land. It is the landowner's responsibility to keep hedges safe for pedestrians and road users.
- PFCC – Fraud has increased by £68.5m in the last years.
- Devolution is taking a lot of Councillors time
- Pot hole repairs have doubled this year by more contractors

Cllr P. Schwier then took questions from residents and Councillors

4. **Report from BDC Councillor** - Cllr Iona Parker

This is the end of my 10th year as your District Councillor for the Stour Valley North Ward, which takes in the villages of Ridgewell, Ashen, Little Yeldham, Tilbury-Juxta-Clare, Ovington, the Belchamps, Pentlow, Foxearth, Liston and Borley. I aim to do my best to represent the interests of your communities on Braintree District Council, help residents with their enquiries and serve on Council committees.

I am a chair of the Planning Committee and am also a member of the Local Plan sub committee, Corporate Scrutiny Committee and Licensing Committee. I also represent the Council at meetings of the Essex Rural Partnership. In addition, I endeavour to attend Parish Council meetings in my ward or send a written report if I am unable to attend in person.

I received £1,250 under the Councillors Community Grant Scheme and was able to provide funds for a new picnic bench in Ridgewell and a new fridge/freezer for Belchamp Walter village hall. Since the inception of this scheme, I have tried to distribute the funds equally around my ward. I am pleased that despite ongoing pressures on the Council's budget, the Council will be continuing this scheme in 25/26 and has maintained the Street Cleansing grant given to Parish Councils and allocated an additional £50,000 for new dog waste and litter bins across the district, something I know has concerned some Parish Councils.

As always, I have been dealing with a variety of issues raised with me including bus transport, planning issues and the never-ending potholes. Resurfacing has taken place on various sections of road in my ward and I know more is planned, including in Foxearth and Tilbury. I continue to report potholes on the Essex Highways website when I see them as well as reporting any fly tipping to BDC. I have been pressing cabinet members about the grass verge obstructing visibility on single track roads in the summer and am pleased to report that it has been agreed that twice yearly verge cutting should resume. I know that solar farms cause deep concerns for many residents. It is very difficult to resist solar farms under current Government policy but along with others, I have been working behind the scenes to make sure the planning conditions are as robust as they can be, that hedging is planted as early as possible to provide an effective screen and that traffic issues during construction are addressed.

In wider terms, Braintree Council has continued with its priority of delivering high quality services on a balanced budget (unlike a number of well-publicised other Councils). Residents will be aware of the plans for devolution in Greater Essex which will have a mayor elected next year, and the creation of 3, 4 or 5 new

unitary Councils in 2028 which will take on the responsibilities of both District and County Council – in our case at Braintree we will be merged with a number of neighbouring Essex Councils and have a population of 400-500,000.

Some highlights of the Braintree District Council achievements or activities during the 2024/25 year are:

- Continued to support residents and communities impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. A new Cost of Living Grant Scheme has just been launched for groups and organisations.
- Delivered over 250 affordable homes.
- Awarded grants from the Rural England Prosperity Fund to a number of businesses and community organisations, including one for refurbishment of Borley village hall.
- New 3G all-weather pitch at Witham Sports Ground
- Delivered the Home Upgrade grant Phase 2 (HUG) for people living in cold homes or struggling with winter fuel bills.
- Introduced a landlord incentive scheme to help prospective renters.
- Launched round 2 of the Halstead Community Fund (a large part of which went to the upgrade of the Empire Theatre in Halstead).
- Put in motion the construction of a Witham Community Centre.
- Supported local investment in a number of local communities through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (Year 3)
- Starting work on physical improvements to Halstead and Witham town centres.
- Increased capacity at the successful The Plaza, Great Notley, to support local businesses, and continued work towards sale of the last remaining plots at Horizon 120.
- Organised well-attended jobs fairs and a Digital Business Expo in Braintree.
- Provided funding for transport to Essex University for 13–14-year-olds from local schools to enable them to learn about further education.
- Installed solar panel arrays and LED lighting at Witham Leisure Centre to make the building largely self-sufficient in electricity.
- Collaborated with other Essex authorities to establish and begin to implement a new Waste Strategy for Essex, as well as consulting on a proposed new waste and recycling regime for Braintree, in line with government requirements, and with the aim to reducing residual waste and raising the proportion of material which can be usefully recycled.
- Continued to collaborate with other Essex Councils on shared services and begun to take part in the process of devolution and local government reorganisation in Essex, as per government mandate.
- Followed up on the Action Plan which stemmed from the Corporate Peer Challenge which took place in late 2023 and which found BDC to be a well-run and ambitious council.
- Started work on a new Local Plan for the District to extend the current plan to 2041. A review of employment need has already been considered and additional housing sites will be considered in May and June.
- Responded to Government changes to the National Planning Policy Framework.

Cllr I. Parker then took questions from residents and Councillors

5. Report of the Chairman of the Council

Good evening and welcome to the Annual Meeting of Electors of Foxearth and Liston Parish Council. This is not a meeting of the Parish Council but an opportunity for local electors to hear what the County, District and Parish Councils have been doing for the past year and for you to put forward your views on any matters you would like us to consider or take into account.

This is my first annual report as Chairman and I propose to provide a fairly succinct report regarding the Parish Council's activities this past year before opening up the public forum.

We are a small, rural parish council so the scope of our activities and achievements is somewhat limited. However, the past year has once again been dominated by two main issues – potholes and trying to find a suitable location for the speed indicator device that the Parish Council acquired some time ago. On both these we have had a very frustrating year but I'm very pleased that the worst potholes have now been repaired and we have a location at last for SID which we can tell you more about when we get to the Parish Council meeting.

There have been two particular achievements that I would like to mention. Firstly, the Flood Working Group that was set up following the flooding events last year has carried out some excellent work clearing ditches and watercourses under the leadership of local residents. Although this started as a Parish Council initiative it is an excellent example of the community coming together in the best interests of our villages and having a very positive impact. As a Parish Council we have some funding we can offer to community projects but ultimately, we are dependent on our residents to support and help to deliver the benefits to the community that we want to see.

We have also had a very successful year managing our own footpath maintenance using our own contractor. This has given us more control about when the paths are cut which has ensured the footpaths are less overgrown at certain times of the summer.

The Parish Council is a statutory consultee on planning applications in our villages. Although we are not the final decision-maker, the Parish Council has considered carefully the impact of any planning applications on the community as well as the character of our villages and submitted comments accordingly.

We continue to use a significant part of our Council budget to support local organisations who deliver improvements and benefits to the things that are important to the community. In the last year this has included donations to Foxearth Church and to the local History Society.

The Council continues to fund the support and maintenance of the defibrillator outside the village hall. Happily, it hasn't been needed yet but it is good to know it's there just in case.

Our meetings have been held on Monday evenings over the past year and I'm pleased to report they have generally been well attended by local residents. Hopefully this day and time allows as many people to attend as would like to.

On a less positive note, I'm sorry to say the Parish Council has not yet been able to fill the two vacancies that still exist on the Council. Foxearth and Liston have very strong local communities and it is disappointing that the Parish Council hasn't yet managed to attract someone else to join us.

Lastly, I would like to thank our clerk, Kevin Money, for all his hard work on our behalf and in particular his support and guidance during my first year as Chairman.

6. Public Forum

The large farm development in Foxearth is causing problems by large HGV's being unable to turn into Claypits from the main road. The barn is being developed under "permitted development". There are 2 other access roads to navigate to the farm. Damage to drains and verges are happening on a daily basis. An alternative for this problem is to create parking restrictions in Claypits or making a "one-way" access to the farm.

What can be done to reduce the speed limit of 60mph to at least 40mph.

Cllr P. Schwier informed the meeting of Staggered Gate entrance at the start and end of the village and/or speed survey. Also, to inform Essex Police Rural Engagement Team to undertake an ad-hoc speed trap.

The Chair then closed the meeting at 8.45pm and thanked everyone for attending

Signed

K Holmes

Keith Holmes
Chair

21st. July 2025