



FOXEARTH & LISTON PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Annual Electors Meeting held on 18th. May 2023 at 7pm in Foxearth Village Hall.

Present: Cllrs M. Posen (Vice-Chairman), F. Binks, S. Ham, K. Robson, ECC Cllr P. Schwier, BDC Cllr I. Parker and Kevin B. Money (Parish Clerk). There were also 5 members of the public present

1. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr K. Holmes
2. To approve the minutes of the last Annual Electors meeting held on 21st. May 2022. **All Agreed**
3. Report from ECC Councillor – Cllr Peter Schwier

Essex Highways has flicked the switch on a significant milestone in the streetlight upgrade programme after 100,000 new LED streetlights were installed across the county.

The upgrades are happening mostly in residential roads, with older lamps being replaced with LED ('light-emitting diode') technology, in the fourth and final phase of the street lighting upgrade project.

Essex Highways' crews have been upgrading around 1,000 lights a week and are currently finishing the upgrades in Braintree and Epping Forest before moving to Castle Point and Harlow.

The upgraded LED lights save around 75% of energy compared to the older bulbs that are being replaced and are more efficient as they are expected to last up to 20 years, saving taxpayers' money being spent on regularly replacing the bulbs.

Councillor Lee Scott, Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport, said: "The streetlight upgrade programme is a significant project and the progress made so far in bringing more efficient and environmentally friendly lighting across Essex has been impressive.

"Despite a number of global issues affecting the supply of LEDs, the team have worked hard to secure stock and continue the rollout, and I am confident every residential streetlight across Essex will benefit from new, more efficient lighting by next year."

Phase four of the upgrade programme was significantly impacted by the global shortage of components for the telecells that are used to control the streetlights. This was due to major events such as the effects of the pandemic lockdowns and the war in Ukraine.

Essex Highways was able to secure additional stock before the shortage hit but the programme was still impacted significantly. Despite this, working with installation contractor Electrical Testing Ltd, Essex Highways was able to ensure delays were minimised and work is now on track to be completed by March 2024.

In areas where it appears that older streetlights have yet to be replaced or may have been missed, it is the intention that crews will return to them. There are several factors that may have prevented them being replaced initially, such as operatives unable to safely gain access to equipment due to foliage or parked cars, or concerns about the column structure.

For more information about Essex's LED replacement programme visit the [Replacement by LED programme webpage](#).

Essex Highways has now launched its 2023/24 programme to upgrade the condition of many roads across the county repairing some of the damage caused by the cold and wet winter conditions.

Essex Highways' 2023/24 budget for maintaining and repairing the carriageway across Essex over the next year is over £35 million. This does not include the £9 million additional investment announced as part of the Essex Highways budget in February, which has now been allocated to the following works:

£3.46 million for road resurfacing

£4 million for two member led footways schemes, where members will prioritise funding across their districts.

£1.54 million for carriageway patching.

An extra £1.2 million has also been allocated to Local Highway Panels for resurfacing and Members will work with the panels in their districts to allocate funding to the defects they prioritise. Additional crews have also been put in place to support Essex Highways teams deliver maintenance and repairs across Essex.

Councillor Lee Scott, Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport, said: "The additional investment allocated to fixing Essex's roads is a clear commitment from Essex County Council to ensuring damage caused by the winter is repaired and roads are maintained. "It's exciting the resurfacing programme is now underway and is being supported by additional crews secured to help with the volume of work required to repair roads the width and breadth of the county and increase the visibility of the service as these repairs are carried out."

Essex Highways' engineers routinely and carefully inspect and record the condition of all roads on the network, to ensure the highest risk jobs are prioritised for the safety of the public.

There are five main resurfacing methods that are used across Essex:

Surface dressing is used where the surface is in reasonably good condition but needs sealing to stop water damage. A large area can be covered very quickly and once completed it can last up to ten years.

Micro surfacing is a more durable process which places a thin layer of a completely new surface on the road. It takes longer to cover a given area than surface dressing but is used where roads are busier and the surface needs levelling off.

Machine resurfacing involves removing the existing surface, and a completely new surface is laid. It is a slower process but is very effective in places where the road is badly worn and is required to take heavy traffic.

Recycling is used in limited areas where the condition of the road is only slightly less than desired and a very durable new surface can be laid. It is easier to re-use existing materials rather than bring in new stone for this method.

Joint and crack sealing is necessary to stop water damage to the underlying surface. The road surface type will determine which method will be used.

Inspections and technical scans provide information on when it is more economical and efficient to renew the entire surface. By resurfacing the road by any of these means, it ensures that the road becomes more water-resistant, potholes are repaired and the road benefits from improved paint work and skid-resistance for many years.

Resurfacing works are different from makes safe works that take place during the winter months to repair dangerous potholes. Makes safes are temporary repairs that are made to high-risk damage while a permanent repair is scheduled, which sometimes could be the resurfacing works.

Resurfacing works can be disruptive and need road closures, but the work to the road will last for many years. To make it easier for the work to take place, residents and visitors are asked not to park on the area of road that is to be resurfaced, as that can cause costly re-visits or even prevent the work being done at all.

On the busiest routes, surfacing works are often carried out at night, which allows longer working sessions than during the day and enables works to be completed more quickly, reducing the impacts on road users and nearby residents.

For more information about resurfacing works and to find out where they will be taking place, please visit [our website](#).

It is now almost two years since I was elected to Essex County Council; serving the residents of all the villages – and 33 parish councils - that make up the Hedingham division has been a real privilege. The year that has passed since your last annual meeting has gone very quickly but has proved extremely busy and filled with activity and achievement.

The passing of those two years also means we are half-way through the current four-year term, and we are starting to see many positive outcomes from the ambitious work the county council set in train back in May 2021.

The following is a small sample of the key numbers, landmarks and achievements from a busy year – many are necessarily Essex-wide but, where possible, I have tried to focus purely on issues relevant to our local communities.

Budget / Council Tax 23/24

In the toughest and most uncertain and inflationary financial climate the county has known for many years, ECC agreed a budget which prioritised support for adults' and children's social care, road maintenance, improving infrastructure and helping people with the cost of living.

Over the course of the next year, the county council will spend a total of £2,281m (gross) and £1,164m (net) through its revenue budget – 7% higher than had been planned last year, as a result of inflationary pressures

There will also be £275m of capital spending in 23/24.

Budget points of note include:

- £58m increase in the adult social care budget
- £7.5m extra to deliver 340 additional school places
- 9% increase in fees for foster carers

- Community supermarkets to be rolled-out – providing essential household goods at lower cost for hard-pressed families
- £200m spending on climate change remains in place, with new and existing cycle routes and active travel schemes are also being built and maintained to enable people to walk and cycle.

Highways

The council will be spending nearly £145m on highways maintenance and sustainable transport over the coming year and, as ever, will prioritise the areas by severity of need.

By way of context, the county looks after:

- 5,100 miles of carriageway;
- 4,000 miles of footways / cyclepaths;
- 130 miles of safety barriers;
- 131,000 street lights;
- 14,000 illuminated highway signs;
- 80,000 non-illuminated signs;
- 36,000 items of Public Rights of Way infrastructure.
- **7,002 – the number of potholes repaired in Essex over the course of 22/23 so far.**

Over the last year, in terms of calls to our contact centre around highways issues, we received the following numbers:

- 1,899 – average daily number of calls to the Contact Centre in January 2023;
- 432,711 - total calls to Contact Centre;
- 47,904 - total calls to Highways (new faults and general) service.

Meanwhile, the average answer waiting time for highways calls was 03:10.

Levelling Up

In late 2021, ECC launched its own Levelling Up White Paper, aimed at raising living standards for people in particular cohorts and locations. One year on, a great deal has already been achieved. This includes:

- 12,000 more homes and businesses connect to Superfast Broadband
- Over 6,600 devices donated to schools across Essex, to support students with getting online and enhancing their learning.
- 250 new entry level jobs created through our social value scheme.
- The Essex Opportunities website launched to provide access to more flexible job roles. In its first year the website has had more than 90,000 visits and 6,500 clicks to apply for jobs
- The Essex Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Service supported creating 240 new apprenticeships across Essex Businesses. Expanded our completely free holiday activity and food programme, ActivAte, which over the last two years has provided over 500,000 free meals and supported over 30,000 young people
- An almost £2million boost provided to social care in Essex under our Nightingale Care Bursary, which will support people from the most deprived communities in Essex to achieve social care qualifications or support existing care workers to achieve further qualifications.
- Our working families programme has been in contact with 960 families to provide support to those seeking information on upskilling or retraining for a new career
- Parkplay has now been launched in 16 areas across Essex and had over 2,000 unique people attend, with 16,000 attendances in total so far! Parkplay will be launched in more areas throughout 2023.
- The physical and mental wellbeing of 130,000 school children and young people supported at Essex Outdoors sites, where they learn a range of skills through outdoor pursuits.
- 60,000 new library members have signed up since Jan 2022
- 150,000 new recyclable library cards distributed to every primary school child in the county as part of the 'Essex Year of Reading' celebration. 74 new literacy areas have been created across Essex (one in every library).
- Almost 24,000 children took part in this year's Summer Reading Challenge. This is an increase of 36.4% on 2021.
- 'Multiply' launched - a new initiative that will offer over 14,000 Essex residents free access to maths and finance training

The environment and climate action

As the county council's Climate Czar, I've been front and centre with much of the work around our support for the environment and the drive towards net zero. I am delighted that it remains a central ambition of the council's work, despite the financial pressure. Progress has been made, along with our partners, over the last year, and key achievements include:

- 138,349 trees planted across Essex on our way to target of 375,000 by 2025. This amounts to 52.73 hectares of trees, and 16,492m of hedgerows

- 36,681 LED streetlamps now installed across the county.
- 1,222 fuel-poor households receiving support, helping them claim an additional £2.4 million in benefits via our Warm Homes Essex project
- £100,000 awarded in the last 12 months to local cycling groups and charities
- SuDS advice provided on 850 major planning applications a year
- 62,500 new properties receiving flood reduction expertise
- Green Flag award status retained across seven country parks welcoming one million visitors during the year
- £500,000 awarded from the Climate Action Challenge Fund to more than 30 local organisations and schools taking action on key climate change issues
- Several retrofit projects completed on the ECC estate
- £17.2m secured jointly with partners to provide fuel-poor households with grant funding of up to £10,000 to improve energy efficiency and heating systems in their homes
- A new North Essex Farming Cluster supported, which will help with information-sharing across the farming community, helping farmers move to more sustainable farming methods and protect sustainable agriculture
- Through Solar Together Essex, we have led a scheme enabling Essex residents to benefit from a significant discount on solar panels and battery storage from a reliable supplier. The scheme in Essex has now delivered over 1,300 installations and enabled over 1,100 tonnes of avoided carbon emissions annually. There have been 6,600 registrations over this year, more than any other year. The deadline to apply has been extended so people can register until 21/4/23.

Waste and recycling

We continue to work closely with district councils to promote recycling and efficient waste management that minimises the harm to the environment:



52% of household waste in Essex was recycled in 2020/21 – higher than the national average of 44%



The household **recycling rate varies from 40% - 58%** across the different district, borough and city areas

On average, each resident in Essex produces around 463kg of waste per year, that's **16% more waste than the national average.**



Approx 700,000 tonnes of household waste are generated in Essex per year – with a recycling rate of 52%, that means **circa 330,000 tonnes of general rubbish to landfill each year**



Over £100m is spent each year on the cost of collecting, treating and disposing of household waste in Essex



There are around **1.5 million visits to our 21 Recycling Centres each year**

Locality Fund

Once again, it has been a pleasure to support local communities through my Locality Fund. The details of schemes supported are as follows:

Organisation	Amount
The Birdbrook & District Community House	£310
Steeple Bumpstead Parish Council	£600
Mens Shed Great Yeldham	£1,000
Sturmer Parish Council	£700
Gestingtorpe Parish Council	£825
Birdbrook Bowls Club	£800
Helions Bumpstead Community Benefit Society	£803
Belchamp Otten & Belchamp St Paul Parish Council - Belchamp St Paul Community House	£300

I hope the above gives you an idea of the work that has gone in over the last year to develop our plans and deliver on them for the people of Essex.

Meanwhile, my work as Climate Czar has been extremely rewarding: meeting people across Essex and beyond; championing the work and achievements of people throughout our county; lobbying government on environmental causes – including the East Anglian Green proposals which I and colleagues across the region are steadfastly opposing.

On top of the above, I have also continued my busy work as a Braintree District Councillor, including membership of various bodies, such as the Planning Committee.

Most of all, it has been my pleasure and privilege to serve the residents of all the villages, both large and small, within the Hedingham division. I look forward to continuing to do so in the next year and beyond.

Cllr P. Schwier left the meeting

4. Report from BDC Councillor - Cllr Iona Parker

If the verges in the parish are cut by BDC, do request cutting of any junctions and corners/bends which need cutting for highway safety reasons.

I am finding that potholes that I report are being repaired within a matter of days. Do encourage residents to report potholes on the Essex Highways website, preferably with a photo and a what 3 words location, but I appreciate this is not always easy when driving!

Under the new scheme of delegation, planning applications for 1 or 2 new dwellings are automatically dealt with by officers but there is a provision that applications can still be determined by committee if deemed significant by the development control manager. If there are any planning applications which are causing significant concern, do raise these with me.

Please be aware that the Ride London Classique, a women's cycle race, will be taking place on Friday 26th May and will be passing along the A1017 near Baythorne End and along the A1017 through Sible Hedingham to Halstead and along the A1124 to Chappel as well as via Finchingfield and Wethersfield. There will be road closures associated with this though only for a short period.

See <https://www.ridelondon.co.uk/the-classique/the-stages/stage-one>

At the May Elections the Conservatives had 22 a majority of 3: 5 Ind: 4 Green: 7 Labour:
3 Halstead Residents

- Council Tax rose by 2.5% plus £25 rebate to all residents making the Council tax into negative territory
- Budget gap into 2023/2024
- Financial challenges
- £1m set aside from new home bonus to help cost of living pressures
- £1250 Councillor grant for 2023/2024
- No reduction in Street Cleaning Grant for 2023/2024
- Recycling calendars are being withdrawn
- Garden waste charge to come in 2023/2024
- Adopted New local plan for District
- 5 year housing supply has not been met
- Braintree Town Centre has been pedestrianised
- New all-weather sports pitches have been provided
- Rural Prosperity fund for supporting rural businesses
- 4 new Enforcement officers in planning but a numerous vacancies still exists

Cllr I. Parker left the meeting

5. Report of the Chairman of the Council

As Vice-Chair of the Parish Council, I'd like to thank those local electors who have come along this evening to participate in the Annual Meeting of Electors of Foxearth and Liston Parish Council. This is not a meeting of the Parish Council. Instead, it is an opportunity for the local electors to hear what the Parish Council has been doing for the past year and to have their say on any topics or issues that they think the local community or the Parish Council should be thinking about.

You have already heard reports from our County Councillor and District Councillor. I will now provide a report regarding the Parish Council's activities in the past year.

I'd like to start by acknowledging the contribution that Tony Clayton has made to our parishes. Tony has been a long-time member of the Council and has been our Chairman (I believe) since 2017. However, Tony decided to stand down from the Council at the elections held on May 4th this year, and unfortunately, he is not able to be with us tonight. On behalf of the Parish Council and the electors, I'd like to thank Tony for his work on the Parish Council, and for being an excellent Chairman, over the past years.

I'd also like to thank our Parish Clerk, Kevin Money, for all his work and support on our behalf during the past year.

As a small rural Parish Council, the scope of our activities is somewhat limited, but I'd like to give you a brief overview of the Council's activities over the past year.

Probably the main issue which residents have brought to the Council is the ongoing traffic problems that we all continue to experience. The Council has prepared a number of requests for traffic schemes, which have kindly been supported and forwarded to the local highways panel by our County Councillor. We have requested a review of the issues with single-direction driving at the bridge at Rodbridge and excessive traffic speeds near Red Cottages. Although nothing has been done yet, we continue to monitor the process, and we are waiting for a traffic speed survey to be conducted at Red Cottages. There has also been considerable concern raised regarding traffic speeds in Foxearth village. In an effort to try to combat this, the Council has purchased a Speed Indicator Device, which has now been delivered. Our Clerk is in the process of applying to Essex Highways for the licence, which we need to place the sign on the public Highway. We'll talk about this a bit more in the main PC meeting.

As a statutory consultee, the Council continues to review and comment on planning applications that affect our communities. Although we are not the final decision-maker for planning applications, the views of the local community, as represented by the Council, are an important part of the planning process. We continue to use a significant part of our Council budget to provide donations to local organisations. In the last year, we provided a grant to Foxearth Church for the maintenance of the church clock and the graveyard, we provided funding for the cutting of the village green at Liston, and we supported the work of the Local History Society.

The Council continues to fund the support and maintenance of the defibrillator outside Foxearth Village Hall. We hope that it never needs to be used, but it is good to know that it is there "just in case."

We also monitor the local footpath network and try to report problems to Essex Highways before they become serious issues. For the coming year, we are hoping to employ a contractor and thus take over the responsibility for cutting the footpaths from Highways. For the coming year, we are employing a contractor and thus take over the responsibility for cutting the footpaths from Highways. We hope that this will allow us to keep footpaths open more effectively. Following a request made at last year's Electors meeting, we have moved our Parish Council meetings from Saturday mornings to Thursday evenings. We hope that this change has made it easier for people to participate in our meetings, and we'd welcome any comments about this from members of the public.

I'd like to end by mentioning that at the parish elections on May 4th, only five of the six councillor seats were filled, and in the main PC meeting, we'll be discussing the process to co-opt someone to fill the vacant seat. I hope that one or more members of the community are willing to put themselves forward for this vacancy. I also hope that more members of the public will attend and participate in the PC meetings in the coming year. The Council is here to support the communities in the parishes of Liston and Foxearth, but it can't do that without members of the community also being ready to put themselves forward to support the work of the Council.

6. Public Forum

No questions from the public

The Vice-Chairman then closed the meeting at 7.35pm and thanked everyone for attending

Signed

20th. July 2023

M. Posen
Vice-Chairman