

Minutes of the Meeting of Great Waltham Parish Council held on Monday 15th July 2024 at The Pavilion, South Street, Great Waltham at 7.00pm.

24/1905 Chair's Welcome:

Chair: Gilbert.

Cllrs: Martin, Stephenson, McDevitt, Bradley, Steel, Jenkins and Micklem.

24/1906 Apologies.

Cllr Palmer and Cllr Jackson.

24/1907 Declarations of interests (existence and nature) with regard to items on the agenda and any request for dispensation.

Cllr Bradley – Allotments – Allotment Holder – 24/1929.

24/1908 Public Participation session for any items regardless of its existence on the agenda.

5 members of the public attended the meeting.

- Two made the Council aware of the recent crash at Ford End – (with relevance to items 24/1934 and 24/1935). A car overturned into the ditch opposite Eagle Cottage – it was entering Ford End from the southern end and overtaking cars. There have been many serious accidents in Ford End of which this is the latest. Concerns were raised over the speed of traffic through the village. All the pedestrian safety structures in the village (school wall, village hall barrier and barrier opposite the village hall) have all been struck at one time or another. The fences installed at Eagle Cottage and on VG150 provide visual barriers to deter motorists. It was stated that the residents of Eagle Cottage are sole carers and users of the land, with other people passing through the green. The green is not safe for recreational use due to the passing cars on the main road.
- Three also raised concerns about the traffic through Ford End – (item 24/1935). Large lorries through the village should be stopped. Generally the speed of vehicles is higher than the limit. A housing development near the school would just exacerbate the situation. It was noted that c.10,000 vehicles pass through Ford End each weekday and that 13% of this traffic is HGVs or LGVs.
- A highways automatic traffic count (ATC) is around £350 per event. A parishioner kindly volunteered to fund an ATC as it was felt up-to-date quantitative data are urgently required.

24/1909 Report by County Councillor – (Cllr Mike Steel).

The full report will be online in the agenda section of the website.

- Member led road defects scheme. Ford End is scheduled to have several faults fixed during August.
- The 20mph wig-wag signs at Ford End School have been fixed several times recently. They are to mark a school patrol/crossing so potentially their installation fall outside of policy as there is no school patrol at Ford End. There is a concern that the units are approaching, or have past, their fault-free life expectancy.
- Ringtail Green Quiet Lane scheme is through LHP validation and is now with the Parish Council for action. (The Parish Council is currently challenging the ostensibly significantly inflated current costs for the scheme, compared to the original estimates obtained).

24/1910 Report by Chelmsford City Councillor – (Cllr Mike Steel).

The full report will be online in the agenda section of the website.

- Pylons – At a recent cabinet meeting the City Council agreed its 35-page response which included particular focus on the ‘Waltham Gap’.
- Cllr. Steel had a one-to-one meeting on the ‘Waltham Gap’ with the National Grid team. Technically a HVDC underground solution could be squeezed into a 60m wide swathe.
- The National Grid consultation runs until 26th July. To date, only 6,000 responses have been received from all the regions along the whole route.
- A pylons meeting at the Walnut Tree public house was well attended – with the focus on the ‘Waltham Gap’.
- Lack of primary healthcare in the area. Chelmsford City Council approves 1,000 new houses a year. While the education authority and highways agency track this and make strategic adjustments and request funding, Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) tends not to have a strategic approach to roll out of additional healthcare provision and do not ask for any significant funds from developers. Chelmsford City Council is holding developers’ money for the ICBs but after 10 years some of this money will need to be handed back as unspent. Cllr. Steel is proposing a motion at the City Council which calls on ICBs to engage more fully and create better outcome plans and commitments.

24/1911 Confirm the minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Council held on 18th June 2024.

Resolution: The Minutes were confirmed.

24/1912 Note the minutes of the Highways and Transport Committee meeting held on 24th June 2024.

Resolution: The Minutes were noted.

24/1913 Note the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 1st July 2024.

Resolution: The Minutes were noted.

24/1914 Local Planning Authority Decisions.

<u>Reference</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Status</u>
24/00544/FUL	Fordhams Littley Green Road Great Waltham Chelmsford Essex CM3 1BU	Application Permitted
24/00001/HRN	Littley Park Farm Littley Park Lane Great Waltham Chelmsford Essex CM3 1LB	Split Decision

24/1915 Finance Report.-(Clerk).

Current Account: £ 3,049.01
(0% interest)

Reserve Account: £70,000.48
(2.75% interest)

- £15,000 Safety Schemes.
- £700 Allotment deposits.
- £31,000 Capital Works.
- £17,826 General Reserve
- £10,000 Asset Refresh (non-playground)
- £5,000 War memorial Reserve
- £947.63 Cil.

Total £73,049.49

Resolution: The accounts were noted.

24/1916 Confirmation of payments - (Clerk) :

Payments	Budget	value
Salaries	Salaries	£1,145.00
HMRC	PAYE	£586.74
Essex Pension Fund	Pensions	£1,076.89
SSE	Electricity - Pavilion	£321.06
JCM	Grounds Maintenance	£1,530.00
Amazon	Weedkiller - Glyphosate Industrial	£39.94
Amazon	Round Up	£57.00
Amazon	Self Adhesive Hooks	£11.98
GW Village Hall	Hall Hire	£48.00
3 Mobile	Broadband	£30.00
A.Wood	Audit - internal	£140.00
cleaning services	pavilion	£33.00
dm payroll	half year	£60.00
edge	it system, annual renewal	£1,022.16
w.adshead-grant	EXPENSES	£52.72
J.BUCKLEY	EXPENSES	£64.36
Amazon	basket ball nets x 2	£12.98
Amazon	a4 dividers - monthly	£14.93
Amazon	projector stand	£12.74
Amazon	hazard tape x 2 50m	£10.26
amazon	cleaning cupboard hooks	£8.66
		£6,278.42

Resolution: The Payments were approved.

24/1917 Monthly Bank Reconciliation – (Clerk / F&GP Chairman).

Resolution: The reconciliation was noted and approved with no discrepancy.

24/1918 Update on the Action Tracker (circulated with the agenda) – All.

The tracker was reviewed and updated.

24/1919 Clerk's Report.

- Internal Audit completed during June 2024. External audit now in progress.
- War Memorial works started with a clean and then hand carving of the letters and the enamelling has been started. A photo of the work to date was shared with the Council.
- Collected documents from the solicitors covering the Council's land ownership. They will now be stored by the Council.

24/1920 Discuss and approve the 2024 Risk register (circulated with the agenda).

Some updates required on the document for 2024.

Resolution: Cllr Gilbert to update and circulate a draft before the next meeting.

24/1921 Discuss the Internal Audit report and review suggested actions.

Following issues raised by the auditor:

1. The minutes do not show that a financial/ reputational risk assessment was carried out during the year. The Council must make certain that this issue is addressed every year.

Resolution: The Council will undertake a financial/ reputational risk assessment and confirm at the August 2024 meeting.

2. A Parish Meeting must be held annually between 1st March and 1st June (both inclusive). The Annual Assembly took place on 5th June 2023.

Resolution: The Council notes the dates and that the reason for the short delay in 2023 was caused by the logistics of securing a suitable venue. The 2024 meeting was

held on the 7th May 2024. The 2025 meeting will be planned within the required dates.

3. The External Auditor's report was not considered by the Council. The Council must consider the External Auditor's report and if applicable note an action plan for dealing with any qualifications.

Resolution: The External auditor's report will be considered when received later in the year and an agenda item has been planned for the Council September 2024 meeting.

24/1922 Consider the Grant requests received.

- Great Waltham Horticultural Society.
No grant request was received by the time of the meeting.
- Royal British Legion Club.
After reviewing the application, it was noted that it was from the RBL Club and not the RBL Branch. The Branch holds charitable status, whereas the Club is a commercial entity and therefore does not meet the relevant eligibility criterion in the Council's policy.

Resolution: The RBL Club grant request does not meet the grants policy of the Parish Council.

24/1923 To update the Council on interest from volunteers and seek agreement to arrange another meeting with Essex Highways with the intention of Great Waltham Parish Council joining the Parish Paths Partnership.

After the recent advertising 10 expressions of interest to join the team and work on the paths were received. This appears to be a firm basis upon which to join the Partnership.

Resolution: Approved.

24/1924 To agree a budget of up to £300 to cover expenditure on signage, high visibility clothing, and other equipment associated with use of volunteers for carrying out works to include siding out footways, vegetation clearance etc.

It was noted that volunteers would bring their own tools (non-powered), e.g. loppers, spades, and that the Parish Council will purchase safety signage etc.

Resolution: Approved.

24/1925 To agree the Finance & General Purposes Committee's recommendation that the Council purchases the AdvantEdge software package's asset management module at an initial annual cost of £314.45 excluding VAT, and then £151.00 excluding VAT annually thereafter (subject to future price changes).

Resolution: Approved.

24/1926 To agree the Finance & General Purposes Committee's recommendation that the Council meets with Great Waltham Village Hall to review the existing agreement to lease car parking spaces from the Village Hall.

Resolution: Agreed. Cllr Gilbert and Cllr Micklem to represent the Council and to arrange a meeting.

24/1927 Review and approve the Great Waltham Parish Council Training and Development Policy.

Resolution: Reviewed and approved.

24/1928 Review and approve the Great Waltham Parish Council Grants Policy and Application Form.

Resolution: Reviewed and approved.

24/1929 Review and approve the Great Waltham Parish Council allotment agreement.

The agreement was updated in line with the resolution passed at the meeting held in June under (item 24/1901 – ‘The Council accepts the allotment landlord’s proposal to vary the rent condition for plot hirers and the condition to allow hirers from adjoining parishes’).

Resolution: **Reviewed and approved.**

24/1930 To agree that the Council will lead on November Remembrance Sunday events and form a committee including the Royal British Legion, church, and other local organisations.

Resolution: **Agreed.**

24/1931 To agree the Council’s representatives at the Remembrance Sunday events at Great Waltham and Ford End.

Resolution: **Agreed Cllr Gilbert for Great Waltham and Cllr Stephenson for Ford End.**

24/1932 To authorise the purchase of two wreaths for the Remembrance Sunday services.

Resolution: **Approved to purchase the two wreaths from the Chair’s allowance.**

24/1933 Northwest Parishes Group is proposing to use a landscape consultant to evaluate the group’s drafted response to the current consultation phase of the Norwich to Tilbury pylon-based power transmission plans and GWPC will contribute a proportional share of the cost of £1,870 excluding VAT for an initial Scoping Report. The estimated cost to GWPC is up to £250.

Given the impending deadline date for the National Grid consultation, members noted the imperative for speed in securing the scoping report and any subsequently commissioned further work.

Resolution: **Approved.**

24/1934 Discuss the VG150 and update the Parish Council on actions taken to date.

The chair provided an update on developments since the last monthly meeting:

- Immediately after the last meeting an email was received from the owners of Eagle Cottage (essentially a copy of the information handed to the Council at that meeting) which confirmed that an adverse possession claim has been lodged with the Land Registry.
- After reviewing and reflecting on the information provided, the view is that the possible meeting offered previously (before the Council was aware of the adverse possession claim) has become problematic because of the legal route which has been taken.
- The Council was written to the owners of Eagle Cottage to say it will object to the adverse possession claim and will revert back when its own legal advice has been obtained.
- The Council is in the process of securing its own legal advice.
- The Land Registry is aware of the Council’s interest as owner of the land and its intention to object to the adverse possession claim.
- The Council has received no further information or update from Highways regarding the understanding that it (Highways) has indicated the fence and hedge installed on VG150 must be removed from its current position.
- The Council’s work to submit a voluntary registration of its ownership of the land with the Land Registry will recommence when the adverse possession claim has been decided.

24/1935 Discuss the Ford End Traffic issues including the recent traffic accident.

Members noted the extent of the previous work of the Parish and County Councils over the last 15 years or so, and that while the road was downgraded from the A130 to the B1008 road it remains designated as a priority (PR1) route which significantly restricts the scope for new traffic calming measures. It also remains the alternative diversionary route to the A120 if there are any problems on sections of the A120 which cannot be accommodated by using the B1256.

Changes to the Ford End Section of the B1008 have included:

- Ford End Village Gateway signs.
- Ford End flower planting by the Village Sign.
- 40mph buffer zone at northern end of the Village.
- 40mph buffer zone at the southern end of the Village.
- Vehicle activated signs (VAS).
- Raised footway kerbs at bus stops.
- 20mph wig-wag signs past the school.
- PR1 status – requests to change this status has been raised.
- A Speed Watch group operates (records speeding vehicles – not volumes).
- Alternative entrance to the school has been adopted.

Members noted the considerable energies dedicated to the (ultimately unsuccessful) average speed camera project. They also noted the concerns from residents regarding the perceived increase in the volume and speed of vehicles, and agreed that up-to-date quantitative data will help to inform the nature of any future debate and lobbying activity. It was noted that the cost of commissioning an automatic traffic count (ATC) survey would be c.£350. The earliest date for a new, representative survey is likely to be in September (when traffic volumes 'normalise' after the summer holidays).

Resolution: Request/commission an automatic traffic count from Essex Highways for September.

Resolution: Replicate the location of the previous speed checks for comparison purposes.

24/1936 Discuss and approve any items for publication.- (All).

- Precis of the minutes
- Allotments article concerning adjoining parishes and neighbouring magazines.
- Play in the Park at Great Waltham.

The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Sec 1 (2) states "A body may, by resolution, exclude the public from a meeting (whether during the whole or part of the proceedings) whenever publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons stated in the resolution and arising from the nature of that business or of the proceedings; and where such a resolution is passed, this Act shall not require the meeting to be open to the public during proceedings to which the resolution applies.

24/1937 Proposal to close the meeting to the public due to an ongoing legal dispute.

Resolution: The closure of the public meeting was agreed.

24/1938 Discuss VG150 and actions to be taken by the Council since receiving legal correspondence.

Meeting closed: 21.30.

W.Adshead-Grant
Clerk to the Council.

Next Meetings:

Annual Assembly at Ford End to be confirmed.

- Monday 5th August Recreation Committee at 7pm at the Pavilion.
- Monday 19th August Monthly Meeting at Pavilion at 7pm.
- Monday 26th August Bank Holiday
- Tuesday 17th September Monthly Meeting at Ford End VH at 7pm.
- Monday 23rd September Recreation Committee at 7pm at the Pavilion.
- Monday 30th September Finance and General Purposes Committee at 7pm at the Pavilion.

- Monday 21st October Monthly Meeting at Pavilion at 7pm.
- Tuesday 28th October Recreation Committee at 7pm at the Pavilion.
- Monday 4th November Finance and General Purposes Committee at 7pm at the Pavilion. ****Budget****
- Monday 18th November Monthly Meeting at the Pavilion at 7pm.
- Monday 25th November Highways & Transport Committee at 7pm at the Pavilion.
- Monday 2nd December Recreation Committee at 7pm at the Pavilion.
- Tuesday 17th December Monthly Meeting at Ford End VH at 7pm.