

# Great Waltham Parish Council

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## **Minutes of the Great Waltham Annual Assembly of the Parish held on Monday 7th May 2024 Great Waltham Village Hall.**

1. Chair of the Parish Council Opened the meeting on behalf of the Parish of Great Waltham.  
Cllr Gilbert opened the meeting .

18 members of the public attended the meeting.

Good evening and welcome to the 2024 annual assembly for the parish of Great Waltham. I am Steve Gilbert, the chair of Great Waltham Parish Council.

[Housekeeping – emergency exits].

The annual assembly is curated by the PC, and it is where we invite parish organisations to highlight their activities and achievements over the previous year with an update presentation if they wish, and potentially to recruit any new members or volunteers for their groups.

It is also an opportunity for parishioners to ask the presenters questions.

I will ask each organisation that wishes to provide the meeting with an update to do so and after each presentation people can ask questions about the presenter. Also, at the end there will be a general Q&A session on any other topic, questions or comments.

First though we need to confirm the minutes of last year's assembly held on 05/06/2023.

2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the Annual Assembly held on 05.06.2023  
The minutes were confirmed.

3. Report by the Chair of the Parish Council

The next item is my report on behalf of the parish council. You will have seen, and without doubt read with interest with you the Council's annual report published in the May edition of Parish News, so I will restrict myself to picking out some principal activities and achievements for the last year.

A new parish council was elected in May 2023, although no actual vote was needed as the number of candidates fell below the positions available. We then successfully co-opted members to get to full strength, but unfortunately, we have since been reduced by one, so we are therefore now seeking a new member. If you wish to become involved, please contact the Parish Clerk to explain and help guide you through the election process.

I would like to thank my fellow councilors and council staff for their input and work during the year and for their help and assistance in my role. It is rewarding when by working together we help to improve our community.

Much of the Council's work, especially that of our staff, goes 'under the radar' so this is an appropriate occasion to thank Will Adshead-Grant, our Parish Clerk, for his work and for keeping us on the straight and narrow, and to Jason Buckley for his contribution as our handyman.

It is equally satisfying to receive formal recognition for our work and how we operate, and in November, following assessment, the Council achieved Foundation status accreditation under the Local Council Award Scheme. As the name suggests, this demonstrates that we have shown we have the essentials in order to deliver effectively for our community.

In the annual report you will have seen we requested an increase in the parish precept to cover our projected expenses in 2024/25. The precept is one of the elements which makes up each household's Council Tax bill, and it remains our principal source of income. The year-on-year precept increase is 22.1%, which means that in Great Waltham parish it now accounts for 5.0% of our overall Council Tax bills, up from 4.1% in 2023/24.

Our budget was agreed in October 2023 for the year beginning April 2024. This means we have to try to predict expenditures up to almost 18 months in the future. The key drivers for the budget increase this time were the effects of inflation, the need to maintain adequate reserves and the projected costs for repair and maintenance of parish assets.

We also included an amount of £10,000 to cover the cost of the loan we then believed we would need for an average speed camera system in Ford End. However, since then the proposed scheme effectively fell through when the backing of Essex Highways could not be secured. The impact of that decision will be addressed in our 2025/26 budget.

In addition, we budgeted for renovation work on the war memorial at Banbury Square and the purchase of a new defibrillator unit which we are intending to install in the old BT telephone box at Broad's Green. By the way, we are looking for a volunteer to help re-paint the telephone box, so again let the Parish Clerk know if this were something you would like to be involved in.

On the other hand, with the financial ledger, we have reduced our administration costs by using the renovated Pavilion at Great Waltham Recreation Ground for the majority of our meetings and as a parish office, rather than having to rent a venue elsewhere. And in addition, the Pavilion is also yielding hiring fee income from a number of interest groups and private hires.

During the year we installed an all-weather path around part of the perimeter of the recreation ground at Ford End. And a new multi-play unit was installed at Howe Street last summer. For those of you who do not know we have the three recreation grounds to maintain – at Great Waltham, Ford End and Howe Street

Historically, we have tended to upgrade or replace play equipment items on a piecemeal basis as they have reached the ends of their useful working lives.

However, this solution is unlikely to be satisfactory at Great Waltham because major items will need to be replaced at much the same time.

We therefore initiated a working group which has met a number of playground equipment suppliers to understand what options are available, given, not least, the significant cost of equipment and the size of our budget. The working group hopes to bring its initial findings soon to the full council for consideration.

And the Great Waltham Recreation Ground was again the venue last summer for a successful play-in-the-park event. We will be holding a similar event again this year in August.

Elsewhere we continued with our provision of allotments at the Brook Mead and Bury Lane sites. There are currently some vacant plots, so if anyone is interested in hiring one, just contact us.

Following episodes of anti-social behavior and vandalism, especially in and around the recreation ground at Great Waltham, we sought closer engagement with our local Community Policing Team who attended one of our meetings to provide insight into their work and we will be hosting them at a drop-in session for residents in the Pavilion at Great Waltham Recreation Ground on the afternoon of Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May.

And finally, National Grid's proposals for pylons are on everyone's minds at the moment. During the year we made strong objections to the plans in our response to the second non-statutory consultation. We will be looking to consider our response to the latest statutory consultation at our next meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup>, and we have also arranged a community meeting for Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> May here in the Village Hall to provide the opportunity for residents to understand the implications of the scheme for themselves and the local area if it goes ahead, and how they can submit a consultation response.

Thank you. Are there any questions?

#### 4 Charity Reports (if Available).

- Great Waltham Charity
  - Aims – To relieve either generally or individually persons resident in the area of the ancient parish of great waltham and who are in conditions of need , hardship, or distress.
  - Accounts were not available as they had not been requested.
- North End Charity.
  - Aims - To relieve either generally or individually persons resident in the area of North End and who are in conditions of need , hardship, or distress.
  - Income £1,730
  - Expenditure £1,600

#### 5 Organisation Reports .

- Twinning

##### **GREAT WALTHAM TWINNING ASSOCIATION – REPORT 2024**

In July 2023, the Twinning Association welcomed nineteen adult and eight teenage visitors to Great Waltham for a week of trips and activities. As our funds were lower than in the pre-Covid years, we saved money by organizing free, very local trips, including a visit to Wild and Rooted Farm on Humphreys Farm Lane, bowling at Falcon Bowling Club, nr Channels, an open-air painting day at the church and a walk to Pleshey.

In late July 2024, 32 British members of the Twinning Association will visit Ceyrat for a week. We still have six places left on the coach so if anyone is interested, contact me (or Mike) urgently. All ages are welcome.

We are currently fundraising for the next visit by Ceyrat to us in July 2025. Our fundraising events include popular, not-at-all-serious quizzes and everyone is welcome.

Joanna Steel  
Présidente, Great Waltham Twinning Association  
joanna.2.steel@btinternet.com

- Community Network.

##### **COMMUNITY NETWORK – REPORT FOR PARISH ASSEMBLY 2024**

Firstly, I would like to say that we were sad to lose Andy Tinsley last year. He was one of the founder members of the Community Network and worked hard on community events for the village.

The Community Network continues this legacy.

In November 2023, we held the 6<sup>th</sup> Christmas Pudding Workshop, always popular and sold-out well before the event.

In December 2023 we ran the 15<sup>th</sup> Christmas Tree Festival in conjunction with the PCC, with trees decorated on the theme of “A nursery rhyme.” In the evening, we held the Essex Police Band Christmas concert.

In December 2024 we intend to revive the Christmas Tree Festival as a two-day event, with the enchanting Christingle returning to the Sunday evening.

This summer, we are hoping for the return of the Old Codgers Cricket Match.

The Community Network gives small grants to local groups. This year we were pleased to award grants to the Art Show and FOGWS. Contact me if your group needs some help.

We are always looking for new committee members or helpers. Let me know if you are interested.

Joanna Steel  
Chairperson, Great Waltham Community Network

- ECC / CCC
  - National grid running a consultation on the power lines to London coming around Chelmsford west.

6. Any Other matters raised by those present for discussion.

Meeting closed 20:40

Will Adshead-Grant

Clerk to the Council.