

# Great Waltham Parish Council

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## **GREAT WALTHAM PARISH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY 2025**

Held at 8pm on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at Ford End Village Hall.

### Minutes

1. Chairman of the Parish Council Opened the meeting on behalf of the Parish of Great Waltham

Good evening and welcome to the 2025 annual assembly for the parish of Great Waltham. I'm Steve Gilbert, the chair of Great Waltham Parish Council.

[Housekeeping – emergency exits].

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

It's also an opportunity for parishioners to ask questions of the presenters.

I'll 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.

18 members of the public in attendance.

2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the Annual Assembly held on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

**Resolution:**        **The Minutes were confirmed.**

3. Report by the Chairman of the Parish Council – Mr Steve Gilbert.

I have the following activities to report, which mainly follow the update you will find in the latest March edition of Parish News.

During the last year we welcomed Cllr. Lee Taylor to the Council, but lost Cllr. Jo Palmer. We have missed Jo's contributions to our work and thank her for her contributions over the years. The current position is that we are actively seeking a new member, so if you are interested, in the first instance please contact the Parish Clerk.

Our largest current (indeed biggest ever) project is the revamp of the play area at Great Waltham Recreation Ground. To fully refurbish the equipment and safety surfaces has a cost projection of £160,000 plus VAT. Because we do not have sufficient reserves to fully finance a project on this scale, we are seeking grant funding. How successful we are with our bid submissions will determine the eventual scale and timing of the works.

Following consultations events with children at Great Waltham school, the preschool and with the cubs, we completed a tender process and made an

‘intention to award’ decision which will be advanced when the level of available funding becomes clear. Once we have secured funds, work can begin.

In the meantime, at our three recreation grounds we:

- delivered on our plans to expand the use of the refurbished Pavilion – the facilities are now hired out for most of the week by a variety of local interest groups and clubs.
- installed new benches.
- installed new and refurbished old goalposts and nets.
- realigned the pitch at Great Waltham to a 7-a-side format to encourage greater use by younger children; and
- organised working parties to blitz some of the upkeep issues.

In August, at Great Waltham, we hosted another successful Play in the Park event with the help of Chelmsford City Council, and intend to hold a similar event again this year. Elsewhere, we renovated the war memorial at Banbury Square in good time for the 2024 Remembrance Sunday parade and service by having the stonework cleaned and all the inscriptions made legible. We also funded the new Christmas lights in the oak tree at Banbury Square – thanks to all the volunteers who made sure they were successfully installed.

We organised the renovation of the telephone box at Broad’s Green and installed a new defibrillator unit inside. Again, we are grateful to all the volunteers who have helped to make this happen.

We continued to encourage full occupancy of our allotment gardens and negotiated an arrangement whereby residents from parishes adjoining Great Waltham are now able to hire plots when the take-up by parish residents is insufficient. And we have a new inspection process to use the technology available to digitally record the conditions of the plots on our administration system. We use the same technology for our routine playground and asset assessment inspections.

During the year we renewed an agreement which ensured that free public car parking spaces remain available at Great Waltham Village Hall.

We also awarded two four-figure grants to parish organisations.

We have a balanced budget.

95% of our main income continues to come from the parish precept (which is collected from households as part of the Council Tax). Our principal expenditures remain staff costs, capital works and asset maintenance costs. And we have continued to make sure our reserves are adequate. Because we have now stabilised the level of annual income needed to reflect our current and projected outgoings, the parish precept amount for 2025/26 will be marginally lower than 2024/25.

This year we also initiated a process to begin our involvement with the Parish Paths Partnership, an ECC-funded community-based scheme that enables local volunteers to look after and/or promote their local Public Right of Way network. And we also continued to engage with our local Community Policing Team and arranged ‘Let’s Talk’ events with their officers.

We also responded to a number of consultations. The most emotive has of course been the plans by National Grid to construct a network of pylons across East Anglia. We submitted a robust objection to the then current plans and will consider our further response to NG’s latest proposals at our next meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> March.

Currently NG are running a 'targeted consultation' which runs until Thursday 27/03/2025. We are aware of an event having been arranged at the Walnut Tree PH at 7.30pm tomorrow to explain the amendments to NG's plans. And National Grid are arranging an event at Great Waltham Village Hall on 14/03/2025 to view AI generated displays of their new proposals. However, you do have to register on the NG website to attend.

During the year we have continued to improve our community engagement activities beyond holding the public meetings for our own business. We organised a public meeting last May to hear parishioners' thoughts on the pylons scheme; we arranged the sessions with the Community Policing Team; and we also welcomed two members of the public to our play area project working group after we appealed for volunteers. We also changed our media engagement policy to help us to communicate more responsively when issues arise, especially on social media.

We know that speeding on our roads is a concern for many residents. We commissioned an automatic traffic count survey outside Ford End school in November (which showed a significant increase in volume since 2021, but also a reduction in average speeds). We are also looking to commission periodic speed checks in the parish as part of an initiative operated by Maldon District Council, something which would complement the important work conducted by the volunteer Speed Watch teams in Great Waltham and Ford End.

In summary we have remained focussed on delivery and the enhancement of our community, outcomes we will continue to aspire to in the coming year.

Thanking you for listening – have you any questions?

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

- Great Waltham Charity. (Charity number: 209874).

Aims – to relieve either generally or individually persons resident in the area of the ancient parish of great waltham who are in conditions of need hardship or distress.

o Income	£579
o Expenditure	£0
o Balance at Year End 2023	£8891

- North End Charity. (Charity number: 213179).

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.

o Income	£1950.56
o Expenditure	£2440.50
o Balance 31/12/2024	£5418.32

#### 5 Organisation Reports (if Available).

- **GREAT WALTHAM TWINNING ASSOCIATION – REPORT 2025**

In July 2024, 30 Twinning Association members, some of them new to us, set off by coach from Great Waltham village hall to go to Ceyrat, France, for a week of trips and activities. Ceyrat Twinning's program included; a walk up into the surrounding volcanic hills along a geological fault; a visit to an artisanal brewery; a welcome buffet with the mayor at the town hall; a trip to an ancient forge in the mountains; a visit to the bread festival in a tiny, remote village; a tour of an abbey built in 1199; and a visit to a castle and adjacent silver mine. In July this year, it is *our* turn to welcome **40** French visitors to our homes. We are already planning the program. We hope to keep costs

down by keeping most of the trips local and of good value. We have been successful in fundraising for the visit by organising regular, popular quizzes for the whole community as well as smaller events just for our members. However, we can't welcome 40 visitors this year unless we can find new hosts. They can reside anywhere in the parish or nearby and can be of any age. Twinning visits are of particular value to children learning French at school. If anyone is interested or knows of anyone who *might* be interested, please email

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[e-voice.org.uk/greatwalthamparish/great-waltham-twinning-association/](http://e-voice.org.uk/greatwalthamparish/great-waltham-twinning-association/).

Joanna Steel

Présidente, Great Waltham Twinning Association

[joanna.2.steel@btinternet.com](mailto:joanna.2.steel@btinternet.com)

4<sup>th</sup> March 2025

- **COMMUNITY NETWORK – REPORT FOR 2025**

The Community Network's aim has always been to enhance village life by organising events for the community, or by helping other groups to run events. We also give grants to local groups. Since the last Parish Assembly, we have continued with our successful and popular events. In November 2024, we held the 6th Christmas Pudding Workshop and gave advice to Roxwell on running their first pudding workshop. In December 2024, in conjunction with the PCC, we revived the Christmas Tree Festival as a two-day event. On Saturday, we had the usual Christmas trees and Christmas Fair, and in the evening, the Essex Police Band Christmas concert, featuring the village choir. On Sunday, the village came together at Banbury Square for the switch-on of the wonderful new lights on the oak tree, followed by an enchanting Christingle in the church, the first in the village since 2019. At this point I would like to thank the PC for the new lights. I would also like to express my gratitude to all those who gave their time and expertise free of charge to make this happen – it demonstrated that community spirit is still alive and well in Great Waltham. Last weekend we held pancake races in the village for the first time since 2011. We shared the task with Waltham Scouts who raised funds selling tea, coffee, and homemade refreshments. Teams of all ages took part and had a great time. Later this year, we are hoping for the return of the Old Codgers Cricket Match.

The Community Network gives grants to local groups. This year we were pleased to award grants to the Art Show, FOGWS and the Parish News. 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

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- **Ford End Village Hall**

From Easter 2025 - There is the potential for a new nursery to come from Great Dunmow to the Village hall. The rules have changed with Ofsted and a nursery can use public buildings.

The village hall will be hired out Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 8am to 5pm. This will increase the revenue to the village hall with minimal impact on the community.

Some minor building works are planned along with some painting.

- **Ford End and Great Waltham Churches**

After the schools, the two churches are the most important buildings in the Parish. The congregations cover the funding of the priest and his expense. However, looking to support the building. Donations of just £5 a month would make a huge difference and support the building.

The Great Waltham organ has been renovated at a cost of £75,000 (made up of 2/3 grants and 1/3 donations). An organ concert is planned for end of March 2025.

Great Waltham church is a fantastic venue acoustically. Also, a great venue for large numbers.

Ford End Church is sometimes hired out as a venue .

- **Scarecrow Event in Ford End.**

Weekend of the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June a joint Church and Village Hall event is planned. The return of the Scarecrow event.

- **Scouts.**

The Scouts have had a busy year with events. The Blossom way Pancake races had brilliant weather and was well attended – a remarkable success. The Christmas tree event at the Church was a good event. Remembrance Parade is an important event every year but was short of Cubs and Scouts but well supported by the Beavers. Scout Breakfast in May is being planned. A cake and plant sale are planned for September 2025 with support from the Community Network. Each Section (Cubs , Scouts , Beavers) has a leader, and a new section is being started called Squirrels to cover the 4–6-year-old bracket.

All leaders roles and titles have changed through a reorganisation. Team Volunteers. But help is needed. Parent Volunteers to support the sections. Sections could close without parent volunteers to support the activities.

- **‘Pop up’ Food bank charity.**

This was set up in Ford End as a pioneering start. This was well supported and used and enable the charity to get up and running and improve the process.

2 paid staff run the charity. Support of either donated items or grants.

A need in Beaulieu , Springfield, and Melbourne.

Charity now moved on to new areas that need the support.

- **Dandara Development in Ford End.**

There are 20 houses proposed in the development by the school and loaded in the Chelmsford Local Plan . The local plan is updated every 5 years.

Back lane – a previous proposal has been removed from the Local Plan.

1/3 of the houses will be affordable housing which means the dwellings are available to rent or buy at 80% of the market value.

There is no local connection priority for this proposed development.

If the development goes ahead, it would be 2030 onwards.

- **Senior ladies Tea In Ford End.**

An opportunity for Cake and a chat. Ladies meeting (Chauffer available) . Meeting for a couple of hours. Currently about 12 regulars from How street, Little Waltham , Great Waltham, and Ford End.

- **ECC / CCC report.**

The full report has been loaded on the parish Website. However, the highlights are:

- Pylons – targeted consultation. Changes proposed in Great leighs , Waltham Gap and Margaretting.
  - Preferred approach is No pylons in the Waltham Gap. Buried cables are preferred by residents.
  - The Pylons in Waltham Gap has increased by one and it is nearer the road (B1008).
  - The pylon height has been reduced from 50m to 37m but with a bigger base.
  - Visibility from a distance will be improved. However, the pylons will run remarkably close to the Windmill (former hotel/Inn).
- Devolution.
  - The Government plans a reorganisation of the middle tiers of government.

- The Essex County Council elections due in May 2025 have been postponed for at least 1 year to allow for the election of a Mayor of Essex.
- Reduction in authorities from 12 to around 5.
- Chelmsford City Council elections have been postponed. A shadow cabinet will be elected, and the unitary authorities will merge to make authorities of approximately 500,000 people per authority.

**Vote of thanks to the Parish Council for their Voluntary Work to support the parish.**

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

- The Automatic Traffic Data count undertaken In November 2024 – Where is the data?

On Our website – on the Speed Indicator Device Page (SID).

- Should a committee be set up to look at the speeding and volume of traffic through Ford End ? Last 3 Months several accidents including 2 in one day.

The Parish Council has taken this issue up with Essex Highways. But Essex Highways state that an Average Speed Camera for Ford End does not meet current policy. Ford End has high traffic volume of 13,000 vehicle movements a day.

Traffic web – shows the casualty road events. An average speed camera requires the South Essex Roads Partnership to run the camera system. It was noted that the A1060 and A414 are the most dangerous roads in this ward. Consideration that an Average Speed Camera could be part of the requirements if the Dandara development goes ahead.

Note that there is a high volume of Aldi lorries passing through Ford End village to Chelmsford due to the three Aldi stores in the City.

The Sheepcoates signs that were changed from pointing lorries to Great Leighs for the A120 / M11 should be reinstated.

- Essex Road Tax for Essex Council. Noted that £300m per annum is raised in Car Tax in Essex but that all goes to central government. Essex County Council only gets £110m for road maintenance.

Meeting Closed 21.38  
Will Adshead-Grant.