



HIGH EASTER PARISH COUNCIL

HIGH EASTER PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING held at High Easter Village Hall on Tuesday 14th May 2024

In attendance were 9 members of the public (including 6 parish councillors), County and District Cllr Susan Barker, and the Parish Clerk.

1. **CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME**, Cllr Robert Lodge opened the meeting and welcomed residents.
2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** received from Parish Cllr Neil Reeve and Gordon Robinson.
3. **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING held on Tuesday 9th May 2023** were approved by the meeting.
4. **COUNTY AND DISTRICT CLLRS REPORT – County and District Cllr Susan Barker**

Uttlesford District Council, elected members are now at the end of their first year. The last year has seen a focus on progressing the Local Plan which remains on target for regulation 19 consultation in July; it is hoped the number of new homes required in the district will have been reduced given the approvals since the draft regulation 18 plan was put together.

At Essex County Council increasing spends continue to be on children's services, adult social care, and Home to School Transport. The council is on target to deliver a new railway station at Chelmsford's Beaulieu Park, as well as investment in highway maintenance and new schools including the relocation and new build for the current Helena Romanes secondary school in Dunmow.

Cllr Robert Lodge thanked Cllr Barker for her support during the year and attendance at parish council meetings.

5. **PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT – Cllr Robert Lodge**

Following the elections, we started the year co-opting two new Councillors to bring us up to full strength, Lucy O'Connor and Wendy Colgrave, who I am pleased to say have settled into their roles quickly and are a great asset to the Parish Council, particularly helping the clerk update the numerous policies and controls we are required to manage, see the website if you are interested!

May 2023 was a busy month in the parish as we joined forces with the village hall committee and church to organise events to mark the Coronation of HRH King Charles III, including the planting of a commemorative tree on the playing field.

The parish council continues to support Monday Muster which has now been running for 15 months and provides a seated exercise class followed by lunch for our older residents. The annual cost to run the group is approximately £5k and in the first year this was supported by grants and donations, as we enter year 2 the expectation is this will be part funded by the parish council.

The normal business of planning applications were considered at meetings with the parish council responding to Uttlesford as a statutory consultee. We acknowledge the planning inspector decision to dismiss the appeal at Maidens Barn a situation that has been ongoing for the last few years, however we remain frustrated with the speed and lack of enforcement action by Uttlesford on this and other applications in the parish.

Uttlesford published its Regulation 18 Local Plan in the summer and the parish council was disappointed to be defined as a larger village with an allocation of 105 new homes. The parish council arranged a public meeting to help residents understand the process that had led to this decision and to provide information to help in responses. The parish council challenged the classification in its response providing evidence to support this and along with other larger villages attended a meeting with Uttlesford to discuss in more detail. We must wait for Regulation 19 at the end of July to know if we have been successful in getting the High Easter allocation removed.

After five years of providing a mobile post service to High Easter every Tuesday morning in The Snug, we said goodbye and thank you to Loretta and Linsells of Felsted at the end of April 2024. They have been replaced by a mobile van service on Friday afternoons in the village hall car park and we encourage residents to use this, and the mobile library van which visits every three weeks, in order to retain these services. It was also goodbye and thank you to the contractor who had cut the playing field grass for many years. This gave us the opportunity to combine the grounds maintenance contracts and increase the ad-hoc cutting of the playing field.

Looking back over the minutes there were other notables:

Repairs to the beacon which will be lit next month as part of the national D-day commemorations, the continuing provision of the weekend Green Waste service and a campaign to save the bus service which has been reprieved until 2026. A Christmas lunch for Monday Muster and invited guests, a litter pick, an onsite meeting last month with Kemi Badenoch MP at Heyrons Lane to try to get support to stop vehicles using the byway during winter months, and most recently the planting of 10 trees in the Jubilee Wood.

The other notable event was the use of our defibrillator in September 2023 which saved the life of a cyclist and has prompted us to agree to the purchase two more units to be placed at The Punch Bowl and Spotted Dog, once the relevant planning applications for their installation are approved. These will be funded by grants, a £650 donation from a fundraising event organised by Lucy O'Connor, with the balance from parish funds.

Finally as always I would like to thank my fellow Councillors for their time and dedication in trying to keep High Easter a lovely place to live.

6. REPORT FROM HIGH EASTER VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE – Simon Sutton

We have had another successful year with lots of events covering all ages, of note were the coronation celebrations and Sunday socials, our thanks to Paul and Allan for providing the musical entertainment.

We have spent a lot of time sorting repairs including to the roof, and a major project to install solar panels on the roof which will come to fruition at the end of May. We would like to record our thanks to Chris Dyer for his efforts on obtaining grants, and to our grant funders Uttlesford Zero Carbon Communities, Uttlesford ward members fund, Essex County Council Locality Fund and High Easter parish council.

We are looking to do more Sunday bar openings and at increasing attendance. During the year we opened the bar for the Six Nations rugby matches, ran a successful beer event and welcomed the Biryani Boys on several occasions. We provided the venue for several other community events including the charity quiz night for the defibrillator and Essex Air Ambulance, church harvest supper and the 10k road race.

The hall is used regularly by local groups including the church and parish council, plus we have ladies boxing, bowls, dance club and of course the pre-school who use the hall daily during term time.

Cllr Robert Lodge thanked Simon and the village hall committee for all they do to support the community.

7. REPORT FROM ANY OTHER VILLAGE GROUPS OR ORGANISATIONS

Mike Parnell reported on behalf of the church and began by confirming High Easter parish is now part of a single benefice of 7 parishes and 10 churches. Rev Robert is the benefice parish priest and is currently supported by Rev Gary Fleming who has completed his curacy training and will be moving to take up the post of parish priest to the Clavering benefice during the summer. In October 2023 we welcomed Rev Jo Wood to the team to complete her final year of curacy. In addition we are supported by Rev Tim Goodbody who has a full time role in the Diocese and lives in the High Easter Rectory. Our clergy and PCCs are ably supported by our parish administrator whose role includes the administration around parish safeguarding.

At our annual church meeting earlier this month Jeremy Beale was re-elected as churchwarden and will be joined by James Pettit, this is the first time for 5/6 years that we have two churchwardens. All other posts on the PCC are also currently filled including treasurer, secretary, and Deanery Synod representative.

Financially we continue to struggle to pay the bills which continue to increase as well as to maintain our large grade I building. We are grateful to the parish council for the grant to support the costs of churchyard equipment and their maintenance, and for the many volunteers who help us to cut the grass, maintain the churchyard, clean the church and the many other jobs that always need doing.

8. PARISHONERS QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS - None

9. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING – Tuesday 6th May 2025 at 7.00pm.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm.