



# HIGH EASTER PARISH COUNCIL

## HIGH EASTER PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING held at High Easter Village Hall on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2025

In attendance were 12 members of the public (including 6 parish councillors) and the Parish Clerk.

1. **CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME**, Cllr Robert Lodge opened the meeting and welcomed residents.
2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** received from County and District Cllr Susan Barker and Parish Cllr Lucy O'Connor.
3. **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING held on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2024** were approved by the meeting.
4. **COUNTY AND DISTRICT CLLRS REPORT – No report.**
5. **PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT – Cllr Robert Lodge**

The year began with the start of the new mobile post office on Friday afternoons in the village hall car park, our thanks to the team at Finchingfield for providing this.

In June the beacon was lit to commemorate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day, the event was well attended.

In August the Parish Council organised an afternoon tea for the 'overs' hosted by Paul and Cllr Wendy Colgrave. Residents were treated to a ride in a vintage coach to Ellis Farm where a magnificent spread was laid on by councillors and volunteers in the beautiful gardens of Ellis Farm.

Last year we reported High Easter was classified a larger village in the Regulation 18 Local Plan with an allocation of 105 new homes. By the time the regulation 19 consultation began in August, High Easter had been reclassified as a smaller village where only limited infill would be considered in existing built areas. The Local Plan has been submitted by Uttlesford to the Planning Inspector and the independent examination begins this June. Whilst this does not mean no developments in High Easter, it limits this to small scale. This year we have seen redundant farm buildings come forward for development with 15 new dwellings approved across two sites and a further 7 pending a decision.

The parish council continues to push Uttlesford to ensure that where it sees breaches in planning these are pursued, and this year the parish council has sent both written correspondence and held in person meetings. Long running issues include Maidens Farm and Greens Farm industrial units.

After a long process with planning, two new defibrillators which include blood trauma kits were installed at The Punch Bowl and The Spotted Dog, many thanks to The Kelseys, Jo Crace and the Spotted Dog for allowing these to be sited on their premises. These were 50% funded by a government grant for installing defibrillators, a grant from Cllr Susan Barkers fund, and from proceeds from a community quiz night, the balance and ongoing maintenance will be funded by the parish council. This brings the total number of parish council funded defibrillators to three, the third being located at The Snug, the intention is this unit will be upgraded to include a blood trauma kit.

A large crowd attended the Remembrance Day Service at the Village War Memorial which also saw the refurbished wooden soldiers on parade.

In December Cllr O'Connor headed up the overs Christmas lunch organisation which was a great success with children from Butterfly Pre-School entertaining the attendees. Many thanks to all who helped.

In early 2025 the parish council led a consortium of neighbouring parish councils and made a successful bid for the 'Love Your Bus Grant'. This will enable marketing material to be produced to promote the usage of the local bus service 17/18 'use it or lose it' campaign and allow for some minor additions to the service to the Chignalls.

More trees have been planted in Jubilee Wood, many thanks to Cllr Reeve for this. And the parish council commissioned a tree survey on parish council owned land to fulfil its obligations to public safety, with some works to trees taking place in 2025.

The grass mound was removed in the play area which had developed large cracks. Thanks to Cllr Boreham for helping me and providing the machinery.

The village circular bench at Pump Green was removed for cleaning and extending due to tree growth. It's now back in place and looking resplendent.

Another successful litter pick took place in April thanks to all who helped.

Cllr Colgrave (and husband) carried out some finger post and road sign cleaning, thanks also to Simon Harris for cleaning the cast iron finger post at Rolph's Green. With Essex County Council no longer funding signage cleaning and painting, the parish council paid for the refurbishment of the historic finger post at the junction of School Lane and The Street.

The parish council continues to run Monday Muster, a seated exercise class for the elderly which is followed by lunch. Our thanks to all the volunteers who help with the lunch. There is no charge for attending the group although donations for lunch are welcome. As well as parish council funding we are grateful to grants from Essex Micro Fund and the High Easter 10k road race.

I would like to thank all Cllrs for their time and effort in attending meetings and events over the last year which is done of their own goodwill.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to and thank Cllr Paul Sutton who has confirmed his intention to stand down following the May meetings due to his imminent move to Suffolk, Paul has been a Cllr for 24 years, much of this time as Vice Chair. We all owe Paul a huge vote of thanks for his expertise on all planning issues and support he has given to events whether it be jubilees, coronations, WW1 and WW2 anniversaries and his bugle 'playing' at the November remembrance events. We wish him well and we will miss his input.

In April 2025 Allison Ward our parish clerk for over 10 years resigned due to changes in family in circumstances, she will continue to provide support until a new clerk is appointed. I know I speak for us all in thanking Allison for her help both during and outside of our parish council meetings. We are grateful for her direction, for her synopsis of our discussions and turning these into meaningful proposals, and for her dedication and determination in supporting the parish council to research matters of importance to our community. We wish her well in her new job.

## **6. REPORT FROM HIGH EASTER VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE – Gordon Robinson**

Highlights for the year include the installation of solar panels on the south facing roof which are very effective and reduce our energy costs. This was achieved with the support of a £15k grant from Uttlesford's Zero Carbon Communities Fund and a £2.5k grant from the parish council. Other works this year have included the redecoration of the committee room and a new fridge/freezer in the kitchen. We have plans to continue to improve the facility as well as upgrades to the smoke detectors to comply with legislation.

The village hall committee continues to organise community events, and we are looking forward to a beer festival in June and the VE Day 80<sup>th</sup> commemorations later this week.

The village hall is the 'beating heart of the community'. Last year saw a packed agenda for the hall with the D-Day commemorations, harvest supper and the pantomime, as well as the regular community bar openings. The hall hosted children's parties, clubs and group meetings, we welcomed Dunmow Rovers football club, and the hall continues to provide the weekly setting for Butterfly pre-school.

We would like to thank the parish council for their continuing support and give a special mention to Jill Jackson and all the volunteers, including Paul who will be seriously missed, that help and support the running of the hall.

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

## **7. REPORT FROM ANY OTHER VILLAGE GROUPS OR ORGANISATIONS – None.**

## **8. PARISHONERS QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS**

Mike Parnell expressed thanks to everyone for all the work they do as volunteers to support High Easter community and made two suggestions.

- a. In relation to the bus, if timetables were put up it might encourage a few more users, the clerk responded to confirm this will be covered in the 'Love Your Bus Grant' funding.
- b. Disappointed that the phone kiosk is still only a deposit for books and not an information point as suggested by the signage, Cllr Robert Lodge confirmed the parish council would consider this and asked that thanks be recorded to Liz Lodge and Amanda Deans for keeping an eye on the book exchange and books deposited, ensuring books were appropriate and not left to accumulate.

## **9. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING – Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at 6.30pm**

Close 6.55pm