

MINUTES OF LITTLE YELDHAM ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL, LITTLE YELDHAM ON TUESDAY 11TH MARCH 2025 AT 7 PM

In the chair: Mr. P. J. Gentry

Present: Mrs. K. Chapman, Mrs. A. Gardiner, Mr. D. Jenkins, Mr. D. Patient and Mrs. M. Pearce

Mr. A. Corder-Birch (Clerk)

Mrs. I. Parker (District Councillor) and 2 (two) members of the public

1) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Mr. P. Schwier

2) MINUTES OF PREVIOUS ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The minutes of Little Yeldham Annual Parish Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 were read by the Clerk, confirmed and duly signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

3) MATTERS ARISING FROM THOSE MINUTES

There were no matters arising.

4) LITTLE YELDHAM VILLAGE HALL REPORT

Mr. P. Gentry gave the annual Village Hall Committee report, a copy of which accompanies these minutes as appendix one.

5) BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT AND DEVOLUTION

Mrs. I. Parker presented her annual report, which was previously circulated to councillors and a copy accompanies these minutes as appendix two. Concern was expressed about the lack of parking at the forthcoming medical centre at Sible Hedingham.

6) ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

In the absence of Mr. P. Schwier no report was given, but ECC information is disseminated by email.

7) PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

Mr. P. J. Gentry gave the annual Parish Council report a copy of which accompanies these minutes as appendix three.

8) LITTLE YELDHAM RECREATION GROUND COMMITTEE REPORT

Mrs. M. Pearce gave the annual Little Yeldham Recreation Ground Committee report a copy of which accompanies these minutes as appendix four. The Chairman thanked Mrs. Pearce for her report. Mrs. K. Chapman reported that a new resident of North End was keen to help and it was suggested that he makes donations to the Plant Sale.

9) ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.30 pm.

(Chairman)

(Date)

**Little Yeldham Annual Parish Meeting – Village Hall Committee Report**

1. At the AGM in May 2024 all five Trustees were re-elected to form the Management Committee. The AGM this year will be held on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> May.
2. The management team continue to work well together for the betterment of the hall and meet regularly every two months.
3. The bank balance remains healthy, buoyed by increasing bookings and the events held in 2024. Bookings so far for 2025 are encouraging and Event planning is well advanced. A Quiz Night is arranged for Friday 16<sup>th</sup> May, a Race Night in August/September, date TBC and a Talk and Social Evening in November, date TBC.
4. Funding was received from Braintree Council improve the heating system in the main hall and to provide a heating system in the John Gardiner room. All systems were in installed in the last quarter of 2024.
5. The fire exit in the John Gardiner Room was been widened, so it is suitable for wheelchairs and a new fire door has been fitted. The external door to the John Gardiner store room has been also been replaced as the old one was rotting. Funding for both of these improvements was received from the Bruce Wake Trust and the Essex Community Fund.
6. Following an award from the National Lottery, work is currently underway to:
  - Replace the kitchen and the sink unit in the John Gardiner Room;
  - Refurbish the ladies and gents toilets;
  - Decorate throughout;
  - Improve external lighting;
  - Improve loft insulation in the Main Hall and John Gardiner Room;
  - Replace the flat roof above the lobby and toilets; and
  - Fit out the main and ancillary store rooms.
7. Funding opportunities continue to be explored for further improvement works, which are always necessary for an old building such as ours.
8. The Village Hall's presence on Social Media, in the 4VM and on the VH and North End notice boards together with the entry on the 'Find a Village Hall' facility on the Rural Community Council of Essex's website, continues to publicise the hall, its facilities and events.
9. An exciting 2025 is in prospect.

## APPENDIX 2 - BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT

### **Report for Parish Councils from Cllr Iona Parker – March 2025**

#### **Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation in Essex.**

The Government has announced that it wishes to extend devolution to all areas of England. Essex has taken the view that it should be at the forefront of this programme and has applied to be in the priority group. This request has been accepted.

Devolution will see powers, functions and funding passed from Whitehall to local areas and leaders. This will enable decisions which would otherwise be taken by ministers and civil servants in London to be taken at a more local level, tailoring the decisions to local needs, enabling more co-ordinated action and giving local areas more say over decisions which affect them.

The proposed model for Essex will see a directly elected mayor and the creation of a combined/strategic authority consisting of representatives from Essex County Council, Thurrock and Southend. Elections for the mayor would take place in May 2026.

The areas to be devolved include:

- Transport and local infrastructure, including buses, highways and train services
- Skills and employment support
- Housing and strategic planning
- Economic development and regeneration, including business support

The Government is consulting on these proposed changes and is seeking your views. Search Greater Essex Devolution Consultation on the Gov.uk website.

In addition to this (and separate from it) the Government is proposing to reorganise local government in 2 tier areas (ie where there are county and district/borough/city councils) and replace them with one unitary council. For Essex this will mean between 2 and 5 unitary councils. Essex has been asked to submit its initial proposals by 21st March with final proposals by 26th September. Leaders have formed cross party working groups to look at issues such as geography, size, number and value for money. Financial viability will be an important issue as will the need to maintain quality services. There also needs to be an understanding with the Government of how existing council debts will be handled.

Given the level of upheaval this will involve, the Government has agreed to postpone elections for Essex County Council due to take place this May for one year (although this may be extended).

#### **Budget**

BDC agreed its budget for the forthcoming year at its meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> February. Main highlights of relevance to my ward:

- Council tax to remain low. The BDC element of Council Tax will increase by 2.97% or £5.94 a year for a band D property. This means our Council Tax is still have one of the lowest in Essex and we are able to set a balanced budget.

- Transformation programme to be adjusted to reflect Local Government Reorganisation. This Programme is looking at how we can work more efficiently and make best use of our funds.
- £1.5m to invest in community assets across the District.
- Further funding for our cost of living fund to help low income households.
- £500k for temporary housing to meet the growing pressures for temporary housing for those who are homeless.
- No increase to garden waste collection charges.
- £50k for new litter and dog bins. (Thank you to the parish councils in my ward who have been pushing for new bins.)
- Street cleaning grants to parish councils to continue.
- Councillor Community Grants Scheme to continue.
- Twice yearly verge cutting to resume.

To remind you, 58% of our income comes from Council tax, 40% comes from business rates and 2% comes from Government grants. BDC collects Council tax on behalf of ECC, the police and fire authorities and town and parish councils. Of every £1 collected in Council tax, 9p is retained by the District Council.

### **Local Plan**

The consultation on the Issues and Options for the new Local Plan has just closed. The next stage is the evaluation of the sites that have been put forward for development (housing and employment). Meetings will take place in May and June.

If any sites have been put forward in your parish, I would urge you to consider now how you wish to respond to these sites so you are ready to participate in these meetings if necessary.

### **Waste Review**

The consultation on this has also just closed. Over 7,500 responses have been received. I hope to be able to update you on this at the meeting.

### **Sible Hedingham medical centre**

Good news on this. The land for this was acquired by BDC as part of a s.106 agreement for the Bloor Homes development in Sible Hedingham. The land has now been transferred from BDC to One Medical who will be building the centre for the GP practices in Hedingham. Work on drainage is due to start shortly. One Medical will then go out to tender for the construction with work starting, all going well, in the autumn. The building already has planning permission.

### **Braintree Diagnostic Centre**

Work has now started on this at the Braintree Community Hospital. We are extremely fortunate to have this facility which is only one of three being developed in the county. This will provide access to X-rays, MRI and CT scans and blood tests and save patients having to travel further afield.

## APPENDIX 3 - PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

### **Little Yeldham Annual Parish Meeting – Parish Council Report**

1. The budget and precept for 2025-2026 is agreed at £9,528 which is £553 or 3.9% more than 2024-2025. The reason for this increase is an increased grass cutting costs and a contribution to Great Yeldham Parish Council towards the production costs of the 4 Villages Magazine. Be assured, that the Parish Council will always endeavour to keep the precept under control, whilst maintaining its current service to residents.
2. Mr Don Jenkins joined as a Little Yeldham Councillor in May 2024 filling the position left by the resignation of Councillor Nicola Wookey.
3. Protective posts for the Village Green at North End have been installed, maintenance work performed on the telephone box and drains cleared. Thank you to Councillor Katie Chapman for instigating and overseeing these improvements.
4. The project to improve the Recreation Ground play equipment is ongoing and Councillor Mary Pearce will give her report under the next agenda item.
5. The use of BDC Amenity Vehicles and drivers for Little Yeldham and North End was very successful and will be continued this year.
6. Your Parish Council continues to take responsibility for the maintenance of the defibrillator at the Village Hall and are happy to report that it remains in full working order.
7. The Planning Advisory Group continued to inform the Parish Council on responses to BDC consultation requests. It was a quiet year with only two applications to deal with:
  - a. Retention of new field access, Little Yeldham Road Objections and Granted
  - b. 11 replacement windows, September Barn, North End No objections and GrantedAll planning applications dealt with by the Planning Advisory Group can be viewed on the PC website.
8. Issues with blocked drains in Little Yeldham and North End continue to be reported to ECC Highways using their online reporting tool and continue to be pursued with Highways and Peter Schwier, our ECC Councillor.
9. Your Parish Council continues to be fully GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) compliant and our Data Controller is Councillor Daren Patient. Thank you to Daren for his sterling work monitoring our compliance and maintaining the policies and procedures as necessary.
10. Your Chairman continues sit on and provide input into the Executive Committee (9 councils) of the Braintree Association of Local Councils (BALC).

11. Thank you to Councillor Amanda Gardiner for her work on the PROWs and as our tree warden and thank you to Councillor Daren Patient for his work on highways.
12. Thank you to our Parish Councillors and Adrian Corder-Birch for all their work for Little Yeldham and North End.
13. Thank you also to our District Councillor Iona Parker and our Essex County Councillor Peter Schwier for their support and work for Little Yeldham and North End.

## APPENDIX 4 - LITTLE YELDHAM RECREATION GROUND COMMITTEE REPORT

### LITTLE YELDHAM RECREATION GROUND SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT FOR LITTLE YELDHAM ANNUAL PARISH MEETING ON 11 MARCH 2025

The last twelve months have seen Little Yeldham Recreation Ground settle down after the excitement of the National Lottery award and the equipment refurbishing of the previous year.

We would have liked to have been in a financial position to finish off the main improvements to pathways, seating, bins and the notice board but this is proving very difficult and so far, we have only secured a grant of £2500 from the Bruce Wake Trust towards the project. The Committee has decided that for now we will scale back our original plan which included an allotment area and raised beds for a Gardening Club and we will approach the National Lottery again in an attempt to secure sufficient funds to complete our reduced plan for the area.

Two Apple trees have been planted on the Recreation Ground and if they survive and produce fruit, everyone will be able to help themselves. A special thank you to Ernie Brookx for nurturing them through the autumn and winter and to Councillor Amanda Gardiner and her team for planting them for us.

We are continuing to hold events each year raising sufficient funds to maintain the Park and this year will hold an Easter Egg Hunt and Coffee Morning on Saturday 12 April utilising the Recreation Ground and the Village Hall and a Summer Barbeque on the Recreation Ground on Saturday 9 August 2025. We also hope to hold a Plant Sale on Saturday 17 May to raise funds for the Park.

The most important thing is that the Recreation Ground is continuing to be well used by people from our community and the surrounding area and it is heartening to hear the positive comments of all users.

Mary Pearce