

MINUTES OF LITTLE YELDHAM ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL, LITTLE YELDHAM ON TUESDAY 10TH MARCH 2026 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) together with 1 (one) member of the public

1) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Mrs. I. Parker and Mr. P. Schwier

2) MINUTES OF PREVIOUS ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The minutes of Little Yeldham Annual Parish Meeting held 11th March 2025, were previously circulated, 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 circulated the annual Village Hall Committee report, a copy of which accompanies these minutes as appendix one.

5) BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT

Mrs. I. Parker had previously circulated her annual report, a copy of which accompanies these minutes as appendix two.

6) ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

The annual ECC report from Mr. P. Schwier was previously circulated and accompanies these minutes as appendix three.

7) PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

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

8) LITTLE YELDHAM RECREATION GROUND COMMITTEE REPORT

Mrs. M. Pearce circulated the annual Little Yeldham Recreation Ground Committee report a copy of which accompanies these minutes as appendix five.

9) LOCAL GOVERNMENT RE-ORGANISATION AND DEVOLUTION

The Clerk reported that the Government should announce its decision regarding the new Unitary Authorities in Essex this month.

10) ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.10 pm.

(Date)

(Chairman)

APPENDIX 1 - LITTLE YELDHAM VILLAGE HALL REPORT

Little Yeldham Annual Parish Meeting – Village Hall Committee Report

1. At the AGM in May 2025 all five Trustees were re-elected to form the Management Committee. The AGM this year will be held on Monday 11th 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 2025. Bookings so far for 2026 are encouraging and Event planning is well advanced. A Quiz Night was held on Friday 28th May and a Race Night is organised for Friday 25th September. A Talk and Social Evening or another Quiz Night is being discussed for later in the year.
4. Following an award from the National Lottery, the following work has been completed:
 - Replacement of the kitchen and the sink unit in the John Gardiner Room;
 - Refurbishment of the ladies and gents toilets in the Main Hall;
 - Decoration throughout and new vertical blinds;
 - Improved external lighting;
 - Improved loft insulation in the Main Hall and John Gardiner Room;
 - Replacement of the flat roof above the lobby and toilets;
 - Fitting out of the main and ancillary store rooms; and
 - External wall insulation and rendering.
5. The National Lottery have also recently provided funding for the installation of solar panels and battery storage and this work is planned for April.
6. Pending opportunities continue to be explored for further improvement works, which are always necessary for an old building such as ours. Refurbishment of the toilets in the John Gardiner room, replacement of the garage and refurbishment of the boundary walls are next on the agenda.
7. 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.
8. An exciting 2026 is in prospect.

APPENDIX 2 - BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT

Annual Report 2025/26

Cllr. Iona Parker – BDC Stour Valley North Ward

This is the end of my 11th year as your District Councillor for the Stour Valley North Ward, which takes in the villages of Ridgewell, Ashen, Little Yeldham, Tilbury-Juxta-Clare, Ovington, the Belchamps, Pentlow, Foxearth, Liston and Borley. I aim to do my best to represent the interests of your communities on Braintree District Council, help residents with their enquiries and to serve on Council committees.

I am a chair of the Planning Committee and am also a member of the Local Plan sub committee, the Licensing Committee and one of the scrutiny committees. I have had a lot of meetings this year, as there have been many Local Plan sub committee meetings as well as Planning Committee and Planning Members Forum meetings. I also represent the Council at meetings of the Essex Rural Partnership. In addition, I endeavour to attend meetings of the 7 Parish Councils in my ward or send a written report if I am unable to attend in person.

I received £1,250 under the Councillors Community Grant Scheme and was able to provide funds for a hearing loop for Borley church, a new gate at Borley village hall and a defibrillator for the Essex Gliding Club. Since the inception of this scheme, I have tried to distribute the funds equally around my ward. I am pleased that despite ongoing pressures on the Council's budget, in 2026/27 the Council will be increasing the amount allocated to each Councillor under this scheme to £1,500. The Council is also restoring the twice-yearly verge cut to improve safety on roads, particularly rural roads.

As always, I have been dealing with a variety of issues raised with me including anti-social behaviour, planning issues and road signage and potholes. Resurfacing has taken place on various sections of road in my ward and I know more is planned, including in Foxearth, following the incessant rain this winter. I continue to report potholes on the Essex Highways website when I see them as well as reporting any fly tipping to BDC. I have supported residents and parish councils with problems caused by the construction of the solar park at Knowl Green and ensured the planning conditions are enforced. I have also supported Ridgewell Parish Council with their attempts to provide holiday activities for school children in the village.

In wider terms, Braintree District Council has continued with its priority of delivering high quality services on a balanced budget and this year, due to sensible decisions taken earlier, residents will see no increase in their Council Tax for 2026/27. There will also be no increase in the garden waste collection charges.

Plans for devolution for Essex are continuing which will see a directly elected Mayor and a Combined Authority, although the elections for the Mayor have been postponed till 2028. Devolution should enable Essex to take more strategic decisions

itself rather than decisions being imposed by civil servants in London. 2027 should also see the creation of new unitary councils in Essex to replace the current mix of County, District/Borough and Unitary Councils. BDC has engaged in the Government consultation on this and supported the creation of 3 unitaries. We await the Government's "minded to" decision, expected imminently.

BDC has also been working on a new Local Plan for the District to extend the life of the current plan to the early 2040s. The Government has imposed a mandatory housing target on Councils and BDC has produced a draft plan setting out proposed allocations for housing and employment as well as updating planning policies. The public consultation on this (known as Reg 18) has just started and I would urge anyone interested to respond to the consultation, a link to which is on the BDC website. There are no housing allocations proposed for the villages in my ward.

The other major piece of work for this year has been the design and implementation of the new waste strategy. This came about as a result of Government legislation which required Councils to collect more materials directly from households, a desire to increase recycling and reduce the amount going to incineration, and a desire to increase revenue from recyclable materials, particularly paper and card. We were very pleased with the level of response to the consultation and are grateful to the time residents took to engage with this. The new bins have arrived and a letter with information on the new service will be sent to households in May.

Some highlights of the Braintree District Council achievements or activities during the 2025/26 year are:

- Awarded a contract to a new provider, Freedom Leisure, to run our 4 leisure centres in the District.
- Renewed the contract with Suffolk CC for processing of dry recyclates.
- Continued to support residents and communities impacted by the cost of living crisis. The budget allocated further funds to the Cost of Living Grant Scheme launched last year.
- On track to meet its annual target of 250 affordable homes.
- Continued to operate the housing register, providing housing for those eligible for affordable housing and to provide temporary housing if required.
- Awarded grants from the Shared Prosperity and Rural England Prosperity Funds to a number of businesses and community organisations.
- Supported delivery of a Safer Streets programme in Halstead and Public Spaces Protection Order in Braintree, included a PSPO to stop car racing.
- New 3G all-weather pitches in Braintree.
- Works started to improve the public realm on Witham and Halstead high streets.
- Continued with regular litter picking on the main roads in the District.
- Continued to respond to fly tipping, abandoned vehicles and other public nuisance issues.
- Developed a new Air Quality Strategy.
- Reviewed operation of the customer service centre to deal with incoming calls

- more quickly.
- Held Sports and Volunteer Awards to recognise achievements and a volunteer day to advertise volunteering opportunities to residents.
 - Held a dementia awareness week and a slipper swap to reduce falls.
 - Held a number of business briefings and jobs fairs both for young people and people in midlife.
 - Responded to consultations on revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework.
 - Responded to consultations on National Grid’s Bramford to Twinstead and Norwich to Tilbury pylon projects.

Cllr Iona Parker
10th March 2026

DRAFT AWAITING APPROVAL

Essex County Council Hedingham Division

Annual Report 2025–2026

Introduction – The Hedingham Division and What It Represents

The Hedingham Division is a diverse and proudly rural part of Essex, made up of 33 parish councils and a network of villages, farmland, small businesses and community organisations that define its character.

Representing the Hedingham Division means understanding that rural issues differ from those in urban areas. Road maintenance affects farm access as much as commuters. Transport links influence young people's access to education and employment. Social care provision must take account of distance and isolation. Protecting our countryside is not an abstract policy issue — it is central to everyday life.

This annual report sets out the work undertaken during the 2025–2026 municipal year and reflects five years of steady representation and delivery for the Hedingham Division as a whole.

Throughout the year I have attended parish meetings across the division, responded to individual casework, worked with officers to resolve local issues, supported community organisations and represented rural concerns at County Hall.

The aim has been consistent: to ensure that the Hedingham Division is not simply part of Essex on a map, but actively heard, properly supported and fairly invested in.

Highways and Transport – Practical Delivery Backed by Policy

Highways remain the most frequently raised issue across our parish meetings. In rural areas the road network underpins farm access, school transport, emergency response and local business logistics.

Essex maintains one of the largest highway networks in the country. It is managed through routine safety inspections, risk-based defect prioritisation and planned resurfacing programmes.

Delivery mechanisms include the Priority One programme for proactive maintenance, the Members' Highways Initiative which enables local priorities to be addressed, and Local Highway Panels which support new safety and design schemes.

Within the Hedingham Division this year we secured and delivered:

- Resurfacing works in parts of Sible Hedingham, Bulmer Tye & Lamarsh
- Road 'top dressing' improvements in Gestingthorpe.
- Extensive white lining improvements across multiple parishes.
- Replacement and upgrading of road signage.

- Continued engagement regarding drainage and long-term maintenance priorities.

These improvements enhance safety, visibility and long-term resilience. Sustained investment in rural routes remains essential and I will continue pressing for it.

Education and Children's Services – Quality and Accountability

Children's services remain one of the most scrutinised and high-priority areas of local government.

Essex County Council has strengthened safeguarding, improved oversight and raised standards. Ofsted inspections have recognised improvements in leadership and service consistency in recent years.

Demand pressures remain particularly significant in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), requiring continued reform, financial planning and expansion of appropriate provision.

In rural areas, access to services is often as important as availability. Ensuring families receive equal standards of support regardless of geography remains a central priority.

Adult Social Care – Managing Rising Demand with Stability

Adult social care represents the largest area of County Council expenditure and one of the greatest financial pressures nationally.

Essex continues to perform strongly, with positive Care Quality Commission assessments recognising effective commissioning, safeguarding and partnership working with NHS services.

Investment has focused on prevention, independent living, workforce retention and support for unpaid carers.

For rural communities, transport access and social isolation are important considerations. Balancing compassionate care with financial sustainability remains central to responsible governance.

Finance, Efficiency and Governance – Scale and Stability

Essex County Council is one of the largest county authorities in England, serving over 1.8 million residents and managing a multi-billion-pound budget.

In February 2026, Full Council approved a total council tax increase of 3.95%, comprising a 1.95% general increase and a 2.00% Adult Social Care precept.

For a Band D property, the Essex County Council element rises from £1,579.59 to £1,641.96 annually — an increase of £62.37 per year or approximately £1.20 per week.

Despite national pressures affecting many authorities, Essex remains financially stable and is widely regarded as one of the better-managed county councils nationally.

Disciplined budgeting, long-term planning and responsible capital investment underpin this stability.

Economic Growth, Skills and Rural Enterprise

A thriving rural economy sustains village life. Essex supports economic growth through infrastructure investment, skills development and support for small and medium-sized enterprises.

For the Heddingham Division, agriculture, independent trades, hospitality and local services remain central to economic resilience.

County-wide initiatives promote apprenticeships, vocational training and alignment between education providers and employer demand, ensuring opportunities remain available locally.

Community Grants and Parish Partnership

- Ridgewell History Society
- Birdbrook Bowls Club
- Castle Heddingham Tennis Clubto name a few

Strong partnership between parish, district and county levels of government remains fundamental to effective local delivery.

Environment, Waste and Energy from Waste

Essex County Council has ended the use of landfill for household waste and transitioned to Energy from Waste treatment, including the Rivenhall facility.

Residual waste is now used to generate electricity rather than being buried, reducing environmental impact.

Food waste recycling has been a particular focus this year. Food makes up around a quarter of general household waste in Essex. Through targeted initiatives, the Council has helped households increase food waste recycling by providing caddy liners, local information packs and direct neighbour support.

Thousands of tonnes of food waste from Essex communities have been diverted from general rubbish and used to produce green energy and agricultural fertiliser, reducing carbon emissions and saving money on disposal costs.

The Council continues working to improve recycling rates, manage waste infrastructure and protect rural landscapes and biodiversity.

Arts - Heritage and Culture

Essex is proud of its heritage, historic towns and rural character.

Through investment and partnership working, the Council has:

- Supported local museums and cultural organisations
- Promoted Essex's heritage assets
- Backed community arts initiatives
- Strengthened cultural tourism

Cultural regeneration supports not only community pride, but also local economic growth -particularly important in rural areas.

Libraries continue to evolve as community hubs, offering digital access, skills support and inclusive community spaces.

Local Government Reorganisation – Future Structures

National government has indicated an intention to simplify two-tier areas such as Essex by moving towards unitary authorities.

This may involve the dissolution of Essex County Council and district councils, with responsibilities consolidated into new single-tier authorities.

Service continuity, rural representation and protection of parish councils must remain central during any transition.

I will continue to ensure the voice of our 33 parish councils is clearly represented in future discussions.

Five Years of Delivery – A Rural Perspective

Over the past five years, Essex has maintained stability during significant national financial pressure.

Across Essex there has been sustained highways investment, strengthened children's services, responsible management of adult social care pressures, transition from landfill to Energy from Waste, and continued economic and infrastructure investment.

Within the Heddingham Division, my approach has remained consistent: attend meetings, respond to residents, raise issues promptly and secure practical improvements.

Closing Reflection

Serving the residents, businesses & 33 parish councils of the Heddingham Division has been both a responsibility and a privilege.

Essex County Council combines scale with stability, ambition with financial discipline, and investment with accountability.

At a time when many authorities nationally face uncertainty, Essex remains one of the strongest and best-managed county councils in the country.

Local government is not about headlines. It is about steady leadership, responsible decisions and visible results.

I remain proud to represent our villages and communities within one of the strongest county authorities in England.



Cllr Peter Schwier AIEMA

County Councillor for the Hedingham Division

Cabinet Member for Environment, Waste Reduction and Recycling

Essex County Council

Tel: 01787 460473

Email: cllr.peter.schwier@essex.gov.uk

Website: www.essex.gov.uk

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APPENDIX 4 - PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

Little Yeldham Annual Parish Meeting – Parish Council Report

1. The budget and precept for 2026-2027 is agreed at £10,006, which is £478 or 5% more than 2025-2026. The reason for this increase is a provision being made for the ongoing maintenance of Parish Council assets. Be assured, that the Parish Council will always endeavour to keep the precept under control, whilst maintaining its current service to residents.
2. Refurbishment work on the bus shelter at Church Green has been agreed and work will start when weather permits. Also, quotes are being obtained for the refurbishment of the Pump House on the village green at North End and an application has been made to English Heritage to help fund this work. Thank you to Councillor Katie Chapman for instigating and overseeing these improvements.
3. The project to improve the Recreation Ground is ongoing and Councillor Mary Pearce will give her report under agenda item 8.
4. The use of BDC Amenity Vehicles and drivers for Little Yeldham and North End was very successful and will be continued this year.
5. 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.
6. The Planning Advisory Group continued to inform the Parish Council on responses to BDC consultation requests. The two applications below were dealt with during the year:

Reference	Description	Address	Parish Council Response	Braintree Council Decision
25/02273/H	Two storey rear extension, erection of a new front porch, and introduction of a side entrance with porch to the existing dwelling	63 Little Yeldham Road Little Yeldham CO9 4QT	No objections	Granted
25/00591/H	Change of use of outbuilding to residential annexe	The Old Hyde, Little Yeldham Road, Little Yeldham CO9 4QT	Supported with Conditions	Granted

All planning applications dealt with by the Planning Advisory Group can be viewed on the PC website.

7. The Parish Council is supporting Great Yeldham Parish Council with its objection to the site GRYE2175 for 30 dwellings, proposed in the Local Plan review, which is now under public consultation. The site borders Great Yeldham and Little Yeldham.
8. Issues with blocked drains and pot holes 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 and Vice Chairman continue to represent the Parish Council on the Braintree Association of Local Councils (BALC).
11. Thank you to Councillor Mary Pearce for instigating, sourcing the necessary funding and overseeing the significant improvements to the Recreation Ground.
12. 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.
13. Thank you to our Parish Councillors and Adrian Corder-Birch for all their work for Little Yeldham and North End.
14. 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.

DRAFT AWAITING APPROVAL

APPENDIX 5 - LITTLE YELDHAM RECREATION GROUND COMMITTEE
REPORT

LITTLE YELDHAM PARISH COUNCIL
LITTLE YELDHAM RECREATION GROUND REFURBISHMENT
SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT
FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING ON 10 MARCH 2026

I am pleased to report that the Sub-Committee for the Recreation Ground started the financial year 2025 – 2026 with reserves of £3052. Our events throughout the year netted a further £1208 and donations from Easyfundraising were £70. Our reserve total going forward is £4311 with presently only the annual maintenance inspection charge to be covered. The charge for 2025 was £260.00

We have applied for and been fortunate in receiving grants totaling £12,500 made up of £2000 from the Bruce Wake Trust, £4000 from The East of England Co-op Community Cares Fund and £6,500 from The National Lottery. These funds were for works to clear the undergrowth, extend the top pathway by approximately 38 metres joining up with the existing pathway, the provision of a notice board, two new bench seats and two new 'bear' litter bins. Colin Ridgewell & Sons were awarded the contract and commenced work on the Recreation Ground in early January. These works are now complete. There is still a small sum outstanding from the grants but no recommendations for the use of the remaining funds have yet been formulated for presentation to the Parish Council.

The new trees planted in memory of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and John Gardiner have suffered through last year's long, hot summer and we are waiting to see if they strike again this spring. Worst case scenario is that we may need to replace them.

Our fundraising events are an Easter Egg Hunt and Coffee Morning to be held on Saturday 28 March and our Summer Barbeque to be held on Saturday 8 August which hopefully will add to our reserves.