



Noak Bridge Parish Council

Minutes

**Held at Noak Bridge Village Hall, Coppice Lane, Noak Bridge SS15 4JS on
Friday the 31st January 2025 @ 7.00pm**

Present

Chairman: Cllr Mark Cottrell

Councillors: Cllr Cristopher Bateman, Cllr Paul Daft (Vice Chairman), Cllr Jacqui Downton, Cllr Lynn Gilliam, Cllr Peter Hawkins and Cllr Terri Sargent

In attendance: Cllr Malcolm Buckley (Essex County Councillor), Lynda Townend (Clerk) and 6 members of the public

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the new Clerk, Lynda Townend.

01/2025 Apologies for Absence

All Members were present.

02/2025 Declarations of Interest

To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests, other pecuniary interests or nonpecuniary interests by Members relating to any agenda items.

Resolved: No declarations of interest were received from Councillors.

03/2025 Minutes

Members reviewed the minutes from the Parish Council meeting held on the 17th December 2024, Minutes 146/2024 to 165/2024 inclusive.

Resolved: that the Minutes of the meeting held on 17th December 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

04/2025 Neighbourhood Plan Update

Cllr Sargent advised the draft Noak Bridge Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan was discussed by Basildon Borough Council on the 16th January 2025. Basildon Borough

Council recommended that the draft plan be published for consultation for a minimum of 6 weeks, an independent examiner be appointed, and the draft plan be submitted along with responses received for examination. If the independent examiner's report concluded that the plan met the basic conditions and was capable of proceeding to referendum, the Council recommended that this be carried out; and if it attained a favourable result, that the Noak Bridge Neighbourhood Plan be adopted.

The Consultation should commence in March 2025.

Cllr Sargent recommended continuing to promote the plan to residents to maintain awareness and engagement

Resolved: that the update be noted.

05/2025 Community Projects

05/2025/1 Little Libraries

Cllr Downton reported that the lock on a door was faulty and a water leak required repair, proposing that these issues be addressed. She confirmed that she would obtain quotes for the necessary works and present them to the Council for consideration at a future meeting.

05/2025/2 Coppice Lane Pond

A member of the public informed the Council that the Basildon Parks and Countryside Volunteers Network has now been established, which includes the Noak Bridge Nature Reserve Society. The Network will focus on planting hedges and trees, developing projects and ideas, assisting with maintenance work, promoting and surveying biodiversity, enhancing wildlife habitats, and helping to raise additional funds.

A litter pick will be held at the pond on the 15th February 2025.

05/2025/3 Handley's Chase Pond

A member of the public reported that Basildon Borough Council had provided a quote of £300 to manage and refill the pond. They asked whether the Parish Council would contribute £150 if the Resident's Association funded 50% of the cost to enable the works to proceed.

Resolved: That the Council would cover the full cost of £300 to allow the works to progress.

06/2025 Replacement Parish Council Website and Email Addresses

Cllr Cottrell reported that the Council had agreed to establish a new website and adopt gov.uk email addresses. The work will be carried out by VCS Websites Ltd at a cost of £490.

Resolved: That the Clerk will liaise with VCS Websites Ltd to set up the email addresses, arrange in-person training, and arrange for the payment to be processed.

07/2025 Fore Street Consultant

The Council considered appointing a consultant to draft an objection response on behalf of the Parish Council regarding the application at Fore Street to change the development from Sheltered Housing to general needs housing. A quote was received from ADP Consultants for a maximum of six hours at £120 per hour..

Resolved: That the Council will instruct ADP Consultants to draft the objection response, which will be submitted by the deadline of 4th February 2025.

08/2025 2025/26 Budget and Precept

Cllr Cottrell reported that a budget meeting had been held to assess the Council's costs for the upcoming financial year, resulting in a total expenditure budget of £136,234.88. Of this, £94,915 will be covered by reserves, leaving a budget requirement of £41,234.88. This equates to a Band D council tax charge of £41.31, a slight decrease from the 2024/25 charge of £41.40.

Using Basildon Borough Council's precept banding, this figure will be rounded to £41,276.54.

Resolved: That the Council agrees to set a budget of £41,234.88 for the 2025/26 financial year.

Resolved: That the Council agrees to submit a precept demand of £41,276.54, resulting in a Band D council tax payment of £41.31.

09/2025 Finance

Cllr Cottrell confirmed the final cost for the three CCTV cameras was £1,335.68.

09/2025/1 Bank Reconciliation

The Council received and noted the bank reconciliation to the 31st January 2025.

09/2025/2 Monthly Budget Sheet

The Council received and noted the budget comparison to the 31st January 2025.

09/2025/3 Accounts for Payment

The Council received and approved the following accounts for payment:

Payee	Amount (£)
Blustone Planning	153.30
Village Hall Hire	50.00
Basildon Borough Council Replacement 3 CCTV Cameras	1,335.68
Total	£1,538.98

Cllr Sargent noted that the cost of the Christmas tree and planting was still outstanding.

Cllr Cottrell reported that the Council's expenditure to date stood at £42,261.51, representing 51.35% of the budget.

Resolved: That the accounts for payment for January be approved.

10/2025 Planning Applications

The Council considered the following planning application:

25/00054/FULL 7 Coppice Lane Basildon Conversion of existing loft space to form 1 No Bedroom with ensuite, including providing 4 No Velux roof windows on rear elevation.

It was noted that whilst the property falls within the conservation area the proposal was not overbearing on neighbours.

Resolved: that the Council recommends approval of this application.

23/01551/OUT - LAND TO THE SOUTH OF WASH ROAD

The Council received an update from the Chairman on the Basildon Borough Council Planning Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 29th January 2025, where the above planning application was considered.

Noak Bridge Parish Council members attended the meeting and spoke in objection to the application. However, despite these objections, Basildon Borough Council approved the application.

The Council strongly deplores this decision, particularly given the lack of proposed infrastructure, and remains concerned that further large-scale developments may be submitted for approval.

The Chairman encouraged all councillors to make their views known to Basildon Borough Council regarding the decision process.

Resolved: That the update be noted.

11/2025 Borough and County Councillor Reports

Cllr Buckley reported on County matters including:

- Noak Bridge was not alone in objecting to the Wash Road planning application. He suggested engaging with the EALC but noted that success in this matter is unlikely. However, a united approach may have greater influence with the Minister responsible for Housing.
- Essex County Council will be voting on their budget on 13th February 2025. The current proposal includes a 2% increase for social care and a 1.75% increase for the general fund, resulting in a total rise of 3.75%. Rising costs, including the minimum

wage, National Insurance contributions, and energy prices, have impacted the budget, leading to a reduction in discretionary spending.

- The Police, Fire, and Crime Commissioner's (PFCC) budget is under significant pressure resulting in a decision being made to reduce the number of PCSOs rather than cut police officers, despite PCSOs being highly valued by local communities.
- Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Roger Hirst, has been lobbying the Minister and secured an additional £100,000, which may help save some PCSO positions.
- The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's precept will be set at the maximum allowable level.
- Public polling has shown overwhelming support for increased funding to maintain police presence.
- The government's decision on devolution was expected today but has been delayed.
- Plans for a Mayor of Essex would include oversight of Transport East, further education, vocational education, and strategic planning.
- Devolution will require local government reorganisation, which could result in the creation of between two and five unitary authorities.

Cllr Sargent provided an update on Borough matters including:

- Basildon Borough Council's Cabinet Meeting is scheduled for 4th February 2025.
- Essex County Council has voted to delay the planned elections in 2025 until a decision on devolution is made.
- No elections are scheduled in the Basildon area this year.
- The Leader of Basildon Borough Council has expressed an interest in Basildon Borough Council joining with Thurrock Council. The Borough Council meeting on 20th March 2025 may provide further updates on devolution plans.

Resolved: that the verbal updates be received and noted.

12/2025 Public Participation

A member of the public advised the Harding Elms junction with the A129 is due to be closed due to gas works and he is concerned about what diversions will be put in place and the resultant congestion.

Cllr Buckley will send over the road closure notification to confirm the diversion plans.

A member of the public advised a comment was recently posted on Facebook requesting the Parish Council meetings were streamed.

13/2025 Correspondence Received

No correspondence was presented.

14/2025 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting will take place on the 26th February 2025 at 7pm in the village hall.

Future meeting dates will be scheduled in due course.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 20.43

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Chairman
Cllr Mark Cottrell

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