



Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 23rd. April 2025 at 7pm in the Village Hall.

Present: Cllrs M. Gibson (Chair), G. Minish (Vice-Chair), J. Cobb, A. Gardner, M. Lear, R. Millett, J. Pollock, and Kevin B. Money (Clerk to Parish Council). There were 2 members of the public present

053/2025 Apologies for Absence were received from ECC Cllr W. Stamp and MDC Cllr L. Haywood

054/2025 Declaration of Interest

To declare any Pecuniary, Registerable or non-Registerable Interest relating to items on the agenda

No Declared

055/2025 Minutes

To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 26th. March 2025. **All Agreed**

056/2025 Chair's report and any update since last meeting

The work to replace the water main has been completed – with Essex and Suffolk Water and contractors' staff being unfailingly considerate of the stresses the work could have caused. The children's play area had to be partially dug up but has been carefully restored to what is probably a batter state. The bark was topped up and grass was seeded where necessary. The carpark had two enormous holes in it at one stage – but I suspect people would find it difficult to work out where they were. A vote of thanks to be sent to Essex & Suffolk Water Board on how well the guys "on the ground" left the area in such a fantastic state.

We have an update on emergency planning with a request for nominated points of contact – just in case! They would like 3 contacts – may I suggest that I am the main contact – largely as I am probably in the village more than most of us, plus George and either Matt or Jon. The presentation from the March meeting of the Forum is available.

Turning to the position of Parish Clerk. At this point in time, we do not have a replacement for Kevin but he has agreed to stay on in a Locum capacity until we can appoint a qualified trained Clerk

057/2025 Essex County Councillor Report – ECC Cllr Wendy Stamp No report was given

058/2025 District Councillor/s Report – Cllr Linda Haywood No report was given

059/2025 Public Participation Session with Respect to items on the agenda

A total maximum time of 15 minutes is allowed for all public participation sessions

The petition for the post office will be forwarded onto the relevant authority. All potential users of the post office should sign the petition. The petition already has over 25 pages with over 600 names and addresses on the forms.

060/2025 Representative Reports

a) Dengie Hundred Group of Parish Councils – Any update since last meeting
Meeting on 16th. April but nothing has resulted from the meeting

b) Greening of the village – Cllr R. Millett any update since last meeting
The rain over the past few days may have disappointed many, but it has been a great help to all of this years planting!!
In the boat the bio greenery has worked well in protecting the existing plants, so now is the time to replace that with colourful Spring bulbs etc

c) Skatepark update – Cllrs M. Lear / J. Cobb
The manufacturer can fit it but it is down to the Council to get it placed in the correct position. Grant funding to be pursued

d) Climbing wall – update from Cllr J. Pollock
Installation on 2nd. May and a Councillor is needed to be on site.

Signed

M Gibson
M. Gibson – Chair of SLPC

28th. May 2025

e) Assets in village update – Cllr M. Gibson

A walk around the village is necessary to get the Asset Register up to date. A date to be confirmed later.

061/2025 Planning – including any Current Planning Applications requiring a response

25/00241/FUL - Plot 9 To 10 Sunny Way St Lawrence Essex

Demolition of outbuilding and construction of two new single storey dwellinghouses with associated access, parking and amenity space.

RESOLVED: St. Lawrence Parish Council recommends Refusal of this planning application

The development proposed is for two 3-bedroomed bungalows. It would involve an additional access onto Sunny Way – an unmade road which is subject to an Article 4 Direction to protect the grass verges – which did exist outside this plot of land (under the brambles). The actual roadway is fairly narrow, and although the verges may belong to the households along the road Article 4 should protect them from being turned into hardstanding or being incorporated into the garden.

The plot itself is not enormous so the bungalows would be rather squeezed in, with about 1 metre between them and the existing neighbours' boundaries and just 1 metre between the 2 bungalows. The plans show 2 parking spaces each which appear to run straight off the roadway – the plans are not detailed enough to show that. The rear garden is fairly small by village standards. No allowance is made for visitor parking – and Sunny Way is not wide enough to accommodate casual parking.

There are windows on the western elevation of the neighbouring bungalow to the east which may be affected by loss of light and overlooking.

The proposal is to build the bungalows up some 1.2m (similar to some, but not all of the other properties along Sunny Way). This does of course cause issues with accessibility as there are flights of steps to both exits. The height above ground level plus the available land would make accessible access almost impossible.

The proposed bungalows seem very small to be marketed as 3 bedroomed family houses - they look more like retirement properties but given the accessibility issues are unsuitable for that. To suggest that they could enable smaller homes elsewhere to be vacated for first time buyers or retirees seems far-fetched. There is little space for a work-from-home environment (a corner of a family open living / kitchen space doesn't sound ideal). While the amenity space may technically comply with various guidelines, it needs to be remembered that St Lawrence is a village, not an urban area, with typically fairly large gardens

The Planning, Design and Access statement is not very accurate in a number of areas:

We are fascinated to be told that we have 4 public bus services but we know that the only ordinary service from St Lawrence is the bi-hourly (and unreliable) D1 which goes to Maldon via Mayland. It does not go to Tillingham. Anything else listed is a school-specific service. As such there is little opportunity for residents to use the bus service for medical appointments or employment. There are no medical facilities within the community and employment opportunities are practically non-existent. Work from home only applies to some types of employment. The remote nature of the village – on a no-through road coupled with an almost non-existent bus service and very limited local facilities (one shop, no post-office and two pubs) make car journeys the only option for the majority of trips.

Although Southminster may only be some 6 miles away it would be a fairly challenging cycle ride for the vast majority of people given the combination of narrow (and busy) roads and fairly steep hills. It is difficult to imagine many people cycling to Southminster (or Burnham) to shop or to catch a train.

Much emphasis is given to this development being a self-build project for local young couples. The recent experience in this village is that small developments rarely provide homes for local people. It is incomers who buy the properties.

Although broadband services have improved there are parts of the village where the digital offering is decidedly limited.

062/2025 Planning Decisions made by MDC affecting St. Lawrence

25/00117/HOUSE - Beacon Hill House Bradwell Road St Lawrence Southminster

Convert existing conservatory to orangery. **APPROVE** subject to conditions

063/2025 2024/2025 Annual Return

1) To Receive the Internal Auditors report for 2024/2025

Councillors noted the Internal Auditors report for 2024/2025

2) To Receive and, if agreed, sign Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement of AGAR 2024/2025

Cllr M. Gibson proposed accepting and signing Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement of AGAR 2024/2025

Cllr G. Minish seconded. **All Agreed**

The Chair and Clerk then signed Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement of AGAR 2024/2025

Signed

M Gibson

M. Gibson – Chair of SLPC

28th. May 2025

3) To Receive and, if agreed, sign Section 2 - Accounting Statement of AGAR 2024/2025
 Cllr M. Gibson proposed accepting and signing Section 2 - Accounting Statement of AGAR 2024/2025
 Cllr R. Millett seconded. **All Agreed**
 The Chair and RFO then signed Section 2 - Accounting Statement of AGAR 2024/2025

064/2025 Finance

a. To receive the Bank reconciliations as at 31st. March 2025
 Councillors noted the Bank reconciliations as at 31st. March 2025
 b. To receive the comparison of Actual to Budgeted for 2025/2026
 Councillors noted the comparison of Actual to Budgeted for 2025/2026
 c. To approve the payment of Accounts for April 2025 and to agree a transfer of funds to meet the Parish Council financial requirements **All Agreed**
 d. To add an additional bank signatory
 Cllr M. Lear and Cllr M. Gibson signed the Unity Trust Bank application form

065/2025 Councillors to list any defective streetlights with location/s in the village

No defective street lights reported

066/2025 Items for Next Agenda

067/2025 Next meeting will be held on Wednesday 28th. May 2025 at 7pm which is the Annual Parish Meeting & SLPC AGM

Remainder of 2025 meetings **NEW DATE 18.06.25**: 23.07.25: 24.09.25: 22.10.25: 26.11.25: 17.12.25

068/2025 Closure of the Meeting

To close the Meeting having considered and determined all items of business

The Chair then closed the meeting at 7.50pm and thanked everyone for attending.

Signed

M Gibson
 M. Gibson – Chair of SLPC

28th. May 2025