



# Toppesfield Parish Council



## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 Via Google Meet at 7.30pm

### 21/48. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:

#### The following Councillors were in attendance:

Councillor Alan Collard – Chair  
Councillor Chris Neale – Vice chair  
Councillor Andrea Chinery  
Councillor Boyd Page  
Councillor Gemma Mackman

Also, in attendance:

County Councillor David Finch  
District Councillor Richard van Dulken  
No members of the public were in attendance.  
Kaaren Berry – Clerk to the Parish Council

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Amanda Smith  
Councillor Daisy Watson

### 21/49. Declaration of Members' interests in agenda items:

No declarations of Members interests were made.

### 21/50. Open Session – opportunity for members of the Parish to address the Parish Council.

County Councillor David Finch reported:

- That he has emailed one of the Essex County Council Officers regarding the issues with Church Lane and possible signage at Cust Hall bridge to advise drivers that the road narrows.
- Essex Council County are in a good financial position and are continuing to look at the efficiency of services
- There was no increase in the Essex County Council element of the council tax and the social care element was increased by 1.5%
- Climate Action Commission – the first report has been published and is quite ambitious to become carbon neutral. A tree planting project is also underway.
- Schools – Holiday Hunger meals provision has been extended to the summer. Over five thousand laptops have been provided to schools in Essex. An education advisory group has been established to help accelerate help/support for children which are lacking in education due to lockdown.
- Covid numbers are decreasing – however the numbers of people going out and gathering in groups is increasing.
- Physical exercise – is being looked at as a major project to help encourage people to get out and be more involved with sustained activity. This will be launched in May or June this year.
- Electrical charging points are being looked at along with how to make electric vehicles easier to obtain.

Councillor Collard asked if the parish council can plant trees on behalf of Essex County Council. Councillor Finch provided details of who to contact regarding this.

As Councillor David Finch is not standing for re-election in May this year Councillor Collard thanked Councillor Finch for his support during his term.

District Councillor Richard van Dulken reported:

- Braintree District Council have not increased their element of the council tax
- Safe, Well, Secure – is a project run in conjunction with the Fire Service and police and dementia care representatives. Approximately 700 homes in Great Yeldham were visited by teams ensuring residents had smoke alarms and giving advice.
- Restart Grants – Braintree District Council are administering these for non-essential shops and Hospitality and leisure businesses.
- There is a cabinet meeting on the 17 May 2021 where the transfer of land for a medical centre is hoping to be completed.
- Councillors Community Grants are available again this year. Last year £200 was granted to the allotment society and £200 for the parish tree planting project. Monies left in the grant fund will be transferred into this financial year.
- Network 5 – local parish councils have expressed interest in starting this up again but no date has been set yet for a meeting.
- Climate Change Programme - £500,000 has been budgeted to the climate change emergency group. The draft cycling strategy can be found on the Braintree website.

### **21/51. Minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting**

The minutes from the Parish Council meetings held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021 were agreed and signed as a true record of the meeting this was proposed by Councillor Page and seconded by Councillor Neale.

### **21/52. Matters Arising not on the agenda – for report only**

The ditch at the bottom of the Toppesfield Playing Field is full as the drainage appears to be blocked. Councillor Page to inspect the area and report back to the parish council. Land owners may need to be contacted to clear the drained and the ditches cleared.

### **21/53. Actions from previous meeting:**

- 21/53.1 Councillor Collard to write to Nigel Meeks. Thanks were extended to Nigel Meeks for his work and dedication to the Neighbourhood Plan. Nigel Meeks is disappointed in having to reach the decision of stepping back but due to work commitments he is unable to continue.
- 21/53.2 Councillor Page to update Councillors Watson and Mackman on progress of the Neighbourhood plan – Councillor Page has forwarded information to update councillors on the Neighbourhood plan progress.
- 21/53.3 Councillor Chinery to confirm booking with the village hall for the Neighbourhood Plan public meeting. No update was available, however it was agreed to move the date until the 31 July 2021.
- 21/53.4 Councillor Collard to circulate to all councillors the figures and narrative regarding the barn project – this was circulated to all councillors.
- 21/53.5 Councillor Watson to draft ideas for a policy on Environment and Ecology for the parish council – Councillors Watson and Mackman have not yet achieved a meeting to discuss progressing this due to illness. However, they are hoping to meet soon.
- 21/53.6 Clerk to contact Braintree District Council for equipment for a litter pick and arrange a rubbish collection. The Equipment has been received ahead of the litter pick.
- 21/53.7 Councillors to look at possible structures of setting up a charity/fund for the benefit of the parish – this needs to be looked at further and Councillor Collard to draw up suggestions for the next parish council meeting for discussion.
- 21/53.8 Clerk to write to Royal Mail regarding the closure of Gainsford End post box – this matter has now been resolved and the post box is open again.
- 21/53.9 Clerk to contact Highways regarding the possibility of road narrows signage at Cust Hall bridge – emails have been sent to Structure Enquires regarding this.
- 21/53.10 Clerk to contact Highways regarding the condition of Mallows Lane – this has been reported to Essex Highways.

### **21/54. Internal Practices and management for the Parish Council:**

- 21/54.1 Neighbourhood Plan Update and drop-in meeting/display – Councillor Page reported that a temporary chair is in place to continue with the project. Interest has dwindled and the project needs to be reinvigorated. It was suggested this may happen once the public meeting occurs.

## 21/54.2 Updates from

- Project Working Group including update and discussion about Green Man barn; - Councillor Collard reported the shop are no longer interested in moving into the barn and Toppesfield Community Pub are interested in selling the barn. It was suggested the project carries on and the space could be used as an office, meeting space or drop-in centre. All councillors agreed to progress the project on this basis.
- Environment working group – no update was available. It was suggested that a refill centre could be set up in conjunction with the shop in the revamped barn.

## **21/55. Correspondence Received:**

- 21/55.1 EALC Legal and County Updates, Essex County Council Highways Highlights, RCCE Essex Warbler – circulated to all Councillors prior to meeting.
- 21/55.2 Stop Stanstead Expansion – latest update letter received. This has been placed on the parish website for information. Please note it is addressed to Dear Supporter, however the parish council as a body has not registered its support.
- 21/55.3 East Anglia's Children's Hospices – Spring/Summer Edition of Footprints received – update on their ongoing works.
- 21/55.4 Essex Minerals Local Plan Review Consultation - The Minerals Local Plan 2014 (Draft Proposed Amendments). Public Consultation: 18 March to 29 April 2021
- 21/55.5 Braintree District Council Amenity Vehicle Hire – clerk to check date availability and for publicity materials.
- 21/55.6 Bramford to Twinstead network reinforcement: start of public consultation. The non-statutory consultation will be held for six weeks between 25 March 2021 and 6 May 2021. Details circulated to councillors prior to the meeting.
- 21/55.7 Request from cricket club for permission to install an all-weather cricket surface at the playing field. It would be located in the NE corner of the field. They also requested the council to consider, in due course, some financial support. It was reported that the cricket club are looking to do a lot of the work themselves. This was discussed and the parish council were in agreement with the project. The project could cost approximately £3000 - £4000 and the cricket club are hoping to fund half of the cost themselves and look for funding for the rest.  
It was suggested that spaces are looked at to encourage space for both football and cricket pitches so they do not interfere with each other.
- 21/55.8 Suggestion from parishioner that village event be held in the summer to mark lifting of covid Restrictions. This would not have to be organised by the parish council but could be partly funded by them. The general feeling was that this should not be held in the summer as it was too soon after lockdown restrictions are lifted, and people are still cautious and to either make the Christmas celebrations larger or wait until summer 2022. It was also suggested a scarecrow trial/competition could be held for the children.

It was mentioned that the number of tickets that will be available for the circus next year may be too low. At present there will be 300 tickets for sale. If all restrictions are lifted is there a possibility of more tickets being available or possibly two shows. Councillor Neale will contact the Little Chestnut Preschool committee for their views as they are running the event. It was noted that the greater the numbers parking could be an issue.

## **21/56. Financial Accounts:**

- 21/56.1 To receive the Clerk's Report indicating receipts and payments requiring approval - The report was received. Councillor Page proposed this was approved and Councillor Smith seconded this. See Appendix A.
- 21/56.2 Consideration to renew the Grounds Maintenance for 2021/2022 – this was agreed to renew this for this year but tenders to be sought for next year. Clerk to sign the agreement on behalf of the parish council.
- 21/56.3 Consideration to renew the Street Cleansing Agreement 2021/22 – this was agreed and clerk to progress.
- 21/56.4 Inspection of play areas are due in May 2021 – consideration to instruct these to be carried out and the possible purchase of a personalised template to document regular checks. This was discussed and the parish council agreed to the inspection being carried out and templates for both Toppesfield and Gainsford End to be purchased.

**21/57. Highways:**

- 21/57.1 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 – Section 14(1) - Temporary Traffic Regulation Order of Leather Lane, Little Yeldham Road, School Road, North End Road, Hall Green, Sudbury Road, Lower Houses, Bulmer Street, Great Yeldham. This link <https://one.network/?tm=120742893> shows details of the intended closure of Leather Lane, Little Yeldham Road, School Road, North End Road, Hall Green, Sudbury Road, Lower Houses, Bulmer Street, due to commence on 22nd June 2021 for 10 days. The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while Essex County Council undertakes 2021/22 surface dressing programme.
- 21/57.2 Park Lane Car Park – update and car park project – despite several promises the vehicle in question will be removed it still remains in the car park. It was agreed to ask the solicitors if the parish council can legally move it to a safe and secure location and for a guide of the parish councils next steps in removing the vehicle.
- 21/57.3 Mallows Lane – update on progress of report to Highways – Reference no 2646896 – this has been reported to Highways who will be inspecting the area.
- 21/57.4 Request received from a resident for a Dog Waste Bin along Church Lane – clerk to contact Braintree District council as to whether a bin could be placed by the footpath marker to Gunces Farm.
- 21/57.5 Church lane road surface – there have been repeated reports/complaints regarding the state of the road surface. Can the parish council support these complaints to progress any response from Essex County Council. Clerk to write to Essex County Council.

**21/58. Planning:**

<b>Application No:</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Action</b>
21/00574/OUT	Outline planning permission with all matters reserved apart from access for the demolition of redundant place of worship, and erection of 1 No. detached dwelling.	Mission Hall, Gainsford End, Toppesfield CO9 4EG	Comments to Braintree District Council by 13 <sup>th</sup> April 2021
21/00657/FUL	Retrospective consent for change of use of land from agricultural use to equine use.	15 Church Lane Toppesfield CO9 4DS	Comments to Braintree District Council by 20 <sup>th</sup> April 2021
21/00762/HH	Erection of single story rear extension including upgrade of drainage and sewage treatment plant.	Toppesfield Hall, Great Yeldham Road, Toppesfield CO9 4LS	Comments to Braintree District Council by 20 <sup>th</sup> April 2021

The above applications were discussed:

Application number 21/00574/OUT – the parish council are supportive of the outline planning application.

Application number 21/00657/FUL – the parish council are supportive of this application.

Application number 21/00762/HH – no objections were raised to this application.

**21/59. Communications:**

Councillor Neale reported he has applied for multiple vouchers towards the broadband project and is waiting to hear the outcome of these.

Information for the website is still required from some Councillors.

**21/60. Playing Fields & The Dick Ruggles Pavilion**

There was nothing to report.

**21/61. Information exchange / Items for the next agenda**

The annual parish meeting invitations will be sent out and groups will be asked for an overview and future plans, reports to be sent to the clerk prior to the meeting.

Discussion on holding virtual meetings and the benefits/concerns of them. The parish council would like to reserve the right to have virtual meetings and would like this to apply to meetings where decisions are made.

**21/62. Date of the next meeting:**

The next Parish Council Meeting is scheduled to be held on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 7.30pm – this will be held virtually.

**21/63. Close**

The meeting closed at 9.40pm

Signed:

Dated:

**Action Summary:**

**Councillors Watson and Mackman to draft ideas for a policy on Environment and Ecology for the parish council.**

**Councillor Collard to look at possible structures of setting up a charity/fund for the benefit of the parish.**

**Clerk to check date availability and for publicity material for Braintree District Council Amenity Vehicle Hire service.**

**Clerk to contact Braintree District Council with regards to a dog waste bin along Church Lane.**

**Clerk to contact Essex County Council regarding the road surface along Church Lane.**

# Appendix A

Accounts - 1 April 2021				
			£	
Community Account				
	Balance as at 31 March 2021		£26,750.97	
All previous issued cheques cashed balance should be			<u>£26,751.97</u>	
Income Received				
			£0.00	
			£0.00	
			<u>£0.00</u>	
Direct Debits	included in balance figure of 31.03.21			
01.03.21	EDF Energy - The Pavilaion electricity supply		£1.00	£0.00
		Balance	<u>£10.00</u>	
			£0.00	
				Unrecoverable VAT
Payments to be approved:				
Date of invoice		Chq No:		
31.03.21	K Berry - March Wages	By Bacs	£380.94	£0.00
			<u>£380.94</u>	
			<u>£26,370.03</u>	