



Toppesfield Parish Council



Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on Thursday 1st May 2025 at Toppesfield Village Hall at 7.30pm

25/72. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair for 2025 – 2026

Councillor Kitty Bourlet received a majority vote for as chair for the coming year. Councillor Bourlet had notified the clerk prior to the meeting if she was voted on to be chair, she would accept the position for the coming year.

Councillor Edwards-Holmes received a majority vote for vice-chair for the coming year. Councillor Edwards-Holmes accepted the position for the coming year and signed the acceptance of office.

25/73. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:

The following Councillors were in attendance:

Councillor Paula Edwards-Holmes – Chaired the meeting
Councillor Frances Winter
Councillor Jane Daines
Councillor Chris Neale
Councillor Amanda Smith
Councillor Jeremy Graves

Also, in attendance:

District Cllr Richard van Dulken

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Kitty Bourlet
County Councillor Peter Schwier

25/73.1 To accept apologies from members of the council.

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor Kitty Bourlet who was unable to attend the meeting due family commitments.

25/74. Declaration of Members' interests in agenda items

Cllr Neale declared an interest in one of the submitted sites for the local plan.

25/75. Open Session – opportunity for members of the Parish to address the Parish Council.

Cllr Richard van Dulken reported:

- The Waste recycling review decision will be taken at the cabinet meeting at the end of May and any changes will take place from April 2026.
- Cllr Schwier and he have taken a tour of some of the local roads to photograph and request that some of the potholes are treated as priority.

25/76. To approve and sign the minutes of the Toppesfield Parish Council meeting held on 3rd April 2025.

Cllr Neale proposed the minutes were agreed and Cllr Smith seconded this. The minutes were signed as a true record of the meeting.

25/77. Matters Arising not on the agenda – for report only.

There were no matters arising.

25/78. Local Plan Subcommittee meeting 25th June 2025 at Braintree District Council

25/78.1 Will the parish council be attending or speaking at the meeting? The parish council will not be attending the subcommittee meeting on the 25th June 2025.

25/78.2 Views on the submitted call for sites within Toppesfield parish to be relayed to Cllr van Dulken on their suitability as he has offered to speak on behalf of the parish council at the Local Plan Subcommittee meeting in June if so desired.

The parish council accepted Cllr Van Dulken's offer to speak on their behalf at the committee meeting. The view of the parish council is that site Topp 2426 on The Causeway - 4 councillors were in favour and 2 against it. The parish council were in favour of sites Topp 2296 in Stambourne Road and Topp 2295 in Park Lane

25/79. Actions from previous meeting:

25/79.1 Cllr Bourlet to review funding options for digitalising historic records. No update available – hold over to next meeting.

25/79.2 Cllr Graves to make further enquiries regarding the location of the Gainsford End Gate sign and contact Braintree District Council to see who provides the village gates should a new one be required. The clerk has spoken to Highways and this needs to be reported through their online facility. Clerk to progress.

25/79.3 Cllr Graves to contact Cllr Peter Schwier regarding further funding for the tree project. Cllr Neale agreed to take this action on.

25/80. Internal Practices and management for the Parish Council:

25/80.1 Neighbourhood Plan update. No update was available.

25/80.2 Wethersfield Airfield and Asylum centre verbal update to be received. The last WASC meeting was cancelled therefore no update available.

25/80.3 Playfield update / progress on funding / quotes – Cllr Winter and Cllr Bourlet have not yet met to progress this.

25/80.4 Annual Parish Meeting Feedback – it was felt it was a good meeting with good discussions including some with Cllr Schwier re potholes and speeding in the parish. Cllr Edwards-Holmes will progress an application to Certas Energy for Community Bloom Fund.

25/80.5 Strategy Document distribution – this will be delivered alongside the May/June parish newsletter.

25/80.6 Financial Regulations Review and proposal to approve. These were discussed and then signed by Cllr Edwards-Holmes.

25/81. Upcoming events

25/81.1 Annual litter pick feedback. Well attended with 20 volunteers and most of the parish was covered, thank you to everyone who helped out.

25/81.2 VE Day celebrations – update on event planning from Cllr Graves including Risk Assessment and final actions to be determined. Cllr Graves reported that two old vehicles will be in attendance, a map of how the activities will be laid out are on Facebook as well as an advert for the event. More volunteers for the day are required, a first aider has been found for the day and the police and fire services have been informed of the event. The bench and figures have arrived. Cllr Smith agreed to help run the games. If it rains on the day moving to the school is an option. Tables and chairs will be coming from the village hall and Portaloo's and an disabled toilet will be arriving. A final planning meeting will held on 5th May 2025. The Risk Assessment for the event was agreed by Councillors present.

25/81.3 Christmas Event – ideas for this year's event required. Cllr Graves will organise the Christmas tree again this year, Cllr Neale will enquire about the PA system, Cllr Edwards-Holmes will speak with church tower Father Christmas and will look at the insurance requirements for the whole event. Decorations and budgets will be discussed at the next meeting.

25/82. Correspondence Received:

25/82.1 EALC Legal & County Updates, Essex County Council Highways Highlights, RCCE Essex Warbler – circulated to all Councillors prior to meeting.

25/82.2 Rivers Trust - Pant and Blackwater Restoration Plan. A draft version of the plan is now available for public consultation between 9th April 2025 and 6th May 2025. This can be found on their webpage <https://www.essexsuffolkriverstrust.org/projects/blackwater-pant-restoration> .

Alongside [the plan](#), you can find a [pubic feedback form](#) to make any comments you would like. These will then be used to alter the draft for the final version of the plan, to be published as soon as possible after the consultation period. This is draft plan and is subject to changes before final publishing.

25/83. Financial Accounts:

- 25/83.1 To receive the Clerk's Report indicating receipts and payments requiring approval. The report was presented and Cllr Winter proposed they were accepted, and this was seconded by Cllr Smith. Payments are detailed in Appendix A. The payment schedule was signed by Cllr Graves and Neale.
- 25/83.2 Updating of Asset Register 2025 – discuss comments, determine any further actions or approve. Cllr Neale look at deprecation percentages before the asset register is agreed.
- 25/83.3 Requested received to purchase items to enable the telephone box to be repainted by a volunteer, Cost will be approx. £40 plus VAT. Proposal to accept this request. It was proposed by Cllr Edwards-Holmes and seconded by Cllr Neale to accept the proposal to purchase the items required to paint the telephone box.
- 25/83.4 Insurance renewal quote received. Proposal to accept the quote received. The proposal was discussed and Cllr Edwards-Holmes will contact the insurers with a few questions.

25/84 Highways:

- 25/84.1 Church Lane - Cllr Schwier has reported that a Public Rights of Way Inspector has been asked to attend as soon as possible.

25/85. Planning:

Application No:	Description	Address	Action
25/00475/VAR	Variation of Condition 2 of (Approved plans) and Condition 7 (Vehicle Parking) of approved application 22/00732/FUL granted on 13/05/2022 for the erection of a two-storey medical centre with allocated parking. Variation would allow a change in design.	Land North Of Osier Way Sible Hedingham Essex	Braintree District Council Decision Pending consideration
25/00617/LBC	Removal of internal partitions from the rear single storey element, removal of fireplace and removal of internal walls to each side of the chimney stack. Block up 4no. existing windows, 1no. existing door and installation of 3no. rooflights, installation of 1no. full height window, with a canopy to be provided to the northeast elevation of the single storey element. All existing external masonry walls forming the newly formed lounge area are to be lined internally with insulation material.	Toppesfield Hall Great Yeldham Road Toppesfield CO9 4LS	Braintree District Council Decision Pending consideration

The above applications were for report only – decisions on these applications are yet to be determined.

25/86. Communications:

No items were discussed under this item.

25/87. Information exchange / Items for the next agenda

The Doctor Car service will be discussed at the next parish council meeting to review the process of the service.

Cllr Winter will hold the Dr Car service phone for the next two weeks.

Cllr Neale has raised with Google that Church Lane is not suitable for vehicles – this will take time to update their mapping services.

25/88. Date of the next meeting:

The next Parish Council Meeting is scheduled to be held on 5th June 2025 at 7.30pm at Toppesfield Village Hall.

25/89. Close

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.50pm

Signed:

Dated:

Action Summary:

- Cllr Bourlet to review funding options for digitalising historic records.
- Clerk to report the missing gate sign at Gainsford End Gate sign to Essex County Council Highways.
- Cllr Neale to contact Cllr Peter Schwier regarding further funding for the tree project.
- Cllr Neale to look at depreciation percentages on the asset register.
- Cllr Edwards-Holmes to contact the insurance provider regarding the renewal quote.

Appendix A

Accounts -1st May 2025				
			£	
Community Account				
	Balance as at 30th April 2025		£42,598.46	
All previous payments issued balance should be			£33,223.46	
Income Received Included in the balance figure of 30th April 2025				
	First instalment of precept payment		£9,375.00	
			£9,375.00	
Direct Debits Included in the balance figure of 30th April 2025				
			£0.00	
			£0.00	
Direct Debits To be taken this month				
01.05.25	EDF - Pavilion electric		£8.00	
07.05 .25	Vodafone contract		£13.80	
				Unrecoverable VAT
Payments to be approved:				
Date of invoice		Chq No:		
01.04.25	EALC/NALC Affiliation fees 2025/ 2026	By Bacs	£191.99	£0.00
25.04.25	Louis Finch Marketing for Strategy Poster & Leaflet creation and printing	By Bacs	£146.27	£0.00
01.05.25	Eden Print - printing of newsletter for May/June 2025	By Bacs	£289.00	£0.00
30.04.25	HMRC - Tax on April salary	By Bacs	£1.60	£0.00
30.04.25	K Berry - April salary	By Bacs	£765.14	£0.00
			£1,394.00	
			£41,182.66	