



Toppesfield Parish Council



Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 11th January 2024 at Toppesfield Village Hall at 7.30pm

24/1. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:

The following Councillors were in attendance:

Councillor Alan Collard
Councillor Kitty Bourlet
Councillor Paula Edwards-Holmes
Councillor Jane Daines

Also, in attendance:

County Councillor Peter Schwier
District Councillor Richard van Dulken
Kaaren Berry – Clerk

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Jeremy Graves
Councillor Amanda Smith
Councillor Frances Winter

24/2. Declaration of Members' interests in agenda items

There were no declarations of interest reported.

24/3. Open Session – opportunity for members of the Parish to address the Parish Council.

District councillor van Dulken reported that:

- The fishing lakes on the Toppesfield Road have been vacated by the owner and are up for sale.
- The main road through Sible Hedingham from Alderford Street to the turn off to Halstead will be shut week commencing 22 January for repairs.
- Hedingham Medical Centre – the final business case will be submitted by February 2024 and if this is approved work can then commence.
- The owner of Wash Farm, Poole Street in Great Yeldham is hoping to create a bus museum there.
- Wethersfield Asylum Centre now has 530 residents. Braintree District Council (BDC) has received the first tranche of grants and the possibility of building a prison on the site has been raised again.
- Nothing further has been received regarding the potential solar farm on Great Yeldham Road.
- Cllr van Dulken has been appointed as the BDC representative on the Essex Flood Partnership group.
- New rules for residual waste will come into effect in April 2024. Operatives will no longer pick up waste by the side of the bins and the bins will not be collected if the lids are not closed.
- BDC planning have met their target for the 5-year housing land supply for this year. For BDC this is 700 - 800 homes per year.

County councillor Peter Schwier reported that:

- Essex County Council (ECC) have 50 gritters and last year went out on 70 occasions and each time cover approximately 40% of the county's roads.
- Strom Henk saw an increase of 800 calls and 12 extra tree surgeon crews were on standby.
- 450 planning applications were commented on with regard to flooding on highways.
- ECC budget – the final settlement from central government is expected to be less than what was hoped for. The maximum their proportion of the council tax can increase is 5%. 2% of the increase will be

ringfenced for increased Social Care costs. A further 2.9% increase will be applied so this is nearly reaches the 5% maximum increase.

Discussions on potholes and the process for reporting and repairing them took place. It was agreed that a post on Facebook, the parish website and an article in the next newsletter is placed so everyone is aware how to report them.

24/4. Minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 7th December 2023 were agreed and signed as a true record of the meeting.

24/5. Matters Arising not on the agenda – for report only.

There were no matters arising.

24/6. Actions from previous meeting:

- 24/6.1 Clerks contract and job description/scope of work to be updated by Clerk and Cllr Collard. This is in progress and a couple of points need to be clarified with the Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC). Comments made about the job description to be reviewed.
- 24/6.2 Clerk to produce Coffee Morning invitations and posters – posters have been produced which could also be used as invitations. Posters to be displayed and the event was advertised in the newsletter.
- 24/6.3 Clerk to draw up draft budget and circulate to Councillors for comment – this was circulated and will be discussed under agenda item 24/9.2.

24/7. Internal Practices and management for the Parish Council:

- 24/7.1 Neighbourhood Plan update. Cllr Collard reported he is waiting to hear back from Locality regarding the grant application.
- 24/7.2 Wethersfield Airfield and Asylum centre update – information received has been circulated to councillors and is available on the parish website.
- 24/7.3 Final details for Coffee mornings on 20th January & consideration of dates for February 2024. The village hall was booked by Cllr Winter, a budget of £50 for refreshments was agreed. Photo's, old newsletters and cd's of the village will all be available for viewing. It was agreed to hold another coffee morning on the 24th February 2024.
- 24/7.4 Historical archives – location of documents. It was agreed to raise this is visitors at the coffee morning to gauge interest and potential storage locations. It was also felt that grants would be available to digitalise old documents.
- 24/7.5 Could more trees be planted in the parish – it was felt more trees could be planted if locations can be Identified. Support and finance could be sought for tree planting. Cllr Bourlet to write an article for the next newsletter regarding this.

24/8. Correspondence Received:

- 24/8.1 EALC Legal & County Updates, Essex County Council Highways Highlights, RCCE Essex Warbler – circulated to all Councillors prior to meeting.
- 24/8.2 Believ - EV charge points in Toppesfield – offer to meet with representatives from the council re the potential installation of charge points. Cllr Collard agreed to speak to this company regarding EV charge points.
- 24/8.3 Sovereign - offer to meet a sales representative to come out and provide a free quotation to upgrade your playground. Cllr Bourlet would be interested in meeting a representative in order to progress plans for the playing fields.

24/9. Financial Accounts:

- 24/9.1 To receive the Clerk's Report indicating receipts and payments requiring approval. The report was received. It was agreed that all payments were approved. See Appendix A for details.
- 24/9.2 Budget for 2024/2025 to be reviewed, amended as appropriate and approved. The budget was discussed and it was agreed to increase the precept to £17750 for the coming financial year. Clerk to complete forms regarding the precept and return to BDC. This represents an increase of 1.7 % over the precept for the 2023-2024 financial year and an increase of £0.05 per annum for a Band D property.

24/9.3 Quotes for a salt bin for Camoise Close were presented and it was agreed on which one to purchase – clerk to progress this.

24/10 Highways:

24/10.1 Potholes on the Great Yeldham Road – could the repairs be expedited. It was agreed that the clerk will call Highways see if this could be expedited.

24/11. Planning:

Application No:	Description	Address	Action
24/00012/HH	Proposed annexe / cartlodge outbuilding. Removal of modern stable, and low quality lean to extensions to historic outbuilding. Proposed new vehicular access and driveway.	Scotneys Farm House Scotneys Lane Great Yeldham CO9 4HG	Comments to be submitted to Braintree District Council by 5 th February 2024.
23/02745/HH	Infill side extension. Erection of front porch. Alteration to fenestration.	20 Park Lane Toppesfield CO9 4DQ	Braintree District Council planning decision: Application Granted
23/02423/TPO	Notice of intent to carry out works to trees protected by Tree Preservation Order No. 14/82 - Prune, tidy up and thin 1 Horse Chestnut Tree	Chapel House The Street Toppesfield CO9 4DJ	Braintree District Council planning decision: Application Granted

Planning application 24/00012/HH was discussed – a no comment response will be sent to BDC.

24/12. Communications:

There were no discussions under this heading.

24/13. Information exchange / Items for the next agenda

Cllr Edwards-Holmes asked if everyone could read the Essex Climate Action annual report before the next meeting so it can be discussed.

24/14. Date of the next meeting:

The next Parish Council Meeting is scheduled to be held on 1st February 2024 at 7.30pm at Toppesfield Village Hall.

24/15. Close

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.20pm

Signed:

Dated:

Action Summary:

- **Clerk to contact EALC regarding clerk's proposed contract and review comments made on the job description.**
- **Cllr Bourlet to write an article for locations for tree planting for the March/April newsletter.**
- **Clerk to completed precept forms and return to BDC.**
- **Clerk to progress purchase of Salt bin for Camoise Close.**
- **Clerk to call Highways to see if the two potholes along the Great Yeldham Road could be expedited.**

Appendix A

Accounts -11th January 2024				
			£	
Community Account				
	Closing Balance as at 9th January 2024		£32,626.10	
All previous payments issued balance should be			<u>£32,621.10</u>	
Income Received Included in the balance figure of 09.01.24				
27.12.23	Compass Energy - Advert in newsletter Nov/Dec		£15.00	
			<u>£15.00</u>	
Direct Debits / Payments made since last meeting (included in the balance figure of 09.01.24)				
01.01.24	EDF Energy - The Pavilaion electricity supply		£10.00	
			£0.00	
			<u>£10.00</u>	
				Unrecoverable VAT
Payments to be approved:				
Date of invoice		Chq No:		
15.06.23	Community Hearbeat - replacement pads/battery - Gainsford End	By Bacs	£329.40	£0.00
05.01.24	Community Hearbeat - replacement battery - Toppesfield	By Bacs	£267.00	£0.00
Jan-23	CPRE - Membership Renewal 9th March 24 -8th March 2025	By Bacs	£36.00	£0.00
11.01.24	Paul Clark Printing - Jan/Feb 24 Newsletter	By Bacs	£220.00	£0.00
02.01.24	HMRC - Tax & NI due	By Bacs	£184.88	£0.00
01.01.24	K Berry - December salary - inc backpay from April 2023	By Bacs	£1,100.47	£0.00
			<u>£2,137.75</u>	
			£30,488.35	