



# Toppesfield Parish Council



## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2024 at Green Man Barn due to the Village Hall being unavailable at 7.30pm

### 24/129. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:

#### The following Councillors were in attendance:

Councillor Kitty Bourlet  
Councillor Paula Edwards-Holmes  
Councillor Frances Winter  
Councillor Amanda Smith  
Councillor Jane Daines  
Councillor Jeremy Graves

Also, in attendance:

No members of the public were present  
Kaaren Berry – Clerk

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Chris Neale  
District Councillor Richard van Dulken  
County Councillor Peter Schwier

### 24/130. Declaration of Members' interests in agenda items

Councillor Edwards-Holmes declared an interest in agenda item 24/137.1

### 24/131. Open Session – opportunity for members of the Parish to address the Parish Council.

Concerns were relayed to the Parish Council regarding the dumping of garden waste and fowl waste on land behind The Causeway. It was agreed the Parish Council will write to the resident who is believed to be depositing the waste and the landowner regarding this.

Concerns were also reported to the Parish Council regarding the increase in traffic along Church Lane at the school drop off time in the morning due to a narrow window of time for the children to enter the school. It was agreed to write to the school to ask them to liaise with parents and ask them to park further away from the school and walk or to look into a walking bus service from the centre of the village to the school. The Parish Council are looking at ways to slow the traffic down in the village and the possibility of reducing speed limits.

District Councillor Richard van Dulken sent in a report as follows:

- Local Plan review - As mentioned in your agenda. You have only one or two small sites put forward for consideration for housing development, under the Call for Sites system. Before the general election in July these sites were going to be considered at BDC Local Plan meetings this month, as part of a tight schedule for the review of the Local Plan rolling forward to 2033. We have heard however that the new Government is making changes to the planning system, including moving back the deadline for having new plans in place, which gives BDC more time. As things stand the 319 sites across Braintree District will probably be considered in May of next year. I take the opportunity to confirm that just because a site is accepted as being appropriate for housing or other development, it still has to go through the planning application process to be initiated by the site owner.

- Wethersfield - I have little to add to what you might be aware of. The latest number of residents at the asylum centre is 580, and we have had no further news on the future of the site despite the Home Office ending the contract for the Bibby Stockholm barge and halting discussions re Scampton airbase in Lincolnshire. There have been some recent local incidents as reported on Facebook, but I understand someone has been arrested.
- While this may not effect many of your residents, I have been made aware of at least two recent occasions when scheduled no.89 bus services have not run, and I have spoken to Hedingham & Chambers coaches about this matter. There is also a new Monday-Friday service (no.60) run by Flagfinders 4 times a day in each direction, running between Braintree and Sudbury via Halstead and The Hedinghams.
- 13<sup>th</sup> September 2024 is the last chance to apply for BDC Community Gardens and Open Spaces Fund grants (up to £4,000) - details on the BDC website.
- I have made no commitments from my £1,250 grant fund so will be pleased to receive any notifications of interest.
- At Cabinet on Monday, it was agreed that the garden waste subscription service for the coming year would be largely unchanged in terms of cost - £55 for the first bin, an increased price of £30 each for any additional bins, and £8 for a roll of the plastic sacks which I doubt apply in your villages. Maintaining the £55 basic charge has been possible due to the very satisfying take-up of the service, about 64% of houses with gardens in the District.

Cllr Graves suggested the Parish Council apply to the Councillors Community Grant fund for help towards the tree project and maintenance of the playing field.

#### **24/132. Minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting**

Cllr Edwards-Holmes proposed the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> August and 5<sup>th</sup> September 2024 were agreed and signed as a true record of the meeting and Cllr Smith seconded this.

#### **24/133. Matters Arising not on the agenda – for report only.**

There were no matters arising.

#### **24/134. Actions from previous meeting:**

- 24/134.1 Clerk to enquire with Essex County Council about the process for gaining a 20mph speed limit and/or flashing speed signs. Information has been gained and is being looked at.
- 24/134.2 Clerk to enquire about community speed watch / police speed traps. Great Yeldham no longer have a community speed watch team and the police have been contacted but no response has been received yet.
- 24/134.3 Cllr Neale to contact Cllr Schwier re potholes along Gainsford End Road. The information has been passed onto Cllr Schwier.
- 24/134.4 Clerk to contact Gt Yeldham Parish Council re the condition of the Toppesfield Road before the residential area. This information has been relayed to Gt Yeldham Parish Council.
- 24/134.5 Cllr Bourlet to liaise with Alan Collard regarding progress made for funding for digitalising historic photographs/documents. Cllr Bourlet to follow this up.
- 24/134.6 Cllrs Bourlet and Winter to arrange and meet with a third representatives regarding possibilities for the playing field. Cllr Bourlet to arrange a meeting with Cllrs Smith and Winter to discuss a plan for the playing field before progressing this.
- 24/134.7 Cllr Bourlet to research funding for the playing field project – held over to next meeting.
- 24/134.8 Cllr Bourlet to report back to the playing field group with response from the Cricket Club representative regarding boundaries for the cricket pitch – held over to next meeting.
- 24/134.9 Cllr Graves to write to contractor for playing field maintenance. Cllr Winter contacted the contractor and work has commenced at the playing field. The contractor is working through the list of priorities.
- 24/134.10 Cllr Graves to look at options for the car park in Park Lane. Consideration of depth required for a charging station and if there are options that do not require costly fees to be looked into.

#### **24/134. Internal Practices and management for the Parish Council:**

- 24/134.1 Neighbourhood Plan update - a meeting is being held on 13<sup>th</sup> September and an update will be forwarded to the Parish Council. An application for funding will need to be made to help progress the plan.

- 24/134.2 Wethersfield Airfield and Asylum centre updates were circulated to councillors as they were received.
- 24/134.3 Waste Collection Vehicle - 21 September 2024. This service has been advertised through the Facebook page and the parish newsletter.
- 24/134.4 2 Hour Short Course training – modules need to be confirmed for the meeting on 16th October 2024.
- 24/134.5 Proposal to adopt updated social media Policy. Cllr Bourlet signed the policy following its adoption by the Parish Council.
- 24/134.6 Cllr Graves – update on Gainsford End sign. Cllr Graves to follow this up.
- 24/134.7 Tree planting project – it was agreed to apply for funding towards the project and locations need to be sought.
- 24/134.8 Christmas Event – it was agreed this will be held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2024 and based on last year. Ideas and a plan to be put forward at the October meeting.
- 24/134.9 Parish Council Strategy document – the draft document was presented to councillors. This will be circulated for consideration, comment and further discussion.

**24/135. Correspondence Received:**

- 24/135.1 EALC Legal & County Updates, Essex County Council Highways Highlights, RCCE Essex Warbler – circulated to all Councillors prior to meeting.
- 24/135.2 Marie Curie Fundraising team – request for financial donation received. It was agreed not to make a donation at this time.
- 24/135.3 RCCE – Essex Big Weekend - Visit Essex is offering people the chance to win big with free tickets to attractions, overnight stays and meal vouchers, which will help extend the visitor season and support local businesses. Details can be found on the parish council website and the Toppesfield Facebook page.
- 24/135.4 Braintree District Council - The committee meeting scheduled for 2nd September has been cancelled and a revised local development scheme, formally setting out the council's timetable towards a submission of an updated local plan in compliance with the proposed NPPF, will be discussed at a Local Plan Sub-Committee on 16th September 2024. For more details see the councils [Latest news page](#).

**24/136. Financial Accounts:**

- 24/136.1 To receive the Clerk's Report indicating receipts and payments requiring approval. The report was received and approved. Payments are detailed in Appendix A.
- 24/136.2 Annual Return Response from Auditors was "On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met."

**24/137 Highways:**

- 24/137.1 Park Lane Car Park – discussed under agenda item 24/134.10.
- 24/137.2 Footpaths – update on mapping of local footpaths including costs. Information is being gathered before a report can be made.

**24/138. Communications:**

No items were discussed under this heading.

**24/139. Information exchange / Items for the next agenda**

No items were discussed under this heading.

**24/140. Date of the next meeting:**

The next Parish Council Meeting is scheduled to be held on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2024 at 7.30pm at Toppesfield Village Hall.

**24/141. Close**

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.35pm

Signed:

Dated:

## Action Summary:

- Clerk to write to letter to resident regarding the dumping of garden and fowl waste.
- Cllr Bourlet to follow up with Alan Collard regarding funding for digitalising historic records.
- Cllrs Bourlet, Winter to arrange and meet with a third representatives regarding possibilities for the playing field.
- Cllr Bourlet to research funding for the playing field project.
- Cllr Bourlet to report back to the playing field group with response from the Cricket Club representative regarding boundaries for the cricket pitch.
- Cllr Graves to look at options for the car park in Park Lane.
- Clerk to write to the owner of the cars left in Park Lane car park.

## Appendix A

| Accounts - 12th September 2024                 |   |         |                   |                   |
|--|---|---------|-------------------|-------------------|
|  |   |         | £                 |                   |
| Community Account                              |   |         |                   |                   |
|  | Closing Balance as at 2nd September 2024            |         | 33,396.06         |                   |
| All previous payments issued balance should be |   |         | <u>£33,404.06</u> |                   |
| Income Received                                |   |         |                   |                   |
|  |   |         | <u>£0.00</u>      |                   |
| Direct Debits                                  | Included in the balance figure of 3rd Septmber 2024 |         |                   |                   |
| 01.09.24                                       | EDF Energy - The Pavilaion electricity supply       |         | £8.00             |                   |
|  |   |         | <u>£8.00</u>      |                   |
| Direct Debits                                  | Not yet taken from account                          |         |                   |                   |
| 07.09.24                                       | Vodaphone Contract                                  |         | £13.80            |                   |
|  |   |         | <u>£13.80</u>     |                   |
|  |   |         |                   | Unrecoverable VAT |
| Payments to be approved:                       |   |         |                   |                   |
| Date of invoice                                |   | Chq No: |                   |                   |
| 03.09.24                                       | Paul Clark Printing - Sept/Oct Newsletter           | By Bacs | £289.00           | £0.00             |
| 01.09.24                                       | HMRC - Tax on August salary                         | By Bacs | £30.60            | £0.00             |
| 01.09.24                                       | K Berry - August salary                             | By Bacs | £712.35           | £0.00             |
|  |   |         | <u>£1,031.95</u>  |                   |
|  |   |         |                   |                   |
|  |   |         | £32,350.31        |                   |