



# Toppesfield Parish Council



## Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020 Via Zoom at 7.30pm

### **20/73. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair for 2020-2021**

Councillor Alan Collard was elected as Chair for 2020-2021 and he accepted the position for another year only. Councillor Chris Neale was elected as vice-chair for 2020-2021 and he accepted the position.

### **20/74. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:**

#### **The following Councillors were in attendance:**

Councillor Alan Collard - Chair  
Councillor Andrea Chinery  
Councillor Boyd Page  
Councillor Chris Neale

Also, in attendance:

1 member of the public  
District Councillor Richard van Dulken  
Kaaren Berry – Clerk to the Parish Council

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Robert Stafford-Baker

### **20/75. Declaration of Members' interests in agenda items:**

No declarations of Members interests were made.

### **20/58. Open Session – opportunity for members of the Parish to address the Parish Council.**

District Councillor Richard van Dulken reported that postcards are being sent out to inform residents that green waste collections will be starting on from 18<sup>th</sup> May on a weekly basis and recycling centres in Braintree are opening up again.

It was also reported that the Councillors Community Grants are being put in place for 2020/2021 but granting has been suspended at present.

There have been no formal meetings held at Braintree District Council recently but they are now starting to hold virtual meetings via Microsoft teams. These can be followed via the Braintree District Council website. Officers have mainly been working from home wherever possible.

Councillor Collard stated he has been impressed with the continued efficiency of the waste collections since the start of the covid-19 lockdown started and with the amount achieved by the Business section at BDC.

### **20/77. Minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting**

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2020 were signed as a true record of the meeting. This was proposed by Councillor Page and seconded by Councillor Chinery.

### **20/78. Matters Arising not on the agenda – for report only**

The overflowing dog waste bin at the allotments has been reported to Braintree District Council.

**20/79. Actions from previous meeting:**

- 20/79.1 Councillor Collard to write to the village hall committee – ongoing.
- 20/79.2 Councillors with signing powers are to contact the bank directly to sign themselves up for electronic banking. Councillors are still having problems in getting through to the bank but will try again.
- 20/79.3 Councillor Stafford-Baker to look at costings for bench near Hill Farm and a bench for Gainsford End playing field. Councillor Page has spoken with Councillor Stafford-Baker who confirmed a new 5-foot bench including vat and delivery would be £280.00. The existing bench has been removed due to its poor state of repair but the base and fixings remain. All information regarding benches to be provided at the next meeting for consideration.
- 20/79.4 Councillor Stafford-Baker to speak to the church wardens regarding the proposed bench for the Church yard. It was suggested that a memorial bench for Ted and Dennis Mortlock be placed in the Churchyard – Councillor Chinery will follow this up with Mr Tom Mortlock.  
It was also suggested that a memorial bench be considered for Dave Dyson – Councillor Collard will speak with Margaret Dyson regarding this.
- 20/79.5 Clerk to progress the changeover of electricity suppliers – EDF will be taking over the new contract and it was agreed to pay this by direct debit.

**20/80. Internal Practices and management for the Parish Council:**

- 20/80.1 Toppesfield Parish Council code of conduct – a reminder was given to all Councillors to read through the code of conduct to refresh their knowledge of it.
- 20/80.2 Annual Parish Meeting – discussion whether to postpone until later in the year or hold over until next year. It was agreed not to hold the Annual Parish Meeting this year due to the current covid-19 pandemic. However, a letter will be sent to all groups to ask if they have any pressing needs and if so to let the parish council know.

**20/81. Correspondence Received:**

- 20/81.1 EALC Legal and County Updates, Essex County Council Highways Highlights, RCCE Essex Warbler – circulated to all Councillors prior to meeting.
- 20/81.2 Braintree District Council – Spring and Autumn Rural Verge Cutting – one-year trial of dispensing with the Spring cut to verges in the central part of the District.
- 20/81.3 Walking in Essex (<https://www.walkinginengland.co.uk/essex>) - request to link to the Parish Website. The site has hundreds of FREE walks to download and has details of books, maps and walking groups in the county. There were no objections to put a link on the parish website to this.

**20/82. Financial Accounts:**

- 20/82.1 To receive the Clerk's Report indicating receipts and payments requiring approval. The report was received and payments approved – see Appendix A. However, it was agreed to hold the cheque for Sovereign until the questions over the installation of the play equipment have been resolved.

**20/83. Highways:**

- 20/83.1 Report of a continued unoccupied Greenfield Housing Association Bungalow in Toppesfield – Councillor Page reported this issue has been raised previously and was reported to Greenfields who were looking into the matter. It has been reported that the tenant continues to visit the property on a few occasions throughout the year and stays only for a short amount of time on each visit. Greenfield's have stated that the property is the resident's main residence and they have a reasonable reason as to why they are not there fulltime. Residents have voiced their concerns to Councillor Page regarding the property and expressions have been made to bring the matter of the property in question to the papers and correspondence has been sent to Greenfields regarding this issue.

District Councillor Richard van Dulken stated that the district council select the people for properties which are managed by Greenfields.

Councillor Collard stated that Greenfields which has 8500 properties are merging with Colne Housing which has 3500 properties in July and will be renamed as Eastlight. Greenfields are responsible to its members and Braintree District Council have no sway in how Greenfields runs its business.

Councillor Collard stated he has a telephone meeting scheduled with Greenfields regarding this matter and they are aware of the problems and are trying to resolve the issue. The outcome of the meeting will be fed back to Councillors.

- 20/83.2 Stambourne Road, Reference 2663022 – condition of the road surface. This was reported to highways who quickly made an initial inspection to make it safe. A further assessment will be carried out to establish whether a permanent repair is required in the future.
- 20/83.3 Finchingfield Bridge - Essential bridge repairs planned for August 2020. The works are expected to take 11 days to complete with the support of a full road closure (closed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week) from Monday 17 August to Thursday 27 August 2020.

Verge cutting was discussed and it was suggested that the parish council look at reducing cuts throughout the year or cut the approaches to junctions/bends only on occasions. This would need to be made clear to the contractors once locations have been identified and a final decision made.

**20/84. Planning:**

No planning issues were raised.

**20/85. Playing Fields & The Dick Ruggles Pavilion**

There was nothing to report at this time.

**20/86. Communications**

20/86.1 Website update – biographies and photos are still required from Councillor's along with preferred contact method for publication.

**20/87. Information exchange / Parish Surgery / Items for the next agenda**

A report from the village hall was read out – please see Appendix B.

Little Chestnuts are looking at re-opening the preschool but priority will be given to 3 and 4 year olds. When the preschool reopens all the necessary practices will be in place in line with current guidelines.

Councillor Neale reported that BT are limiting the number of orders being taken at the moment as Openreach are not installing at present. Councillor Neale will let the council and those involved with the project locally know more after next week when he finds out more information.

95% of the project is complete – there have been some conflicts with County Broadband but these are being worked through. Giga bit vouchers have now closed – all vouchers are safe but if people default there is a possibility the voucher monies will be lost. Therefore, other sources of funding may need to be looked at. Only one person has dropped out but a business has signed up. Other voucher schemes are available. Councillor Neale will monitor the situation.

Councillor Page reported that the Gainsford End telephone box has been painted and the Covid-19 Response Group is going really well. Prescriptions are being brought into the parish and being delivered, the shop service is doing really well and vulnerable people have been identified and are receiving help. There have been a lot of thanks from residents for the services in place.

**20/88. Date of the next meeting:**

The next Parish Council Meeting is scheduled to be held on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2020 at 7.30pm – this may be via Zoom or to be held at Toppesfield Village Hall depending on government advice at the time.

**20/89. Close**

The meeting closed at 9.00pm

Signed:

Dated:

**Action Summary:**

Councillor Collard to write to the village hall committee.

Councillors with signing powers are to contact the bank directly to sign themselves up for electronic banking.

All information regarding bench costings and potential memorial benches to be presented at the next meeting.

**Appendix A**

Accounts - 14 May 2020		£	£	
National Savings Deposit Account:				
Balance as at 1st January 2020		<u>£2,646.58</u>		
Community Account				
Balance as at 30 April 2020			<u>£34,137.57</u>	
Subtotal:		<u>£2,646.58</u>		
All previous issued cheques cashed balance should be		<u>£2,646.58</u>	<u>£22,838.57</u>	
Income Received (included in balance figure at 30.04.20)				
23.04.20	Donation received		£2,500.00	
30.04.20	1st Instalment - precept		£8,627.00	
30.04.20	BDC - Distribution of surplus		£217.00	
			<u>£11,344.00</u>	
Payments to be approved:				
Date of invoice			Chq No:	Unrecoverable VAT
16.04.20	T Roberts - Telephone expenses for T & GE Response Group		101933	£45.00 £0.00
16.04.20	E.on - Electricity supply to the Pavilion at Toppesfield Playing Field		101935	£8.79 £0.00
29.04.20	Paul Clark Printing - May Newsletter		101936	£210.00 £0.00
28.04.20	Paul Clark Printing - A4 Flyer T & GE Response Group		101937	£36.00 £0.00
05.05.20	Toppesfield Community Shop - Covid-19 support - Food parcels		101938	£28.99 £0.00
05.05.20	CommuniCorp - Clerks & Council Direct Subscription Renewal		101939	£36.00 £0.00
07.05.20	Community Heartbeat Trust - Replacement Battery for defibrillator		101940	£223.20 £0.00
11.05.20	Groundwork UK - return of unspent grant for the Neighbourhood Plan		101941	£1,405.74 £0.00
May-20	CCC Finance - balance for Play equipment at Gainsford End Playingfield		101942	£4,253.45 £0.00
30.04.20	Toppesfield & Gainsford End Allotment Society - Water Supply		101943	£45.74 £0.00
30.04.20	K Berry - April wages		101934	£380.94 £0.00
				<u>£6,673.85</u>
Balance		<u>£2,646.58</u>		<u>£27,508.72</u>
Last bank statement received up to 30 April 2020				

## Appendix B

### **Toppesfield Village Hall Report to Parish Council May 2020**

The Village Hall closed on the 19th March to all hirers, users and all forms of meetings. During this time we have continued to inspect it internally on a weekly basis to ensure that it is 'safe'. There is a check list to ensure that there are no leaks, break- ins or damage. This is required to ensure our insurance is valid.

Naturally our planned AGM could not take part.

Today the pre school have asked if they could use the premises again in lines with the Government encouragement to reopen early years settings. In principal we have agreed but there are many aspects to work on to ensure the children, parents, staff and community are safe. Together with Andrea we will ensure that the necessary paperwork, risk assessments and posters are in place. Cleaning, distancing and monitoring systems will be discussed and arranged.

On Monday I received a really warm communication from the Trustees at Sainsburys. They have continued to have a close connection and interest with us a village. They asked after all of our community. I reported back that there was really good organisation and support for all of our needs.