



Toppesfield Parish Council



Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 16th February 2023 at Toppesfield Village Hall at 8pm

23/32. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:

The following Councillors were in attendance:

Councillor Chris Neale – Chair
Councillor Alan Collard
Councillor Trisha Roberts

Also, in attendance:

Kaaren Berry – Clerk

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Amanda Smith
Councillor Kitty Bourlet
District Councillor Richard van Dulken

23/33. Declaration of Members' interests in agenda items

No declarations of Members interests were made.

23/34. Open Session – opportunity for members of the Parish to address the Parish Council.

No members of the public were present.

Councillor Richard Van Dulken provided the following report:

- The proposals for the 2023/24 BDC budget have been made public and will be discussed at the 20th February Council meeting. We are all aware of the 10% inflation rate which has impacted BDC salaries and diesel fuel in particular, which has resulted in the proposal to increase the BDC share of the Council tax by 2.5% for next year, less than the permitted 3%. To put this into context, for a Band D house this will mean an increase of £4.68 for the year, only 9p a week.
It has also been announced by the administration that following the decision by ECC to not go ahead with the Millennium Slips at the A120 in Braintree, and subject to agreement at the Council as part of the 2023/24 Budget, the amount of £2.5 million put aside by BDC towards this project will be used to support the community in various ways, including a sum of £25 as a New Homes and Growth Dividend to be paid to all eligible Council Tax payers.
- From Wednesday 8th the Lighthouse charity will be able to collect unwanted large electrical appliances from the Braintree recycling centre in Springwood Drive, to refurbish them and sell at low prices to those in need.
- Love Essex/ Love Food - during February BDC is taking part in a campaign to reduce food waste - the average family with children apparently wastes £60 a month on wasted food, and this makes up an astonishing 25% of residual (grey bin) waste. A waste of money, of resources, and a major producer of methane gases at landfill sites. Sign up to the Pledge at www.loveessex/foodwaste and get many hints as well as a chance to win £60.

- The latest appeal by the owner of the Fishing Lakes to remain living on the site, and providing a takeaway food service, has been turned down by the Planning Inspector, and he has one month to find alternative accommodation and six months to remove the improperly situated mobile homes etc.
- Starting on 13th March there will be a trial for 9 months of a booking system for cars and vans at the Essex County Council-run recycling centres, including ours in Braintree. This new system has been trialled, apparently successfully, in Rayleigh, and is intended to reduce congestion (and pollution from idling vehicles) as well the misuse of the facility by commercial traders. ECC will be publicising the system in due course.
- Green bins. The collection of garden waste is a discretionary service (not statutory) offered by BDC for some years, but in view of the financial pressures on the Council it is being proposed to offer an opt-in subscription service from some time in 2024. Note that 70% of Councils in England and Wales are currently charging for this service, and by 2024 this will include virtually all other Essex Councils.
- Furniture and waste textiles including POPs (Persistent Organic Pollutants), typically foam in sofas, can no longer be collected as part of the amenity collections arranged by the Parish Council - it must be collected individually by the bulky waste collection service of BDC.
- Councillors' Community Grants - I have distributed all of my grant funds for 2022/23 but am pleased to say that the scheme is intended to operate in the coming financial year.

A note was also received from the Gardening Club at St Margaret's school with an update acquiring litter pickers and high viz jackets. The school were not in possession of any and they approached Cllr Richard van Dulken to see if he could assist. He kindly arranged for the school to receive even more than we asked for. He is coming to school on Tuesday 21 February to take part in a litter pick with the gardening club.

It was also asked who is responsible for clearing leaves between school and church? This has previously been carried out by the Community Payback team and other local volunteers.

23/35. Minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 12th January and 2nd February were signed as a true record of the meeting.

23/36. Matters Arising not on the agenda – for report only.

Following the question of clearing the leaves along the entrance to the playing field it was mentioned that the clearing of ivy and the rubbish behind the pavilion needs to be carried out. This is to be discussed at the next meeting.

23/37. Internal Practices and management for the Parish Council:

23/37.1 Proposal for Defibrillator training and setting up a list of volunteers to assist should there be a need for the defib to be used. Cllr Neale proposed that a training session to raise awareness of 1st Aid and using a defibrillator is organised. The cost would be £125 for 15 people to have a training session which would last approximately 3 hours. The proposal was agreed and Cllr Neale to progress and confirm a date for the training. This would then be advertised for people to sign up to.

23/37.2 Proposal to adopt the following policies: Freedom of Information, Document Retention and updated Travel Expenses Policy. The policies were approved and will be placed on the parish website.

23/37.3 King Coronation, 6th May 2023, do the parish council organise a celebration event i.e. street party. It was agreed the Parish Council would be supportive of a group to organise a street party for the 7th May. Clerk to place an article in the Newsletter asking for volunteers.

23/37.4 Annual Litter pick. It was agreed to carry out the annual community litter pick on 11 March 2023 at 10am, meeting at the village hall as long as the equipment can be supplied by Braintree District Council.

23/38. Financial Accounts:

- 23/38.1 To receive the Clerk's Report indicating receipts and payments requiring approval. The report was received and approved. See Appendix A for details.
- 23/38.2 Proposal to engage Judith Fletcher to prepare the year end accounts. It was agreed to engage Judith Fletcher to prepare the year end accounts.
- 23/38.3 Parish Council to insure the village hall and shop premises and recharge costs to each organisation. Quotation was received and accepted to insure the village hall and shop premises and recharge the organisations.

23/39. Highways:

23/39.1 Essex Highways has submitted a planning application to Essex County Council's Planning team for a new replacement bridge at Finchingfield. This application includes the provision of a temporary pond crossing to support the community during our proposed bridge replacement works. The inclusion of the pond crossing follows previous engagement undertaken by the parish council which suggests that this is the preferred option by residents and businesses.

The application is available for public comment by visiting: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/view-comment-planning-applications> comments to be submitted by 9th February.

Finchingfield Bridge webpage which can be accessed at: <https://www.essexhighways.org/finchingfield-bridge-b1053-finchingfield>

This planning application is still open for comments until the 28th February 2023.

23/40. Community Prescription service

23/40.1 The Post Office have asked if the Parish Council would support a prescription collection service to held in Post Office located within the village shop on a Wednesday morning.

This was discussed and the parish council are supportive of the shop and post office should they want to supply this service.

23/41. Information exchange / Items for the next agenda

Items for the next agenda: clearing the leaves along the entrance to the playing field and of the ivy and the rubbish behind the pavilion.

23/42. Date of the next meeting:

The next Parish Council Meeting is scheduled to be held on 2nd March 2023 at 7.30pm at Toppesfield Village Hall.

23/43. Close

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.45pm

Signed:

Dated:

Action Summary:

- **Cllr Neale to confirm a date for a training session to Raise Awareness of 1st Aid and use of a defibrillator**
- **Clerk to do an article for the newsletter seeking volunteers to organise a Street Party on the 7th May 2023 to celebrate the Kings Coronation.**
- **Clerk to enquire with Braintree District Council if they can supply litter picking equipment for the 11th March.**

Appendix A

Accounts -13th February 2023			£	
Community Account				
	Balance as at 12th February 2023		£43,771.36	
All previous payments issued balance should be			<u>£43,781.36</u>	
Income Received Included in the balance figure of 12.02.23				
			£0.00	
			£0.00	
			<u>£0.00</u>	
Direct Debits / Payments made since last meeting (already deducted from the balance figure on the 12.02.23)				
01.2.23	EDF Energy - The Pavilaion electricity supply		£10.00	
			<u>£10.00</u>	
				Unrecoverable VAT
Payments to be approved:				
Date of invoice		Chq No:		
				£0.00
14.01.23	Chris Neale - Christmas tree lights	By Bacs	£104.99	£0.00
20.01.23	Paul Clark Printing - Jan/Feb Newsletter	By Bacs	£260.00	
various	K Berry - Ink, Paper and Chocolate coins for Christmas tree competition voting	By Bacs	£34.94	
01.02.23	K Berry - January wages	By Bacs	£502.92	£0.00
			<u>£902.85</u>	
			£42,868.51	