



Toppesfield Parish Council



Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 2nd July 2020 Via Zoom at 7.30pm

20/106. 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:

No members of the public joined the meeting
District Councillor Richard van Dulken
Kaaren Berry – Clerk to the Parish Council

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Andrew Bull
Councillor Amanda Smith
Councillor Robert Stafford-Baker

20/107. Declaration of Members' interests in agenda items:

No declarations of Members interests were made.

20/108. Open Session – opportunity for members of the Parish to address the Parish Council.

District Councillor Richard van Dulken reported that most of the council owned play areas will not be opened yet due to the current government covid-19 guidelines/procedures required. The green waste collections will return to the fortnightly collections from 13th July 2020. The local plan inspector recommendations have been received by Braintree District Council. Also, a reminder the Councillors Community Grant for this year is available and the Toppesfield Bell Ringers has been granted some monies towards the replacement of the bell ropes.

20/109. Minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 4th June 2020 were signed as a true record of the meeting. This was proposed by Councillor Page and seconded by Councillor Neale.

20/110. Matters Arising not on the agenda – for report only

Councillor Page asked for it to be noted that he was dismayed at the incident last Friday at the Green Man and the subsequent comments on social media. Councillor Page stated he was in support of the actions of Toppesfield Community Pub Committee in ensuring the government covid-19 procedures were carried out.

20/111. Actions from previous meeting:

20/111.1 Councillor Collard to write to the village hall committee. Councillor Collard reported that he has written to the chair of the village hall committee with concerns regarding access for the clerk, the village hall as a designated building in the parish council's emergency plan and the liability for the insurance of the building.

20/112. Internal Practices and management for the Parish Council:

- 20/112.1 Toppesfield and Gainsford End Response Group – discuss the possibility of reducing the help given by 1st August 2020 if current predictions of the covid-19 outbreak continue declining. Councillor Page reported that requests for help are declining and suggested scaling down the service from August 1st 2020. Vulnerable people in the parish have been noted and they will possibly need continued support – this will need to be looked at. Just over 200 prescriptions were delivered during lockdown. The three helpline phones are all active at present but it was suggested this is reduced to one – this would be the 24hour helpline which could be passed around members as Gill Page will no longer be working from home. Trisha Roberts has also handed back her role at Toppesfield Stores to the shop committee.
- 20/112.2 Consideration of what continuing support is needed to help the vulnerable people that have been identified in the Parish. Councillor Page to provide a brief plan of help and the number of people who may require ongoing help for the next parish council meeting. It was suggested that some help could be combined with the doctor's car service.
- 20/112.3 Neighbourhood Plan Update. There is an update in the July parish newsletter. The first draft of the Housing Needs Survey response is due at the end of July, The first draft of the landscape character assessment has been received and comments on this have been given by the steering group and the design code is being drawn up.
- 20/112.4 Maintenance of the Parish Council land behind Post Cottage/Green Man Pub. It was agreed this land should be maintained by the parish council. Councillors Page and Stafford-Baker will address this after the summer and grass the area.
- 20/112.5 Neighbourhood Watch – this was discussed and Councillor Collard will speak to Alan Preston to see if he would like to resurrect his role in this.
- 20/112.6 How the parish council deal with and respond to planning applications. Councillor Page suggested a small working party look at the way the parish council respond to planning applications. An up to date check on comments to applications from the Braintree website is required for meetings as it is felt that the parish council do not reflect what others say. It was also suggested the parish council's planning policy is updated – it was further suggested this could be looked at after the results of the Housing Needs Survey and Neighbourhood plan. Clerk to look at previous training notes and circulate to councillors and any other information on best practice in responding which can be gained from CPRE and EALC.
- 20/112.7 Councillor Collard reported that he is setting up a working group to look at the possible shop extension. Trisha Roberts will lead this from the shop. The chair of the village hall will be asked for their views. Possible problems with an extension are the village hall roof as it has weak points and sewerage/drainage. Representatives from the preschool will also be involved as they have an interest. Representatives from the parish council will be Chris Neale, Andrea Chinery and Alan Collard. Councillor Collard to contact the village hall and shop committees to progress this.

20/113. Correspondence Received:

- 20/113.1 EALC Legal and County Updates, Essex County Council Highways Highlights, RCCE Essex Warbler – circulated to all Councillors prior to meeting.
- 20/113.2 NALC – Model Code of Conduct Consultation. this was circulated to councillors for comment.
- 20/113.3 Basics Essex Accident Rescue Service, B.E.A.R.S – request for consideration of financial support. It was agreed not to make a donation to them at this time.

20/114. Financial Accounts:

- 20/114.1 To receive the Clerk's Report indicating receipts and payments requiring approval. The report was received and payments approved – see Appendix A.
- 20/114.2 Grant request from Toppesfield Bell Ringers for a grant towards the cost of replacement ropes. This was discussed. Councillor Collard proposed a grant of £350 was made and this was seconded by Councillor Page and agreed by those present.
- 20/114.3 Accounts for year ending 31st March 2020 - Proposal to approve the accounts. The accounts were discussed and Councillor Chinery proposed they were accepted and Councillor Page seconded this.

20/115. Highways:

- 20/115.1 Gainsford End Defibrillator is live with the Ambulance Service ready for use. There is an article in the July parish newsletter to inform residents of this.

20/115.2 Recent works along The Causeway – concerns regarding the tarmac and it possibly not being sealed correctly which could result in it deteriorating quickly in wet/cold weather. It is felt that there is no sealing between the tarmacs. This needs to be raised with the contractors and/or county broadband.

20/116. Planning:

Application No:	Description	Address	Action
20/00521/FUL	Change of use to provide tourism accommodation jointly within vineyard visitor building	Bradfields Harrow Hill Toppesfield Essex CO9 4LX	Comments to Braintree District Council by 9 th July 2020

The above application was discussed and the parish council are in support of this application.

20/117. Playing Fields & The Dick Ruggles Pavilion

- 20/117.1 Gainsford End playing field equipment update. Councillor Page reported that the project has now been signed off and all points raised by RoSPA have been addressed.
- 20/117.2 RoSPA Reports for the playing fields received – proposal to approve recommended repairs and replacement of items. Councillor Page reported that additional signage is required – he will look into costs and design of signs. Councillor Page and Stafford-Baker will look at clearing the south east corner of Toppesfield playing field. It was also recommended that the paly equipment is not opened yet due to the current government covid-19 guidelines/procedures required.
- 20/117.3 Benches for Gainsford End park and for the hill overlooking the valley. It was agreed to purchase the benches. Councillor Stafford-Baker to progress.
- 20/117.4 Update on memorial bench for Dave Dyson, including style and location. This was discussed and agreed. Clerk to progress.

20/118. Communications

- 20/118.1 Openreach Broadband project. Councillor Neale reported that the project has been delayed due to covid-19 and the final works have been delayed until September. Areas still to be addressed are around the green junction box where Great Yeldham Road and The Causeway meet. The bottom end of Park Lane is still to be done along with Harrow Hill. A few people have dropped out losing about £9000 of funding – 3 business vouchers were lost and another was taken on. An update has been requested from Open Reach as to what has been claimed. The project is still ongoing and other funding is being sought.
- 20/118.2 Website – information from some councillors is still required to update the website.

20/119. Information exchange / Parish Surgery / Items for the next agenda

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

Councillor Chinery reported that she has spoken to Paul Chinery regarding selected verge cutting and in particular junction cutting. Concerns were raised about liability if accidents occur however if the parish council would like reduced verge cutting a detailed plan of areas to be cut would be required – Councillor Stafford-Baker will be asked to do this.

Councillor Collard expressed his thanks to everyone who helped to tidy up the church yard.

20/120. Date of the next meeting:

The next Parish Council Meeting is scheduled to be held on 6th August 2020 at 7.30pm – this may be via zoom or at Toppesfield Village Hall depending on government advice at the time.

20/121. Close

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

Signed:

Dated:

Action Summary:

Councillor Page to provide a brief plan of the number of vulnerable and the help they may require after the Toppesfield & Gainsford End response group scales down.

Councillor Collard to speak to Alan Preston regarding the possibility of resurrecting his role with Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor Stafford-Baker to draft a plan for reduced verge cutting areas.

Councillor Smith to contact County Broadband/contractors regarding recent works along The Causeway and concerns regarding the tarmac sealing.

Appendix A

Accounts - 2 July 2020					
		£		£	
National Savings Deposit Account:					
Balance as at 1st January 2020		£2,646.58			
Community Account					
	Balance as at 30 June 2020			£32,410.93	
Subtotal:		£2,646.58			
All previous issued cheques cashed balance should be		£2,646.58		£26,198.94	
Income Received (included in the balance figure of 30 June 2020)					
02.06.20	Essex County Council - payment towards verge cutting for 2020/2021			£1,958.54	
				£1,958.54	
Payments to be approved:					
Date of invoice			Chq No:		Unrecoverable VAT
25.05.20	S Sheldrake - Pumphouse Hanging Baskets maintenance/renewals		101949	£35.50	£0.00
08.06.20	Braintree District Council - Grass cutting - Toppesfield playing field 2020/21		101950	£1,089.00	£0.00
10.06.20	Playsafety Limited - RoSPA reports and Annual Inspection		101951	£168.60	£0.00
11.06.20	Paul Chinery - verge cutting		101952	£600.00	£0.00
18.06.20	EALC - Chairman briefing webinar - training		101953	£48.00	£0.00
Jun-20	Rural Community Council of Essex membership renewal up to 30.06.21		101954	£52.80	£0.00
24.06.20	Toppesfield Community Shop - Covid-19 Support - Food Parcels		101955	£41.47	£0.00
19.06.20	E.on - Electricity Supply to the Pavilion at Toppesfield Playing Field		101956	£13.83	£0.00
02.07.20	Paul Clark Printing - July Newsletter		101957	£270.00	£0.00
30.06.20	K Berry - June wages		101948	£380.94	£0.00
				£2,700.14	
Balance		£2,646.58		£25,457.34	
Last bank statement received up to 29 May 2020					

Appendix B

Toppesfield Village Hall Report to Parish Council July 2020

The preschool will finish for the summer holiday at the end of this month. They have had the sole use of the hall and took on all responsibility for the safety of the children and adults in every way. It has all gone extremely well and I'm sure they have welcome advice to give to help us to open up for other groups in September, assuming off course that it is 'allowed' and safe.

In preparation we have started to consider systems that we need to have ready. Any group that wants to use the hall will be supported in completing a risk assessment and will be expected to follow tight guidelines. We aim to be prepared for when we can restart.

We will hold our AGM as soon as we can. I checked with the RCCE about holding a 'virtual' meeting. Sadly the terms in the lease means we cannot.

Sheila Braithwaite