

July / Aug
Edition 206



USEFUL NUMBERS

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| Braintree District Council | 01376 552525 |
| Colchester Hospital | 01206 744491 |
| Doctors Car Service | 07845 596092 |
| Freshwell Health Centre | 01371 810328 |
| Hedingham Medical Centre: | 01787 461465 |
| Kaaren Berry, Parish Clerk | 07341 264219 |
| Little Chestnuts Preschool | 079018 80914 |
| Pumphouse Brewery | 07801 042545 |
| Church Warden Brian Moody | 01787 237974 |
| St Margaret's School | 01787 237354 |
| The Green Man Public House | 01787 237418 |
| Toppesfield Community Shop | 07895 510767 |
| Toppesfield Village Hall Bookings | |
| Frances Winter | 07809 237789 |
| Vets - Ardmore, Gt Yeldham | 01787 238255 |
| Medical Equipment | 01787 238146 |

TOPPESFIELD COMMUNITY SHOP

Church Lane, Toppesfield. Tel: 07895 510767

Fresh Fruit & Vegetables, Milk, Newspapers, Confectionery, Pet Food, Dairy Products, Meat & Poultry, Coal and Kindling, Cards, Stationery and lots more!

Monday—Friday

8.30 am— 4.00 pm

Saturday—10.00 am—12.30pm

TOPPESFIELD POST OFFICE

Church Lane, Toppesfield

Wednesday - 10.00 am—1pm

Services include: Special Delivery, Mobile Top Up, Insurance Services, Household payments, Travel Money, Moneygrams, Savings Accounts plus more!

Toppesfield Parish Council

Your Councillors are - Kitty Bourlet (Chair), Paula Edwards-Holmes (Vice Chair), Amanda Smith, Chris Neale, Frances Winter, Jeremy Graves and Jane Daines.

Parish Clerk — Kaaren Berry

Parish Council Meetings are normally held on the first Thursday of every month in the village hall. You are welcome to attend the Open Session which starts at 7.30pm.

Toppesfield & Gainsford End Parish Newsletter — Published by Toppesfield Parish Council

Editor: clerk.toppesfieldparishcouncil@gmail.com

Please submit your articles for the next newsletter by 19th August 2025

Please see our online resources to find out what is happening

Facebook Pages :-

Toppesfield & Gainsford End Community

Toppesfield Village Hall

Toppesfield Village Stores

The Green Man, Toppesfield

Pumphouse Community Brewery

Toppesfield and Gainsford End Neighbourhood and Development Plan

Twitter & Instagram— Toppesfield & Gainsford End Community

Website—<https://e-voice.org.uk/toppesfield-parish-council/>



From the Parish Council



Hello everyone and welcome to the summer edition of the Parish Council newsletter!

I wanted to reflect on the wonderful VE day celebrations that we had in the village in May.

The event was a wonderful testament to the village coming together to not only throw a really very wonderful event – but also to have a wonderful day!

As per all these events, we had a volunteer committee, who took hours out of their time to plan, prepare and run the event. We also had many more volunteers the day before and on the day itself. A heartfelt thank you to each and every person who volunteered or offered to volunteer – these events, as we all know, can only happen with this wonderful generosity of spirit.

Once the day arrived, the Village seem to transport itself back to the 1940's – the music stayed on theme all day, we had nearly everyone milling around in costumes that were well thought out in keeping, allowing us to really celebrate VE day as it deserved.

We had homemade cakes, our wonderful local wine from Toppesfield Vineyard, our local beer from the Pumphouse, a small selection of classic cars and games galore!

We started the day with a heartwarming dedication of our new bench and figures, with Brian reflecting on what Toppesfield would have been like in the war. We soon then continued into picnicking, socialising and catching up with friends old and new. I know I heard some wonderful memories from some of our villagers who lived in Toppesfield in the 40's, and it really did make for an even more special day.

The day had a focus on those rather competitive races – which were as well attended as ever, and great fun to be a part of!

As the day came to a slow and lazy close, I certainly had a wonderful feeling that we had energised the community spirit once again, and it was an honour to be a part of it.

Thank you again to all those involved – and to many more expertly organised village events!

Parish Council Information

A summary of Parish Council goings-on at the May and June meetings:

In May Cllr Richard van Dulken reported:

- The Waste recycling review decision will be taken at the cabinet meeting at the end of May and any changes will take place from April 2026.
- Cllr Schwier and he have taken a tour of some of the local roads to photograph and request that some of the potholes are treated as priority.

Other business in May included:

- Councillor Kitty Bourlet was elected as Chair for 2025 – 2026
- Councillor Edwards-Holmes was elected as vice-chair for 2025-2026
- Cllr Edwards-Holmes completed an application to Certas Energy for Community Bloom Fund.
- Strategy Document distribution—this will be delivered alongside the May/June parish newsletter.
- VE Day celebrations – final plans were discussed.
- Christmas planning began.
- Cost for equipment needed to redecorate the Telephone box in Toppesfield were agreed.
- Cllr Neale has raised with Google that Church Lane is not suitable for vehicles , however this will take time to update their mapping services.

In June Cllr Richard van Dulken reported:

Cllr Richard van Dulken reported:

- Braintree District Council (BDC) have 5 leisure facilities who are changing supplier from the 1st September 2025.
- Waste & Recycling - at the cabinet meeting on 25th July 2025 it was agreed the changes to waste bins and collections will come into effect from June 2026 and communications regarding this will be sent to each household.
- Local Plan, call for sites. The sites submitted for Toppesfield will be discussed on 25th June 2025.
- Grants – Cllr van Dulken was not able to support the VE Day grant application but will look at supporting another project this year.
- Other grants available from BDC are the cost-of-living grant scheme and the Rural England prosperity fund. More information about these can be found on their website.

Other business in the June meeting included:

- The lack of lighting from the centre of the village to Camoise Close was raised as there is no footpath for people to walk along – Cllr Edwards-Holmes will contact Highways to see if there could be a solution to this.
- It was mentioned that the hedge that runs along the junction of Great Yeldham Road and The Causeway is encroaching into the road and is obscuring a clear view for traffic. It was agreed that an article will be placed in the newsletter and on Facebook reminding people of the rules around hedges and the road-side.
- Strategy Document – some responses have been received so far, a reminder will be put on Facebook and an article in the next newsletter with an extended date to the end of July. Responses will be discussed at the August meeting.
- The updated Emergency Plan was approved.
- Doctor Car service - Cllr Edwards-Holmes will produce an updated process of the service for councillors for review .

Full minutes of each meeting can be found on the parish website:

[Minutes - Toppesfield Parish Council \(e-vote.org.uk\)](https://www.e-vote.org.uk/minutes-toppesfield-parish-council)

If you have any concerns you would like to raise with the Council, ideas for projects or anything you would like to parish council to consider please do get in touch or attend the open session at a Parish Council meeting. There is a public session held at the start of every parish council meeting from 7.30pm —7.45pm.

Parish Council meetings are normally held on the first Thursday of each month but please check the website for confirmation.

Vision 2035

Our 10 year strategy for Toppesfield and Gainsford End

Delivered with the last newsletter was the Parish Council's draft 10-Year Strategy showing a range of key goals and asking for your feedback.

Thank you to those of you who have already replied but more views are required to give a true representation from the parish. In order for this to happen the deadline for responses to be submitted has been extended to 31st July 2025.

Please do respond - it is your village too and you can help shape its future.

The QR code below will take you to the survey or if you require a printed copy these are available from the village shop or contact the parish clerk at clerk.toppesfieldparishcouncil@gmail.com

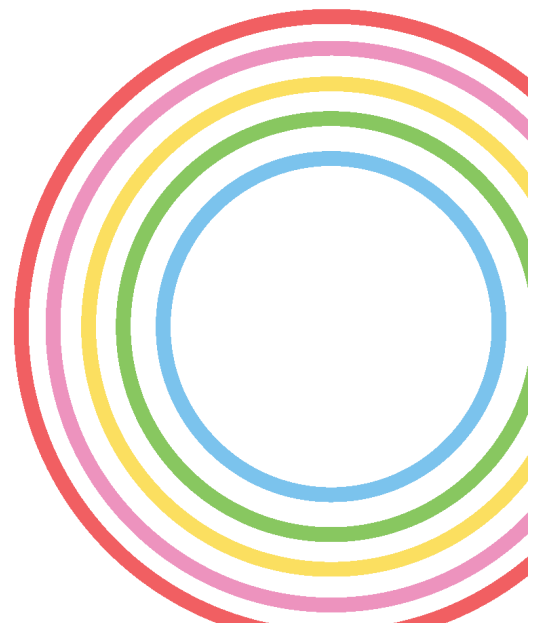
Thank you for taking the time to respond.

With regards,

Toppesfield Parish Council



Scan the QR code to
complete the
feedback form



BAR OPENING HOURS

Monday - Closed
Tuesday - Thursday 3 - Close
Friday - Sunday 12 - Close



KITCHEN OPENING HOURS

Wednesday & Thursday 5-8
Friday & Saturday 12-9
Sunday 12-4

Kevin vs. Janet: The Battle of the Dishes!

Each Friday, watch as Kevin and Janet go head-to-head in the kitchen, each whipping up a special dish to win your hearts and taste buds. Who will reign supreme? You be the judge!

~

Sundays

Sunday Roast featuring sirloin of beef and large selection of fresh vegetables

~

Monthly Pub Quiz Night!

Join us for a night of trivia and fun, all in support of Air Ambulance. Test your knowledge and help a great cause at the same time!

1st Saturday of the month from 7.30pm

Upcoming Village events



Toppesfield Community Pub's Annual Members Meeting

Will be held on 30th July 2025
At 8pm in Toppesfield Village Hall

Toppesfield and Gainsford End Allotments

Car boot / Table Sale

Toppesfield Playing field - Sunday 27th July 2025

12pm — 4.30pm

Tombola Refreshments Ice cream van

Call Linda for a pitch on 07921956555

The background of the poster is a photograph of cricket equipment, including a blue helmet, a white batting glove, and a cricket bat, resting on a green grassy field.

TOPPESFIELD CRICKET CLUB PRESENTS FAMILY CRINDERS

SATURDAY 12TH JULY 2025
2PM

TOPPESFIELD PLAYING FIELD

Toppesfield and Gainsford End Village Show

Saturday 13th September 2025

Toppesfield Village Hall 2.00pm

THE DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Yes it is that time of year again. **You will find a schedule for the show inside this newsletter** so you can be thinking about and planning your entries. We have a few new classes this year and I hope something for everyone. Just think if everyone entered just one class what a show it would make. Also this year we have scrapped entry fee of 20p per class.

Time line

- **Now** have a look at the schedule and decide what you wish to enter and fill in the **entry slip**. Please note for the **children's classes the age must be written on the entry slip**.
- **Thursday 11th Sept** Bring your completed entry slips to the village hall between **7.00pm and 8.00pm** and collect your exhibitor's cards.
- **If this not convenient you can leave your slips at Toppesfield Shop by Wednesday 10th Sept at 4.00pm** and I will sort your exhibitor's cards for you. You can collect your exhibitor's cards when you place your entries on Saturday morning.
- **Saturday 13th Sept** Bring your entries to the village hall between **8.30 am and 10.00 am**
- **Saturday 13th September 2.00pm** Come and check on your winnings and awards.

Come and enjoy the show.

- Check out the competitive entries and admire what amazing talent we have in our community.
- There will be stalls, games, a fantastic raffle and delicious strawberries and cream teas.
- Sit in the garden and have a chat with friends.

A great afternoon for all the family.

So many villages have lost their shows.

Show everyone that Toppesfield is the greatest!

Ann Read

Toppesfield and Gainsford End Historical documents

I have a wonderful collection of old photographs and documents all relating to Toppesfield and Gainsford End. These are quite a responsibility and looking to the future, feel they should be in a position where they are accessible to all. They need to be archived properly, possibly digitalised and stored in a safe place.

I did wonder if any one would be interested in doing this or helping me with this.

Some years ago it was suggested that we form a historical society. That would be wonderful as I am sure there is a lot of memorabilia relating to Toppesfield and Gainsford End sitting in draws and boxes that we do not know about.

Any one interested please get in touch.

Ann Read

Tel 01787237464 m.07981422665

email skomerann@tiscali.co.uk



**The Next Village Markets will be held at
Toppesfield Village Hall on:**



Saturday 5th July 2025—10.30am—12.30pm
Saturday 2nd August 2025 —10.30am—12.30pm
Saturday 6th September —10.30am—12.30pm

Please come along to see what is on offer from fresh meat, jams, pastries, and cakes to handmade crafts, cushions, cards, jewellery and much more.

Or pop in for a tasty bacon roll and a cuppa with friends.





St. Margaret of Antioch Toppesfield

Church services for July and August 2025 are detailed below.

All services start at 11.00am unless indicated.

July 6th Morning Prayer

July 13th Holy Communion (Common Worship)

July 20th Family Service

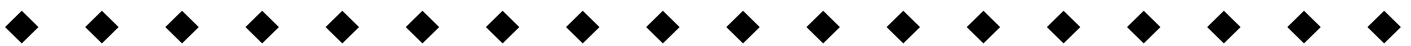
July 27th Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)

August 3rd Morning Prayer

August 10th Holy Communion (Common Worship)

August 17th Family Service

August 24th Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)



A date for the diary....

The Church Supper Auction

will be held on

Friday November 14th.





We have had a busy few months and are delighted to share with you our completed learning room.

This new quiet space is becoming a valuable part of our pre-school, providing a calm, quiet space for the children to learn, engage in activities and work in small groups.

It is also a lovely space for parent meetings, for staff to complete assessments and a quiet space to have a lunch break.

We have also replaced the fencing and created a small garden area, we are also updating the garden equipment with new core balance apparatus, small world toys and new kitchen area.

All of this has been made possible through fundraising and donations which we are so grateful for.

Little Chestnuts is constantly transforming and developing ensuring our setting is a safe, stimulating and exciting place for children to learn, we are already planning for September 2025, we will continue to provide weekly dance classes, sports sessions and outside learning at our amazing space at the allotments.

There are spaces available from September so please contact Andrea for more information and to arrange a visit.

Opening times.

Pre-school Monday – Friday 8.30am-3pm children aged 2years-5years term time only.

Afterschool club – Monday – Thursday 3.15pm – 5.15pm open to all pre-school children and children from St Margarets Primary school Toppesfield.

Contact Andrea 07901880914 email: manager@littlechestnutspre-school.co.uk

Website: www.littlechestnutspre-school.co.uk



Our new learning room with new wooden building equipment



Our little garden with core balance apparatus



A Castle in the Clouds

Upon a cloud, a castle stands,
Built of dreams and gentle hands.
With laughter ringing, spirits soar,
In realms of magic, we explore.

Beyond the gates, adventures call,
In games of hope, we rise, we fall.
Together we'll chase the fleeting light,
In castle formed through shared delight.

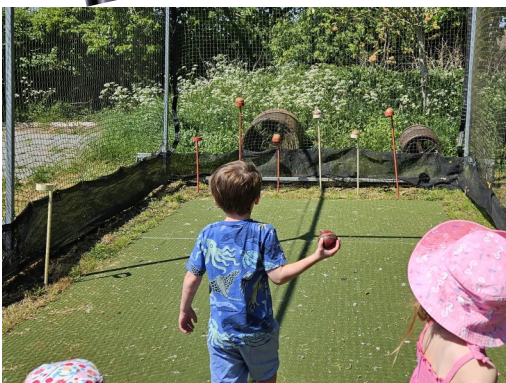
A poem to invite you to envision the whimsical worlds that unfold during creative play.



A selection of photos from the celebration event

May 2025

Toppesfield playing field.









Toppesfield Allotment news

The site is very well kept at the moment with lots of grass area kept tidy.

The little Chestnuts outdoor learning woodland is being well used, but the allotment plot could benefit from some weeding and bramble removal.

A sad goodbye to Richard Evers who has given up his plot after about 12+ years and also Amy who has found it difficult to juggle family life with allotments.

Thank you all for your support on working parties and supporting Linda Pritchard with the Easter Raffle.

Thanks also to the Pains for their support, and helping to rebuild the water cabinet.

A warm Hello to Mick, Catherine and Malcolm, who are all new members of the allotment group.

What to plant in July on the TOPPESFIELD allotment plots.

Planting in July on your allotment is all about making the most of the remaining summer and planning for autumn and winter harvests. Here's what you can plant in July in the plot.

Vegetables to Sow/Plant in July

Direct Sow Outdoors:

Carrots – Choose fast-maturing varieties like 'Adelaide' or 'Amsterdam Forcing'.

Beetroot – 'Boltardy' or other bolt-resistant types do well.

Turnips – Quick to mature and great for late summer and autumn harvests.

Spring onions – Ideal for late summer salads.

Radishes – Fast-growing and perfect for quick succession sowing.

Lettuce – Choose heat-resistant or bolt-resistant varieties.

Spinach – Opt for late-season types, like 'Perpetual Spinach'.

Pak choi & oriental greens – Best sown later in the month to avoid bolting.

Swiss chard – Hardy and colourful; will crop well into winter.



Toppesfield Allotment news continued

For Autumn & Winter Cropping:

Kale – Sow now for harvests well into winter.

Cabbage (late varieties) – 'January King' or savoy types.

Leeks – Transplant if you sowed them earlier.

Purple sprouting broccoli – Transplant seedlings for next spring harvest.

In the Greenhouse or Indoors:

French beans (dwarf) – Quick crops if started under cover.

Coriander & parsley – Sow in pots for continued harvest into autumn.

Basil – Loves the warmth; great in pots or greenhouse.

Flowers for Pollinators & Companion Planting:

Calendula (pot marigold) – Easy, edible flowers.

Nasturtiums – Great for attracting aphid predators.

Borage – Excellent for bees and adds beauty to your allotment.

Other Jobs in July:

Keep sowing **succession crops** (radishes, salad leaves).

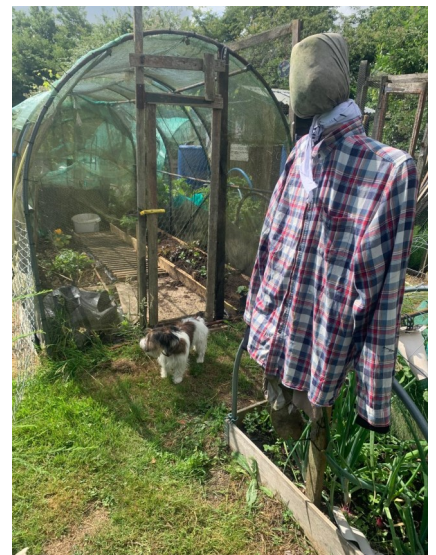
Harvest and dry out **garlic** and early **onions**.

Start preparing beds for **autumn planting** (e.g. green manures).

Paul Thompson

Chair and general dogsbody

07824665915





St. Margaret's C of E Primary School

As always, we have been busy in school this summer term and are delighted to share some of our news with you.

We are very pleased to announce the opening of our new Outdoor Classroom by Reverend Tia Stickland.



This is a beautiful space for children to use whatever the weather for play or outdoor learning. The Outdoor Classroom fits with the school's ethos of enhancing children's wellbeing, alongside our Forest School, and to teach children about caring for nature and the local environment.

We would like to say a huge thank you to the Earls Colne & Halstead Educational Charity and the Friends of St Margaret's (FOSMs) for their help with funding this project which means so much to the school community.

The whole school enjoyed a trip to Colchester Zoo in May where they showed great respect for everyone, making it a brilliant day. We must thank our staff, parents, governors and FOSM's for their support in making this trip such a success.



Once again, our year 6 pupils have shown immense resilience and positivity during SATs week. They all worked hard and showed great determination working through these tough papers. We wish them all the best of luck as they move up to senior school.

At the time of writing this, there may only be four weeks of term left, but we still have a lot to pack in, our school production, transition days, our community coffee afternoon, sports day, district sports and a water fight!

We welcome all to our Community Coffee Afternoons so please look out for details of future dates. There is always plenty of cake! You can contact the school office for details.

Our hall is available for lettings. If you have a need for a letting for a one-off event or a regular booking and are struggling to find a suitable space, why not contact the school office by emailing admin@st-margaretscofe.essex.sch.uk or calling 01787 237354.



These details together with more information about the school including up to date news and events can be found on our website:

<https://www.st-margaretscofe.essex.sch.uk/>



Hedge and Tree Cutting Information from Essex Highways website.

Guidelines below:



Grass cutting

Cutting the grass of highway verges is undertaken by Essex County Council to ensure the safety of road users and takes place during the late Spring and Autumn months.

Essex Highways is only responsible for cutting the grass verges in rural areas, normally twice a year. If you notice a problem with overgrown vegetation you can [Tell us online](#). In specific areas, verges may contain protected plants and cutting can only take place at certain times of the year.

District, borough and city councils deliver urban and rural cuts on our behalf except for rural cuts in Epping Forest, Uttlesford, Colchester and Tendring which are delivered by us.

Overgrown vegetation

Along with our grass verge cutting and weed spraying residents can do their bit to help by looking after the area outside your home or property and encourage your neighbours and community to do the same.

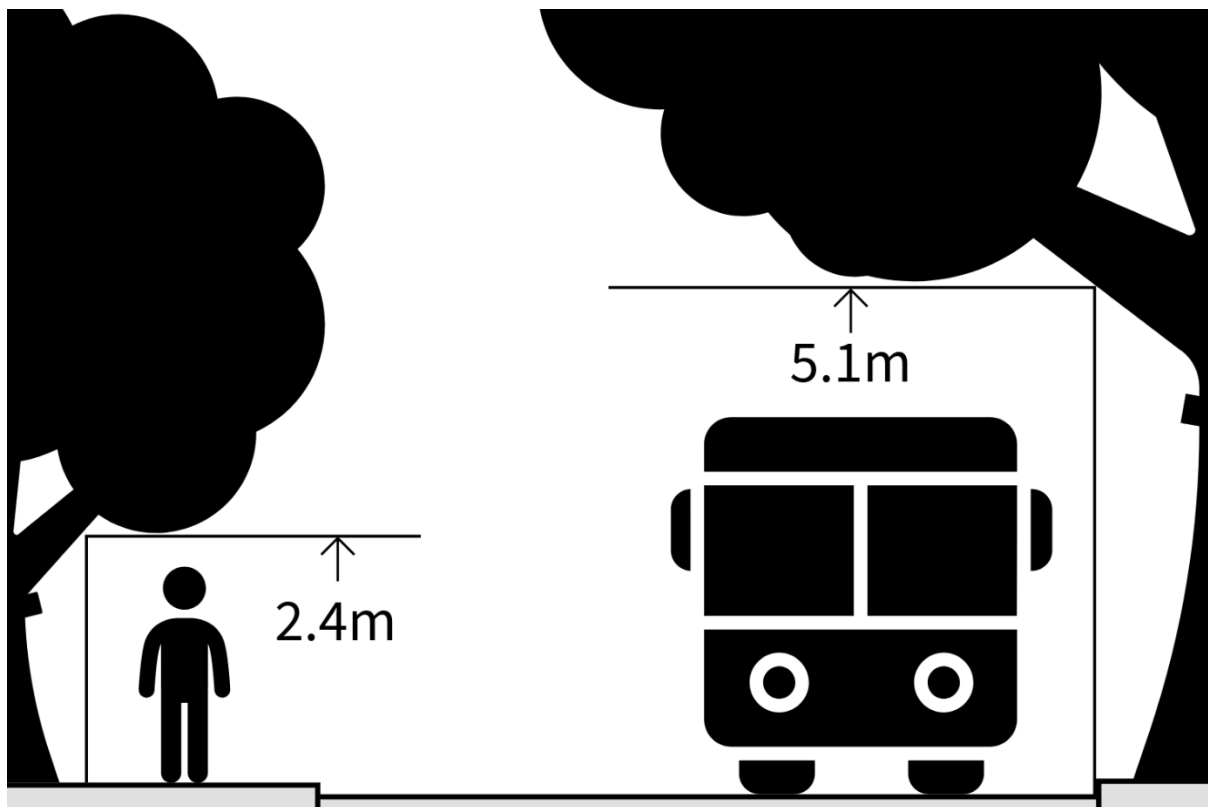
Vegetation on (or from) private land

We don't look after trees, hedges and shrubs on private land, including land that is next to roads and pavements. Most trees and hedges by roads are on land owned by private landowners, district councils, city council, parish councils, housing associations and homeowners. It is the landowner's responsibility to look after these areas. They have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to prevent or reduce as far as possible, the risk of injury or damage that could be caused to anyone else - [Highways Act 1980](#).

Examples are:

- overgrown vegetation reducing the available pavement width for pedestrians - vegetation should be kept back to the property boundary.
- overhanging vegetation reducing the height for pedestrians or cyclists on the pavement or cycleway - low hanging vegetation should be cut back so there is a clearance of 2.4m (8ft) over a pavement or cycleway.
- overhanging vegetation that reduces the height or clearance of the road for tall vehicles such as double deck school buses - low hanging vegetation should be cut back so there is a clearance of 5.1m (16ft 9in) over a road.
- overhanging vegetation reducing the width or blocking the view of the road - vegetation should be kept back to the property boundary.
- a damaged or diseased tree that is in danger of falling onto the road or pavement - these should be treated or removed, where possible.

overgrown vegetation obscuring road signs or street lights - vegetation should be cut back for visibility.



Vegetation clearance heights for pavements, cycleways and roads



TOPPESFIELD

Community Shop

***OFF LICENCE & GROCERIES**

BREAD - MILK - FRUIT & VEG - FROZEN FOODS

ICE CREAMS - BEERS - WINES - SPIRITS

STATIONERY - CARDS - STAMPS

COAL - PET FOOD - PLANTS

NEWSPAPERS - MAGAZINES - CIGARETTES



Garden Cafe

*no alcohol is to be consumed on the premises

OPENING TIMES

| | | |
|-----------|-------|-------------------|
| Monday | | 8.30am - 4.00pm |
| Tuesday | | 8.30am - 4.00pm |
| Wednesday | | 8.30am - 1.30pm |
| Thursday | | 8.30am - 4.00pm |
| Friday | | 8.30am - 4.00pm |
| Saturday | | 10.00am - 12.30pm |



WEDNESDAY 10am - 1pm