



**September / October
2025**

Edition 207



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

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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 18th October 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



Dear Residents,

Welcome to the September/October edition of our Parish Newsletter. As always, thank you for your continued support, contributions, and community spirit which keep our village thriving. This edition highlights important council updates, local issues, and the many activities that bring us together.

Parish Council Updates

- Community projects & grants – Applications are encouraged for local tree planting and digital projects.
- Waste & recycling – From October, landfill disposal will cease, with waste processed at the new Rivenhall facility. A new collection scheme with bins and boxes begins June 2026.
- Neighbourhood Plan – Now progressing to public consultation.
- Road safety & highways – Ongoing concerns about speeding, parking, potholes, and farm traffic are being raised with Essex Highways. A request for a 20mph speed limit on The Causeway has been submitted.
- County matters – Pothole repairs, Beaulieu Park station completion (ahead of schedule), and the Essex Transport Strategy consultation (open until 24th September).

Local News & Events

- Village Market – Upcoming markets on 6th Sept, 4th Oct, and 1st Nov, offering food, crafts, and a social catch-up.
- Village Show – Saturday 13th Sept at 2pm in the Village Hall. A great chance to showcase your gardening, baking, arts, and crafts, with stalls, raffle, games, and cream teas.
- Allotments – A successful summer boot sale fundraiser and a busy harvest season ahead. Guidance is given for autumn planting and site upkeep.
- Village Hall – Improvements include new cookers, polished floors, safer stage steps, and plans for better outdoor facilities. Volunteers are warmly welcomed to join the management team.
- Walking Group – Weekly Thursday walks at 10am continue to be popular, exploring local footpaths and nearby areas.
- St. Margaret's School – A warm welcome to new pupils and staff this September, with regular community coffee afternoons planned for the year.

Looking Ahead

Please remember, Parish Council meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. All residents are welcome to attend and share ideas during the open session.

With best wishes,
Kitty

Parish Council Information

A summary of Parish Council goings-on at the July and August meetings:

In July Cllr Richard van Dulken reported:

- Community grants – an application for the tree project would be welcomed. Cllr Neale reported that the consensus seems to be for more mature trees rather than saplings, however sites have not yet been identified/confirmed. Cllr van Dulken suggested that an application to help with digitalising costs could be made instead.
- We are Group – funded by UK power networks is offering free energy advice. A link to this is on the parish councils website.
- There is no money available from Essex County Council for new lighting schemes— however could solar power be considered. Cllr Neale suggested that overhead power could be used, and he will contact Cllr Schwier.
- Under the Rural Prosperity Fund there is £176,000 available for capital projects. To check criteria please see BDC website at: [Grant Funding for Rural Businesses and Community – Rural Prosperity Fund – Braintree District Council](#)
- The new waste & recycling bins/collections will start in June 2026. Some properties will have boxes rather than bins due to space/access issues. Communications will be sent to households regarding the new scheme.
- Cllr van Dulken did not attend the meeting regarding the call for sites on the 25th June but mentioned that the sites should be entered in the Neighbourhood plan as they are outside the village envelope.
- The reorganisation/devolution is ongoing and it is looking like September Local Authorities need to submit their suggestions of how many unitary authorities there should be in the new Greater Essex area.

Other business in July included:

- The Neighbourhood Plan is progressing to public consultation
- Strategy Document – Responses have been received and the deadline was extended to all time for further responses.
- Toppesfield Parish Council Risk Assessment was approved and is available on the parish website.
- The process for the Doctor Car service is being reviewed.

In August Cllr Richard van Dulken reported:

- You will no doubt be aware that because of the summer surge of illegal migrants, the Wethersfield facility is slowly ramping up its numbers towards a ceiling of 1200 from the usual 800 maximum. It is hoped that the numbers will go back down to 800 or less in the near future. There have been no significant issues at the facility in recent months.
- From October 2025 we will cease using landfill to dispose of general household and business waste - this will be treated and incinerated at the new Rivenhall Integrated Waste Management Facility which will also generate electricity for the grid.

- Work is continuing on the different suggested configurations of the local authorities in Greater Essex, with the latest one promoted by ECC which would involve a North Essex composed of Tendring, Colchester, Braintree and Uttlesford.
- The authorities will, together, in late September send a submission to the relevant Minister with one or suggested arrangements. BDC has not taken a position on the matter pending receipt of the all-important facts and figures for the various options, being worked on at this moment.

County Cllr Peter Schwier reported:

- Some of the potholes along Great Yeldham Road have been marked up and will hopefully be fixed soon.
- Essex Transport strategy – a public consultation is open until the 24th September 2025 and people are encouraged to respond. More information can be found at [A Better Connected Essex - Essex County Council - Citizen Space](#)
- The number of potholes in Jan 2023 were more than 5000, in January 2024 it was down to 4000 and January 2025 the figure was at 1600 reports so numbers are decreasing.
- Beaulieu Park station will be finished in the Autumn of 2025- 9 months ahead of schedule and it is within budget.
- An inclusive app is being devised to cover all types of transport is being developed in order for people to plan their whole journeys.
- It is business as normal at Essex County Council, but they have to submit their preferences for the number of unitary authorities by the 26th September 2025.

Other business in the August meeting included:

- An action list was produced following the RoSPA reports and 3 quotes will be sought for someone to carry out the work required.
- The Strategy survey has now closed and Responses will be reviewed
- The Doctor Car service process has been reviewed and approved.
- Cost for additional salt bins will be sought and potential locations looked at.
- Under highway matters various items were discussed. This included bins permanently on the highway, road signage, speed of vehicles, parking. And overhanging hedges.

Full minutes of each meeting can be found on the parish website: [Minutes - Toppesfield Parish Council \(e-voice.org.uk\)](#)

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.

Road Issues

The Parish Council have received a number of concerns and complaints in relation to cars and roads so we thought it would be easier to summarise the issues and what we are trying to do.

1. Speed

The speed people are travelling down The Causeway is alarming for many and very dangerous. We have requested to Essex Highways that the speed be reduced to 20mph. We have looked into getting a flashing sign showing people the speed they are travelling but these are very expensive (over £4000) so we are trying to find funding for this.

2. Parking

Parking on the greens on The Causeway is discouraged. Please can everyone try to park on the road. Parking down Stambourne Road is troublesome as there have been occasions where it would be impossible for an emergency vehicle to pass through.

Parking on the corner of Park Lane is blocking people's view when trying to turn out of the lane and a few times a near miss has occurred when a car has come round the corner and neither car can see each other due to the parked vehicles. There have been numerous prangs and cars scraped down Church Lane when it is school drop off and pick up time.

Can everyone please be mindful of where and how they are parking.

3. Farm Traffic

The Parish Council funded a sign a few years ago to point farm traffic away from Park Lane but this sign came down. Boyd Page has kindly put this back up – thank you Boyd for your efforts. We have requested official signage from Essex Highways to restrict access to large vehicles. A letter was sent to all the farmers last year asking that the speed the vehicles are travelling be reduced as it's exceedingly dangerous. It was requested that if any farm vehicle is spotted speeding them to take a photo and notify the farmers or at least try to get the number plate – so if you do spot a speeding tractor or a tractor driving dangerously through the village, please notify the Parish Council.

4. Church Lane

There have been numerous issues with large vehicles thinking they can get down to Great Yeldham via Church Lane and we all know this isn't the case. Again, we have requested a sign to restrict access and show it's not a through road.

5. Pot Holes

Chris Neale on the Parish Council noted every pothole and reported it on the Government Highways website. There is a need to access 'What 3 Words' to locate the pothole effectively and Chris has done this – thank you Chris.

With all these issues, we report it via the official website page

(<https://www.essexhighways.org>) and also follow up directly with Cllr Peter Schwier (AIEMA Cabinet Member for Environment, Waste Reduction & Recycling Chair, East of

Road Issues continued

England Regional Climate Change Forum; Hedingham Division, Essex County Council) and keep following up.

It would be a great help for you all to also report these matters on the Essex Highways website and then hopefully these issues might get resolved quicker.

In the meantime, as the Summer Holidays are drawing to a close and the schools will be starting back, please everyone, watch your speed driving through the village to ensure the safety of everyone and park responsibly.



St. Margaret of Antioch Toppesfield

Church services for September and October 2025 are detailed below.

All services start at 11.00am unless indicated.

Sept 7 Morning Prayer

Sept 14 Holy Communion (BCP)

Sept 21 Family Service

Sept 28 Holy Communion (CW) Rev Tia's first communion since her full ordination.

Oct 5 Harvest Festival 4pm, followed by Harvest Supper in the Green Man

Oct 12 Holy Communion (CW)

Oct 19 Family Service

Oct 26 Holy Communion (BCP)

Other upcoming events:

Save the Clock Tower 80s night in the Village Hall Saturday 13 Sept at 8pm. Tickets available from Rob Stafford-Baker.

Cheese and Wine Evening at Berwick Hall Saturday 20 Sept at 7pm. Tickets available from Belinda Littler.

Supper Auction in the Village Hall Friday Nov 14th, 7pm Tickets on sale soon.

Provisional date for our next Messy Church is Wednesday 29th October, 10.30am - 12.15pm, which will be confirmed nearer the time.



Friday 12th September 2025 in Toppesfield and

It would be appreciated if you could park on your driveways or elsewhere on these days to allow the sweepers to have clear access to the road channels (Kerbs).

Both sweeps are only scheduled to take half a day so disruption will hopefully be minimal.

Thank you for your help and understanding.



Saturday 4th October 2025—10.30am—12.30pm

Saturday 1st November 2025—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.



Toppesfield and Gainsford End Village Show 2025

Saturday 13th September

Toppesfield Village Hall 2.00pm

Show day is fast approaching. I do hope you have been keeping an eye on your flowers, fruits and vegetables and well as practising your baking, needle, photo and paintbrush skills.

There is something for everyone in the show and I do hope you are going to enter. Just one class would be fantastic.

There is going to be an amazing raffle, stalls by local suppliers and games, competitions and fun activities for all. Then when you have had a look around the exhibits sit and enjoy a delicious strawberry cream tea and catch up with friends.

Dates to note

Thursday 11th Sept bring your entry forms to the **village hall** between **7.00pm and 8.00pm** to collect your exhibitor's cards. If you can't get to the village hall on Thursday evening you can leave your **entry forms at the shop by Wednesday 10th** and I will sort your exhibitor's cards for you. Please note the **age must be on the children's entry forms.**

Saturday 13th Sept Please bring your entries , complete with exhibitor's cards to the **village hall between 8.30am and 10.00am.**

Saturday 13th Sept 2.00pm Come and check on your entries and enjoy the show.

Donations for the raffle will be most welcome and can be left at the shop .

I am looking forward to seeing you and your exhibits at the show.

Ann Read

Toppesfield Allotments (And general place of Recreation)

Boot sale

Thanks to Linda for organising a splendid day at the boot sale in July, and to all the Parishioners that donated to the Tombola, Ian and Anoush for their involvement on the TOMBOLA .

It was our best fundraiser ever !

By popular demand we will do this again, pictures of the event are on the next few pages.

General Admin - Thanks again to Clair for continuing to excel at the accounts and banking.

September / October Allotment Schedule

Harvest time for apples pears and the last Blackberries, Early October (1st–10th)

Harvesting: Pull up root crops like carrots, parsnips, and beetroot; gather any remaining beans and tomatoes before the season's first frosts.

Clear spent plants: Remove any foliage, dried stems, or old crops. This helps reduce disease and pest reservoirs.

Sow cover crops or green manures, such as mustard, red clover or annual ryegrass, to protect and enrich the soil over winter

Compost: Chop and compost green material, or use to mulch newly cleared areas.

Seed saving: Collect seeds from hardy edibles or herbs for next-year planting

Mid-October (11th–20th)

Plant bare-root trees or fruit bushes, if you're planning on adding fruiting elements.

Divide and lift perennials like rhubarb or chives and replant as needed.

Repair and tidy structures: secure fencing, fix greenhouse glazing or shed doors.

Mulching: Apply compost, grass clippings, or leaf-mold, especially to brassicas and roots, for protection and soil health.

Late October (21st–31st)

Final soil prep: Hoe any remaining weeds and add organic matter like compost or well-rotted manure.

Plant onion sets and early broad beans to get a head-start for spring

Protect vulnerable plants: Consider fleece for tender crops if early frosts are forecast.

Install winter water protection: Wrap taps and turn off hoses if needed (this will be done in NOVEMBER and the water will be restricted to Stop waste)PT Clean tools, oil and store them securely to preserve them for the winter break.

Throughout October

Site security: Keep vigilant—many allotment sites experience theft or vandalism in autumn. Lock sheds, mark tools, and consider joining or liaising with schemes like Allotment Watch, run by Essex Police, to stay informed and increase security.

Plot tidy and composting: Remove discarded structures or waste. Maintain a neat site to help spot pests and maintain overall health.

Plan ahead: Note which crops did well or failed, and draft a rotation plan or seed order list for next season.

Insights from Applotment Experience

A fellow gardener shared after acquiring a plot in mid October:

“They covered the ground... going for raised beds... good idea... I will do.”

Starting preparations in October (covering, planning beds) can set you up well for next season

Period

Key Tasks

Early Oct

Harvest, clear spent crops, sow green manure, seed save

Mid Oct

Lift/divide, repair, mulch

Late Oct

Soil prep, plant sets, frost protection, tool care

All month

Maintain security, tidy, compost, plan ahead

This framework should help you make the most of October at Toppesfield. If you'd like help with seed selection, crop rotation planning, or climate considerations specific I'd be happy to assist further!

All the best

Paul Thompson

Chair









Toppesfield Village Hall

Reg. Charity 301426

Summer is a quieter time for hires at the hall usually so a good time to get on with any improvements works needed. This year we have taken the opportunity to replace our aging cookers as one had lost the function of the hobs. We have had a local contractor in to polish our wooden floor, which does take a bashing with the amount of use it gets. New steps up to the stage with handrails are under construction, planned for in time of the Flower show as our old ones are not fit for purpose.

Future plans include replacing our dilapidated shed so looking for a replacement that can incorporate some outside seating too. The increasingly hot summers which seem to be more frequent and likely to worsen into the future have inspired us to look into air conditioning for the hall. However the structure of the hall along with the height makes it more likely we will be need to be using portable options during the hot spells rather than an integrated system. The demand for shaded areas is also increasing so will look into purchasing gazebos once a shed is in place.

We have recently introduced a key safe for hirers to use, where code will be advised off once booking forms etc are completed. For security this will need to be changed periodically. We are very grateful to Linda Bowen who has been our key lady for many years but now this is increasingly difficult for her. Hopefully will avoid the key not being available as happened recently for a hire, but will depend on hirers remembering to place key back into the keysafe please.

Bookings have been quite steady with a few parties being booked along with the usual big village events, even have one booked in for Boxing day. Please ensure hall is available before advertising events as we would hate to disappoint hirers but we are not clairvoyant so do need to communicate with the bookings secretary if anyone wants to hire the hall. Likewise if hirers intend to sell alcohol a licence must be applied before the event which can take a few weeks to action via the local council at the hirers expense.

Our equipment hires have increased particularly for tables and chairs but does increase admin work so we are now looking at a minimum charge of £5 from September, and items must be returned ASAP as other hirers may need them too.



Toppesfield Village Hall continued

We are a managing committee of only 5 people currently so lots of jobs for just a few people which can be onerous at times so anyone looking for a volunteering opportunity would be warmly welcomed.

We do have an email address for hall which is now increasingly being used for potential bookings by hirer -Toppesfieldvillagehall@gmail.com



Toppesfield Footpaths Walking Group

We continue to go from strength to strength on our walks around Toppesfield with up to 1 dozen regulars attending weather permitting (mainly Heat related this summer).

We have had a couple of away days towards Belchamp last month which made a change.

Its nice to know that we can now walk safely around the back of the Hilton Valley Carp lakes without the fear of being attacked by feral dogs. The new owners are very nice approachable people.

Please feel free to join us on a Thursday at 10 AM at the Pump nr Green Man

Speeding cars can be an issue down the Causeway and towards Cust Hall, any drivers that use this route please be aware of the 30MPH speed limit (With Thanks).

Farmers. Please keep the vegetation down on the pathways.

Paul Thompson



St. Margaret's C of E Primary School

Welcome back to the new school year!

We have only just returned to school following the summer break and are delighted to have welcomed 8 children into our reception group this year and we cannot wait to see what they will add to life at St. Margaret's! We are also delighted to welcome Miss Ashman, Mrs Elliott and Miss Meadows to our classroom support team.

Last year ended with a fond farewell to our year six pupils: Fred, Freddie, Jake, Ryan, Sher, Will and Zac. We wish them well as they embark upon the next stages of their education. We also said goodbye to Mrs Wiffin as she retires after more than 30 years working at the school and also to Miss Michael as she goes travelling. We wish them both lots of joy in their new adventures.

We have already scheduled in our coffee afternoons for this academic year. These are open to anyone and everyone and are a fantastic opportunity for our young people to support the community and learn some life skills as they welcome people into our school so please support them by coming along – everyone is welcome and the more people we have the more joyous the event! The following Fridays are the dates for this academic year: 26th September, 30th January, 27th February, 24th April and 26th June. We hope to see lots of you there.

We look forward to an amazing year ahead during which we will keep you up-to-date with school life.

Facebook: [St. Margaret's CofE Primary School, Toppesfield](#)

Twitter: @StMargaretsTopp

Instagram: stmargaretstopp



CHEESE & WINE

Night

TASTE, ENJOY, AND SOCIALIZE AT
TOPPESFIELD CHEESE AND WINE

£15 PER
TICKET*



SATURDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER 2025 - 7PM TO 9PM

*BERWICK HALL, THE CAUSEWAY, CO9 4DZ, by
kind invitation of Brian*

CONTACT BELINDA FOR TICKETS - 07825 647403

**ticket includes first drink & all your food*

IN AID OF ST MARGARET'S CHURCH, TOPPESFIELD

Community Agents

Part of the Essex Wellbeing Service

Community Agents provide support to individuals in order to maintain independence living in their own home. We can help anybody over the age of 18 that is in particular need of a home visit in order to source the support needed.

Community Agents can assist with:

Equipment
Blue Badges & Bus Passes
Benefits
Social Opportunities
Transport
Meals & Shopping
Carers Support

To refer yourself, family member, friend or neighbour to Community Agents.

Please call EWS direct 0300 303 9988

Please note you must have the person you are referring's permission. Lines open Monday to Friday 8am-7pm and Saturday 9am-12pm.



**Essex
Wellbeing Service**



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



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